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In the aftermath of the first murder on this planet came God's question: "Where is your brother?" The question was not a divine invitation to a philosophic dialogue on the mysteries of life; nor was it a cosmic pronouncement on life after death. Its purpose was both immediate and enduring.

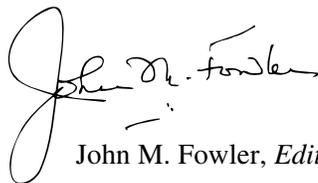
The immediate forced Cain to stand before divine justice and grace: on the one hand, to be charged with the responsibility of his brother's murder, to face sin as betrayal of brotherhood, and to stand condemned as a sinner before the bar of divine justice; on the other, to face the possibility that he could be whole again, given the mystery of the Creator's grace and redeeming love.

The enduring purpose of the question has kept history on its tiptoe. The question served notice on all time to come, on generations yet unborn, that no person is an island, and that life to be meaningful must be lived within the context of God and the human. Poor Cain missed the point, and therein lay his sin. And Cain, terrorized by the question, did leave a legacy of fear and troubled conscience, but never any shortage of successors.

In facing the question "Where is your brother or sister?" (to be inclusive) we shall have answered one of life's great questions. The issue is not social, economic, political, philosophic, or even moral. The issue is primarily religious. Because Cain drifted away from God, because he did not wish to relate to Him in the way God prescribed, and because he wanted to chart his own way out and be the master of his own ship, he could not relate to his brother Abel. He preferred murder to relationship; he chose loneliness in the place of community; he denied God in order to be god.

There lies the root of one's inhumanity to the other. "Sin originated with self-seeking," wrote Ellen White long ago (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 21). More recently, Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the great theologians America has produced, made a remarkable contribution to Christian thought in recognizing sin—be it the most complex or the most simple—for what it is in its essence: self-centeredness, which on the one hand would rise to proclaim itself its own god, and on the other hand, would not hesitate to do away with whatever comes in its way. So it was with Lucifer. So it was with the tyrants of history. So it could be with me.

Perhaps that's why Luther defined a Christian as a "crucian"—one who has heard the Master's call and has crucified self. The total abandonment of self—be it at home, at school, at work, at worship—is the alpha of the gospel call, not in some mystic way, but in a relational way. What that demands is that I recognize the Other as my first priority and the other as my second priority. That is to say, I abandon self first and foremost because my Creator has a demand upon me, and secondly that demand has placed a responsibility upon me to look front, look back, look sideways, and see there my neighbor. Neighbors may come in many hues, but together they form a rainbow—a rainbow of God. Where there is a sense of God's rainbow, differing hues give way to create a common humanity that clings to God's promise and God's vision of a home where love and love alone reigns. And perfect love, dipped in the blood of the Cross, can banish the lurking Cain in every human heart.



John M. Fowler, Editor

### **Nature study and the Sabbath**

Like many other readers of your magazine, I attend a non-Adventist school. My ecology course requires one weekend of field work per semester. That involves some work on Sabbath, for example, picking up soil samples. Such work keeps me close to God's handiwork. But in my mind, there's always a but....! Am I doing the right thing? By the way, *Dialogue* is wonderful to read, and at the same time it encourages me to keep a strong faith and good relationship with our Father.

GENEVIEVE COLLETT  
St. Laurent, Quebec,  
CANADA

*The editors respond:*

*The fact that there is a "but" in your mind seems to indicate the presence of a predicament. Sabbath observance is both an objective requirement and a personal commitment. Often we have a tendency to lean toward the latter, and we find many reasons for our action: life saving work (in a hospital cafeteria, for example), enjoying nature (deep sea diving), etc. In facing your question, two things may be kept in mind. First, keep Christ as a reference point: What would Christ do in the situation? Would He have done something, as good as it might be, that would bring in return a benefit for Himself? Second, have you exhausted all other alternatives? In the final analysis, you have to answer the question for yourself, keeping in mind and heart the objective and divine nature of Sabbath observance.*

### **Appreciated in France**

I recently discovered *Dialogue*, and I am really enthusiastic about the journal. Would it be possible for me to receive all the back issues? As an Adventist student in a non-Adventist university, I find that I can share copies of some of the articles with my friends and easily start a conversation about God and the Bible. Enclosed you will find the names and addresses of other Adventist university students scattered throughout France

who, I know, would love to receive *Dialogue*.

DAVID DERIGENT  
La Rochelle, FRANCE

*The editors respond:*

Thank you for a copy of the letter you addressed to our representative in the Euro-Africa Division and for its encouraging content. He will see that you and your friends in France receive *Dialogue* regularly and free of charge, courtesy of your church. You may be interested to know that our journal has an incentive plan that allows readers who purchase a two-year subscription to receive all available back issues gratis.

### Useful for church programs

Together with this letter you will find the information you need to renew my subscription to *Dialogue*. I thoroughly enjoy each issue of the journal; it helps me to stay in touch with the thinking of Adventists in other parts of the world. In fact, the articles are a sort of condensed books which approach, from a Christian perspective, important issues in modern life. I have used some of them to conduct lively youth discussion in our church. Let me congratulate all of you involved in editing and publishing *Dialogue*. May God continue to bless you in your important and far-reaching assignment.

CLAUDIA E. F. ESTEVES  
Albufeira, PORTUGAL

### Adventists and fiction

I thoroughly enjoy each issue of *Dialogue*. I particularly appreciate two approaches often taken by contributors to this journal. These approaches are well-illustrated by two articles in *Dialogue* 8:3. The first is Scott Moncrieff's "Adventists and Fiction," an informative application of biblical principles and Ellen G. White guidance to an area of general interest and professional specialization. As a teacher, I strive to do the same, applying Christian norms to my own profession and area of specialization,

which includes literature. The second article, Mario Pereyra's "Psychology of Postmodern Society," provides an analysis of a passage of the Bible from the perspective of a particular discipline. I, too, am challenged and intrigued by sections of the Bible that relate to my professional interests: language, the spoken and written word, miscommunication, language learning, bilingualism, etc. Please continue to include articles featuring these approaches. They are two sides of the same coin.

SYLVIA R. GREGORUTTI  
Pacific Union College  
Angwin, California, U.S.A.

### Continuing interest

I am enclosing my credit card number and my address so that you may begin my subscription to *Dialogue*. I became acquainted with the journal when I was a university student and received it free. Now that I am a full-time secondary school teacher, I want to continue enjoying the content of *Dialogue*. Its articles are always relevant.

MELANIE S. KWAN  
Lillooet, British Columbia,  
CANADA

### Inspiring experiences

I am a third-year nursing student at Philippine Union College. I thank God because a few days ago I discovered *Dialogue* in our college library. Everything I read in it inspired me, especially the "Profiles" section. I love to learn about the unique experiences of great Adventist men and women who, in addition to being successful in their professions, take time to serve God and their fellow human beings.

EVA LIMBAGAN  
Manila, PHILIPPINES

### Get on the Web

I am medical assistant who reads and enjoys *Dialogue*. My recommendation is that you create a Web page for the journal, so that many more university students and professionals around the

world can have access to its excellent content. This will also allow us to read articles and reports published before we became aware of *Dialogue*.

CARLOS L. ORTA  
Lynwood, California, U.S.A.

*The editors respond:*

Thank you, Carlos, for your good suggestion. We have begun planning to create a Web page for *Dialogue* in its four language editions and will proceed to do it as soon as it becomes possible. As you probably know, our journal has a small budget and most of the editorial staff volunteer their time.

### A marvelous periodical

You will find enclosed a check with our yearly contribution. I'm quite sure that *Dialogue* in its various language editions is by far the very best publication produced by our church today. Don't let anything hinder its widest circulation. It's a marvelous periodical!

LOUIS A. RAMIREZ  
Grand Terrace, California,  
U.S.A.

### Very much impressed

As an Adventist university student pursuing a degree in human resources management, I want you all to know that I am very much impressed by *Dialogue* and thoroughly enjoy its articles. Keep on publishing it, and may God bless you!

DINI VAN ACHTEREN  
Groningen, THE  
NETHERLANDS

### Write to us!

We welcome your letters, with reactions and questions, but limit your comments to 200 words. Address them to *Dialogue Letters*: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. You can also send them via fax: (301) 622-9627, or E-mail (via CompuServe): 74617,464. If selected for this section, your letter may be edited for clarity or space.

**Y**ou are out on a walk. You see a stick leaning against a tree. You observe the stick and the tree. From your observation, can you conclude that it is an evidence of intelligent activity? Perhaps not. Branches often break from trees, and sometimes lean against a tree. Such an event does not require any special explanation. Of course, a person *might* have placed the stick against the tree for a purpose, but there is no need to invoke this explanation if a more “natural” explanation is available.

But suppose you find three sticks leaning against each other in such a way that removal of any one stick would cause the other two to fall to the ground. Such a “tripod” could not be the result of a gradual accumulation of sticks. All three sticks must have been placed simultaneously. Is it reasonable to suppose that this could happen by chance? The probability of such an event happening by itself is unreasonably low. An intelligent person must have arranged the sticks for a purpose that may or may not be evident.

### **The key to understanding design**

What distinguishes between intelligent design in the tripod arrangement as contrasted with the leaning stick? Perhaps two features: complexity and functional interdependence. The complexity of the “tripod” is represented by its three parts. Its functional interdependence is seen in the fact that none of the parts can be removed without destroying the tripod. A structure that is composed of three or more parts, all of which must come into relationship simultaneously, is best interpreted as the result of intelligent design. Although it can always be argued that such a structure *could* have originated by chance, such an interpretation would stretch the credulity of most people.

Can such an argument be reasonably extended to nature? If so, do we see evidence in nature of intelligent design?

### **The argument from design**

For centuries the idea that nature resulted from intelligent design was accepted without question or controversy. The Scriptures affirm that God can be seen in nature. For example, listen to the psalmist: “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers..., what is man that you are mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:1, 4, 5 NIV). Perhaps Paul makes the strongest case in Romans 1:19 and 20, where he argues that the evidence of God in nature is so clear that no one has an excuse for denying His existence, power, and sovereignty. For many authors, the evidences of design in nature point to the Creator God of the Bible. William Paley is a case in point.

# Is there design in nature?

## *Intelligent design in nature points to a Creator Designer*

by  
L. James  
Gibson

*Paley and the argument from contrivance.* Paley claimed<sup>1</sup> that nature is full of features that show evidence of design. He called them “contrivances,” and compared them to human-made devices or machines. Paley’s argument can be phrased as: The existence in living organisms of features that function like mechanical devices to achieve some purpose are evidence that they were created by a Designer.

Paley’s most famous illustration is a watch. Suppose you found a watch, having never seen one before. Would it not be obvious that the watch had been crafted and was designed for a purpose, even if the purpose was not understood? Likewise, many features of living organisms function as machines. If we recognize the activities of a designer when we observe mechanical devices, we can also recognize the activities of a designer when we observe similar features in living organisms. According to Paley, nature exhibits the properties of design, leading us to recognize the God of nature.

**Charles Darwin and the argument against design.** Early opposition to Paley came from Charles Darwin. Darwin admitted that even though he was “charmed” by Paley’s arguments, he could not blame God for designing all the evil in nature.<sup>2</sup> Darwin proposed that God was so far removed from nature that He did not intervene and was not responsible for the state of nature. In effect, Darwin claimed that nature was not designed, and therefore did not point to a designer. He proposed that unassisted natural processes were sufficient to explain the adaptive features of living organisms, through the process of natural selection. Apparently, Darwin would rather have God good but in the distance than close to us and evil. Most of us would probably agree. But was Darwin’s argument from natural selection valid?

Darwin himself identified a method by which his theory might be refuted. In Chapter 6 of his book, the *Origin of Species*,<sup>3</sup> Darwin stated: “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”

Darwin claimed he could find no such cases, but others have made the opposite claim.

### **Arguments for design**

Clearly, the argument *from* design is not valid if nature is not designed. Darwin shifted the focus of the debate to whether nature is truly designed. Thus, our interest focuses on the argument *for* design.

**The argument from “irreducible complexity.”** Michael Behe of Lehigh University in Pennsylvania is one of the current leaders of argument for design.<sup>4</sup> He bases his argument on what he calls “irreducible complexity.” For an illustration, he uses an ordinary mousetrap composed of a platform, a bait pan, a lever, a “guillotine,” a spring, and some staples. The parts of the mousetrap work together to perform a function—catching mice. Let the mousetrap

represent an organ that had evolved from some simpler ancestral structure. What would the ancestral structure look like, and what function would it have? How could a mousetrap be simplified, yet retain any function? Imagine removing any one of the components of the mousetrap—the resulting structure would have no function at all. The mousetrap is irreducibly complex. If any such example could be found among living organisms, Darwin’s theory would “absolutely break down.” According to Behe, the cilium is one such example.

A cilium is a small hair-like structure that moves back and forth in a fluid medium, providing a method of swimming in certain one-celled organisms. Cilia are also present in our respiratory tracts, and their movements help remove particles from our lungs. At least three parts are required for active movement: a part that moves; a link to an energy supply; and an “anchor” to control the position of the movable part. In the case of a cilium, the moving part is composed of molecules of tubulin; energy for movement is supplied through the activities of molecules of dynein; and the parts of the cilium are held together by molecules of nexin. Without any one of these, the cilium has no function. Thus the cilium appears to be irreducibly complex.

As one might expect, those who are philosophically committed to evolution refuse to accept the argument from irreducible complexity. However, this rejection is based on philosophical, not empirical grounds, as evidenced by the total lack of demonstration of evolutionary claims.

**The argument from improbability.** Some circumstances seem so unexpected that one suspects there must be something more than chance involved. Most scientists are willing to attribute a result to chance if it could be expected to occur by chance as often as five times in 100 trials. Some scientists will lower the acceptable odds to one chance in 1,000 trials, depending on the nature of the event. But there are limits to what anyone will reasonably accept as the result of chance. If the probability of an event is exceedingly low, it is reasonable to suppose that it did not happen as the result of chance. If the event also seems

to have a purpose, it is reasonable to suppose that the event was guided by an intelligent mind.

