

C O L L E G E A N D U N I V E R S I T Y

# DIALOGUE

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**Ethics and human cloning**

**The mathematics of marriage**

**God and history: A biblical perspective**

**In the name of the law!**

**Ten reasons why I believe in God**

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## College and University

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**Dialogue has received correspondence from readers in 103 countries around the world.**

## A healthy resolution

1999 is upon us. The new year urges us to make new resolutions—and reconsider the ones we did not actively pursue. Resolutions are written in many ways—with a pencil on a piece of paper, keyed in a computer, or entered in a personal journal. They may come to us during a moment of meditation, in a dialogue with our pillow, or in a conversation with our best friend.

Whatever the form in which they are written, whatever their source, the new year provides a time to pause and reflect on the areas of our lives that need to be touched up, improved, or entirely redrawn.

You may not need many suggestions for resolutions. However, as an editor of *Dialogue* writing to a reader of the journal, in the common quest of enriching our lives for the glory of God and for the service of the community, I would like to suggest one resolution you can add to your list—taking care of your health.

“But I’m healthy! I’m not a sickly person!” I almost hear you shout. “Besides, I am young! I’m strong and in the prime of my life!”

Yet, think for a moment about your current lifestyle—with mountains of materials to study, only few hours of sleep, eating food loaded with grease and sugar, drinking lots of sodas, and ingesting plenty of caffeine to keep you up through the night before the exams. (I am not considering alcohol as part of your lifestyle.)

Let me suggest a few ideas about a healthy lifestyle, and put them in the form of an acronym—**NEW START**: Nutrition. Exercise. Water. Sunlight. Temperance. Air. Rest. Trust in God.

Or the acronym can be **GOD’S PLAN**: Godly trust. Open air. Daily exercise. Sunshine. Proper rest. Lots of water. Always temperate. Nutrition.

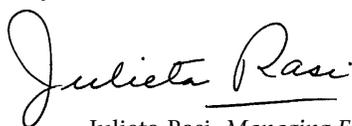
Or it can be **CREATION**: Choice. Rest. Environment. Activity. Trust in God. Interpersonal relationships. Outlook. Nutrition.

I almost can hear you laughing. I have been there too, when I was a university student. Even now, sometimes I wonder how can I meet my editorial deadlines in *Dialogue’s* four language editions, amidst faxes and e-mails, computer crashes, human delays, my own procrastination, and still follow these basic “natural laws.”

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are fortunate in belonging to a church that was established on solid biblical principles, which include the care of our body—“God’s temple.” In addition, we have benefitted from the inspired counsel of Ellen G. White in books such as *The Ministry of Healing* and *Counsels on Health*. How many of her views are continually being confirmed by the latest scientific findings.

So, besides pursuing your academic and professional goals, I challenge you to start 1999 by doing something for your physical, mental, interpersonal, and spiritual health—because these come in a package.

And if the lists I suggested seem too long, start first with one or two items, paste them on your mirror, and as they become part of your lifestyle, keep adding others throughout the year. But *do* take the first step! Your Creator is vitally interested in your well-being. As you follow His plan, you will be better able to acquire new knowledge and be happier in your relationships—a powerful witness of God’s goodness among your teachers and classmates. Here’s to your health!



Julieta Rasi, *Managing Editor*

### Suggestion for future topics

Our student association has been using select articles from *Dialogue* as topics for study and discussion in our Sabbath afternoon programs. Not too long ago the article “What Shall I Wear?” (7:2) was the basis of a very lively forum. May I suggest two subjects for coverage in future issues: Christmas celebration and wearing of jewelry. The Adventist Church in my country takes the position that these are not acceptable. However, we learn that in some other countries these practices are quite common. If our church is a united global family, why is there such diversity of standards?

**Eric Aidoo**

Korle-Bu, Accra  
GHANA

### The editors respond:

Thank you, Eric, for your thoughtful letter and for your suggestions. In a future issue we will address the subject of jewelry from a biblical perspective. As you know, the Bible does not deal with the celebration of Christmas, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not taken an official position regarding that practice. You may find useful the following comment by Ellen White: “There is no particular sin in selecting a fragrant evergreen and placing it in our churches, but the sin lies in the motive which prompts to action and the use which is made of the gifts placed upon the tree....Christmas and New Year celebrations can and should be held in behalf of those who are helpless. God is glorified when we give to help those who have large families to support” (The Adventist Home, p. 482).

### A call to poets

I am a reader of *Dialogue* and also the publisher of *El-Shaddai*, Singapore’s first Protestant journal that features Shabbat poems by Christians and Jews, and Protestant news of interest from Singapore. We welcome poems submitted by Seventh-day Adventists as long as they reflect Protestant values, the Bible, and

# Letters

the goodness of the Sabbath. Mailing address: Blk 205 #11-1087; Ang Mo Kio Ave 1; Singapore 560205. Shalom!

**Gan Yung Chyan**  
SINGAPORE  
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## Inconclusive statistics

I wish to comment on Stefan Mihai-cuta's article, "Try health!" (10:2). In a small sample, such as 26 or 30 individuals, the fact that 46% of those who participated in the 5-day-Plan and 60% of those who followed the Breathe Free program were able to quit smoking does not necessarily mean that Breathe Free is a better approach. If these percentages represented hundreds of individuals, the results would be more conclusive. Both sets of numbers seem to imply that non-smoking seminars are successful. Keep up the good work!

**Donna Dietz**  
Troy, New York, U.S.A.  
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## Late but still thought-provoking

I thank God for the international ministry of *Dialogue* and for the high quality of its content. Although some issues reach us almost one year late, I still find the articles important, thought-provoking, and useful. Accept a fellow editor's warmest congratulations.

**Claudia L. Garcia**  
San Miguel Petapa  
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## Welcome to our home page

On behalf of the Adventist Students Group at Universidad Central de Venezuela (known by the acronym GEA-UCV in Spanish), I want to congratulate you for the wonderful work you are doing through *Dialogue*. The articles you publish, such as "Christ's Resurrection: Hoax or History" (6:3), help us to explain and defend our faith as we relate

to thoughtful people. Readers are invited to consult our home page: <http://strix/ciens.ucv.ve/~jfgarcia/geal.htm>

**John F. Garcia**  
VENEZUELA

## The influence of La Sierra University

Thanks for issue 10:3 of *Dialogue*. I always enjoy the journal and find it stimulating. And congratulations on the three influential pacesetters you chose to profile: Linda Hyder Ferry, the doctor with a mission to help people stop smoking; David Pendleton, the politician who is transforming Hawaii politics; and Milton Murray ("Mr. Philanthropy"), whose postage stamp reminds us that true living consists in giving and sharing. Your readers will be interested in knowing that there is something formative that ties these three leaders together: they are all graduates of La Sierra University! Hurray for Adventist higher education!

**Lawrence T. Geraty**  
President, La Sierra University  
Riverside, California, U.S.A.  
lgeraty@lasierra.edu

## Impressed and encouraged

I am impressed by the substantial content of your journal and also encouraged by the stories of personal struggles and triumph, under God's guidance. Here is my check for a two-year subscription. I don't want to miss a single issue!

**Zacarias Molina**  
Miraflores, Lima  
PERU

## Proud of the journal

I am always proud to share *Dialogue* with my non-Adventist friends. And you deserve applause for your efforts to foster deep thought and solid commitment among Adventist young adults. As a 22-year-old struggling to leave behind my past and live a truly Christian life, I am encouraged by the successful Adventist professionals you feature in "Pro-

files." I will be happy to exchange correspondence with other young adults. My address: Gomez de la Torre #657, 3er. Piso; Quininde, Esmeraldas; Ecuador.

**Camilo Orjuela**  
Quininde, Esmeraldas  
ECUADOR

## Just in time!

The free copy of *Dialogue* that you sent to me, at my request, was a most welcome gift. Thank you! It arrived just a few days before I became a Seventh-day Adventist through baptism, on May 23, 1998. One of the articles in this issue, "Seeing through the eyes of Jesus" (10:1), presented a true spiritual challenge to me as I begin a new friendship with God. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will accomplish a true transformation in my life.

**Nsulwa J. Shashula**  
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## Between the upbuilding and the superficial

I have thoroughly enjoyed the issues of *Dialogue* that have reached me. I particularly appreciated the article "Adventists and fiction: Another look," by Scott Moncrieff (8:3). To achieve the ideal God has for us we need to be discriminating readers, educated to discern between the upbuilding and the superficial—whether in fiction or nonfiction.

**Corrine Vanderwerff**  
Lubumbashi, CONGO

## Write to us!

We welcome your comments, reactions and questions, but limit your letters to 200 words. Write to *Dialogue Letters*: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A. You can also use fax: (301) 622-9627, or E-mail: 74617.464@compuserve.com Letters selected for publication may be edited for clarity or space.

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# In our own image? Ethics and human cloning

By Anthony J. Zuccarelli  
and Gerald R. Winslow

*The brave new world of cloning  
has opened uncharted territory.  
How should thoughtful  
Christians relate to its ethical  
implications?*

Cumulina! Not a romantic town in a faraway island. Not an exotic dish. Not anything you could ever have guessed a few months ago. Though Cumulina is only a mouse, she is a brave new entrant into a brave new world. Nested in wood shavings in clear plastic cages in Honolulu at the University of Hawaii, Cumulina and about 50 other mice are the latest pioneers in a scientific quest with frightening implications. The mice look quite ordinary, indistinguishable from any at an animal facility. However, the group is unique because they have only female “parents.” Like Dolly, the best-known sheep since “Mary’s Little Lamb,” the mice were produced by somatic cell nuclear transplantation—in other words, by cloning.

Dolly ignited a firestorm of debate. The announcement of her birth by Scottish scientist Ian Wilmut in February 1997 [1]\* raised the prospect that, in the near future, it may be possible to clone human beings. The philosophical and ethical implications occupied the news media for months and put human cloning on the agenda for legislative bodies and think-tanks around the world. For a year and a half, the debate continued, restrained only by the inability of other scientists to repeat the process, by doubts that the technology could be adapted to humans, and by suggestions that Dolly’s conception may not have been immaculate.

Those firebreaks were removed by three reports in the July 1998 issue of the journal *Nature*. Two groups provided convincing evidence that Dolly is genetically identical to the ewe from which she was derived; she is indeed an authentic clone [2,3]. The Honolulu group

showed that somatic cell nuclear transplantation can be repeated, creating three successive generations of mouse clones [4]. They also provided evidence that this can be done with species thought to be difficult to clone, including humans. According to the editor, “it becomes all the more probable that, where someone is legally allowed to [clone humans], they will.” [5] That probability took substance as physicist Richard Seed announced that he has identified clients, financial support, and scientists to staff his proposed Chicago cloning clinic.

## **Should humans be cloned?**

But, should humans be cloned? As Adventist Christians, with an appreciation of the value God places on human life and our responsibilities as stewards of the earth, the matter needs to be carefully examined. After exploring the science and economics of cloning, the objective of this article is to identify ethical principles that might guide us through the web of issues and emotions surrounding the prospect of asexual human duplication.

Let’s begin with sexual reproduction. Your biology textbook says that when two germ cells unite to fertilize, they combine their genes to create a single-celled zygote. The genetic material of the zygote, in the form of DNA, is later replicated and distributed equally to two daughter cells, forming the two-celled embryo. The embryo develops by ordered cycles of DNA replication and cell division. Every cell receives a complete copy of the genetic material, half originally provided by each parent. When the embryo reaches a critical

number of cells, they begin to specialize by selectively expressing some genes and turning off others according to a built-in program. Depending upon the pattern of expression, some will become nerve cells, others muscle cells, and still others skin cells. Continued differentiation eventually forms a fetus with hundreds of specialized cell types that will make up the newborn organism at birth.

Though sexual reproduction is a common theme, it is not universal. Your biology textbook also describes single-celled microorganisms, like bacteria and yeast, whose regular mode of reproduction is asexual. They simply divide into two genetically identical cells, clones of each other and of the parent cell. Many plants also reproduce asexually. A fragment scattered by a neighbor's lawn mower can start a growth of crab grass in your lawn. A favorite grapevine, rose bush or house plant can be cloned by rooting a cutting until it grows into a complete plant. Some animals, like starfish and earthworms, can also regenerate from a fragment. Each of these cases of asexual reproduction depends upon the fact that every cell in a complex organism carries all the genes of the entire organism, even if the cell came from the leaf of a plant where it used only the genes needed for "leafiness."

Genes turned off during embryonic development were thought to be permanently inactivated in animals. Decades of failed attempts to generate whole animals from isolated body cells (called somatic cells) established the belief that they were terminally differentiated. There seemed to be no simple way to flip their genetic switches back to the "start" position—until Dolly.

### **Somatic cell nuclear transplantation**

Following the lead of experiments performed in the 1950s and 1960s, Dr. Wilmut obtained sheep oocytes (eggs before maturation) and manually removed their nuclei (which contain the genetic material) using fine glass pi-

pettes. Then he fused the gene-less oocytes with somatic cells taken from the udder of an adult ewe. The nucleus of the udder cell replaced the genes normally supplied by the sperm and egg at fertilization. Oocyte cytoplasm apparently provided the proper environment to reset the genes in the udder nucleus, allowing them to be expressed in the normal sequence for embryonic development. After a period of growth in nutrient solution, the reconstituted oocyte, which had become a multicellular embryo, was implanted in an ewe for full-term development [1].

That's how Dolly came to be. The crucial steps in the process are reflected in its name—somatic cell nuclear transplantation. With several modifications, the Honolulu team used the procedure to make Cumulina, the first cloned mouse, and clones from the clones in two succeeding generations [4].

Several facts are worth emphasizing. Dolly and Cumulina have neither fathers nor mothers in the conventional sense—parents who contributed germ cells to their conception. Rather, each has a nuclear donor who provided all the nuclear genetic material, an oocyte donor who provided the cellular "incubator" into which the genes were placed, and a gestational parent who nurtured the embryo until birth. Since none of the participants were male, one might say that Dolly and Cumulina each have three "mothers."

Second, a clone has the same chromosomal material as its nuclear donor. Some have likened a clone to a delayed identical twin of the nuclear donor. The oocyte donor contributes a minuscule amount of genetic material found in its mitochondria; the gestational parent provides only a nurturing womb. Dolly's three parents were Finn Dorset, Poll Dorset, and Scottish Blackface sheep, respectively. She looks just like her Finn Dorset nuclear "mom."

Third, though cloning is an amazing achievement, it is dauntingly ineffi-

cient. More than 400 sheep ova were used to produce Dolly [1]. All the others died at various stages. Cumulina and her cohort represent about 2.5 percent of the attempts in the Honolulu experiments [4]. Obviously, sexual reproduction is more efficient, simpler, and usually more satisfying.

That may provoke the question, "Why attempt cloning at all?" Surprisingly, the primary motivation is to duplicate animals, not humans. The value of cloning is the consequence of a crucial difference between sexual and asexual reproduction. Consider the uncertainties of conventional animal breeding. Calves born to a champion milk producer, for instance, would get only half of their mother's genes. Since milk production depends on many interacting genes, few of her offspring are likely to inherit the precise combination that made her such a great milk cow. After winning the Triple Crown, for example, Secretariat sired more than 400 foals borne by the best mares in the world. Not one of them had a successful racing career! Sexual reproduction limits how much you can stack the deck in favor of desirable traits.

### **Transgenic animal factories**

Clones, in contrast, have exactly the same genes as their nuclear donor. Cloning would assure that the genetic makeup of sheep with particularly thick, soft fleece or chickens that lay lots of low-cholesterol eggs would be precisely replicated. Though such traits are desirable, others are still more highly prized. The engine driving development in nuclear transplantation is the desire to produce animals that carry human genes, so-called transgenic animals.

During the past 25 years, biotechnologists have identified and isolated human genes that code for various cellular components and products. As a practical result, insulin and other simple human proteins are now made by genetically engineered bacteria growing in

vats of broth. Many valuable proteins, however, are too complex for bacteria to replicate properly. One alternative is to use cultures of genetically modified human or mammalian cells, but growing them is expensive and they make only a small amount of the desired product. The oldest method, extracting proteins directly from cadavers or outdated human blood, is avoided because of the risk of contamination with infectious agents like HIV or hepatitis viruses.

Pursuing cost efficiency and safety, biotechnology has shifted to domesticated animals that make products under the direction of human genes added to their chromosomes. In the best cases, the added DNA directs the animal to secrete large quantities of human protein into its milk. Cleverly called pharming, the first wave of transgenic animals is represented by goats, cows, pigs, and sheep in the U.S., Scotland, and the Netherlands that make such proteins as antithrombin II (an anti-clotting agent), alpha-1-antitrypsin (absent in emphysemics and useful in treating cystic fibrosis), blood clotting factors (absent in hemophiliacs) and interferons (antiviral agents). Having farm animals convert grass into proteins is like having a goose that lays golden eggs—maybe better! Some therapeutic proteins are worth many times their weight in gold.

OK, so animals that secrete useful human proteins are valuable. How does cloning enter the picture? High-yield transgenic animals are difficult to make; cloning may make it easier. The first step in making a transgenic animal is to identify and isolate the human gene for the desired product—say, an antiviral protein. Next, the gene is joined to a DNA segment that controls when and where the gene will be active. A typical strategy is to use a segment that directs the gene to make its antiviral protein in the milk-producing cells of the mammary gland. These steps are readily accomplished using tried-and-true molecular genetic techniques, but subsequent

stages are technically demanding and inefficient. Several hundred copies of the gene-plus-controller DNA are laboriously microinjected into fertilized oocytes. Zygotes that develop are later implanted in surrogate mothers for gestation. The efficiency is disappointingly low—typically, less than 0.5% survive to birth and test positive for the transgene. Even fewer secrete useful quantities of the protein in their milk. Clearly, it can take years to establish a productive transgenic herd.

Reliable methods for cloning would change the picture. As before, a human gene must be isolated and joined to a control segment. Then, instead of microinjection, gene-plus-controller DNA is simply added to the liquid in which cultured animal cells are growing. Under the right conditions they pick it up on their own or after a brief electric pulse. Using standard selection methods, cells that have accepted the transgene can be purified and tested to learn if they are likely to be good protein producers. Since these manipulations are done with cultured cells, rather than animals, they can be accomplished in a few days. Successfully modified cells would then be used to make whole animals by transferring their nuclei to enucleated oocytes.

#### **Tissue for transplantation**

A further role for cloning is the creation of animals with “humanized” tissues to meet the great need for transplant organs. Hyperacute rejection of animal organs is due to an arrangement of sugar subunits on the surfaces of the cells that is not tolerated by human recipients. Since it is possible to subtract as well as add genes, “knocking out” the genes responsible for the offending surface modifications would make animal organs more compatible with human hosts.

The mysterious ability of oocyte cytoplasm to reprogram a nucleus is intriguing. Some predict that it may be possible to take even greater advantage

of this property. After a nucleus from a patient has been reset to an embryonic state within an oocyte, it may be possible to instruct it to replicate and mature into a different cell type. The aim would be to generate specialized tissues that could be used to treat a wide range of human diseases—young pancreatic islet cells to treat diabetes, skin cells to heal burns, nerve cells to repair spinal injuries or reverse Parkinson’s disease. Since the transplanted tissue is derived from the patient, it would be perfectly compatible and would avoid immune rejection. Rather than consider the ghoulish possibility of cloning people to be used for “spare parts,” nuclear transplantation might be able to reprogram human cells so that they will grow into isolated organs or organ-like tissues.

#### **Cloning and ethical issues**

Cloning technology promises awesome benefits, but at what cost? Some warn that it may be high—undermining human dignity and eroding family relationships. Let’s examine these concerns thoughtfully to determine if they are useful guides in making decisions about cloning. We will organize our discussion around seven themes of Christian ethics: protection from harm, consequences for human freedom, effects on family structure, potential for relieving suffering, stewardship of personal resources, truthfulness, and the potential for understanding God’s creation. [6]

1. *Protection from harm.* Dolly’s creator, Ian Wilmut, identified the most compelling reason for not attempting to clone humans: it would result in the loss of countless human ova and in the deaths of many fetuses at various stages of development, including those near full-term. It also poses a high risk for malformed infants and infant deaths. In his early experiments, about 60 percent of cloned lambs died soon after birth and many showed physical abnormalities. Cloning is morally precarious because it is medically hazardous. The

standard of Scripture is to avoid putting human lives at undue risk of injury or death, especially the lives of the vulnerable. The same principle is reiterated in the physician's oath to "do no harm." It prohibits an undertaking that would result in dozens of stillborn, malformed, or unviable infants in order to produce a healthy child.

The National Bioethics Advisory Committee, appointed by the President of the United States, decided that human cloning is presently unacceptable for reasons of safety [7]. Their judgment was based on the state of a technology still less than two years old. They recommended a temporary moratorium, fully expecting further experience to improve the success rate. A permanent ban would be equivalent to prohibiting forever public air travel in the days immediately after the first successful, but death-defying, airplane flight at Kitty Hawk. Dolly and Cumulina represent mileposts in a long series of biological developments spanning five decades. The current pace of progress requires that we reassess the technology at intervals to determine if it has matured beyond the point of balancing benefits against risks.

*2. Human freedom and dignity.* Christians believe that humans have dignity because they were created in the image of God with autonomous "power to think and to do." The prospect of asexual human reproduction often evokes a contrary and disturbing vision—armies of soulless zombies marching in the genetic footsteps of their progenitors. Our fear of human carbon copies is powerful, almost visceral. It derives, in part, from our tendency to equate appearance with personal identity. Last year a newspaper featured the responses of teenagers to the prospect of human cloning. "So people will be cloned," said one 18-year-old, "but you won't know who the clones are...And how do you know if they're going to even have a soul? How do you know, like, what's walking down the street?"