Darwin admitted that he “shuddered” when he thought of the problem of the evolution of the human eye. He tried to make a case for the evolution of the eye by pointing to a variety of less-complex eyes in other animals, and suggesting that they might represent stages through which a more complex eye might have evolved. However, it is not clear that he convinced even himself. The evolution of the eye would require an elaborate series of improbable events that most people would consider unlikely to occur without a designer.<sup>5</sup>

### **The argument from mystery**

Many arguments for design have been based on a lack of understanding of a particular process. Before the mechanism for the circulation of the blood was understood, one might have been tempted to claim that blood circulation was a mystery beyond our understanding, and this in itself was evidence for the workings of a superior intellect. Problems arose when the mechanism was discovered, seemingly making God no longer necessary. Examples such as this have led to a general suspicion of any type of argument for design. Such “arguments from mystery” contain two features: ignorance of the mechanism of a particular phenomenon, and an appeal that the phenomenon is a mystery beyond our understanding. Hence we have the “god-of-the-gaps” argument.

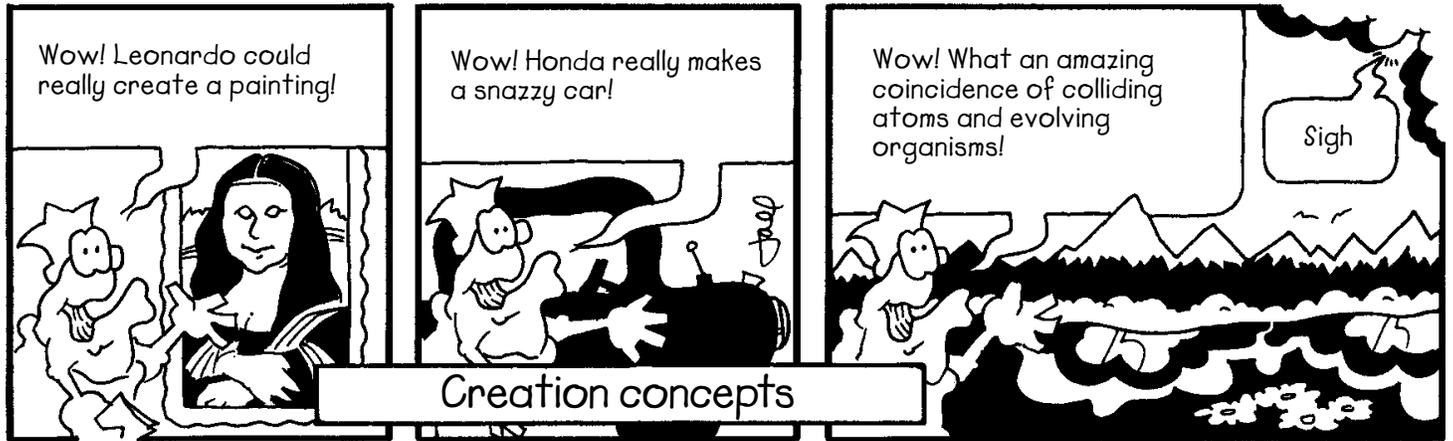
The argument from irreducible complexity should be contrasted with the argument from mystery. The first is based on two principal features: the system must have an identified function, and the components of the system must be known and identified. Thus, this is an argument from knowledge, and is completely different from the argument from mystery.

### **Examples of design in nature**

Many examples of design in nature can be described, but we shall note a few here.

**The existence of the universe.**<sup>6</sup> The existence of the universe depends on a precise combination of finely balanced physical constants. If any of several were different, the universe could not exist.

## Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kauffman

For example, if the electromagnetic force were slightly greater, atomic nuclei would not exist. Other physical constants include the values of the gravitational constant and the strong and weak nuclear forces.

**The appropriateness of conditions on earth for the support of life.**<sup>7</sup> The earth differs from other planets in ways that permit life to exist. If any of these conditions were not present, life as we know it could not exist on earth. For example, the earth's atmospheric composition is unique among planets in our solar system.

**The existence of life.** Life requires both proteins and nucleic acids. Neither of these materials is found in the absence of life. Both must be present in order for life to exist. For example, protein production requires the presence of both protein enzymes and nucleic acids.

**Unique genes are found in certain groups of organisms.** Different groups of organisms have different genes that are not found in other groups. New genes require new information. It seems highly unlikely that new information can generate itself through random processes, even if starting with an extra copy of a gene. Additional discoveries are needed to help clarify this point.

**The human mind.** The human mind appears to be exceedingly complex, substantially beyond what is necessary for natural selection. The mechanism for certain types of mental activity seems beyond our ability to understand. For example, science has no good explanation for human self-awareness or for our

capacity for language and abstract thinking.

Other examples of design include the existence of the genetic code, the process of protein production in living cells, the process of nucleic acid production in living cells, the senses, gene regulation, the complex chemistry of the photosynthetic pathway; sex, etc. While some conjectures have been offered as to how these features might have arisen without intelligent design, the proposed processes seem so highly improbable that intelligent design seems more plausible to many scholars.

### Counter-arguments against design

Several objections have been raised to the argument for design. We will briefly note four types:

**Pseudo-design.**<sup>8</sup> Patterns may form as the result of natural processes, with no need to invoke an intelligent designer. For example, a snowflake has an intricate pattern, but no one suggests that God especially intervened to create this pattern. Rather, the pattern can be explained in terms of physical processes and molecular properties. Complex, non-linear systems frequently exhibit unexpected properties that "emerge" naturally without any intelligent input. However, the complexity of the required initial conditions, such as the necessary existence of a computer, seems dependent on a designer.

Natural selection can be considered a type of pseudo-design argument. If

organisms can be modified by natural processes to fit their environment, there is no need to propose that God specially intervened to design them. A serious weakness of this argument is that it presupposes a structure to be modified. Recent advances in molecular biology have revealed the existence of levels of interdependent complexity far beyond the expectations of those who developed the theory of evolution. The problem of the origins of biological structures appear to provide a powerful argument for design.

**Defective design.**<sup>9</sup> Many features of nature appear to be flawed. It is sometimes argued that an intelligent creator would do a better job of designing nature. Some examples of allegedly defective design include the "thumb" of the giant panda and the structural arrangement of the retina of the eye of vertebrates. However, no one has shown that these structures function poorly, removing the basis for the argument. Furthermore, imperfections are not unexpected in a world that was designed by God, but has been corrupted by the activities of Satan.

**Imposed design.**<sup>10</sup> Humans like to organize observations into patterns that may be artificial. An example would be seeing familiar shapes in the clouds—there is nothing real that needs an

explanation, except perhaps to wonder why people do such things. Most scientists reject this argument, since the practice of science depends on the existence of real patterns to be explained. All observers agree that nature at least appears to be designed.

**Evil design.**<sup>11</sup> Many features of organisms seem “designed” for killing or causing disease or pain. The malarial parasite is an example. It does not seem right to blame God for designing the causes of death and disease. On the other hand, if God did not design the “evil” things of nature, why claim that He designed the “good” things of nature? The presence of evil in nature does not refute the argument for design, but may raise questions about the nature or character of the designer. The biblical explanation is that this world is the battleground between two designers, a Creator and a corrupter. The result is that nature sends a mixed signal; both good and evil are present.<sup>12</sup>

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“Good morning. Today’s sermon deals with modern society’s short attention span. The end. Amen.”

## Conclusion

The “argument for design” was widely ignored in the century after Darwin, in part because knowledge of living systems was so incomplete that the gaps could be filled in with imagination. As biological knowledge has increased, the argument for design has been revived and expressed in more sophisticated ways, such as the argument from “irreducible complexity.” The existence of certain features that could not survive in intermediate stages is evidence of a Designer. It is also evidence of a Designer God who created by special intervention—Creation—and not through a continuous process such as evolution. The argument from irreducible complexity is an argument that supports an interventionist, discontinuous creation.

According to Paul in Romans, nature is clearly designed, but not all are open to recognize the Designer. Nature can be properly understood only in the light of God’s special revelation in the Scriptures. Guided by the Bible, we can join with the psalmist in praise to the Creator: “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. . . . Their voice goes out through all the Earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psalm 19:1, 4). 🌍

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## Notes and references

1. W. Paley, *Natural Theology* (Houston: St. Thomas Books, 1972. Reprint of 1802 ed.). Paley’s argument has recently been discussed by J. T. Baldwin, “God and the World: William Paley’s Argument from Perfection Tradition: A Continuing Influence,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1985, pp.109-120.
2. See N. C. Gillespie, *Charles Darwin and the Problem of Creation* (University of Chicago Press, 1979), Chapter 7. For

- example, Darwin stated that he could not believe in a God that made cats to play with mice, or that designed tiny parasitic wasps to eat out the insides of a caterpillar.
3. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 6th ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1958).
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9. An example of this argument is in S. J. Gould, *The Panda’s Thumb* (New York: Norton and Co., 1980).
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11. For example, see D. L. Hull, “The God of the Galapagos,” *Nature* 352 (1991), pp. 485-486. See also Chapter 8 in P. J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
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“Mr. Wolffe, sir, 10 men have been commissioned to assassinate you tonight after you reach your first destination. Here is a list of their names. May Allah defend you.”

With such words as these ringing in his ears, Joseph Wolffe bade farewell in 1844 to the city of Bokhara, in southwest Uzbekistan.

Joseph Wolff! His name has intrigued me since my childhood, this man who could speak so many languages, who survived so many adventures, and who preached the Second Coming of Christ in so many places in Africa and the Middle East at the time when William Miller was preaching it in America. Ellen G. White devoted five pages (357-362) to him in *The Great Controversy*.

“Through the labors,” Mrs. White wrote once, “of William Miller and many others in America, of seven hundred ministers in England, of Bengel and others in Germany, of Gausson and his followers in France and Switzerland, of many ministers in Scandinavia, of a converted Jesuit in South America, and of *Dr. Joseph Wolff in many Oriental and African countries*, the advent message was carried to a large part of the habitable globe.”<sup>1</sup>

But, back to Bokhara. Wolff, we are glad to learn, was not murdered after he left the city. Two years earlier, he had set out from England in an effort to determine the precise fate of two British army officers reported to have been killed. He ultimately reached Bokhara and learned beyond doubt not only that they had been murdered but also who the murderer was—one of the head men in the town. Although he made many friends among the city’s leaders, he came within days of being executed himself under orders from the same head man. A letter from the Shah of Persia arrived just in time to save his life. Even then, as he left the city, he was informed that he wasn’t safe yet. After a day’s travel toward home, he was to be assassinated when he settled down for the night.

But he wasn’t killed that night. At the end of the day’s travel, Wolff sent out a call for a public meeting. After people had gathered, he announced publicly the details of the plot against him. The fact that he could speak the local language was a distinct advantage. The people of the area rallied to protect this religious leader from the West, this “dervish from

England and America.” The would-be assassins were arrested in due course and appropriately punished.

During his momentous career, Wolff encountered almost innumerable perils. He was starved, beset by robbers, and three times condemned to death. He was tied to a donkey’s tail, and was offered for sale as a slave for “two pounds, ten shillings.” A thief swam out to the river boat he was riding on, reached up and

# Joseph Wolff: missionary extraordinaire

by  
C. Mervyn  
Maxwell

grabbed his coat that was folded up behind him. Friends hustled him hastily out of a city 30 minutes before a mob arrived, hoping to tear him to pieces. He was given 200 blows to his bare feet and then, before his feet had healed, was forced to walk 15 hours without water on an intensely hot day. In exchange for his life, he was required to hand over to brigands everything he had with him: money, Bibles, tracts, food, and even his clothes, leaving him to walk hundreds of miles in frigid mountains with practically nothing on.

Wolff survived partly because he possessed a natural charm and partly because he could speak the languages—14 or so—of the different people among whom he moved. He made a careful point of carrying official papers, and sometimes officers of friendly governments arrived when most needed. No doubt, as a deeply dedicated missionary, he owed his survival to God’s intervention. Once shipboard friends prevented him from riding into port in the ship’s rowboat. As the boat returned to the ship later, shots rang out and a bullet

was heard to whiz above the very seat Wolff would have occupied. Wolff believed God had protected him.

A sense of humor also helped at times. A troublemaker with a prison record once tried to disturb a meeting by demanding “mathematical” proof of Christianity. The man prided himself on being a mathematician. Wolff asked the mathematician-troublemaker whether he ever ate food. When the man admitted that of course he did, Wolff asked him why he did so. The man, no doubt bewildered, answered that he ate because he got hungry, to which Wolff responded: “Can you give a mathematical proof of hunger?”

### **Missionary to the Jews**

Wolff was born a Jew in Germany (in 1795) and died in Britain (in 1862) as a priest of the Church of England. As a child he was known simply as “Wolff,” not taking the name “Joseph” until he became a Catholic at the age of 17. Young Wolff’s father, a Jewish rabbi, was determined that his son should not be contaminated by the predominantly Christian society. To make certain that nothing that wasn’t *kosher* fell into the family’s milk supply, his father commissioned the 7-year-old boy to watch closely as a neighbor milked his cow. The neighbor, who was a Lutheran, engaged Wolff in conversation about the Messiah, calling his attention to Isaiah 53. Wolff never forgot what he learned from the neighbor, but he quickly learned not to ask his father about it.

As a teenager he gained his education in many places, including some of the finest schools available in Europe. Some were liberal, some conservative, some Catholic, some Protestant. Often he supplemented his income by teaching Hebrew. At times he secured his main support from noble families and other upper-class people.

At age 17 he adopted Roman Catholicism. He took “Joseph” for his first (or Christian) name. Not long afterward, he set out for Rome. Born a Jew, he had found enormous joy in discovering the true Messiah, and he longed to share his joy with Jews everywhere. In Rome he hoped to be trained as a missionary at the College of the Propaganda.

But his experience in Rome was not encouraging. He became appalled by the emphasis on the papal claim to infallibility, among other matters, and he began arguing openly “and not always politely” in class. His teachers, who were not amused, eventually secured an order for him to leave the city. He was not compelled to leave, however, until in God’s providence, the wealthy English banker, Henry Drummond, in Rome apparently on business, heard about this courageous student and got in touch with him. He invited Joseph to England, where, he promised, fellow Christians would sponsor his further studies. A year later Joseph left for England.

In England, Joseph was warmly welcomed by Drummond, who helped him continue his education, now under Protestant teachers. As part of his Protestant education, he was given specific instruction in how to win Jewish people to Christ.

Joseph Wolff made three extensive missionary journeys, 1821-1826, 1828-1834, and 1836-1838, in addition to his trip to Bokhara (1843-1845) in search of the two British soldiers. In the process he visited Greece, Malta, the Crimea, Palestine, Turkey, Egypt, Central Asia, Abyssinia, Yemen, India, and other lands, including even the United States of America.

He came to America on the advice of physicians in Bombay. His plan was to preach Christ in India, but his health at the time was so precarious that the doctors said he would die if he tried it. They recommended instead that he sail for America. He did—and was welcomed like a hero. On a motion by former U.S. President John Quincy Adams, he was invited to preach in the Congressional building to a joint meeting of both houses of Congress. He was invited also to address the legislators of the states of New Jersey and of Pennsyl-

vania. He says that he lectured on his researches in Asia and also on the personal reign of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> While in America, he was ordained a deacon in the Church of England and served for one month as a pastor before returning to Britain.

### **Support for his journeys**

How did he finance his journeys? Mainly through the largess of Henry Drummond and Drummond’s friends. Henry Drummond (1786-1860) was both an expert in scientific agriculture and a banker. For many years he served as a highly respected member of Parliament. For his second and third journeys, Wolff was sponsored by the Society to Promote Christianity Amongst the Jews, which in turn was sponsored by Henry Drummond.

Wolff was financed also through his relatives by marriage. His wife, whom in his books he usually refers to as “Lady Georgiana,” belonged to a noble family. This loving lady occasionally accompanied her husband on his hazardous travels. In the dark hours when Wolff thought he was about to be executed in Bokhara, he wrote a note in his Bible: “My dearest Georgiana. I have loved you unto death. Bokhara 1844.”

The Jews lived in scattered places. Moslems, who made up the bulk of the population in many areas, were not automatically hostile to a Christian Jew. Wolff, who rarely stayed long in one place, spoke privately and publicly with both Jews and Moslems as well as peoples of other religions, distributing copies of the Scriptures in local languages. He also visited with Europeans who were serving on diplomatic or business assignments far from home. Very often he was given a warm and friendly hearing. How many converts he made is hard to ascertain, inasmuch as he didn’t try to institutionalize his work other than by starting a few small schools.

### **Appeal based on prophecy**

As we have seen, Wolff’s greatest passion, as a Christian Jew, was to win other Jews to Jesus. Three of his four journeys to the Middle East were undertaken to find and win Jews to Christ. In the process, he also preached to many fellow Christians and to many Moslems, Hindus, Parsees, and others.

His basic method with Jews was first to assert that the Messiah was coming soon to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem. Next, he showed from Isaiah 53, Micah 5:2, and other “Messianic” texts, that the Messiah is to be identified with Jesus Christ. To clinch his identification of the Messiah as Jesus, he employed the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9, tracing its precise fulfillment in Christ’s life and ministry. With Daniel 9 nailed down, he proceeded to expound the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, showing that they would end in 1847 with the coming of the Messiah in power and glory. Having established in his hearers’ minds that the Messiah would be returning to re-establish the Jewish kingdom within a few years, Wolff called for belief in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Notice that 1847, not 1844, was Wolff’s termination date for the 2300 days. We needn’t worry much about the difference, as it was only technical, based on the information he had respecting the date of the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7.

### Miller not first with the 2300 days

Many people today think that the current understanding of the 2300-day prophecy was developed by William Miller. But the first person to see the 2300 days (the “2300 evening-morning”) of Daniel 8:14 as 2300 years was a Jewish rabbi, Nahawendi by name, who lived in the ninth century. As a rabbi, Nahawendi was an expert in Hebrew. Indeed, in the ninth and 10th centuries, rabbis (all of them experts in Hebrew) in Persia, Palestine, France, Spain, and Portugal were teaching that the 2300 days were 2300 years.

Down through the centuries, other notable Bible students made the same discovery, not the least of whom was Arnold of Villanova, physician to a number of popes. Around the time Miller was born, Johannes Petri in Germany was showing that the 2300 days were linked to the 70 weeks, with the result that, because you can date the 70 weeks to 457 B.C., you can show that the 2300 days or years were to end in the 1840s.

Miller discovered the 2300-year prophecy in 1818, but he didn’t start preaching about it until 1831. Meanwhile, far away to the east, Joseph Wolff, who had never heard of Miller and who knew Hebrew well enough to teach classes in it,

had also discovered the same prophecy and had already begun preaching about it.

Wolff felt confirmed in his understanding of the 2300 days as 2300 years when he visited the monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai. There to his delight he found a book by Johannes Stauros, a Bulgarian Jew of two centuries earlier, who also had taught that the 2300 days of Daniel 8 and the 1260 days of Daniel 12 were symbols of so many years.

As the years passed and 1847 loomed close, people asked Wolff what he would say if 1847 passed without the return of the Messiah. He answered simply that he would admit that he had been wrong. Wolff was a very brave, active, creative, and intelligent Christian missionary. In preaching the 2300-day prophecy he was doing something that God wanted done, something whose time had come. The 2300 days did end in the 1840s, and the Messiah did do something then in connection with His kingdom. Daniel 7:9-14 shows that at that time “the Son of man” came “on the clouds of heaven” to the “Ancient of days” (not to the earth) to begin the judgment scene in heaven, where He was to receive “dominion and power and might and glory” (Daniel 2:37, NIV). Wolff was far more nearly right than he knew.

He didn’t discover his mistake until 1847. We can wish that he had been in closer contact with his Advent brethren in North America. Already by 1847, the understanding was clearly conceived in North America that the coming of Christ in 1844 was not to the earth but “to the Ancient of days” in heaven for the commencement of the judgment *there*, and, as we just noted, for the reception of His kingdom *there*.

### Later years

In his later years, Wolff served as the pastor of a Church of England parish in southwest England. He was immensely popular as a preacher. He was invited to speak in many British churches. From the friends whom he made everywhere, he was able to raise funds enough to build a new church for his poor, rural congregation. He also managed to provide each family in his church with food and fuel during the winter months each year. He was much loved.

Joseph Wolff’s astonishing career is in itself fascinating, but for Seventh-day Adventists it holds unique interest, for in all his dangerous journeying he announced the second coming of Christ on the basis of the 2300-year prophecy. He was perhaps the most colorful of the large number of spokesmen who heralded the Second Coming in much of the world during the Great Second Advent Awakening of the 1830s and 1840s. 📖

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### Notes and references

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### For further reading

See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 357-362; LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*; 4 vols., 2:194-196; 3:435-481. Looking under Wolff, Joseph, in your university library may lead to one or more biographies about the man and to one or more volumes of his own *Journals*.

For more on the 2300 days, see Clifford Goldstein, *1844 Made Easy*; and C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell It to the World; God Cares*, vol. 1, on Daniel 7, 8, 9; and *Magnificent Disappointment*.

*Tell It to the World* is available in Spanish as *Dilo al mundo* and in Portuguese as *Historia do adventismo*.

A proud father of two fine sons, I occasionally catch myself attributing various traits seen in my boys to either my wife or myself. “Their moods come from their mother and their sense of humor from me.” No doubt our sons inherited some combination of their parents’ genetic material, but then, we have inherited our genes—good, bad, or indifferent—from our parents, they from theirs, and so on.

# At the brink of the Gene Age

*Now that we can manipulate genes in the test tube, should we be concerned that we are entering a territory forbidden by the Creator?*

by  
George T.  
Javor

While there has always been an interest in genetics, in recent years the study of genes seems to dominate all biological sciences.

Genes have also gone public. They play an important role in criminal trials, in identifying persons, in the study of diseases, and in numerous other fields. Every now and then, news reports link a particular gene with a disease, opening up the possibility of arriving at a cure. About two years ago, a gene was implicated in Werner’s syndrome, a condition in which 20-year-olds get gray hair and come down with ailments common only to the elderly. This gene is thought to be the “holy grail” of aging research. If the link is right, perhaps there is hope that, like illness, aging may be treated in the future.

The discovery of new genes provides the possibility of eventual cure to genetically caused diseases. As a result we have the “Human Genome Project,” biology’s equivalent of NASA’s moon-

landing venture. Although this undertaking will cost many millions of dollars each year, the expected results will be as spectacular as the first moon walk, and possibly much more useful. We could be heading for the “Gene Age.”

## **Genes: What are they?**

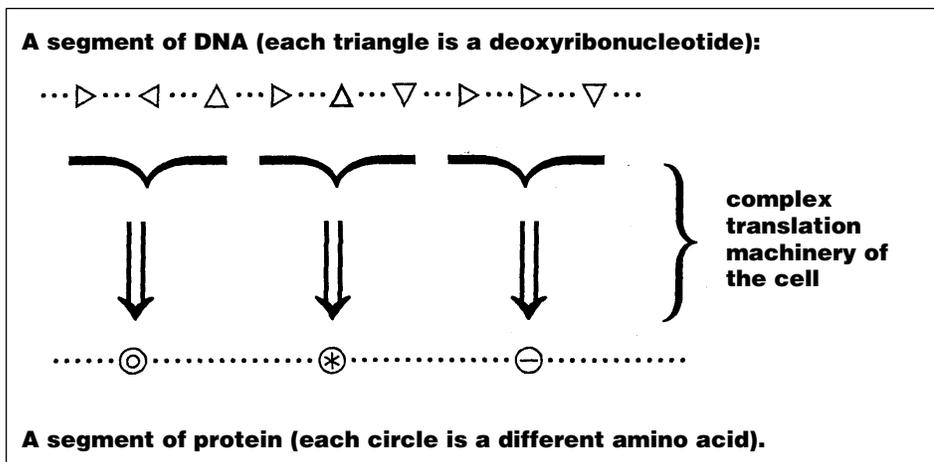
But, first, what are genes? What role do they play in the function of organisms?

Genes are segments of chromosomes that produce specific proteins. Each of our 100,000 or so genes contain data for the correct structure of one protein. Our genes are distributed among 23 pairs of chromosomes. A person inherits 23 chromosomes from the mother and 23 from the father; therefore, we have two copies of each of our genes. One exception is the genes found in the male-gender determining chromosomes called “Y.” Of these, males have only a single copy, and females none.

Both genes and their corresponding proteins may be pictured as strings of beads. The chromosome-beads have four different colors, while the protein-beads have 20. The different “colors” stand for different chemical structures. The chromosome-beads are called “deoxyribonucleotides” (abbreviated here as “nucleotides”) and the protein-beads are “amino acids.” Three nucleotides in a row on the gene are interpreted by a complex translation machinery within the cell, as a specific amino acid in the corresponding protein. So a stretch of 300 chromosomal “beads” code for 100 amino acids in the gene’s protein. Typical proteins may have several hundred amino acids. The sequence of nucleotides in the gene determines the order of amino acids of the protein chain. This is shown in Illustration 1.

Just as spelling affects the meaning of a word, the order of amino acids determines the function of individual proteins. Incorrect spelling of a word may cause loss of meaning. Likewise, the wrong order of amino acids in a protein can result in the loss of its function. The most common reason for the wrong amino acid order is an altered (mutated) gene. A mutated gene keeps directing the production of wrong proteins, and it is often passed on to future generations.

How serious is the problem of having incorrect proteins? The issue becomes critical when we consider the wide range of work these substances do. Every chemical change in the body depends on the presence of specific protein catalysts.



**Illustration 1**

Proteins constitute much of the physical infrastructure of living matter. They participate in the transport of oxygen and other nutrients in the blood. The immune system uses protein “antibodies” in defense against foreign substances. When cells communicate with each other, it is the protein “receptors” that recognize the chemical signals.

Incorrect proteins cause a hosts of diseases. Until recently, the only recourse doctors and patients had to combat genetically inherited illnesses was damage control; that is, trying to minimize the negative consequences of a faulty protein. In the case of the illness phenylketonuria, for example, the infant’s ability to metabolize an essential amino acid, phenylalanine, is impaired. The child accumulates toxic substances from this amino acid, resulting in mental retardation. Infants in the United States are routinely tested for this metabolic defect shortly after birth, and if such is found, the baby’s diet is altered to exclude the harmful amino acid as much as possible. How much nicer it would be if we could correct the genetic defect by either repairing the faulty gene or replacing it with one that functions well.

**Breakthrough in genetics**

The past two decades have seen a real breakthrough in our ability to deal with genetic material. By the early 1950s it was known that the chemical makeup of the genes was deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA, which consisted of repeating units of four types of nucleotides. If such a structure were represented on paper in a simplified form, using the abbreviations A,T,G, and C for the four nucleotides, we

would have one or more books filled with lines similar to this (the order of nucleotides would vary continuously):

-ACTGGTTAGTTCAGTCAT  
GAGGTCCAATATAGATCAG  
TACGATTTAAGGCAT-

This structural monotony prevented scientists from breaking DNA down to smaller, manageable fragments of uniform composition and from determining the order of the nucleotides. The breakthrough came with the discovery of bacterial “restriction enzymes.” These amazing proteins apparently can recognize short stretches of unique nucleotide sequences of the DNA and break DNA at that point. Therefore, we now have means of obtaining smaller DNA fragments of uniform composition.