By contrast, we have little difficulty accepting the fact that "identical" (monozygotic) twins are not really identical. They develop distinct personalities and temperaments as a consequence of their independent experiences, environments and choices. In spite of their identical genes they become fully unique "souls." A cloned person would mature into an individual who is entirely distinct from the nuclear donor for the same reasons but, in addition, the clone would have a different "mother," would grow up in a different family and would live at a different time than the donor. Consequently, the belief that clones of Albert Einstein or Michael Jordan would retrace the life histories of their progenitors is totally unfounded. Hasting Center bioethicist Erik Parens summarized the matter succinctly when he observed, "You can't clone a self." [8]

Though clones would be unique individuals, some may attempt to limit the expression of that uniqueness. Can you imagine the clone of a famous pianist being compelled to spend hours at the keyboard to the exclusion of other pursuits? Would some be inclined to produce clones for commercial purposes or sacrifice them for their organs? Our view is that it is morally indefensible to create clones to be used solely as sources of transplantable organs, for commercial exploitation, or as subservient tools. We should strongly oppose "commodification" and "genetic bondage" of human beings. Cloning, like all powerful technologies, can be a tool for good or for ill. Any use that would undermine or diminish the personal dignity or autonomy of human beings must be rejected.

*3. Alleviating human suffering.* Full, creative application of our minds and bodies to advance the healing ministry of Christ is a fundamental principle of Adventist theology, which expresses itself, in part, in our worldwide educational and medical programs. Implicit in the Great Commission is our responsibility to prevent and relieve suffering

with the means at our disposal. Cloning may be a potent healing tool if it allows us to prevent the transmission of genetic diseases or to create replacement tissues and organs for repair or transplantation. Retaugh Dumas at the University of Michigan expressed an opinion that may strike a chord with those committed to the ministry of healing; "I could make a moral argument that if these techniques are available and we don't use them, we are letting society down." [9]

*4. Safeguarding the family structure.* During the announcement of a cloning moratorium, the U.S. President voiced the concern that it "has the potential to threaten the sacred family bonds." The image of infants mechanically produced outside the family circle is indeed unsettling. God's plan is for children to be nurtured within the context of a loving family with the presence, participation, and support of a father and a mother. Since nuclear transplantation can be used to achieve human reproduction when other methods are ineffective, it should be attempted only within the setting of a faithful marriage and in support of a stable family. For this reason, we should avoid the moral complications that would arise if a third party were to act as a gestational surrogate or be the source of the genetic material. [10] Cloning could be a valuable last resort for couples who wish to have children but are unable to produce functional germ cells. In such situations, nuclear transplantation would serve as an advanced form of assisted reproduction. Many have proposed the hypothetical case of a couple whose only child is dying and who want literally, to replace the child. Some would consider this an appropriate application for nuclear transplantation.

*5. Wise use of resources.* Given the technical challenges of cloning, it is expensive and will likely remain so for some time. An American couple, for example, has paid \$2.3 million to Texas A&M University to clone their beloved dog Missy.

In free societies, people are at liberty to spend their money in a multitude of ways, including foolish ones. But Christians are called to use their resources in a manner that reflects responsible stewardship. This commitment means putting the kingdom of God first. And it means self-sacrificial attention to the needs of others. Thus, Christians should assess the expense and the value of cloning in light of faithful stewardship.

6. *Truthfulness.* Scripture teaches us to value honest communication and to refrain from lying. When new technologies, like cloning, are developed, it is not uncommon for some enthusiasts to overstate the benefits and underestimate the costs and risks. On the other hand, it is tempting for some naysayers to exaggerate the risks and misrepresent the goals. Christians have an obligation to understand and promote the truth.

7. *Understanding God's creation.* God intends for human beings to grow in their appreciation of His creation. Our desire to understand the human body and the mechanism of human development is no different from the drive to investigate other natural phenomena. Efforts to understand the world around and within us by ethical research, an impulse instilled by our Creator, should be encouraged and supported. For those who are sensitive to signs of God's hand in the physical world, such knowledge is evidence of His love and power.

Currently, there is widespread ethical agreement that human cloning should not be attempted. Proponents appear to be few. Safety concerns alone should be sufficient to rule out applications to humans at this time. But as reproductive biologists accumulate more experience with animal cloning, the procedure will become more efficient and cheaper. Attempts to clone humans can then be expected.

Christians have an opportunity now to reflect on the ethical issues that human cloning presents and to consider them in the context of abiding biblical

principles [6]. To do this ahead of time is an act of faith and of moral maturity.

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# When two become one: The mathematics of marriage

by Miguel Angel Nuñez

*When a man and a woman  
unite in marriage, a mysterious  
merging takes place. How can  
the individuality of each one be  
preserved in this oneness?*

John and Jane are two entirely different persons—different in upbringing, personality, and background. After much prayer, time, and counsel, they march to the altar and take the vow of becoming one flesh under the blessing of God. What does it mean becoming one? Is it possible for two differing persons to become “one”? Some would say no. The Bible, however, says yes.

But how does one understand the statement that two “shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Is it a mathematical mystery? Or is there something more to it?

## **The mathematics of annulment**

Some would argue that the Christian marriage is a miracle that transcends the simple rule of mathematics, giving us the equation  $1+1=1$ . Such an argument does not reflect the true meaning of Genesis 2:24 or the underlying biblical principle of oneness in marriage. If  $1+1=1$  is correct, it follows that one of the two must renounce self and become 0. Such a self-renunciation allows for a mathematical possibility ( $1+0=1$ ), but creates a theological difficulty.

Consider Elaine. She was one of those who seemed to have a very clear view of her future. She had every potential of becoming a successful professional. Always happy, always alert, she had a personality that would move her upward. However, when Elaine got married, she began to experience some small changes in her attitudes. Self-doubt and insecurity slowly intruded into her life. She did become a professional, but the high-level success seemed to elude her. She became quiet, laughing or smiling only when her husband was not around. She lived a quiet, sometimes painfully reclu-

sive life—seldom expressing herself even on such matters as the education of her children, the decor of her home, or the clothes she wore. Her husband decided everything.

You have met Elaine any number of times in every conceivable place. She carries on life as a routine, even portraying a pleasant image outside. But hidden within is a multitude of problems that go undetected by even the closest of friends or family members. Psychologists call this Identity Annulment Syndrome, seen more in women, and somewhat less in men.

Two significant characteristics mark this syndrome: a loss of decision-making ability and a slow transfer of control over everything to the spouse, including the most personal tastes. The result? A tremendous sense of frustration, not expressed verbally, but stored internally until one day it explodes in an emotional trauma. Fear, anguish, and emotional pain come to the surface.

Ellen White counsels that the wife “should not sacrifice her strength and allow her powers to lie dormant, leaning wholly upon her husband. Her individuality cannot be merged in his. She should feel that she is her husband’s equal—to stand by his side, she faithful at her post of duty and he at his.”<sup>1</sup>

Again she wrote: “God has given [the wife] a conscience, which she cannot violate with impunity. Her individuality cannot be merged into that of her husband....It is a mistake to imagine that with blind devotion she is to do exactly as her husband says in all things, when she knows that in so doing, injury would be worked for her body and her spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

Again, speaking to a newlywed couple, Ellen White said: "But while you are to blend as one, neither of you is to lose his or her individuality in the other. God is the owner of your individuality. Of Him you are to ask: What is right? What is wrong? How may I best fulfill the purpose of my creation?"<sup>3</sup>

Thus the ideal of biblical oneness does not permit the annulment or surrender of one to the other. A spouse is not to control the conscience of the other. Indeed God's creative activity involving a rib is a forceful symbol that Eve "was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal."<sup>4</sup> "Nobody gets married to have their personality destroyed or to be ignored by the spouse."<sup>5</sup>

### **The mathematics of mutilation**

If annulment of one person is not the answer to the problem of oneness, can we think of mutilation of both as a possible way to understand the concept? By mutilation, I mean each person gives up 50 percent of self. That would permit this formula to survive:  $0.5+0.5=1$ . Some Christian couples walk through this path for social and financial reasons, for the sake of children or to avoid failure. In the process, they are forced to give up many of their personal goals and dreams.

Of those who take this route, many are not even aware when they stopped being themselves to become someone else. "Both decided that their 'life' would be a 'way of life.' But as time went by, both must examine whether daily living is real life, agony . . . or death."<sup>6</sup> In fact, both are "half dead" because they have left 50 percent of their lives completely outside the relationship.

If the percentage is something else, say 40 percent by one and 60 percent by the other, the result could be even more disastrous. No, the answer to the problem of oneness in marriage does not lie

in the mathematics of mutilation—but in the mystery of love. But first, consider a major question.

### **Looking for a solution**

If you feel that any of the mathematical riddles described above fit your case, pause for a moment. What should you do to overcome the temptation of self-negation?

1. *Ask for help.* It is fairly easy not to be aware that your personality is slowly undergoing a process of annulment. Seek help from a Christian professional, preferably with pastoral background. Such help can enable you to rediscover and reinforce your unique personality.

2. *Unlearn.* Behavior is learned, and as such can also be unlearned. People give their lives to be managed by others for many reasons. Whenever people allow others to control them, to the point of not knowing who they are, they should try to find the cause. It may be family situations, unresolved childhood trauma, or some crisis that forced one partner to take charge.

3. *Express your feelings.* If you feel that you are not being heard, or that your spouse tends to put you down and take the upper hand, it's time to speak up. Communicate and be assertive. Help your spouse to appreciate and affirm the principle of mutuality in marriage.

4. *Study the purpose of marriage.* God gave husband and wife the responsibility to take care of each other. Husband and wife are to complement each other. While one cannot be the conscience for the other, both can be a source of strength to each other.

5. *Treat each other with mutual respect.* Husband and wife must understand that they are equal partners in a divinely ordained relationship. Both have responsibilities to preserve this relationship of mutual love and care.

### **The mystery of love**

Now, back to our question. What does "the two shall become one" mean?

When Mary and I began our married life, we had to face many conflicts that arose from our cultural differences and the way we did things. The first years were difficult ones. After trying to "convince" and impose our point of view on each other, we were finally able to take the high road of agreement. We began with simple things, like our meals. Personally, I do not like oil of any kind. My wife, on the other side, loves to add oil to everything. In the beginning, this was a struggle, trying to make the oil disappear from our table and pantry. But one day she discovered it was possible to cook without oil, adding it afterwards. For 14 years we have been cooking without oil at home, but those interested in eating with oil just add it on to their plate later. Problem solved.

For me, rest means lying down on a sofa to read a good book or listen to some music. For my wife, rest means taking a walk. In the beginning, I tried to convince her of the advantages of staying home to do a little reading. She, on the other hand, wanted me to understand the importance of going outdoors. Finally, we opted to take turns deciding what activity to do, even if the other one did not particularly like the choice. We were happy with the arrangement. Through the years, I have learned to appreciate a day outdoors, and my wife spends more time reading. What appears as a problem can be solved by mutual respect and consideration.

Oneness, therefore, does not mean eclipsing the other's personality. It means giving up self's desire to be master over another, and instead reach the high ground of mutual love and respect, and create the unity that is foundational for the success of marriage. The basic ingredient of this unity should, of course, be love.

### **Love is the solution**

Love is not selfish, does not seek its own. Born of free will, love seeks to give and not receive. Only those who do not

## Individuality and Annulment Test

Circle the answer that applies to you. Do not think about each statement for too long. Just circle the first thing that comes to mind. Usually that is the closest answer.