Other catalysts (enzymes) were found that could splice broken DNA fragments together. These findings paved the way to where we are today—the capacity to handle individual genes, to introduce genes of one organism into another, to recombine portions of different genes in the test tube, and to determine the order of their nucleotides.

The Human Genome Project, launched in 1988, is attempting to determine the nucleotide sequences of the 24 human chromosomes (there are two different gender-determining chromosomes called “X” and “Y;” males have an X-Y pair, and females an X-X pair besides the 22 other chromosome pairs), estimated to contain about three billion nucleotides and locate the 100,000 genes among these sequences. The nucleotides of the 100,000 genes constitute roughly two percent of the

human genetic material. What the other 98 percent of human DNA does is largely unknown. However, because the genes of all humans are relatively similar, the obvious differences between each individual must come from the other 98 percent of the genetic material. One of the factors controlled by these portions of the genetic material is the amount of proteins made. At any rate, it is safe to assume that these “non-gene” portions are also vital to our welfare.

**Order of nucleotides**

The exact order of nucleotides of a few less-complicated organisms has already been determined. As of the spring of 1996, the complete sequences of the bacterium *Hemophilus influenza* (1.8 million nucleotides) and of yeast (13 million nucleotides) have been sequenced. Due to its sheer size, it will be some years before the complete nucleotide order of the human genome will be known.

But whose nucleotide sequence will it be? It so happens that with the exception of identical twins, we differ from each other, on average by one nucleotide per thousand (0.1%) in the non-gene portion of our genome. The Human Genome Project utilizes the genetic material from a comparatively small number of individuals of North-American or European ancestry. This small composite genome will be the first “norm” to which everyone’s genome will be compared. It will be a long time before enough genetic testing is done to gain a good understanding of the nature of the variations among human genetic material.

**Concerns in genetic studies**

There is legitimate concern that the time may come when individuals whose genetic profile fall outside the “norm” will be considered second-class human beings. Society one day may even decide that people with “bad genes” are a menace to the long-term welfare of humanity.

Chemical “probes” already exist to look for genetic signatures of certain gene-connected diseases, such as Alzheimers, or certain forms of breast and colon cancers. Particular aberrant patterns of nucleotide sequences, appear to correlate with an increased risk-factor for those illnesses. For someone possessing such a trait, an advance knowledge of these may provide warning to put preventive measures into practice.

On the other hand, if one's insurance company or if one's employer discovers these risk factors, a person may be in danger of losing health insurance or a job. Such reasons make the privacy of genetic information an important concern. In the name of protecting the welfare of society, how far will outsiders go to intrude upon our most private possession, our genetic make-up? Individuals inheriting disease-causing genes have reasons to be bitter; why should they suffer for no fault of their own? But is it not true that all of us are hostages of our genes? If genes determine our personalities and intelligences, do they not to a large measure control the quality of our lives?

The answer is "no." While much of our physical attributes and our basic personality traits are genetically controlled, there is abundant evidence that our environment, lifestyle, and diet are major determinants of our physical and mental welfare. What we read, hear, see, feel, think, and do affect our lives. We have the power to control or modify our moods, thoughts, and actions. We are not static entities; we continually change. As our senses unceasingly sample the environment and report their findings to our central nervous system, moment by moment our brain records the new

information and modifies everything else already filed there. The most important point is that our genetic make-up is not altered by what we are storing in our brains. And it is the content of our brains that defines who we are.

Another concern in genetic studies is the assumption in sociobiology that everything that happens in biology is for the benefit of the genome. This theory supposes that genes preceded everything else, and somehow caused the biological world to form for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the genome. This form of biological determinism helps some scientists to formulate a grand "theory of everything," which to them explains why things are the way they are.

### Genetic study and evolution

What this and other evolution-based theories do not address is, Where did the information-content of the genome come from? That there is biological information residing in the genome is difficult to deny. It is estimated that one cubic micrometer of DNA can encode 150 megabytes of information. This is 10 orders of magnitude better than current CD-ROM's optical storage capacity. If the complete nucleotide sequence of the common colon bacterium *Escherichia coli* would be printed in a standard book form, it would be about 3,000 pages long. A similar document containing the information content of the human genome would be a library of 1,000 volumes, each one 3,000 pages in size.

A generation ago evolutionary theoreticians were busy describing a hypothetical primordial, prebiotic world, where the first live organism emerged from non-living components. One of the shortfalls of these chemical evolutionary schemes was the inability to show how nucleic acids could come into existence. The hurdles include the challenge of forming the requisite five-carbon sugar, D-2-deoxyribose in appreciable quantities, the synthesis of the four different deoxyribonucleotides, and their interconnection into appropriate sequences. But an even more formidable, unsolved challenge for these scientists is to account for the source of biological information, residing in the genome of every organism.

The genome carries direct data for the correct structure of every protein of

the organism, and the regulation for the amount and timing of their production. Indirectly, through the actions of proteins, every aspect of the metabolism and infrastructure of the organism is coded into the genome. The level of engineering and biochemical sophistication seen in living matter far exceeds anything seen in our best chemical production plants.

### Genetic research: a forbidden area?

Bible believers will quickly recognize the signature on the genome of the same Creator who called into existence the entire universe. But now that we can manipulate genes in the test tube, should we be concerned that we are entering a territory forbidden by the Creator?

If one views the genome as a component of functioning living matter and not some "master substance," then the concerns expressed specifically regarding genome research may be broadened to include all biological research. The biblical record quotes the Creator addressing the first humans: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis. 1:28, NIV). All biological research may fall under the category of "subduing the creation," since understanding nature is prerequisite for its efficient utilization.

Genes, in particular, have been manipulated since time immemorial through selective breeding. As long as the new knowledge obtained through research is used to promote health and well being in individuals and groups, we may be sure that it is within biblical parameters. In contrast, research aimed at exploiting biological systems for destructive purposes puts us on a collision course with the Creator. At the brink of the age of genes we face issues not unlike those when we entered the atomic age. The question is, Are we any wiser now? 🌱

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### For further reading:

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*On sociobiology:*

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I am a person. I am human. Am I both? No one would have raised this question when times were simple, when medicine involved a doctor, a stethoscope, a thermometer, or perhaps even an x-ray machine. But we live in a complex world. Medical technology takes four-color photographs of the developing fetus. It tells us that we all began our lives as single-celled organisms the size of a pencil dot. And each dot is a *human being*. That is, each of us, just after conception, was human, and each of us at that beginning stage was a living being.

But can we apply to that dot the term *person*? If “person” is defined as the equivalent of “human,” then, of course, the answer is easy. But if by “person” we mean an individual who possesses self-consciousness, for example, then the newly conceived life does not qualify to be called a person.

### New questions

The dilemma of human/person definition raises difficult questions. Given the elemental nature of a concept, is the use of a morning-after pill ethical? Is an IUD morally permissible, since it strips the days-old blastocyst from the uterine wall? Is RU-486 a blessing or a great evil, since it is most often used to thwart pregnancies after five or six weeks of gestation?

Consider an elderly patient with a terminal illness who lapses into a semi-comatose state. Whether this condition is viewed by society, the patient, and the family as a significant aspect of living or as a meaningless part of dying depends a great deal on where the patient is seen along the human-to-person continuum. And increasingly, patients who lie dying in medical centers are incompetent, and others must make the crucial decisions. Today, fully three-quarters of deaths occur because of a conscious decision made by caregivers that the therapies being used to sustain the patient should be discontinued. Whether the patient’s life is viewed as merely *human* existence or as meaningful *personal* living is crucial to the decision.

Modern knowledge compels us to explore the enigmatic moral status of human—and yes, animal—lives. I argue that the possession of *self-consciousness* is a necessary and sufficient condition to be a person of full moral status. I see the

term *person* as denoting an individual who possesses self-consciousness and is thus entitled to maximal moral standing. There are certain individuals, e.g., normal newborns, who should be and are considered persons because they show significant development toward realizing their potential for self-consciousness.

# Is Koko a person?

*Modern medicine is forcing us to think critically about personhood*

### The dilemma of marginal human life

My concern is not the ethical status of readers of this article—a maximal status that we do and should take as a given. Rather, my interest is in grappling with the moral standing of “marginal” human life. Here I have in mind the Karen Ann Quinlans, the Baby Michelles, the Nancy Cruzans—and even the Kokos—of society.

- Karen Ann Quinlan, in a vegetative state, survived for more than 11 years, first on a hospital ventilator and then on artificial nutrition in a nursing home, despite her parents’ wish that she be allowed to die. Finally on June 13, 1986, she was pronounced dead, because her heart stopped due to increasing respiratory congestion and because her parents requested that no antibiotics or blood pressure medication be given.
- Canadian Baby Michelle, born in 1986, was diagnosed with anencephaly—absence of the neocortex and most of the cerebrum. Doctors later found that even the lower portions of her brain had died, and it

by  
James W.  
Walters

## The dilemma of personhood

What do we mean by the word *person*? Consider the following two cases:

**Baby K:** Baby K (Stephanie Keene) was born in October 1992, at the Fairfax Hospital in Falls Church, Virginia. While a fetus, Baby K was diagnosed as anencephalic, but her mother continued her pregnancy despite recommendations from her pediatrician and a neonatologist. At birth the baby had difficulty breathing, and a ventilator was begun. Within a few days, physicians began urging the mother to give permission for them to cease the ventilation, but she declined. A hospital ethics committee recommendation was also refused. Within six weeks, Baby K was no longer ventilator-dependent, and the mother agreed to have the baby transferred to a nursing facility, with the stipulation that her baby could return if respiratory support became necessary. Baby K was returned to the hospital at least three times because of breathing difficulties.

Fairfax Hospital went to court claiming that it must not be forced to render “inappropriate” care. The mother’s position was that “all human life has value, including her anencephalic daughter’s life.” The mother “has a firm Christian faith...[and] believes that God will work a miracle.”<sup>1</sup> The trial judge ruled in July 1993 that the mother had the legal right to acquire lifesaving treatment for her infant. Under the Emergency Treatment Act, enacted by Congress to prevent “patient dumping,” treatment must be provided until the patient is medically stabilized. The hospital conceded that respiratory distress was an emergency condition, but it argued that such treatment was “futile” and “inhumane.” The judge disagreed, stating that both the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act also prohibited discrimination against Baby K based on her anencephaly. On February 10, 1994, the U.S. Court of Appeals, in a two-to-one ruling, affirmed the earlier judgment of the trial court. The majority opinion held that the language of the Emergency Treatment Act was unambiguous and had been interpreted correctly. The court sympathized with the hospital’s interest in appropriate treatment, but said that the U.S. Congress was the appropriate branch of government to “redress the policy concerns.”<sup>2</sup>

**Baby P:** The story of Baby John Pearson is the British equivalent of America’s original “Baby Doe” case. Born in 1980, Baby Pearson was an apparently uncomplicated Down’s syndrome infant whose parents decided that they did not want their newborn to live. (A post-mortem examination revealed a damaged heart and lungs, but these defects were not known during the newborn’s life.) The attending pediatrician, Dr. Leonard Arthur, complied with the parents’ wishes and prescribed nursing care only and large dosages of adult pain medication. Dr. Arthur faced murder charges in this highly publicized case, but after supportive testimony from leading physicians was finally acquitted. A BBC poll showed that the public by a margin of 86 to 7 favored a “not guilty” verdict if a physician is charged with murder because, with parental consent, “he sees to it that a severely handicapped baby dies.”<sup>3</sup>

Raanan Gillon, writing in the *British Medical Journal*, justified Dr. Arthur’s use of euthanasia on the pivotal basis of *personhood*: “I believe that the issue turns on the question of personhood and that it is because the newly born infant is not a person that it is justifiable in cases of severe handicap to ‘allow it to die’ in the way Dr. Arthur allowed baby Pearson to die.”<sup>4</sup>

It is too easy to dismiss these cases as polar extremes. On the one hand, there is an overly religious mother, and on the other, a self-absorbed yuppie couple. In these cases, if you were the decision maker, would you have let Baby K die, as the physicians repeatedly recommended? Why? Would you have requested adult analgesics for Baby P? Why?

1. In the Matter of Baby K, 832 F Supp. 1022 (E.D. Va. 1993).

2. In the Matter of Baby K, 16 F 3rd 590 (4th Cir. 1994). See George J. Annas, “Asking the Courts to Set the Standard of Emergency Care: The Case of Baby K,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 330 (May 26, 1994): 1542-1545.

3. See a full account of this case in Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, *Should the Baby Live? The Problem of Handicapped Infants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp 1-11.

4. Raanan Gillon, “Conclusion: The Arthur Case Revisited,” *British Medical Journal*, 292 (1986), pp 543-45.

was determined that she met the criteria for whole brain death. Subsequently the baby was used at Loma Linda University Medical Center as a controversial source for a heart that saved the life of Baby Paul Holc.

- Nancy Cruzan, a young Missourian whose case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, was left in a vegetative state after an auto accident. To thwart the will of Nancy Cruzan’s parents to legally allow their permanently unconscious daughter to die peacefully, militant pro-life advocates attempted to literally steal her body from a hospital and sustain her in their own quarters.
- Koko, the “talking” gorilla, made the front cover of *National Geographic*. This educated ape is reported to use 500 words in sign language and understand 500 additional words. Koko so mourned the accidental death of her pet kitten that another was given to her.

## Colliding moral galaxies

The all-physical-humans-are-sacred and the only-persons-are-maximally-valuable groups are colliding moral galaxies. The benefit of the “physicalist” approach is tradition and clarity. Civilized society has long seen human life as possessing a categorically privileged moral status. The benefit of the “personalist” view is that its rational view of valuable beings fits more easily with the complexity of modern knowledge and life. Neither approach can be “proved.” Thoughtful individuals will not easily label either position as either “right” or “wrong.” Each position is held for deep-seated social, philosophical, or indeed, religious reasons. Ronald Dworkin is correct, in his recent book, *Life’s Dominion: An Argument About Abortion, Euthanasia, and Individual Freedom*,<sup>1</sup> to contend that abortion and such issues as we are discussing here are “essentially religious.” I have deepest respect for those in the physicalist camp, but for my own philosophical and religious reasons, I argue for the adequacy of the personalist approach.

I contend that *human* and *person* are not equivalent terms. For example, I do not see either of the following as qualifying as a person: a human conceptus or a human who is irretrievably beyond

consciousness—such as a patient in a truly permanent coma. Neither of these possesses self-consciousness, so neither qualifies for the moral status of personhood. And just as not all humans are persons, all persons are not human. For examples I point to the aforementioned Koko as at least a quasi-person, and to angels and God Himself as surely persons. The Bible speaks of angels and God as intelligently self-conscious in ways similar to us—individuals who are indisputably persons, that is, entities with full moral status.

The distinction between “human” and “person” is important and will become even more significant as medical technology gallops ahead and resources shrink. A conceptus slowly evolves into a person, so how one defines human/person issues goes far in determining the permissibility of interrupting a pregnancy. As medicine allows patients with less and less quality of life to be sustained longer and longer, the issue of human existence versus meaningful personal life increases in importance.

### Moral status and brain function

A person’s unique moral claim to life depends primarily on his or her higher mental capacities. The individual being who will never possess—or is forever beyond possession of—neo-cortical functioning does not have a special moral claim to life. Thus, for example, an anencephalic infant or a permanently comatose patient lacks the special claim to existence that you or I possess.

Even more difficult than issues surrounding upper-brain-absent patients is the question of aggressive treatment for the severely handicapped newborn or the nursing home resident with advanced senility. There is no simple answer to the dilemma presented by these patients; however, a failure to decide on such borderline cases itself constitutes a decision because the technology to sustain life is readily available in advanced nations and will be used unless predetermined limits are set. Decisions on marginal human life are made every day in the modern medical center, and their number and difficulty will only increase. Hence, we must grapple with the question of what it is about an individual’s life that gives him or her or “it” a distinctive moral right to existence.

Thus the big question is, How do we decide who has a special moral claim to life and scarce medical resources? This question is made more urgent because of modern medicine’s powers. My argument is that *the more nearly an individual human or animal approximates a life of self-consciousness (such as you or I), the greater the claim of that individual to maximal moral status.*

My rationale for viewing life as I do is not merely my own personal opinion, but emerges from my particular religious tradition. Philosophical and religious traditions have long determined fundamental views about life, and today they continue to inform us on big existential issues.

More needs to be said about the two fundamentally different traditions that are at odds on the question of personhood.

### Physicalism and personalism

*Physicalism.* In physicalism, the essence of a person is found in his or her biological make-up. All humans are persons, ipso facto. Accordingly, Baby P (see sidebar) is surely a person, and so is Baby K, only she is severely handicapped. The physicalist tries to save every human life possible: the 400 gram newborn with the remotest chance of survival and the Alzheimers patient who might be kept alive an extra year.

Although William E. May, the Roman Catholic theologian, distinguishes “moral beings” from “beings of moral worth,” both categories are in the physicalist camp. He argues that moral beings are those creatures who are “capable of performing acts of understanding, of choice, and of love.” These humans are moral beings because they are “minded” entities. However, not all humans are “minded” moral beings (i.e.

anencephalic newborns). But regardless, all humans are “beings of moral worth” because all share “something rooted in their being human beings to begin with.” This “something is the principle immanent in human beings, a constituent and defining element...that makes them to be what they and who they are...; it is a principle of immateriality or of transcendence from the limitations of materially individuated existence.”<sup>2</sup>

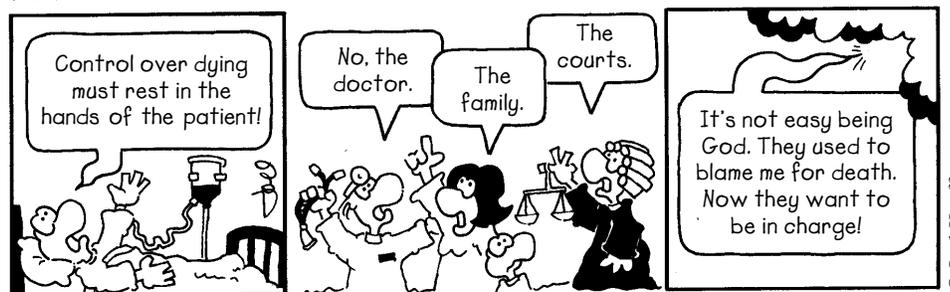
*Personalism.* Contrasted with physicalism, personalism sees the essence of a person as being located in one’s mental capacities and ability to use these in satisfying ways. Whether one is a human is not important. If a computer were self-conscious, it would possess moral worth—as do angels and extraterrestrials. But Baby K is not a person, and has no chance of ever becoming one. Baby P is not a person at birth, and her parents had the right to request her death.

Michael Tooley has long contended for the morality of infanticide—up to three months for newborns like Baby P. Says Tooley: “Anything that has, and has exercised, all of the following capacities is a person, and that anything that has never had any of them is not a person: the capacity for self-consciousness; the capacity to think; the capacity for rational thought; the capacity to arrive at decisions by deliberation; the capacity to envisage a future for oneself; the capacity to remember a past involving oneself; the capacity for being a subject of non-momentary interests; the capacity to use language.”<sup>3</sup>

The late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, insightfully summed up the contrasting philosophies: Physicalism (he called it “personalist humanism”) finds human dignity in “being human,” whereas personalism (he called it “pragmatic humanism”) finds human dignity in doing “human things.”<sup>4</sup>

*Continued on page 34*

### Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kauffman

# Lars Justinen

## *Dialogue with an Adventist illustrator and artist*



“I get bored easily,” admits Lars Justinen. So one of the things he particularly enjoys about what he does is variety. “No day is ever the same,” he says.

Lars’ range of interests—and skills—mark him as a true renaissance man. Besides his art, he is interested in music, nature, computer technology, family, religion, and other areas. Seventh-day Adventists are familiar with Lars’ work through his covers of the adult Sabbath school lesson quarterlies, used around the world. In addition, his work and that of his wife, Kim, appear regularly in numerous books, periodicals, and advertising both for the church and for others.

Justinen Creative Group (JCG), the business Lars and Kim founded, employs a number of individuals with complementary skills. Recently, JCG has become increasingly involved with computer animation and designing web sites. Lars does not see the recent explosion in computer technology as threatening to artistic creativity, as some have done. Instead, he welcomes the changes the computer has brought. “It’s liberating,” he declares.

■ *Have you always been aware that you had artistic capabilities—that you could draw, for example?*

Yes. Art always played an important role in our home and in my life. My mother was an amateur artist, and she kept stacks of newsprint around with pencils. From a young age, my brother and I would lie on the floor and draw the kinds of toys we wished we had. Looking back on it now, that was probably a better experience for us than having real toys.

■ *Did you have any formal art training?*

My mother was a member of a women’s painting group. Whenever they went out into nature to paint, I tagged along with my mother and painted and had a lot of fun. When I turned 13, my mother enrolled me in a private painting class for a few weeks.

■ *How did you decide to make art your life’s work?*

I came to art through the roundabout path of pre-medicine and dentistry. At Walla Walla College I took pre-med, while majoring in art! Besides the fact

that I enjoyed art, I thought medical schools might look favorably at someone with an unusual major, instead of the usual chemistry majors. But by my junior year, I was enjoying art so much that I said to myself, “If I go into medicine, I won’t have time for art.” So I switched to pre-dentistry. I had taken a lot of pre-med courses that would apply to pre-dentistry as well. My plan was simple: be a dentist three days a week making a comfortable living, and devote the rest of my time to art!

Then in my senior year, I ran out of money. So I dropped out of school and moved back to Victoria, British Columbia, to earn enough money to finish college. I spent the next four years living the proverbial life of the impoverished artist, from rent check to rent check. Eventually, I knew I had the talent and ability to make a living as an artist. I had a few breaks. I did a limited-edition print that was well received. I began to look at successful artists and say, “I think I could do that.”

■ *What was the first piece of art you actually sold?*

The very first drawing I ever sold was a crayon picture of a sunset. I sold it

for five cents. I was seven then. I did these drawings for a Sabbath school investment project, and church members bought them. My mother bought some and saved them. I still have at least one somewhere. It says “five cents” in the corner. I also remember making a little money later on by painting watercolors on white paper plates and selling them to tourists. But professionally, my first sale was through a gallery. I took two paintings to a gallery and asked to have them framed, but I was surprised that the gallery offered to exhibit both paintings. I prayed a lot that God would somehow make this happen. And He did! The gallery sold both paintings, and I received \$200 for each. That experience gave me self-confidence that I could actually make a living as an artist.

■ *Can you describe the creative process as you experience it. Does an illustration just come out of your imagination? Do you do a lot of research first? Is it a sort of effortless process of inspiration, or is it just hard work?*

All of the above! Every time I do something creative, I bring to it everything that has ever happened to me in the past. That’s one reason I encourage young artists to do a lot of experiment-



# Beverly Wesner-Hoehn

*Dialogue with an Adventist musician*



As a child, Beverly knew that a career in music was her calling in life. At six, she began formal musical studies, and today she is a world-class harpist with numerous achievements and awards to her credit. A native Californian, she received a bachelor of music degree from Pacific Union College and went on to study at the Conservatoire Royale de la Musique in Brussels, Belgium. Upon returning to the United States, Beverly continued her studies in harp at the University of Southern California where, in 1981, she received a master of music degree. In 1989 she was awarded a doctor of music degree with high distinction from Indiana University.

In 1991, Dr. Beverly Wesner-Hoehn was appointed assistant professor in the School of Music at Indiana University in Bloomington where she lives with her physician husband, Theodore, and their three sons Rudi, Casey, and Jason. Her teaching duties include private harp lessons, pedagogy courses, and directing the harp ensembles. She also serves as an officer in several international harp organizations.

Dr. Wesner-Hoehn was born and raised in a Seventh-day Adventist home. As a committed Christian, she sometimes faces challenges in remaining true to her convictions in the diverse world of music. But it is her faith, she says, that has gotten her through difficulties and allowed her to relate well with and gain the respect of her colleagues.

■ *From early in life, music was one of your great passions. Were your parents musical, or did that interest develop in some other way?*

For 11 years I attended Sacramento Adventist Academy, in California, which has always had a strong music program. My parents encouraged my three sisters and me to get involved in band, choir, and piano. I started keyboard in the first grade, and then clarinet in the second. I continued studies in these two areas until junior high, when I started harp. My father is not actively involved in music,

but my mother plays the trumpet and piano. By the time we were juniors and seniors in high school, my sisters were interested in other careers, but I was so involved in performance and music lessons that I was determined to continue.

■ *Why did you choose to specialize in the harp?*

The harp is an interesting and ancient instrument; specializing in it is rather rare. My mother hoped that one of her daughters would play the harp—it turned out to be me! I took six months of lessons in harp under a teacher from Sacramento State University, and she recommended that I seriously continue. My mother had to make me sit down at

the piano, set the timer for 40 minutes, and I counted the minutes until practice was over. With the harp it was never that way. I could hardly wait to get home from school to play the harp; I loved practicing.

■ *At what point did your faith become a priority in your life?*

I'd say at age 12, when I was baptized. I'm from a third-generation Adventist family, and feel blessed to have this influence in my life. I have been a Christian for my entire life, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church is my home.

■ *How has your faith affected or influenced your career?*

Every door that has opened in my career was because God wanted it to

open. I have many friends in the music world who are atheists, Jews, or Muslims. I feel that my faith has allowed me to relate to them well, and I have gained their professional and personal respect. Some think an intelligent Christian is an oxymoron, but I feel strongly that I can exist with others of different faith and be respected by them not in spite of my faith, but because of my faith in God.

■ *What are some of the challenges you face as a Christian performer, and how do you manage your commitment to the Sabbath?*

I have chosen not to work on Sabbaths. For me, Sabbath is a special event and I enjoy this moment in time supremely. The challenge of the Sabbath's uniqueness I face with many of the organizations with which I am involved. I serve as treasurer of the World Harp Congress, and I am the executive director of the U.S.A. International Harp Competition. All board members know that we don't work on Friday nights and Sabbaths. No one has ever said, "We can't accommodate you." I think it's just a question of asking. I wonder how many young musicians today feel that they can ask. When one is in the performing arts and committed to a belief system, it is rare to be asked to perform against those principles. Instead, respect is gained for having values and commitment.

■ *What counsel would you give other musicians, especially Christian musicians?*

Excel. Excel in your field. Then you can command the respect of other musicians. Some Christians try to excuse their mediocrity: "We're just passing through this world, so excellence isn't necessary." I think if you are a Christian performing artist you should be the best. Striving to be the best in any occupation is, after all, a Christian imperative.

■ *You said you are the executive director of the U.S.A. International Harp Competition. You are also an officer of the World Harp Congress. What do these involve?*

Mainly, I have to organize a tri-annual competition on the Bloomington campus of Indiana University. We usually have 90 applicants and we accept 40 for the four-stage competition. I decide the repertoire with the artistic

director, and we offer prizes of more than \$100,000 as well as harps and concert appearances in New York, San Francisco, and Tokyo.

I have been an officer of the board of the World Harp Congress for 10 years. The congress meets every three years in a different venue around the world, including Jerusalem, Vienna, Paris, Copenhagen, and most recently Seattle. The next one will be in Prague. It's a week-long series of lectures, concerts, historical presentations, papers on the development of the repertoire for the harp and developments of the instrument. As treasurer, in addition to caring for finances, I process memberships and publish a biannual scholarly journal.