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Most of the time, at home, one spouse makes the decisions for both of us.  | Yes | No |
| 2. I usually give in to my spouse's ideas, ignoring my own.   | Yes | No |
| 3. I believe that for a marriage to work well, one must be "in charge" and the other one must follow.   | Yes | No |
| 4. I have gradually lost my own friends because my spouse doesn't like them.  | Yes | No |
| 5. We usually spend our free time doing things my wife/husband likes to do.   | Yes | No |
| 6. I feel that I have given in too many times to my spouse's choice.  | Yes | No |
| 7. My parents and others tell me I am not the same person I used to be. They think my spouse thinks for me.   | Yes | No |
| 8. I don't have any dreams or goals independent from those of my spouse.  | Yes | No |
| 9. I never spend any time alone. I do everything with him/her.  | Yes | No |
| 10. I feel that marriage is like a prison that has taken away my right to decide on my own.   | Yes | No |
| 11. The least important decisions are made by me. The most important ones are made by my spouse.  | Yes | No |
| 12. When my spouse is not there, I don't know how to resolve situations surrounding my life, especially problems. That is why I wait for him/her to get home to make decisions. | Yes | No |
| 13. I feel that my spiritual life is dependent on my spouse's relationship.   | Yes | No |
| 14. What we do today and in the future, in our lives and with our children, is decided by my spouse.  | Yes | No |

Each "YES" answer implies you suffer from Identity Annulment Syndrome. The more questions you answered "YES", the more help you need.

love demand submission and annulment.

No one unites with another in marriage to lose his or her individuality. To the contrary, we unite with a person who appreciates our uniqueness and dignity. A couple's relationship is a reciprocal commitment of mutual cooperation. Both are happy to see the other reach maximum potential.

Each person is unique. The saying that "God broke the mold after he made you" is not only true, but it should be repeated more often. There never was, and there never will be, anyone exactly like you or me. Therefore, in marriage, as we establish a love relationship, we are doing so with a very unique person. Love and respect for that uniqueness preserves the unity of the relationship.

A Chinese proverb says: "Do not walk in front of me, I cannot follow you. Do not walk behind me, I cannot be your guide. Walk by my side and I will be your friend." There lies the secret for a lasting, united love. Two different persons, walking side by side, hands clasped, hearts united, affirming that they are one in the mysterious relationship of marriage.

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*When Miguel Angel Nuñez wrote this article, he served as director of education and youth ministries of the Pacific Chile Mission. The ideas presented here have been developed fully in one of his books, Amar es todo (To Love Is Everything). His new address: Universidad Adventista del Plata; 25 de Mayo 99; 3103 Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos; Argentina. E-mail: miguelanp@hotmail.com*

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# God and history: A biblical perspective

By Siegfried J. Schwantes

*For Bible-believing Christians,  
history is not a perplexing  
puzzle but the outworking of  
God's purposes in the context  
of human freedom.*

History is a cyclic process, argues Socrates. History is linear, leading to a goal of God's own choosing, proclaim the biblical prophets.

History is no better than "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Thus said Shakespeare. History is where we see "behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will."<sup>1</sup> Thus said Ellen White, seeing an overarching divine design and purpose in history.

Between Greek philosophy and biblical prophecy, between humanism and revelation, we have a dichotomy regarding what history is all about. As Christians, it is imperative that we be fully informed of the biblical understanding of history. The Word of God affirms that God rules over the affairs of individuals and nations. Indeed, divine sovereignty in history is a deeply embedded biblical truth. Moses argued: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he fixed the boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of God" (Deuteronomy 32:8, NIV). Isaiah spoke about Cyrus as one chosen by God for freeing Israel from Babylonian captivity (Isaiah 45:1). Daniel underscored that God "changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them" (Daniel 2:21, NIV). The Apostle Paul believed that the coming of Jesus was within God's reckoning of time in history (Galatians 4:4). He further argued that the chief end of national and individual existence on this earth is a religious one: "He [God] made from

one every nation of men to live on the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him" (Acts 17:26, 27, RSV).

## God and the nations

Did God grant to every nation and civilization a "time of grace," an opportunity to seek after Him and find Him? Ellen White's comment on Paul's Acts 17 speech leaves no room for doubt: "Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of 'the Watcher and the Holy One.' Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world's great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. With each of these, as with nations of less power, history repeated itself. Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another."<sup>2</sup>

Consider Babylon. Its religious speculations led it to an ever-deepening morass of superstition and obscurantism. Babylon might have known God. Indeed, the Lord even placed it in contact with His people during the captivity. But Babylon failed to see God's workings in history.

Egypt presents no better picture. Despite the promising glimmer in the days of Ikhnaton, when people's search for truth led them to the idea of one supreme divinity, rank polytheism held Egypt captive. The powerful priests of Amon in Thebes crushed the budding religious aspirations of the Amarna Age.

At Ikhnaton's death the court returned to Thebes, and the religious insights of Ikhnaton bore no fruit.

On the other hand, history shows that God's "allotted periods" were not entirely fruitless. In Persia, in the seventh century B.C., Zoroaster distinguished himself by remarkable insights into religious truth. He replaced the conflicting claims of Persian polytheism by a belief in Ahura Mazda, the god of truth and light. Zoroastrianism recognized a protracted struggle in which the forces of good would eventually prevail, in the final judgment.

In the dimness of such light and in the brightness of biblical revelation, God's role in history is clearly recognized. Ellen White, in perfect harmony with biblical writers, endorsed the providential view of history: "In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. The Bible reveals the true philosophy of history."<sup>3</sup>

### **History as unfolding of God's work**

Eusebius (c. 260-c. 340 A.D.), bishop of Caesarea and first historian of the Christian Church, argued that the broken threads of humanity's past could be woven into a meaningful whole if history was seen as a preparation for the gospel. Only thus could the incongruities of history with all its woes and unfulfilled hopes be interpreted as meaningful within a divine plan. Deriving his main inspiration from Paul, Eusebius recognized in history an intelligible pattern. To him, history moved not haphazardly, but toward a goal of God's own choice.

This is not to say that history proves

God's role in human affairs. But history in its inevitable march toward a divine goal reveals God to the eye of faith, just as nature in all its beauty and pain reveals God to the eye of faith. Of God's overruling providence in history there is enough evidence to sustain faith, though never so overwhelming as to compel it. Thus history makes sense to the believer, while remaining an obscure riddle to the unbeliever.

The truth of a divine providence guiding the course of events toward an eschatological goal is best sensed when a multiplicity of factors are perceived as contributing toward the fulfilment of a divine purpose in history. Thus the Apostle Paul writes of the "fullness of time" as the critical moment when "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who were under the law" (Galatians 4:4, NKJV). The climatic moment in redemptive history could not come until preparatory conditions had been fulfilled. The apostle might have had in mind the fulfilment of a time prophecy like that of Daniel 9:24 to 27. But certainly more was included under "the fullness of time." A series of historical trends were paving the way for the coming of the Messiah: the unification of the ancient world that followed the sweeping victories of Alexander (336-323 B.C.); the diffusion of Greek language and ideas from Greece to the borders of India; one common language and culture creating a "global village"; and the increasing evilness of human nature crying out for deliverance.<sup>4</sup>

When the Roman empire absorbed the Greek-speaking world, Roman skills in jurisprudence and territorial administration imposed order and safety within its borders. Roman rule also opened up the arteries of commerce and built a network of roads. Navigation in the Mediterranean was made much safer by the virtual elimination of piracy.

Another "fullness of time" factor that facilitated the dissemination of the gos-

pel was the ubiquity of the Jewish *diaspora*. Jewish merchants and synagogues were to be found in most of the major cities of the Roman empire. The synagogues attracted many God-fearing citizens impressed with the monotheistic faith of the Jews and their high moral standards, which contrasted with those of the Gentiles. These proselytes, already familiar with the teachings of the Old Testament, were much more easily persuaded to embrace the Christian message, as the Book of Acts clearly shows.

That one historical factor might favor the advance of God's kingdom on earth doesn't carry much persuasive force *per se*. But when several factors, as listed above, converge in the same direction, skepticism would seem unjustified.

### **The Reformation in divine providence**

Another important event with earthshaking consequences for religious history was the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. It too bears the tokens of divine guidance of the ongoing historical process. Preparatory trends converged to make the revolution a success—a success hard to imagine in the preceding centuries. Five such trends can easily be identified:

1. Feudalism was losing its grip upon the economic life of Western Europe. With cities flourishing and becoming more assertive in the political arena, and with agriculture becoming less influential, feudalism was gradually waning, and individuals were freer to determine their destiny in both politics and religion.

2. Ruling monarchs in France, England, and Spain were gaining the upperhand in the struggle with feudal lords and the church. There was a growing discontent with church interference in the affairs of the state. The state increasingly resented and resisted the drain of resources by the papal curia.

3. The so-called reforming councils

of Constance (1414-1418) and Basel (1431-1449) failed in their attempt to reform a recalcitrant Papacy, and the conflicting claims of legitimacy by different contenders for the papal throne—at one time there were three rival popes—contributed in no small measure to the loss of papal prestige. The commanding authority of a pope like Innocence III was a thing of the past.

4. The Renaissance, first in Italy, and later throughout Western Europe with its admiration for the riches of Greek and Roman civilization, and its slogan of “back to the sources,” encouraged the study of Christian sources as well. The Bible and the patristic literature were studied more than ever, and showed the glaring discrepancy between biblical religion and the distortions it suffered during the Middle Ages. Writers like Erasmus pressed for a reform of the church in “head and limbs.”

5. Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press (c. 1450) increased the flow of books, especially the Bible, to the common people. For example, before 1500, only 92 editions of the Vulgate Bible were already available. Gutenberg’s moving press catapulted Luther’s 95 Theses throughout Western Europe.

The convergence of these and similar trends paved the way for the success of the Protestant Reformation. Does this not suggest the guiding hand of divine Providence in the affairs of the nations, while allowing for individual decisions? Such an understanding, better than any other, appeals to the unbiased student of history. The unfolding of events may seem slow to the casual student, “[b]ut like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God’s purposes know no haste and no delay.”<sup>5</sup>

History remains tragic because human alienation from God cannot be overcome by divine fiat. Some appalling tragedies, such as monstrous tyrannies or massive genocides, will never be fully understood by humans this side of the final Judgment. Though tragic, histo-

ry—even secular history—partakes of an overall design. God gives human beings the freedom to choose and to act, even against His will.

### **History, church, and freedom**

History is neither meaningless nor inconsequential. Even though the divine presence in the historical process is shrouded in mystery, enough glimpses of God’s concern are revealed to make the biblical view credible. Of these intimations, none is as significant as God’s redemptive plan on the cross. Anchored in history, the Christ event makes all history reveal a providential design.

The tragedies of history are the result of human struggle for self-assertion. They should not blind us to the evidence of an overruling providence. Hence the mission of the church as the herald of reconciliation takes on special meaning. But this mission would be hampered if there were no freedom for men and women to make their spiritual choices.

Therefore, every instance of progress toward greater political and religious freedom becomes an evidence of a divine intent to bring about the best climate for genuine Christian decision. In the arena of moral decisions, history must ever surround us with a measure of freedom. Through His guiding providence, God acts toward preserving and expanding the areas of freedom. To reverse this trend would be to defeat His redemptive purpose.

Some scholars have advocated a deterministic view of history, as if event followed event in a chain of causal connections, no different from the chain of cause and effect that operates in nature. But as Isaiah Berlin states, “The evidence for a thoroughgoing determinism is not at hand.”<sup>6</sup> If it were, the laws of historical causation would long ago have been discovered.

The biblical view of history rejects determinism as undermining personal

responsibility, basic to the biblical understanding of the human as a free moral agent. It also rejects the view that history is completely undetermined—that it presents no recognizable pattern. The view closest to the biblical perspective is that history reflects, albeit dimly, God’s eternal purpose.

### **History and God’s eternal purpose**

A simple illustration may clarify how human freedom and God’s sovereign oversight can coexist. Imagine a ship full of passengers ready to depart to a destination known only to the captain. The general direction of the ship as it crosses the ocean is under the captain’s control. He knows the port of destination and the best route to reach it. At the same time the passengers on board

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are free to act and move at will, with elbow room for all. The captain's control of the ship's destination does not interfere with the relative freedom of the passengers. Thus the ship of history moves forward under divine guidance, while plenty of freedom is allowed to every human being to make personal choices. Providence may use any of several alternatives to direct the sequence of events according to a heavenly plan. This divine supervision is admittedly discreet so as not to thwart human freedom, on the one hand, and not to deprive the human necessity of walking by faith, on the other. Though never obtru-

sive, divine providence is as pervasive as the air we breathe.

There are, of course, historians who are committed neither to the deterministic nor to the providential view of history. When confronted with an unexpected denouement in a perplexing plot, they have no other recourse than to appeal to the "fortuitous concurrence of lucky factors." But for a historian to introduce chance or accident as an explanatory principle is to disclaim any knowledge of the real cause.

Speculations on the "ifs" of history are sterile except to stress the element of

contingency in history. At times, events may seem to be trifles. If it had not rained on the morning of the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon's artillery might have maneuvered to advantage, and the defeat turned to victory. The Christian substitutes "providence" for "fortune" or "accident," and argues that divine providence works to bring together the appropriate alternatives so as to produce the best result coherent with the divine plan.

Harris Harbinson, formerly professor of history at Princeton University, well summarizes the Christian view: "Where materialists may see mere blind process, where rationalists may see evident progress, he will see providence—a divine *providing* in both the conscious decisions and the unintended results of history, a purpose partly revealed and partly concealed, a destiny which is religious in the deepest meaning of the word, in which human freedom and divine guidance complete each other in some mysterious way."<sup>7</sup>

*Siegfried J. Schwantes (Ph.D., The Johns Hopkins University), born in Brazil, taught church history in many educational institutions and authored The Biblical Meaning of History (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1970). His address: 1013 Meadowhill Rd.; Silver Spring, Maryland 20901-1527; U.S.A.*

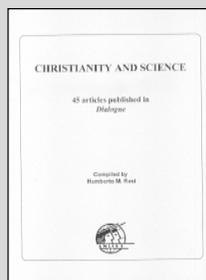
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2. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
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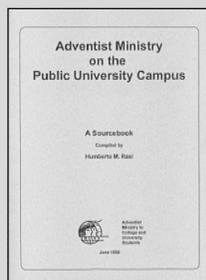
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# In the name of the law!

By Roberto Badenas

*God's law is more didactic than imposing, more revealing than legislative.*

**O**f all discussions that arise from the Bible, none is more controversial or polemic than the subject of the law. Perhaps not everyone knows, but the best legislations in history have had their roots in the biblical concept of the law. The reverse is also true: In the name of this law, many abuses have occurred, holy wars have been fought, slavery has been justified, family planning is condemned, women have been held subordinate, figurative arts have been excluded, and blood transfusions forbidden.

How did law—a fundamental element in God's order for life—become such a controversial issue?

## **The unlawful use of the law**

Our difficulties with God's law come not only from our transgression of it but also from our errors of perspective concerning its functions. Many of these problems can be traced to what George Knight calls "our unlawful uses of the law."<sup>1</sup>

Despite the fact that it is holy, just, and good (Romans 7:12), God's law may be used in a way that is bad, unholy, and unjust. It may be employed for purposes for which it was not given. In fact, one of the constant temptations of the believer is to use God's law in a wrong way. For example, in the name of the law, a group of men brought before Jesus a woman caught in adultery—not so much to uphold the law but to trap Jesus in a theological and legal tangle (John 8:1-11). "Should He acquit the woman, He might be charged with despising the law of Moses. Should He declare her worthy of death, He could be accused to the Romans as one who was

assuming authority that belonged only to them."<sup>2</sup> The rabbinical plea to the law in this instance was a mere pretext for condemning two persons. But Jesus took the incident and turned it to expose the hypocrisy of the rabbis, to stress the sinner's need of the forgiveness of divine grace, and to point in the direction of a new life.

To Jesus, holding to the letter of the law is not enough (Matthew 5:20). True respect for the law requires respect for the spirit behind every precept. Thus the commandment "not to kill" requires also not to hurt or attack even verbally (Matthew 5:21-26). The precept concerning adultery speaks not only against the physical act, but also the thought and the look (Matthew 5:27, 28). What this suggests is that the only right way of understanding the law is seeking for the principles behind the precepts.

Another unlawful way of using the law is to find in its obedience the means of salvation. Many Pharisees were guilty of this. The Galatian heresy had to do with such misrepresentation of the law. Paul knew well this problem. Having lived as a Pharisee until his encounter on the road to Damascus, he prided himself in legalism—blameless in respect to the keeping of the law (Philippians 3:4-6). But when he accepted the good news of Jesus, Paul understood that legalism cannot save a person, and that salvation is possible only through faith in Jesus (Romans 1:16, 17; Ephesians 2:8). The law in itself has no power to save, and to attribute such power to it is a theological farce that does great damage to our understanding of God's appointed way of redemption.

But, then, does not the law have a

role in the life of a person saved by God's grace? One of the most common and most serious confusions in salvation history "is the failure to make a clear distinction between what one must do to be moral and what one must do to be saved."<sup>3</sup> That was the blunder of the Pharisees. Their optimistic view of human nature led them to an erroneous perception of sin. They thought that any human being could overcome sin on the same basis as the unfallen Adam. They believed that everyone could still live according to God's will by faithfully keeping the law. This limited view of the power of sin (Romans 3:9) affected the Pharisees' understanding of the purpose of the law, by advocating that obedience to the law was God's appointed way to obtain righteousness.

Although Paul and the Protestant Reformers demonstrated the fallacies of this belief, this optimistic view of humans and this distorted view of the law are still

alive among Christians of all denominations, including Seventh-day Adventists.

We need to realize, as Ellen White wrote, that "it was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin, our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law."<sup>4</sup>

### The intended use of the law

If our sinful nature is unable to fulfill God's requirements anymore, what, then, is the purpose of the law? Paul mentions several.

The first function is juridical. Like any other code of laws, God's law has a "civil" role. Paul says that the law was given "because of transgressions" (Galatians 3:19, KJV)\*. The first goal of the written law is to limit, avoid or prevent human transgressions as much as possi-

ble, in order to restrain evil. In this sense, "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient" (1 Timothy 1:9).

The second function of the law is theological. "By the law," Paul wrote, "is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). He further argued that were it not for the law, he would not have known that he was a sinner (Romans 7:7). One of the most humiliating realities of life is that we are not always aware of our shortcomings. In this context, the law functions like a mirror (James 1:23), revealing us as we really are. The mirror reveals our blemish and our need for improvement, but it is unable to remove the blemish. So it is with the law of God. It reveals our problems, it tells us we are sinners, but it cannot bring about any change. It accomplishes an important role—that of revealing sin—but it cannot remedy the situation. For the remedy, we must turn to Jesus.

## Two ways of looking at God's law

### Pharisaism

The law is holy, righteous, and good.  
 The law is spiritual.  
 The law reveals God's character.  
 The law helps me to do God's will.  
 To know the law is all I need to do God's will and liberate my life from sin.  
 I can fulfill the requirements of the law by my own will.  
 The law leads to life.  
  
 The law is fulfilled by keeping the commandments.  
 Righteousness is obtained through faithfulness to the law.  
 The faithful believer lives under the law.  
  
 The law is an end in itself for righteousness.  
 Righteousness is a matter of behavior.  
 The law is viewed without consideration of human nature (optimistic view of man).  
 One could feel "blameless" as to the righteousness required by the law. (Phil. 3:4-6).  
 The law is the definitive master.

### The Apostle Paul

The law is holy, righteous, and good (Rom. 7:12)  
 The law is spiritual, but I am flesh, sold into slavery under sin (Rom. 7:14).  
 The law reveals God's character and also my sinful character (Rom. 7:7).  
 The law condemns my incapacity to do God's will (Rom. 7:15-24).  
 The law cannot liberate me from the bondage of sin: the liberation has come to me through Christ (Rom. 8:13).  
 My mind set in the flesh is not able to subject itself to the law of God. I can fulfill the requirements of the law only through the Spirit (Rom. 8:4-9).  
 The law (intended to lead to life) results in death (Rom. 7:10-13) because of my sin.  
 The law is fulfilled by living in the *agape* love (Rom. 13:8-10).  
  
 Righteousness is obtained apart from the works of the law through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:20-28).  
 Believers are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). Life is centered in Christ (Gal. 2:20).  
 Christ is the end of the law for righteousness (Rom. 10:4).  
 Righteousness is a matter of relationship/faith (Rom. 4:13, 14).  
 The law is considered from the perspective of humanity's sinful nature (realistic view) (Rom. 7:14-20).  
 Even as a Christian, Paul did not feel he had reached up to the requirements of the law (Rom. 7:7-25).  
 The law leads people to the definitive Master, who is Christ (Gal. 3:24).

The Lutherans have traditionally tended to deny to the law any other role than the civil and the theological. Whether the law has a third function has been much discussed among Protestants. The third role is a spiritual one. If the law comes from God and if it is the transcript of His character, it must necessarily reveal God's will for us. If God commands love and condemns injustice, it is because He Himself is loving and just. Paul observed that "the law is...holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12, 14). The law shows that God's ideal for every human being is to reflect His character. And since God does not change, the principles of His law are also the permanent standards of judgment, from Eden to the end of time (Romans 2:12-16; Revelation 14:6-12).

No wonder the New Testament affirms that Spirit-led believers are those who respect God's will (Revelation 14:12). According to John Calvin, this "third use" is the "principal use of the law among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns.... Here is the best instrument for them to learn more thoroughly each day the nature of the Lord's will to which they aspire."<sup>5</sup>

None of the three uses of the law has anything to do with our justification. While the law does not provide salvation, it does offer ethical and spiritual guidance for the believer. "The law sends us to Christ to be justified, and Christ sends us to the law to be regulated."<sup>6</sup>

On the one hand, the law always points to the gospel for assurance of salvation, and on the other, the gospel always invites us to a more sensitive respect of the law. That is why Paul could state that faith establishes the law (Romans 3:31).

### **The insufficiency of the law**

The law itself points out its own limitations. The entire sanctuary system of the Hebrew dispensation teaches us that. The law shows the transgression and con-

victs the sinner of that transgression. But the law cannot do anything to expiate the transgression. Until Jesus came, the sinner had to turn to the services of the sanctuary. In the name of the law, the sinner was invited to seek salvation outside the law (Romans 3:21). Expiation for sin is God's affair (Leviticus 16). The blood provided for expiation was to be given by God (Leviticus 17:11). It is God who justifies. It is God who sanctifies (Leviticus 20:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24).