■ *You also instruct students through lessons and workshops. What are the most important things you try to teach your students?*

To love music, their instrument, and the repertoire. While they look for a particular way to interpret music, I ask them also to master a technical skill that will allow them to interpret the music beautifully. One must really love the instrument and the music to succeed. If students don't have that love and enjoy what they are doing, then they are in the wrong field.

■ *Looking over your many accomplishments, it is obvious that you get a great deal of satisfaction from music. What makes it so fulfilling for you?*

Music is so beautiful. I perform on what I think is the most beautiful instrument in the world! Music is often described as the universal language, the language of the soul. That may well be, for whatever country or culture I may be performing in, I try to make a statement through my harp. That statement is that God loves me, and I am doing His will through my music. Whether performing or teaching music, I feel I am doing God's will. Within those parameters, I find my fulfillment.

■ *What role does music play in the life of your family?*

A very important role. Music fills our home and much of our spare time. My family respects my career and I appreciate their support. My husband plays cello and enjoys singing. The boys

have started keyboard and brass instruments, as well. We play together for worship, and we've played quartets at church and talent programs. We all love a wide diversity of music.

■ *What would you consider as your greatest success thus far in life?*

My happy, healthy, loving children are my greatest success. Their respect for me as a woman, as a mother, and as a professional in my field; that's got to be my greatest success—and my husband's too. I can't take all the credit. But together, I think, we've presented a united front. In fact, the reason we moved to this university town was so I could study. I think our children have become stronger as a result of seeing Mom and Dad respect each other's careers.

Beyond our family circle, my husband and I enjoy providing spiritual encouragement and social support to many Adventist students attending Indiana University. I have not yet forgotten my student years, and the importance of interacting with students continues in my life.

■ *You have accomplished a great deal already. What are your aspirations for the future?*

For the future, I wish that my children will grow up to love God and make a difference in this world. In my own performance career, I don't aspire to become the world's greatest harpist or the world's most recorded harpist. Those aren't my goals. My goal is to serve others: to give back to the field of music. That, to me, is very important. 🙏

## *Interview by Cheryl Knarr.*

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*Cheryl Knarr works in public relations at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.*

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“*In the Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way to salvation—an aroma redolent with life. But those on the way to destruction treat us more like the stench from a rotting corpse*” (2 Corinthians 2:14-16, The Message).

# A walking perfume

by  
Ray  
Dabrowski

Chanel No. 5. I can smell it all day. I can smell it at a distance. It makes my head turn.

But I am more than Chanel No. 5. I am a walking perfume. Listen to Paul: “Through us. . . people breathe in the exquisite fragrance.” The apostle’s metaphor goes beyond language. It affirms what God has done through Christ in us. As a Christian, I “give off a scent rising to God.” I have “an aroma redolent with life.” But how do others react to this walking fragrance? Do they like it? Are they attracted to it? Does it reflect life in its fullness, joy in its radiance, and hope in its positive impact?

Jacob was a baker in a small Jewish town. Each morning, a long line of people queued up in front of his door for the best bread in town. Best not only in taste, but also in the wisdom it contained. The baker knew how to market his product. He knew the people to whom he sold his bread. Along with the loaf, he passed out to his customers something to think, to laugh, to hope. During his odd night hours he hunched over pieces of paper. He scribbled on each piece a little of his wisdom. One of those notes found its way into the dough and was baked into a loaf of bread.

The woman who found it was moved by what she read. Soon the whole community discovered Jacob’s secret.

How did he know so much, this Jacob? They all wanted to know. Soon little groups of Jacob’s Fan Club would form outside the bakery. Jacob would listen to them, answer their questions, laugh or cry with them, as the occasion demanded.

*One day a man in his proudness, looked at the baker, his eyes longing for a word of wisdom. “Jacob, I want my life to make an impression on others.”*

*“Every life is an impression,” said Jacob.*

*“What do you mean?” asked the man.*

*“We are God’s fingerprints,” Jacob answered.\**

Simple story, powerful message. If you are a Christian, your religion is about communication. Wherever you turn, you project an image. You are a walking perfume. Is yours a likable image, a fragrant perfume? Are people interested in the image you project? Do you transmit the fragrance of love, faith, and hope?

Jesus once said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9, NIV). Jesus reflected the Father—in His words, in His life, in His relationships. Nothing in His life contradicted the will or the purposes of God. He was a perfume for God. To see Jesus was to see the Father. To be with Him was to be with God. And so when Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21 NIV), He expected as much from us. To see us should be equivalent to seeing Him. We should reflect His image, carry His message, be His perfume.

Our life is our testimony. It should speak of Jesus. We may be poor; we may be rich; we may be learned; we may be simple, but we must, if we are Christians, carry the aroma of love, joy, and hope.

And if we do, people will know. “Here comes a Christian,” they would say.

*Fingerprints of God. Aroma redolent with life. Images of God’s communicators. Wherever we are.* 📖

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*\* Jacob’s Journey, Noah BenShea (New York: Villard Books, 1991).*

# Dialogue answers your questions

## Intrauterine devices

**I**s the use of intrauterine devices biblically acceptable as a family planning measure? This procedure prevents the implantation of the fertilized egg. Isn't this equivalent to abortion?  
—Boaz Adegu, University of Nairobi, Kenya

Intrauterine devices (IUD) are used to prevent conception. Placed directly into the uterus and left over an extended period of time, they cause a low-grade inflammatory process in the uterus that prevents (in most situations) any fertilized ova from implanting on the uterine wall, thus preventing a pregnancy. For those who believe that life begins at conception, this is problematic since it is denying an "individual" life, and could be classified as an "abortion."

In understanding the issue, however, one needs to look at the events that establish a viable pregnancy. Conception is not an event but a process with various stages. When the sperm has released its genetic material in the ova (egg) and the ova begins to divide into multiple cells, there is a period of time when the ova is called a "pre-embryo." More than 50 percent of the time, the pre-embryo is "aborted"—without intervention or birth control. It simply passes from the body and never implants.

Also, the pre-embryo may implant in the uterus, but later spontaneously abort and no pregnancy is established.

Furthermore, the pre-embryo is undifferentiated; its destiny undetermined. It can divide and produce two or more pre-embryos, each capable of producing a viable pregnancy (and thus separate individuals). As demonstrated in animal studies, two pre-embryos (from two separate fertilized ova) can fuse and

become one. Because of the undifferentiated characteristics of the pre-embryo, it is the opinion of some that it is not yet a "person" and thus is viewed differently than a mature embryo whose cells have differentiated into the precursors of the human organs.

Many assume that the "pill" (oral contraceptive containing hormones) acts prior to fertilization and therefore is not problematic since it does not cause an early "abortion." Contrary to this misconception, oral contraceptives act in two ways. First, they prevent or reduce ovulation (the release of eggs from the ovary). However, viable ova may still be released and fertilized by sperm. Second, oral contraception also acts on the lining of the uterus and thus prevents implantation. It is not usually possible to know which of these actions occurred during any given menstrual cycle. If one concludes that there is a moral problem with IUDs, one would also have to conclude that there is a moral problem (in some instances) with oral contraception.

Having discussed some of the physiology of contraception, it would be well to point out that proper moral action should not be based on biology phenomena that are unknown or are difficult to understand. Christ taught that sin begins

in the mind. In the context of abortion, there is a vast difference between the desire to limit the number of children in the family and the willful choice to destroy an established pregnancy. The more significant moral decision begins with the mind, and subsequent choice should not depend upon complex physiologic phenomena. 🌐

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## Open Forum

Is there a question you'd like to have answered by an Adventist specialist? Phrase it clearly in less than 75 words. Include your name and postal address, indicating your hobbies or interests. Mail your question to *Dialogue - Open Forum*; 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A. If your question is selected for publication, along with an answer, you will receive a complimentary book with our thanks.

## Adventist Professionals' Network (APN)

Are you a Seventh-day Adventist with a graduate academic or professional degree? Do you wish to network and interact with Adventist colleagues in your field, discipline, or profession around the world?

We can help you to do so. Just send us your name and address, and we will mail you the application form. Encourage your friends to apply too.

Contact us at: Adventist Professionals' Network, c/o *Dialogue*; 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A. Fax: (301) 622-9627. E-mail (via CompuServe): 102555,2215.



## East African Students Meet

In December 1996, more than 500 students attending public colleges and universities in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda met in Moshi, Tanzania, for a spiritual retreat under the motto, “That They May Know.”

The meeting was opened by Prof. Joseph Mbwiliza, a representative of the regional government. He stated: “The Seventh-day Adventist Church is known for the discipline and honesty of its members. I encourage you to pass on these qualities to all other students, so that they may know Jesus.” He also asked, “Pray for peace in our countries and for peace in our campuses.”

In addition to foster Christian fellowship, the meeting was organized to equip the participants to witness on their



**Adventist students from several university campuses in East Africa attended the retreat.**

campuses. Among the featured speakers were several church leaders in Tanzania and Elder Richard Stenbakken, General Conference director of chaplaincy ministries. There was also a group excursion toward the top of Mt.

Kilimanjaro, which at 5895 meters is the tallest mountain in Africa. Health lectures and choir music added value and beauty to the retreat. 🌄

—James Machage, *Campus Ministries Director, Tanzania Union*

## Year of the Adventist University Student

The Inter-American Division leadership has declared 1997 “The Year of the Adventist University Student.” Here is the text of this important initiative:

“Whereas, Adventist university students are to a great extent a privileged, intellectual group of our flock that need to be organized, nurtured, and trained for Christian service and,

Whereas, It is our privilege and responsibility to utilize all available means to be successful in taking the Adventist message to the intellectual sectors of our society, and in this way reach the objectives of our Global Mission Program,

*Voted*, 1. That 1997 be declared the Year of the Adventist University Student in all the Inter-American Division territory.

2. That the Youth and Education Departments be in charge of coordinating this plan with the cooperation of the other departments of our church.

3. That during the latter part of 1996 all unions and local fields complete the organization of new Adventist University Student Associations/Fellowships as well as a census of Adventist university students, so as to continue furnishing them with the magazine, *College and University Dialogue* as well as with local information and other publications.

4. That a special spiritual retreat or congress be held in each local field for their university students.

5. That each local field appoint chaplains—denominational workers and lay persons—to work for our young people in the secular universities.

6. That each University Student Association/Fellowship organize the

following activities during 1997, as part of this celebration:

a) A special convention to be held on Adventist University Students’ Day, Sabbath, April 12, 1997, to be directed by the administrative board of each Adventist University Student Association/Fellowship, and to be held on a non-Adventist university campus, where they are pursuing their education. The program to include from the Sabbath School hour to the evening’s recreational activities.

b) Active participation in the Conference/Mission Youth Evangelism Plan, conducting an evangelistic campaign, or a Bible Investigation Seminar during the Month of Youth Evangelism, holding a university baptism at the end of the campaign or on another baptismal date set for the local field.

c) To conduct at least seven special activities on the university campus, including a banquet in honor of their professors and university authorities, a specialized seminar presented by

# National Congress in Mexico

Almost 700 young adults came to Puebla, Mexico, in December 1996 to take part in the first National Congress of Adventist University Students and Professionals. They represented more than 25 university centers in which there are Seventh-day Adventists pursuing a variety of university degrees and practicing their professions.

The four-day meeting included plenary sessions and group discussions that focused on understanding the secular mind, living the Christian life in a challenging environment, ways of sharing our faith with colleagues and teachers, and supporting the mission of the Church using the talents God has entrusted to us. The participants also heard encouraging testimonies of Adventist professionals who are now occupying positions of responsibility in government and business.

The organizers expect that, as a result of the congress, the positive influence of Adventist beliefs and lifestyle will be strongly felt in campuses and offices across Mexico.

The congress had an immediate and positive result. Two of the top administrators of the hotel where the congress was held and the restaurant chef, impressed by the conduct of the participants, are now receiving Bible studies from Adventists in the city. 🌱

—Heber García and Arturo King,  
*Youth Ministries Directors, South and North Mexican Unions*



**Delegates came from all regions of Mexico. Dr. Humberto M. Rasi, director of the General Conference Education Department, was one of the featured speakers.**

outstanding Adventist university professionals, a party celebrating the anniversary of the Adventist University Student Association, and a baptismal ceremony on the university campus wherever it is possible.

d) Active participation in the “Antidrug Walk Around the World 2000 Project” as organized by the local field.

e) To provide their members with the insignia for Adventist University Students as produced by the Inter-

American Division.

7. That the Adventist University Student’s outreach program be part of the Division-wide target of 15,000 Adventist Youth missionary projects and 30,000 baptisms reached by the Adventist youth.”

Responding to this initiative, each union in our territory has had or is planning to hold a congress for university students. We are receiving the support of our student associations, some

of which have been active for more than 25 years. Even Cuba will hold a union-wide congress. We look forward to a strengthened ministry for and with this important sector of our membership. 🌱

—Alfredo García-Marenko, *Youth Ministries Director, Inter-American Division*



Elias Ogwena\* was at last there—at the pinnacle of his educational ambition. From childhood, he wanted to be an engineer. He studied hard all through elementary and secondary school, mastering mathematics, polishing his English, cultivating every social grace that would help him in the interview in his country’s best engineering college. When the results of the school finals came, Elias was thrilled.

# Keeping the Sabbath on the secular campus

*A perennial problem or an opportunity  
to affirm one’s faith?*

by  
John Graz

His grades in every subject would somehow get him to the mountain top. And, of course, there was his Jesus—One who had never let him down.

The first week in college, Elias received something of a rude shock. His classes were scheduled for Saturday—some of his labs, too. Elias prayed. His church members prayed. His pastor and the religious liberty director of the mission talked to the college authorities. Nothing worked. At the end of the first week, Elias was in church on Sabbath. The same thing happened again and again. His professors told him that at this rate he was bound to fail. One of them even said, “God expects us to reach our

full potential. This business of Sabbath keeping contradicts God’s will.”