The New Testament shows that all redemptive work, shadowed in the earthly sanctuary, was accomplished through Christ (Romans 3:27-31). Thus "Christ is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4). In Him culminates the law as revelation, and through Him all that the law demands becomes a reality.

As Ellen White states, "Through the imputed righteousness of Christ, the sinner may feel that he is pardoned, and may know that the law no more condemns him, because he is in harmony with all its precepts....By faith he lays hold of the righteousness of Christ and responds with love and gratitude for the great love of God in giving His only begotten Son, who died in order to bring to light, life and immortality through the gospel. Knowing himself to be a sinner, a transgressor of the holy law of God, he looks to the perfect obedience of Christ, to His death upon Calvary for the sins of the world; and he has the assurance that he is justified by faith in the merit and sacrifice of Christ. He realizes that the law was obeyed in his behalf by the Son of God, and that the penalty of transgression cannot fall upon the believing sinner. The active obedience of Christ clothes the believing sinner with the righteousness that meets the demands of the law."<sup>7</sup>

### **Human resistance to the law**

Despite the fact that the principles of the law reveal God's will for us, we tend to see the law mainly as an obstacle to freedom. While we recognize the advan-

tages of respecting a certain order, our human nature resists any restriction. We expect others to respect the law, but we find it hard ourselves to submit to its discipline.

The need for the law is clear and logical, but we tend to minimize its obligations. Nature demands the presence of the law, and human nature knows the need for it. But knowing is one thing, and doing is something else. Human happiness is the instructive function of the divine law. The law is meant to focus toward that which is good, to show the difference between good and evil, respect and violence, justice and injustice. The law draws a security line between these polarities, and provides us with a fence to keep us secure. The law's imperative mode is nothing but God's expression of love.

### **Law's didactic function**

Paul compares the function of the law to the task of a schoolmaster who prepares the child to follow the instructions of a higher teacher. He says the law was "to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).

In the Bible, often prohibitions precede orders. For instance, the commandment "You shall not murder" (NKJV) comes before any development about love toward our fellow men. For we could not realize the value of life if any previous prohibition did not oblige us to refrain our violent passions. The prohibition of killing stops our aggressive impulses and obliges us to meditate on the consequences of our decision.

While life constantly obliges us to choose, the law helps us to choose well. It teaches us that failing to choose is a dangerous option and that asking for God's guidance means more, not less freedom. This is the reason why the Bible calls the law "the perfect law of freedom" (James 1:25, Jerusalem Bible).

In its didactic function, the law teaches us where our values are. Each prohibition and each command asserts

*Continued on page 28.*



## Kay Kuzma

*Dialogue with an Adventist with a passion  
for family values*

**W**atch her teaching on satellite television. Sit in one of her seminars. Talk to one of her college students. Or read any one of her numerous publications. You will instantly discover that Kay Kuzma is a person with a passion—a spiritual passion for family values and happiness. Married to a biostatistician and a mother of three grown children, Dr. Kuzma (known by most as Dr. Kay) is a well-respected educator, author, and public speaker. Whatever she does carries a concern for today's young families—their survival at a time and in a culture that seem to erode the concept of togetherness and family time, so valued not so long ago.

Dr. Kuzma graduated from La Sierra University, obtained a masters in child development at Michigan State University, earned an Ed.D. in early childhood education from the University of California, Los Angeles, and is the founder and speaker of Family Matters, a non-profit Christian organization established in 1982 to promote wholesome family relationships. She has published more than 35 books, written hundreds of articles, appeared on numerous television programs, spoken at many women's retreats, conducted seminars on parenting and marriage, and hosts a daily radio program, Got a Minute for Your Family? currently syndicated on more than 800 outlets.

Kuzma's writing career began as part of a husband-wife New Year's resolution some years ago. Her husband, Jan, suggested that each of them write an article during the year. "He wrote two," recalls Kuzma with a chuckle, "and they were both published. I wrote one, and it was rejected." After the rejection, she says she never thought she would write again. But a few years later, she read an article promoting spanking as a way to discipline children. She says, "I was infuriated! I was so angry that I yelled at my husband, 'How can they do this?'" He replied, "If you feel so strongly about it, don't yell at me; write a rebuttal." When Dr. Kuzma saw her first article in print, she says, "Something happened to me. It was as if God placed a burden on my heart to write." She sees her success as a calling and gift from God and believes that He has opened the door for her to share an important message with the world. As a result, thousands have been blessed.

The Association of Adventist Women, recognizing Kuzma's contribution, recently honored her with the 1998 Woman of the Year award in family life.

■ *What do you see as the most important challenge facing the family?*

The character of our children. If we train our children appropriately in the early years, and treat them in such a way that they see God as a loving God, many problems will be alleviated. Character development is a very broad as-

signment, because it includes basically everything—behavior, thoughts, attitudes, desires, and emotions. I've tried to focus on building a comprehensive program that takes kids all the way from the birth through high school—as they prepare for marriage and the rearing of the next generation.

Most parents don't take a parenting course until they are having problems with their children. When their two-year-old stomps his little foot and says "No!" parents begin to think, "Well, how can I get him to say 'Yes'?" My suggestion is that before a baby is dedicated, parents should take a short course to learn about character development. They should be taught how a child develops and what they can expect at different stages. That's why I've developed the baby dedication materials and helped with the *Ladder of Life* series (published by Review & Herald).

■ *How can people have a marriage relationship that will not only last, but also thrive?*

Start at the beginning. Even before marriage, it's very important to make appropriate decisions. It's easy to "fall in love" with anybody, if you share enough of yourself with them. But many of the people who you fall in love with are not the kind of people who would be easy to live with.

In marriage, commitment is absolutely vital. If both have a commitment to each other and to their marriage, then they can face any difficulty with God's help. Through sickness or financial loss or whatever the crisis, they can work it out if they are committed to their marriage. Love can be renewed.

Look at marriage as a series of relational "banking" transactions. You make certain deposits into your spouse's account and certain withdrawals. If you're making too many withdrawals because of your criticism or anger, or because you're not spending enough time together, you'll soon find your love account will have little or nothing left.

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And if you're making too many deposits into someone else's life who is not your spouse, or they are making deposits into yours, that person's account will grow in your heart, and you'll begin to fall in love with the other person. That's how affairs start. So the goal is to keep your spouse's love account full to overflowing. Be very careful about withdrawals.

■ *Many college or graduate school students are busy trying to juggle a marriage, children, course work, and a part-time job. What can they do to make their lives a little more manageable?*

It is very difficult to raise a family and pursue an education. I encourage young people to get as much education as possible before they have children, because generally with more education they can demand more flexibility in their future employment, which will allow them to be with their families when it really counts.

When you're trying to go to school and you have a spouse and children to support, it is a time-demanding situation and something generally has to give. In too many cases, children end up getting the raw deal—they spend hours in daycare and only see their tired parents when they get home. They often grow up without the parental attention they need to really feel loved.

If student families are beginning to feel the stress of too much to do and their children are suffering, they must re-evaluate and plan their educational training and careers to fit the stage of where their families are. It may mean making financial sacrifices, but if you meet the emotional needs of your spouse and children, then everything

else will come in time. You'll have an opportunity later on to get your education and the job you've been wanting.

Don't try to do it all if your family ends up being sacrificed.

And don't try to accomplish everything alone. Humble yourself and ask for the help you need from your church family or friends so your children don't have to suffer. If you're stressed out, with raw emotions, you will probably take out your frustrations on the people you live with. A good support group can help you through such situations. Also, parents whose children have grown are wonderful resources. Often, they would enjoy taking care of a baby while the mother is in an evening class a couple times a week.

■ *Many times when people are in difficult situations, they are afraid to see a counselor for help. How do you encourage them to seek help?*

I advise them to look at counseling as a tutorial program—like an independent study class in graduate school. You can go to a big class for general advice or to counseling for individual tutorial help where you can learn much faster and move more quickly toward solutions for your problems.

Small group programs can help people learn why they do what they do. Drs. Ron and Nancy Rockey, members of the Faith for Today family health ministry team, believe that the majority of people who have emotional problems can, with the Lord's help, deal with these situations if they have the correct information. Rockeys have developed an excellent set of videotapes and manuals that can help students learn about themselves (contact Faith for Today or Family Matters).

The knowledge the Lord has given us to heal broken relationships is incredible. Those of us who believe He is coming soon should know that God wants the hearts of the parents to be turned to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents. And I believe the Lord is helping us put this information together so families can find healing and be ready for His return.

■ *What would you say to students as they face important decisions in their lives?*

As I look back at my life, failures have always been steppingstones to success. I really think that any person who reaches success does not do so in a vacuum. In my life, a network of family and friends cared enough to give a little extra of their time to encourage me and help me get above and beyond where I ever thought I could go.

God gave me this vocation. It was not my plan, but God opened the doors. When we are able to get an education, it is a gift that we get from those who encourage us and it is a gift from God. Because it is a gift, we have a responsibility to do something for others. "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:18, NIV).

### **Interview by Michael Peabody.**

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## Manuel Escorcio

*Dialogue with a South African international singer*

**M**anuel, a freshman student at Helderberg College in South Africa, was singing in the shower. The dormitory preceptor followed the music, listened from the hallway, and later suggested that Manuel join the choir and augment his talent with voice lessons. From that day on, Manuel Escorcio has not stopped singing.

Escorcio is a legend in South Africa where, as principal resident tenor for the Cape Town City Opera, he sang in over 40 productions ranging from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* to Donizetti's *The Barber of Seville* and Lehar's *The Student Prince*. Dedicated fans voted him twice as South Africa's "Most Popular Singer"—in 1986 and 1990. Three of his 27 recordings have achieved gold status and one has gone platinum. His compact disk *Symphony of Praise* won "Best Gospel CD" award in 1996.

Escorcio graduated from Helderberg College in 1972 with a theology diploma. Although he had planned to serve as a church pastor, his musical talent drew him away from that goal into the exhilaration of public musical performance. He completed a baccalaureate in music at the University of Stellenbosh in 1976, and then studied under talented mentors in South Africa and England.

Escorcio earned a Master of Music degree in 1982 at the University of Cape Town. His dissertation, "Parallelisms and Analogies Between the Genre of Opera and the Genre of Drama in Shakespearean Plays," describes the direction his life had taken since that musical shower at Helderberg. Awards and successes came in multiples for Escorcio. The Portuguese government awarded him the title of "Comendador of the Order of Prince Henry the Navigator." In Salzburg, Austria, he won the award as "Best Singer" from the Academy of Music. And his native land lauded him as the "Most Popular Personality in the Performing Arts."

Then in 1992, confronted with a feeling of personal emptiness, Manuel Escorcio returned to his religious roots. "I wanted to do something more positive than self-centered performing," he says. "I wanted to serve God fully."

■ You were a highly successful opera star; now you are in a Christian musical ministry. What is the difference, and how do you feel about the change?

As an opera star I was in it for myself, just "to make a great noise" so people could see how good I was. My entire vocal experience was directed toward vocal prowess—to show off what I could do. I wanted applause for myself and desired the greatest possible number of solo bows. Although I still need vocal prowess and excellence, the primary

function now is the message rather than the vocal technique. I am not in this to sing lower or higher than the next guy. My music has become subservient to God's message. I have become a vehicle for Him, a voice imbued with the Holy Spirit. Best of all, I have never been happier!

■ Why did you choose to change?

I was tired of the empty, angry, pride-filled world of the opera. It's a very lonely place. There are always a dozen singers waiting for the moment when your voice fails you. You're alone in a place where no one will step in to help you. The opera is also an unbalanced and volatile world where every department is empty of Christ and filled with superficiality. I had everything—money, fame, praise—and yet nothing. I was miserable.

■ Do you miss singing opera music?

No. I cannot do that anymore. Not since the Holy Spirit spoke to me in 1990. A Christian friend came to me in one of those special moments of need and urged me to face the issue of my spiritual connections. Remember, I studied opera for 13 years. I had compromised on the Sabbath and much more. He showed me that it was time to come back.

■ You left a high-visibility, well-paying job when you resigned as principal resident tenor at the Cape Town City Opera. What has happened to your career since then?

I am on an adventure with God, and my life is a ministry. Occasionally I sing some light classical music and sell art pieces from artists I value as a way to se-

cure income so I am able to give life to my ministry. Imagine how special this is. I receive an invitation from a friend or an acquaintance who loves good music and fine art. So, I load my Volkswagen van with art, a stereo system, background tapes and a box of CDs and travel to their home for an evening of music and ministry. My job that evening is to share my best friend Jesus with my new friends at the home. Many times there will be 60 or 70 of the neighbors who have come to buy paintings, socialize, and listen to good music. Me? I am there to minister!

■ *What brought you to add fine art sales to the music on these social evenings?*

I discovered that quality paintings gave me a perfect opportunity to talk about God. Somehow I seem to know what people are looking for and so they contact me asking for specific types of original art. I locate what they want, bring it to the exhibitions and then talk with them, honestly. The first way for me to communicate about God is to be an honest art dealer—a Christian with Christ’s business ethics. Invariably, along with the art, I give them a gospel cassette or a compact disk. Often, I speak long and joyfully about my Christian principles and discuss how God wants to be part of their life.

■ *What makes this ministry effective for you?*

People trust me. You can never give a Bible study without first connecting to the people. Make them your friends. Show them that you can be trusted. Don’t use your Bible as an AK-47 to eliminate the opposition and prove your truth. Instead use the Bible to share the love of Christ and make them your friends. Talk about Jesus and emphasize the points that connect us as Christians.

■ *Your personality is a blend of energy and emotion. How do you “keep on giving” day*

*after day?*

I try to keep fit. I jog three to four times per week and eat healthfully to keep my energy level high. I walk alone in nature, listen to good music, read great books, and revel in God’s love. Giving can only happen in proportion to the energy I have. I give, not just an operatic act, but a real giving—sharing, communicating, comforting, strengthening, and building the body of Christ. You see, for me there is no such thing as an audience anymore. They are now just my friends and it is my job to “break the bubble,” to get straight through to their hearts. One minute we laugh and the next minute we cry. All the time I am giving straight from my heart to their hearts. It is exhausting! And it is the most energizing thing I do! There is one other thing. The “giving” comes from God, not me. What he gives me I must pass on. I cannot help it.

■ *What is your greatest hope?*

To hear success stories from the people who have failed: the drunks, the policeman killer, the ones who went to the depths and are now experiencing the miracle of grace. To be reminded often that grace is not a theory but the real thing! I want to be a small instrument in God’s wheel of life. Then, when God pours the oil of the Holy Spirit on me, the wheel flies!

■ *What counsel do you have for how music should be used in the church?*

We must use music that reaches into the hearts of children. I love classical organ and “Almighty” music for church worship. But, God is like my father. He has many different facets. Sometimes He is a judge. At other times He is a teacher, friend, listener, and more. We must not use all of our energy to portray Him as the stern long-haired judge. We must show Him as the one whose life is filled with fun! Imagine, He makes hippos fat and cuddly and the entire host of angels breaks out laughing. Then, He

makes giraffes and the whole angelic host sings aloud at the sight. God is never boring. He is always varied and challenging, and our music must show Him as He is. We must cast aside our preconceptions and make music that draws children to Christ. When we reach the children, we reach the future.

■ *What advice do you have for young Christians who have great musical talent?*

Four things: (1) Do not allow harsh criticism to discourage you from pursuing what God asks you to do. (2) As you feel and develop your music idiom/language/style, do it with guidance from God. His pure, sincere, honest, grace-filled love will run farther than you can run away. Don’t accept a cheap Jesus; instead, revel in the richness of His gift and share it with joy. (3) Never abandon Jesus because of what another person may have done or said to you. (4) Do not forget the basics. To be special means to be different inside, in your attitudes and decisions. Your difference is the difference of grace. Focus there.

## Interview by Dick Duerksen.

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By Ulrich Frikart

# Experience the power of God's Word

**T**he Bible is the undisputed best-seller of the world. Each year more than 30 million copies in 350 languages are sold in more than 170 countries. Many more millions of Bible portions are available in more than 2,000 dialects. The smallest Bible ever printed has the length of a match: 4.5 cm. It is 3 cm. wide and 2 cm. thick. This little 878-page booklet was printed in England. It weighs no more than 20 grams. I always carry with me a minuscule copy of the whole Bible. This 3 x 4 cm. microfilm contains the entire Bible on a scale of 1:48,400; its text is perfectly readable with a microscope or when projected on a screen. Quite a curiosity!

Yet the Bible is also the least understood book!

"He who believes knows more," Erich Kästner once wrote. In a society characterized by crumbling values, creeds, and philosophies of all kinds, it is highly meaningful for us to rediscover the importance of God's revelation, so as to fill the existential emptiness within us. The true knowledge that gives our lives meaning and makes us conscious of our responsibility within society can be found only in God's Word. If we reject "the word of the Lord...what wisdom is in them?" (Jeremiah 8:9, KJV) "For the Lord gives wisdom" (Proverbs 2:6, NIV).

God reveals Himself in His Word. There we discover who He is, His plans for us, His promises, requirements, and judgments. The pursuit of that discovery, the face-to-face confrontation with the God of that discovery, gives our life purpose and meaning both individually and collectively. Accept Him, and life rises to

new heights. Reject Him, and the results are unthinkable.

## Where are we?

The need to be sure as to where we stand in relationship to God and His Word becomes paramount when we realize the seriousness of the controversy that is raging between the God of truth and life and the god of falsehood and death, between Christ and Satan. "Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. But within the domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated."<sup>1</sup>

This controversy involves a battle for the allegiance of the human mind and heart. "Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things."<sup>2</sup> If our allegiance belongs to Satan, the consequences for our life and purpose would be just the opposite. For Satan's studied purpose is to misdirect our liberty and autonomy, free us from all restraints, and lead us to reject God and His absolute requirements.

Here's where the Bible plays a crucial role. It not only gives us a proper perspective of where we stand and what we ought to do in this controversy, it also guides us in our decision making process. It shows us what is right and wrong, and helps us to choose that

which is right. A mind dwelling on the Word of God, reflecting on its purposes, and obeying its directions cannot but be in tune with the Author of the Word. The apostle was right: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, KJV).

Regardless of when in history we live, the spiritual state of God's people has always depended upon their attitude toward God's Word. No distinction as to the relevancy of the Bible can be drawn between Old and New Testament times, between the age when theology reigned as queen and the age when the electronic superhighway seems to push us up to dizzy heights, or between today and tomorrow.

The Bible will always be "a lamp" unto our feet and "a light" unto our path (Psalm 119:105). Confess its faith, study its theology, obey its call, practice its principles, and you will always find life on a better and more fulfilling course. You will always find yourself the wise man who built his house on the solid rock. Come wind, come rain, come chaos, come despair, the house will stand. "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" shall enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21, 24-27).

### What is important

Some 30 years ago, on Christmas eve, a man, far from being sober, walked out of a Paris bar with equally drunk friends. As they were about to cross the road, they came across a group of Christians singing carols. The drunk walked to this group, and even before he could say anything, one of the singers opened his Bible and read that great passage: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Then

the singer gave the reference: John, three, sixteen!

The drunk was dumbfounded and shouted to his friends: "That's me! He spoke about me!" His name was indeed John. He was married three times. And he had sixteen children. At that moment, the Holy Spirit convinced him of where he stood in the great controversy. The man realized that it was time for him to make some changes in his life. The Bible passage spoke to him personally on God's behalf. The day after, John narrated his experience to some of his friends. One of them offered him a Voice of Prophecy enrollment card. He began studying the Bible in earnest. His life was transformed completely. A few months later John gave a public testimony of his commitment to Christ through baptism. Ah, the power of God's Word!

More than 30 years ago, I met a young woman whose eyes were the most beautiful in the world. She was a Seventh-day Adventist and I was not. We became friends, and she invited me to study the Bible with her pastor. I shall never forget that first Bible study. It was on Daniel 2. I was fascinated as the pastor unveiled God's hold on his-

tory. For the first time, I learned that history has meaning and life has purpose and that God is in charge of it all. I discovered who I am and why I am here. I knew I had a sure future, with God leading me on. The Bible became my life guide. I was baptized. And the girl who introduced me to this great discovery became my life companion.

The same transforming power of God's Word is available to all of us. Read it, without trying to manipulate its message. Embrace it, without weakening its demand over your life and lifestyle. Accept it as it is, without letting doubt and criticism erode its power. You will experience its transforming energy and find a new and fulfilling life.

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## On being a true friend

by Martin W. Feldbush

*Interpersonal helping skills for Christian university students*

The phone rang with urgency. John was surprised to hear the familiar voice of Will, his roommate. "My sister has been in an auto accident." Will sounded very agitated. "She's injured pretty badly. Can you meet me at the hospital emergency room?" On the way to the university hospital, John kept wondering "What should I do? What can I say?" Then he remembered the words of a counselor at a workshop on crisis helping skills. Three words: *personalize*, *stabilize*, and *verbalize*. Instantly, John knew how he would begin his ministry of comfort and support for his distraught friend.

As he entered the emergency section waiting room and saw the tortured look on Will's face, he breathed a prayer and moved across the room to his seated friend. Sitting down, he placed his hand on Will's shoulder. "How's Janet?" he asked.

John's caring presence and simple words initiated a multi-phased helping process that was bathed in prayer and guided by the Holy Spirit, yet grounded in a solid understanding of human behavior. He knew that in times of crisis a helper can provide several kinds of care, all the way from simply being present to solving problems. He realized, however, that before he helped at any of these levels, he needed to build an "on ramp" or create an environment in which, and through which, this healing ministry could take place. That's where the crisis counselor's three words came into play: *personalize* (John needed to focus on establishing a caring presence); *stabilize* (help bring order if the situation is chaotic); and *verbalize* (create an environment where his friend could safely talk

about what had happened and how he felt about it). Before morning—and the good news that Janet had come through emergency surgery and would fully recover—John and Will had talked, shed tears, made phone calls and cared for other arrangements, claimed the promises of Scripture, and prayed and grown closer together in the Lord.

What John did is an important part of a caring interpersonal ministry. This ministry is particularly becoming significant in dealing with crisis situations, and its importance is increasingly recognized by both secular and Christian counselors. This article will deal with the basics of crisis theory, ways of extending help, a model for helping, seeking professional assistance, and following Jesus' example.