But Elias stood firm. His lifestyle attracted his fellow students to inquire about his faith and belief. When the first term exams came, sure enough, Elias did not write the paper that fell on Sabbath. But the examination results surprised everyone. Elias had done so well in other subjects that the missed one did not make any difference. Elias passed. The next term, the college arranged the schedule in such a way that Elias didn’t have to worry anymore.

Some called it luck. But Elias calls it faith in the first Sabbath keeper—in the Creator who never lets His children down.

That does not mean every Adventist student in a non-Adventist campus is going to find faith so promptly rewarded. Often the road could be rough and the decisions tough. So what should you do when you face a Sabbath problem?

## **First, don’t give up!**

You may feel you are alone, and in most cases you are right. Being alone and seeking for Sabbath privilege may be too much of a burden to bear. The college administration, fellow students, and teachers may not be sympathetic and may even mock at you. But don’t despair. Seek spiritual advice and support from your local Adventist community.

*The Church Manual* stipulates that every level of church organization from local to General Conference should have a Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, charged with helping people like you. Seek the help of that department.

Adventists are good citizens. We pay taxes. We obey the law. And as citizens we have privileges and responsibilities. One such privilege is freedom of religion and worship, according to our religious convictions. Many countries recognize this right. In 1986, the United Nations voted the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. One section is in respect to the day of rest and worship. See if your country has a law on this.

In addition, be a superior student. Prepare well for your classes and examinations. Turn in your essays on time. Be prompt and reliable. Teachers

will be more inclined to make adjustments if you are among the best students in the class.

### **Second, work on the problem.**

If you have a Sabbath problem, don't take it as something inevitable. Don't say: "The persecution has started. We are at the end time." Maybe it is the end time; maybe not. But as long as you have the law giving you religious freedom, go for it. React in a positive way. This is a good opportunity to defend human rights.

But even before the problem comes up:

1. Have the name and address of the local and conference public affairs and religious liberty director.
2. Keep in touch with the conference education director.
3. Maintain relationships with other Seventh-day Adventist students in your university or in your town. If possible, organize an association of such students who can worship together, witness together, and—when problems arise—work with the university administration.
4. At the beginning of the school year, visit your teachers and administration and explain your convictions to them.
5. Collect official documents regarding religious liberty in the constitution and laws of your country to share at the appropriate time.

### **Third, do what you can.**

The best thing to do is to act before the schedule is finalized. Even if it is too late, there are always things you can do, such as:

1. Pray and talk with your pastor.
2. Contact the public affairs and religious liberty director of your conference.
3. Make an appointment with your teacher, the department chairman, the dean of your school, or a university administrator. When you meet with university authorities, have an alternative and acceptable proposal. Nobody likes losing credibility. Propose a workable compromise.

4. Ask your Adventist Students Association to intervene.

If these don't work, still don't give up!

### **Fourth, try new strategies.**

1. Pray again. God helps those who are confident.
2. Set a new strategy with your supporters and church advisors.
3. With the help of your local chapter of the International Religious Liberty Association, organize a public meeting about religious liberty. Include local speakers. Invite the media. Present strong arguments on why Sabbath observance is a freedom issue.
4. Organize a signature petition and send it to the university president and the state education department. Include copies of the national laws and international declarations on religious freedom. It may be helpful to send these to the press and politicians as well.

### **Fifth, remember you have legal rights.**

If nothing has changed, still don't give up. As a last resort, form a coalition of your friends, religious liberty director and churches and go to court. This issue, your issue, will become a human rights issue.

The most efficient action in cases of sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, is to go as soon as possible to the administrative court. In some countries, this is the way to solve problems with state institutions. You have to find the equivalent in your country. Nobody is offended by that. Most of the time, the judge freezes the case for years. It means that you can continue to go to your courses.

### **Sixth, above all.**

Don't forget that our way of defending human rights is a Christian way. We have to act as Jesus' disciples. Do not be superficial, insolent, or outrageous. Respect people even if you don't share their opinion. Be polite and courteous.

In spite of doing everything, you may still lose. Don't become anti-government for that, but analyze with

your Adventist brothers and sisters the reason why. Reflect on what you have learned through the experience. Ask God to give you wisdom to know what your next move should be. But don't give up, because you are not the only one having such a problem. Above all, remain faithful. 🙏

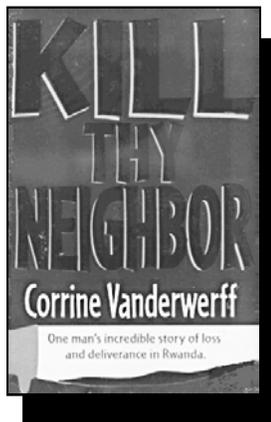
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*John Graz (Ph.D., University of Paris-Sorbonne) serves as director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, Maryland 20904; U.S.A. E-mail via CompuServe: 74532,240*

*\*Not his real name.*

## **Dialogue for you, free!**

If you are a Seventh-day Adventist student attending a non-Adventist college or university, the Church has a plan that will allow you to receive *Dialogue* free while you remain a student. (Those who are no longer students can subscribe to *Dialogue*, using the coupon on page 31.) Contact the director of the Education Department or the Youth Department in your Union and request that you be placed in their distribution network for the journal. Include your full name, address, college or university you are attending, the degree you are pursuing, and the name of the local church of which you are a member. You may also write to our regional representatives at the address provided on page 2, with a copy of your letter sent to the Union directors listed above. In North America, you can phone us toll free at 1-800-226-5478, fax us at (301) 622-9627, or send an E-mail message via CompuServe: 74617,464 or 104472,1154. If these contacts fail to produce results, write to us at our editorial address.



**Kill Thy Neighbor**, by Corrine Vanderwerff (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1996; 224 pp.; paperback).

REVIEWED BY MARY WONG.

*Kill Thy Neighbor* is a saga of a family trapped in the ethnic conflict leading to the carnage that swept through Rwanda in 1994. Corrine Vanderwerff portrays the tragedy through a skillful weaving of superstitions, prejudices, and their

aftermath as they spring from an older generation and challenge the future of a younger generation. The story deals with the adversity of a Hutu man separated from a Tutsi wife of his own choice, as he is subjected to the “gall” of the Hutu wife selected by his parents. To the union of the Hutu and Tutsi was born Richard, a Hutu.

The title, in direct opposition to the biblical injunction, “Love thy neighbor,” captures the interest of readers immediately, and they will not be disappointed with the content of the book. Charged with suspense, the book challenges the readers to experience with Richard the tragedy and to question its diabolical nature from a Christian perspective.

Richard stands bewildered and uncertain at the onset of the tribal killings. He witnessed the slaughter of his Tutsi mother and sister. As he fled from one refuge to another, he learned of the murder of his Hutu father and the fiancée he had planned to marry in four months. The slaughter and consequent terror left him helpless, sleepless, and hopeless. Where could he find meaning? Hope? Alone he struggled and found meaning only when he discovered God and in Him love and life abundant to overcome the tragedies of life.

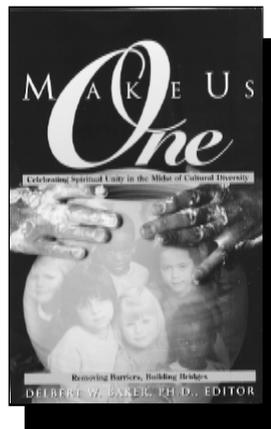
Suspense-filled and dramatic as the book may be, the author appears to favor one of the groups in Rwanda’s ethnic strife as she discusses the country’s cultural, historical, and political background. However, one must realize that the author’s viewpoint is that of a Hutu protagonist who favored his Tutsi mother over his Hutu stepmother.

The book has all the essential qualities of a good story—rich local color, quick movement from one scene to another, vivid portrayal of each scene, and strong suspense. In spite of the tragedy it deals with, the book ends on a bright note—the affirmation that through all the tragedy, loss, and sorrow, God is still in control—as seen in the life of Richard when he found Christ out of his bitter experience.

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Mary Wong (Ph.D., Michigan State University) serves as director of the children’s ministries, family ministries, and women’s ministries for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the General Conference, in Singapore.

An excerpt of this book was published as a first person story under the title of “God Will Take Care of Us” in *Dialogue* 8:3 (1996), pp. 28-29.



**Make Us One**, edited by Delbert W. Baker (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1995; 284 pages; paperback).

REVIEWED BY JOHN M. FOWLER

*Make Us One* is more than a wish. It is the prayer of the church at a time when Bosnia, Rwanda, Zaire, Ireland, Palestine, and numerous other places in God’s good earth have risen to defy God’s good plan to make the human family one body,

created in His image and redeemed by the blood of His Son.

It’s bad enough that a Hindu kills a Muslim, a Vietnamese tortures a Cambodian, a Hutu hunts down a Tutsi, a white American has no room for a black American, and a man cannot accept a woman as an equal. But what’s unimaginable is that a Christian cannot live with a Christian—2,000 years after the wall of partition has been broken down by the Man of the Cross; and what’s inconceivable is that an Adventist harbors racist feelings toward another Adventist, while both continue to preach the three angels’ message and await the imminent inauguration of God’s eschatological community.

Is the gospel of Jesus an impotent farce? Is the second coming of Jesus a pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by, having neither meaning nor power to unify God’s people in anticipation of history’s coming great climax?

Perish the thought, but face the situation.

*Make Us One* tries to do just that. Twelve Adventist writers—sociologists, educators, theologians, ethicists, and church administrators—share their agony and their hope: agony of witnessing racism raising its head now and then, here and there within the church in North America and elsewhere; and hope of Adventist theology and practice coalescing together under the power of the Holy Spirit to practice the presence of the oneness of the body of Christ.

Robert Folkenberg, the world president of the General Conference, begins the book with a moving introduction to the theology of a non-racist, united church. His thesis is as simple as it is fascinating. “The Seventh-day Adventist Church,” Folkenberg says, “is engaged in a divine experiment” (p. 15). Began at Creation, empowered at the Cross, continued with the great commission, the experiment awaits consummation in the eschatological community of faith awaiting the soon coming of Jesus. Given that context, “diversity,” says Folkenberg, “isn’t a problem but an opportunity” (p. 15).

The other 11 authors probe that opportunity, from every possible angle, both in theoretical constructs and practical suggestions. Read Caleb Rosado’s sociological analysis of change and how it affects the mission of the church. Consider Roy Branson’s appeal to history and existence in the construction of the Adventism’s rainbow coalition. Reflect with Jim

Zachrison on his passionate appeal for unity and its role in creating an eschatological community. Listen to Rosa Banks' plea that the toppling of barriers did not end with the cross, but it is a continuous act in the human heart and in the faith community. And there's more.

The book divides itself in three sections: understanding, growing, and relating. While the first two parts lay the foundations for Christian unity, the last one tells the *how*. How do we develop intercultural understanding and communication? How do we solve conflicts that tear communities into unbridgeable factions? How do we deal with the paradox of global mission and local vision? Do we take inspired counsel seriously when it comes to practicing the power of Christian unity?

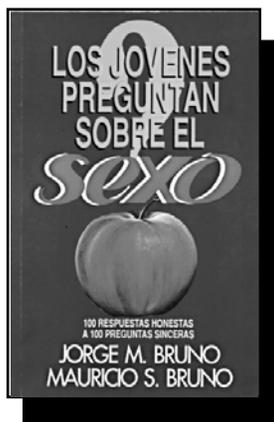
The book, edited by Delbert Baker, currently president of Oakwood College, is powerful, cogent, and scratches where it itches. While it deals with the Christian antidote to racism, it fails in one area. It does not provide a recourse as to what should be done when an individual in ecclesiastic power or when an ecclesiastic body practices subtly or openly policies bordering on discrimination.

Perhaps that is a subject for another study. Meanwhile, read the book, digest it, and do what you can to move *Make Us One* from just a wish or a prayer into a "celebration of spiritual unity in the midst of cultural diversity."

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*Publisher's address: Pacific Press Publishing Association; P.O. Box 5353; Nampa, Idaho 83653-5353. Fax: 208-465-2531. E-mail: INTERNET:sushar@pacificpress.com*



**Los Jóvenes Preguntan sobre el Sexo: 100 Respuestas Honestas a 100 Preguntas Sinceras**, by Jorge M. Bruno and Mauricio S. Bruno (Miami: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 1995; 288 pp.; paperback).

REVIEWED BY EMILIO GARCÍA-MARENKO

Jorge M. Bruno and Mauricio S. Bruno's book meets an important

need of Spanish-speaking Adventist youth. Jorge is a professional counselor; his father, Mauricio, a retired psychiatrist, and both have been university professors for years. The authors answer questions youth have asked them during their professional life, and include several related case studies.

The authors write with emotion and forcefulness. They display a deep conviction and a definite commitment to the

*Dialogue* 9:2—1997

Bible and Ellen White's writings. They begin with a biblical foundation of life and sex as they relate to youth. Then they deal with questions that youth frequently ask: love and infatuation, physical expression of love, virginity, the "test" of love, dating behavior, and others. Some questions may be typical of youth in Latin America, and the authors seem to take a more "conservative" approach than those in some other cultures.

The book's approach to sex in marriage cautions against "improper, sinful, or unapproved behaviors," including sexual perversions that have crept in under the guise that what is mutually desirable should be mutually acceptable. The authors argue that sex within marriage is a beautiful act and should not become a prey to society's ill-conceived so-called "free" acts. On the question of sex on Sabbath, so frequently asked in meetings around the world, the authors say: "Our opinion is that there is no wisdom on extreme positions for yes or no.... In matters of conscience, each one should be left free" (p. 148). The authors suggest that "there is nothing that might make the sex act on Sabbath illicit or immoral" if it does not interfere with church activities and both spouses can do it without violating their consciences.

The book also deals with sex education in the home and tackles the issue of temptation and sexual sin, insisting on the importance of a personal relationship with God and of taking full advantage of spiritual resources to live victoriously.

The chapter on masturbation is a masterpiece. It is the best apology I have read for Ellen White's position. While taking a stance against masturbation, the authors recognize that an occasional event does not bring the negative results associated with the practice. They introduce the concept that harmful effects are related to other factors, such as continuity and frequency.

The final chapter deals with homosexuality and AIDS. The authors show a deep concern for youth to understand that God's laws are a demonstration of His love to His children and that youth are expected to live according to those laws. However, the authors see the reality around them and call for an attitude of compassion and caring love for the victims of AIDS in their suffering.

The book seems to have two different styles, one somewhat conversational and the other argumentative. Some sections of the book are well organized, while others jump from topic to topic. In spite of some stylistic and editorial deficiencies, the book is an important contribution to the Christian understanding of human sexuality.

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*Emilio García-Marenko (Ed.D., Andrews University) is a family life educator. Currently, he serves as the vice president for academic administration at Montemorelos University, Mexico.*

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*Publisher's address: P.O. Box 520627; Miami, Florida 33126; U.S.A. Fax: (305) 592- 8999.*



# Adventists and the AIDS Epidemic

*The AIDS epidemic is affecting men, women, youth, and children in most countries of the world. The United Nations estimated in December of 1996 that there were 22.6 million persons living with HIV/AIDS and that 6.4 million had already died of these infections: 5.0 million adults (2.9 million male, 2.1 million female) and 1.4 children. However, in spite of intense research and major financial investment, no effective cure has yet been discovered for this dreaded disease.*

*During the 1996 Annual Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, world leaders assembled in Costa Rica issued an official statement that provides recommendations and guidelines on ways in which we can individually and collectively relate to this global crisis. The text of the statement is provided here for the benefit of our readers.*

## Rationale

The global epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) profoundly impacts the worldwide gospel mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Church leaders are called to respond through initiatives in education, prevention, and community service, and through personal acts of kindness to persons and families involved in the crisis. AIDS is no respecter of national boundaries, church membership, gender, marital status, education, income, or position in life. In many countries of the world, it is decimating the population, taking the lives of many

individuals, including Seventh-day Adventist Church members. All persons, especially young people growing up in an era of moral laxity, need to be taught biblical principles regarding sexuality and God's design that sexual intimacy be experienced within the protection of the marriage covenant. Leadership should provide credible information to members—presented in their own language and sensitive to their own culture. The Church is called to be both a prophetic and a compassionate voice—the mouthpiece and hands of God as it extends the ministry of Christ into the community.

The global mission of the Church, in reaching out to all races and peoples, draws into church fellowship many who are infected by the AIDS virus prior to joining the church or who are affected by having family members with AIDS. The epidemic is of such magnitude that no family will ultimately remain untouched. Many are infected through no action of their own. A judgmental attitude is always inappropriate, especially since the source of the infection cannot be determined with certainty. Many have experienced shame, fear, and agony as family members suffered and died with AIDS, often feeling compelled to secrecy regarding their painful situation. Just as Christ came to offer healing to a suffering world, so Seventh-day Adventists are commissioned to compassionately care for those who suffer and are affected with the virus of AIDS. Members can safely serve as care givers, at home or in health care facilities, if they are educated in appropriate ways of doing so.

## Recommendations

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes its Christian responsibility to respond to the global AIDS crisis and the devastating effect on humanity and wishes to respond in multiple ways which include:

1. **Extending the teaching and healing ministry of Christ**, who without prejudice cared for all in need, by engaging in efforts to reduce the risk of individuals acquiring AIDS, and compassionately and non-judgmentally caring for all those affected when an individual suffers from AIDS.
2. **Designating a person in each division**, along with such personnel and financial resources as may be secured, to respond to AIDS challenges through appropriate initiatives and cooperative efforts with other entities in the community or country at large.
3. **Developing and managing AIDS education programs** using the resource *HIV/AIDS Guide* when applicable.\* Programs should be contextualized for relevant cultural and linguistic needs and directed to:
  - *Pastors*: Continuing education and ministerial meetings should be designed to equip pastors to deal with members touched by the AIDS crisis. Pastors need information on prevention, compassionate ministry, and applied ecclesiastical functions such as conducting a funeral service for a person whose death was the result of being infected with AIDS.
  - *Teachers*: Continuing education and in-service training should be offered with emphasis on conveying spiritual values and developing skills among youth for coping with sexual pressures.
  - *Parents*: Encouragement needs to be given to model a lifestyle that upholds Christian values, recognizing that poor marriage relations and any use of alcohol or other abusive substances has a direct

negative effect on their children's sexual values and practices.

- **Church members:** Sermons, Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, premarital counseling and marriage-strengthening activities, seminars regarding AIDS, and educational curricula are avenues for providing information regarding sexuality in general and AIDS in particular.
- **Communities:** The Church needs to recognize the opportunity for Christian witness and ministry in the community at large, providing appropriate community outreach, and participating in cooperative endeavors.

#### 4. Protecting and strengthening marriage by:

- Upholding the ideal of abstinence from premarital sex.
- Advocating premarital HIV testing for both potential partners as part of the church-based preparation for marriage.
- Elevating God's ideal for fidelity in marriage.
- Recommending protective measures against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

#### 5. Intentionally transmitting Christian values to the next generation, recognizing that individual sexual values are established in youth. Priority should be given to providing accurate information, a forum for open discussion, and emphasis on the moral dimension of decision making regarding sexuality.

(\*) Provided by the Health and Temperance Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in cooperation with the General Conference AIDS Study Commission Members. For more information, contact: Dr. Albert Whiting; 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, Maryland 20904; U.S.A. E-mail via CompuServe: 74617,1634

### Guidelines for Contributors

**C**ollege and University Dialogue, published three times a year in four language editions, is addressed to Seventh-day Adventists involved in postsecondary education either as students or teachers, and also to Adventist professionals and campus chaplains around the world.

The editors are interested in well-written articles, interviews, and reports consistent with *Dialogue's* objectives: (1) To nurture an intelligent, living faith; (2) to deepen commitment to Christ, the Bible, and Adventist global mission; (3) to articulate a biblical approach to contemporary issues; and (4) to offer ideas and models of Christian service and outreach.

*Dialogue* usually assigns articles, interviews, and reports for publication. Prospective authors are urged (a) to examine previous issues of our journal, (b) to carefully consider these guidelines, and (c) to submit an abstract and personal background before developing a proposed article.

- **Essays:** Well-researched and stimulating feature articles that focus, from a biblical perspective, on a contemporary topic in the arts, the humanities, religion, or the sciences.
- **Profiles:** Biographical sketches of Adventist men and women who are outstanding in their careers or professions, and who are also active Christians. Recommendations are welcome.
- **Logos:** A fresh look at a Bible passage or theme that offers insights and encouragement for the life of faith in today's world.
- **Campus Life:** Practical ideas for the college or university student, chaplain or teacher who seeks to integrate faith, education, social life, and outreach in an academic setting.
- **Action Report:** News of activities by Adventist students, chaplains, and teachers, on a regional basis.
- **Books:** Reviews of significant books by or about Seventh-day Adventists, published in either English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish. Recommendations are welcome.
- **For Your Information:** Reports on events, activities or statements relevant to Adventist students and professionals.
- **First Person:** Individual stories of experiences by Adventist students or professionals that will inspire and encourage their peers.

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# Koko...

Continued from page 17

## Proximate personhood

As a Seventh-day Adventist, I am uncomfortable with either pure personalism or physicalism. Born and reared in my church tradition, I have been taught that one's dignity is found in being created in God's image. I have long appreciated Ellen White's simple definition of what it means to be created in God's image, a definition that is emblazoned in the minds of hundreds of thousands of Adventist students worldwide from their study of her book *Education*: "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do."<sup>5</sup>

The higher powers of the mind and the power to act in a distinctively personal manner are all-important. This view of the human person is in stark contrast to the belief in an immortal soul that begins at conception. Understandably, in cultures where the concept of an immortal soul dominates, an ethos of physicalism prevails.

Personalism is an appealing philosophy, especially today when medicine can sustain the physical body at such great lengths—e.g., Baby K! But a big problem with personalism—as well as with physicalism—is that of rigidity.

Both philosophies are analogous to light switches. To these philosophies, the life being considered is either black or white; it is either without moral status or it has full moral status. But given our modern knowledge, human life is much more like a rheostat: it begins with a flicker, swells to fullness, then dims to nothing in death. The proximate personhood is rheostat-like. It is a common-sense position. It takes its intellectual content from personhood thinking, but listens to the intuitions of physicalism.

Proximate personhood suggests that the greater the proximity or nearness of the individual to that of undisputed personhood—such as you or I have—the greater the individual's moral status.

There are three pivotal criteria for making decisions in the proximate personhood approach:

- 1) the *potentiality for* gaining or regaining personal being;
- 2) the *development toward* becoming a personal being or development beyond such being; and
- 3) the *bonding of* an individual and significant others or society at large.

These criteria are, respectively, intellectual, physical, and social.

What difference does it make whether you are in one camp or the other? Depending on your view of persons, you will possess different answers on several contemporary dilemmas:

- Is animal rights just a trendy idea, or is there moral significance to the claim that the Kokos of the world have at least a quasi-personal status?
- Was Loma Linda University Medical Center right or wrong to use anencephalic newborns as organ donors so that these fatally ill babies' organs might save other doomed babies' lives?
- What is the moral justification for spending hundreds of millions of dollars to sustain an estimated 10,000 permanently comatose patients in U.S. hospitals?
- On what basis does one determine the moral status of the human fetus being considered for abortion?
- When life's candle is flickering, about to end, and one goes for life-prolonging treatment, how should we reckon the morality of such an act?

How we define personhood *does* make a difference on a score of contemporary decisions. And depending on culture, religious background, and personal convictions, one is likely to be a thorough-going physicalist or personalist—or profess a hybrid position such as that of proximate personhood. 🌐

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James Walters (Ph.D., Claremont Graduate School) teaches ethics at Loma Linda University. He is also the executive editor of *Adventist Today*. This essay is adapted from the author's seventh book, *What Is a Person? An Ethical Exploration* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997). His address: Loma Linda University; Loma Linda, California, 92350; U.S.A.

## Notes and references

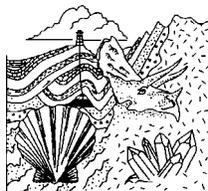
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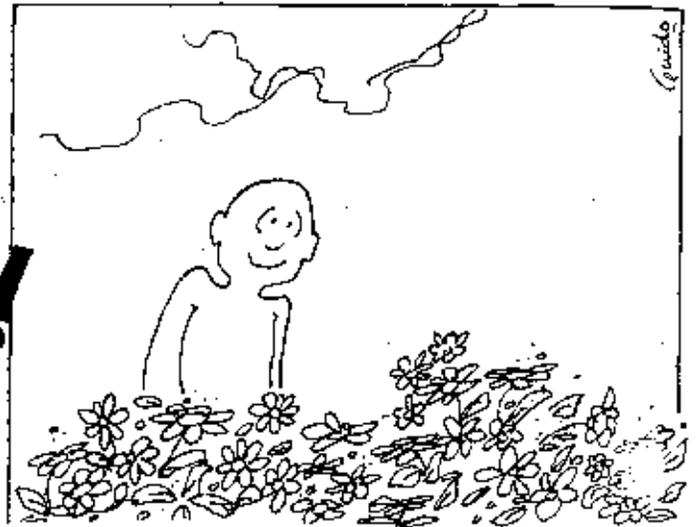
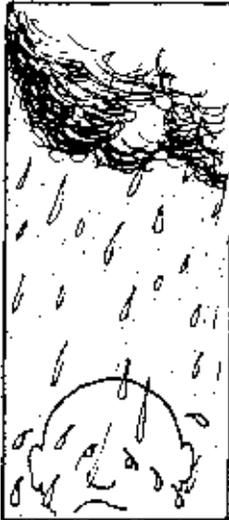
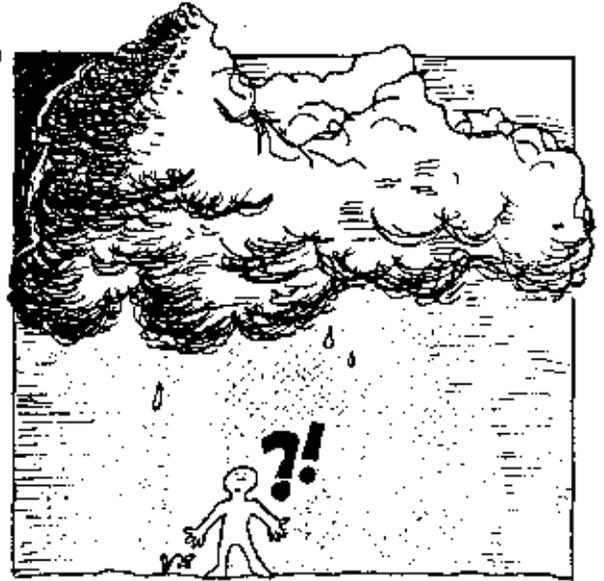
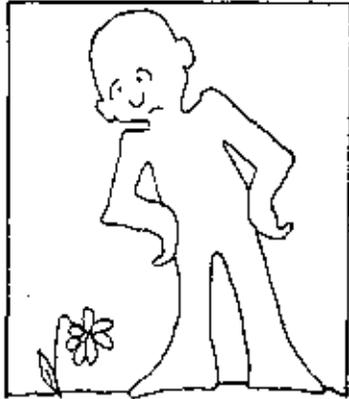
## GEOLOGY





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# Prayer



**“The Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don’t even know what we should pray for, nor how to pray as we should.”**

—Romans 8:26, *Living Bible*