### Basics of crisis theory

The process of interpersonal helping is structured, yet adaptable to many specific situations. In order to understand this process we must first examine some basics of crisis theory. A crisis is essentially a turning point, when some precipitating event forces one to ask, "What is the meaning of this, and what do I do about it?" The most common crises are developmental in nature, stemming from the challenges we encounter during the unfolding phases of our lives (adolescence, marriage, child-rearing, aging, death, etc.). Other crises are situational, in response to specific and often unexpected events such as accidents, natural disasters, job loss, unexpected and tragic death, etc. Whatever the nature of the event, *the crisis is not the event itself, but rather our interpretation of, and response to, the event.*

The normal crisis pattern begins with a precipitating event, followed by an internal assessment of that event. We ask: "What is happening? Has this happened before? If so, how did I cope and was I successful? Will that work again? If not, do I have the resources with which to cope now?" Sometimes these questions are answered almost instantly and their answer helps us to interpret whether or not the current situation is a threat. If we conclude "I can handle this," the crisis is averted. But if our reaction is otherwise ("I've never dealt with this before." "I don't know what to do." "I may not be able to deal with it."), we marshal our resources and try to respond. If we succeed in handling the issue, the crisis is thwarted. If not, we are plunged into a crisis state. At this point, we often need help from a trusted person. The key is in understanding that crisis is our internal response rather than the external stimulus. The core of crisis care is helping people focus on what they *think* about what is happening to them.

### How do we help?

There are several classic ways in which we can help people in crisis. Some of them are:

*Avoidance.* Helping people develop lifestyles that avoids stressors that produce crises.

*Stabilization.* Addressing urgent matters in a way that helps bring order and form into a chaotic crisis situation.

*Reframing.* Through active listening and appropriate dialogue, helping people examine and test their perceptions, often assisting them to see things in a new way. Scripture and prayer can help people gain a new perspective and an

understanding that they are not alone.

*Reducing stress arousal.* Christian helpers can utilize Scripture, prayer, meditation, and listening to help reduce the emotional and physical stress brought about through the mind-body connection.

*Ventilating the stress response.* Good listening skills provide a safe environment where people can talk, thus helping diminish pent-up stress responses.

*Problem resolution.* Sometimes we can only be a supportive presence, or help in some of the ways listed above, but other times we might be able to utilize some simple solution-focused approaches to problem resolution, and thereby eliminate some factors that helped cause the crisis.

These approaches involve developing some basic interpersonal helping skills, such as active listening, appropriate questioning, problem resolution and so on. (See "For Further Reading" for some excellent help in these areas.)

### **Developing a basic model for helping**

While there is no fixed "recipe" for helping people in crisis, a basic model would include the following.

1. *Establish a caring presence.* Right at the outset, the helping process must provide a caring presence to the one in crisis, in order to initiate trust. This is done primarily through nonverbal (body language) and paraverbal (rate of speech, tone of voice) means rather than through just words. Attentive posture, good eye contact, appropriate touch, measured rate of speech with a caring tone of voice, and other communication skills can convey in the first few seconds that "I care, and I am here to help you."

2. *Be directive, if necessary, and be as brief as possible.* A chaotic situation may require direct intervention to care for the practical and immediate needs and to restore some order and direction. Do phone calls need to be made? Do urgent

decisions need to be pointed out? Is transportation or other help needed? Sometimes the person feels overwhelmed by practical need so this can block the needed verbalization, which you want to encourage.

3. *Encourage talking.* Let the person in crisis talk about what has happened and how he or she feels about it. The core of interpersonal caring is to become a listener to stories (sometimes over and over!). Develop your listening skills to the point where you can draw out the storyline through appropriate questions and attending behaviors. What you hear will lead you to assess needs and plan your caring strategy.

4. *Begin to assess spiritual needs.* This need not be a complex process. A basic assessment might involve answers to three questions: Does the person see himself or herself as a child of God, or has he or she rejected self? Does the person feel embedded in a caring social community, or does he or she feel isolated from others? Is God seen as present and caring or as having abandoned the person? Key questions such as these begin to highlight spiritual issues and give clues about how to respond.

5. *Consider and utilize options for caring.* Review the classic helping methods mentioned above. How can you best assist the person in need? Will listening and good attending behaviors alleviate the stress? Can quiet meditation or use of Scripture and prayer help reduce the stress arousal? Will appropriate spiritual encouragement or prayer and Scripture help with reframing? Are there solvable problems that have contributed to the crisis? Can you use simple solution-focused methods that will help address those problems? Remember that your use of Scripture, prayer, and spiritual encouragement needs to address the observed spiritual needs in order to be relevant and helpful.

6. *Refer to a professional if necessary.* Remember that you are providing help and friendship, not serving as a thera-

pist or counselor. Do not minimize the importance of this, but also do not hesitate to suggest that your friend see a professional caregiver if necessary. Referral is different from transferral. Transferral is where care of the person is given over entirely to another person; referral is where the circle of care is simply enlarged to include a qualified professional. In referral, you will continue to be a friend who cares and supports.

### **Referring for professional help**

Following are some of the conditions that signal the need to refer to a professional:

1. Threats of violence to self or others.
2. Risk of suicide or homicide.
3. Psychotic behavior (losing grasp on reality, hallucinations, paranoia, irrational thinking, etc.)
4. Mood, emotional, and behavioral changes that seem to occur without discernable and connected external stressors.
5. Clinical depression (persistent sadness/helplessness/hopelessness, recurring thoughts of death

### **Jesus, the Care-giver**

An often overlooked, yet powerful, example of interpersonal crisis ministry is found in Jesus' ministry to two grieving friends. Read Luke 24:13-35 and see if you find examples of the following principles discussed in the article:

- Establishing a caring presence
- Good listening skills
- Appropriate use of questions to facilitate "telling the story"
- Crisis intervention tailored to the specific need

Are there other examples of crisis care? Read the quotation from *The Ministry of Healing* used in the article and reflect on how you can follow the helping ministry of Jesus.

- or suicide, loss of interest and pleasure in usual activities, etc.)
6. Extreme and persisting confusion.
  7. Any situation that is beyond the scope of your helping skills.
  8. Dependence on chemical substances.
  9. Unusual feelings of sexual attraction.
  10. Any physical disorder (in which case, the referral is to a physician).

### Following the Jesus model

No higher calling is given to us as Christians than to follow the footsteps of Jesus. "He who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:6, NIV).

A simple overview of Jesus' model of helping is given by Ellen White in *The Ministry of Healing*, page 143: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their

good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"

Note the five basic steps in Christ's helping ministry: friendship, empathy, caring for felt needs, building trust, and inviting people to follow Him. The first three were given unconditionally, whether people responded to Him or not. Those helping acts, however, were the foundation upon which trust was built. Once trust was built, the invitation to follow Him became a natural extension of friendship, not an intrusion.

### Being a helper

Perhaps this brief article has motivated you to become an effective helper and friend to those in need. How do you begin?

1. Attend a class or workshop in crisis caring. Contact your local hospital or crisis hotline and ask if you can attend the classes they have for their volunteers. Take a workshop on specific elements of the helping process, especially listening skills.
2. Read some of the books listed in "For Further Reading," or other books on peer helping.
3. Talk with a counseling professional about helping skills, their strengths and limitations, and about referral issues.
4. Be sensitive to the needs of those around you. Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and seek to walk as Jesus walked. Find opportunities to be a friend and helper, a blessing to those in need.

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## In the name...

*Continued from page 19.*

a specific value: not lying reminds us of the value of the truth, not committing adultery underlines the importance of faithful love, not using violence highlights the uniqueness of life, etc. The law tells us that the lives and feelings of our fellow human beings are as precious as our own lives and feelings. The mission of God's law is, in this sense, more didactic than imposing, more revealing than legislative.

Realizing the profound values of the law, but also its definite limits, helps us to see it no longer as an obstacle to our freedom, but as a precious help in our journey. It guides us, like a map or a chart, but the way itself is no other than Jesus. He Himself has clearly stated that in these troubled times of history, true believers will remain faithful to both God's commandments and their trust in Jesus (Revelation 14:12).

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# Action Report

## Students work united in Chile

Chile is recognized as one of the most educationally oriented countries in Latin America. Its literacy rate stands at 95 percent and two of its poets have won the Nobel Prize in literature: Gabriela Mistral (1945) and Pablo Neruda (1971). The Seventh-day Adventist Church, with almost 100,000 members, operates a network of elementary and secondary schools as well as Chile Adventist University, located near the city of Chillan.

For a variety of reasons, including the fact that our university does not offer all the programs in which our young adults are interested, more than 1,000 Adventist students attend non-Adventist institutions of higher learning across the country. Many of them have organized Adventist student associations for mutual support and to coordinate service and outreach programs.

One of these fellowships is known as GESA, an acronym that in Spanish stands for Higher Education Adventist Students Group. Organized in the Central Chile Conference in 1996, it includes students living in the metropolitan area of Santiago, the nation's capital, as well as young professionals. GESA has sponsored several activities such as helping to build a new church in Las Cabras, spiritual retreats, providing free medical and social services to needy people, special Christmas programs at a children's hospital, and a national congress for Adventist university students and professionals.

In the South Chile Conference, students have established Adventist fellowships in three major university cities and coordinate their activities with the support of the Education and Youth Ministries Departments. In two of these centers—in Concepcion and Temuco—

Adventist students operate their own integrated residences. Although the buildings belong to the local conference, students each year elect their administrative committee, apply their statutes, handle their finances, enforce their own strict discipline code, and are actively involved in the life of the local church. Readers interested in learning more about these two student centers may contact their leaders directly: Adventist Students Home—Concepcion, Orompello No. 148, Concepcion, Chile; or Adventist Students Home—Temuco, San Francisco No. 932, Temuco, Chile.

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Residents of the Adventist Students Home in Temuco, established in 1986.



Residents of the Adventist Students Home in Concepcion, established in 1962.

## Ten reasons why I believe in God

by Hector Hammerly

*While I cannot prove that God*

*exists, on the basis of evidence*

*I must conclude that He exists.*

**I**n the beginning God..." (Genesis 1:1). That's the ground of my being, my hope, and my destiny. Without that solid foundation of belief in God, life is empty. Some find it difficult to believe in a living, personal God. Some find it odd to relate to God at a deep and meaningful level. Not me. For me God is real, as real as one could hope for—to guide, to correct, to lead in the journey of life. As I reflect on my faith in God, I can think of at least 10 reasons for that conviction.

**1. I believe in God because of the great beauty most of nature still exhibits.** Beauty of nature is unnecessary from an evolutionary survival point of view. Nature speaks of design with an eye for beauty.

**2. I believe in God because of the order, complexity, and complementarity of nature.** Most things in nature operate well together and seem made for one another, like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle. This reveals purposeful design, not chance occurrence.

**3. I believe in God because of the numerous ways in which our planet's ecology, surroundings, placement, and movements precisely meet the needs of life on earth, within very narrow limits.** This, again, is far more likely the result of design than of chance.

**4. I believe in God because of people like Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa, and unsung millions of other self-sacrificing human beings.** Altruistic lives and impulses contradict the tooth-and-claw evolutionary "survival of the fittest." Self-sacrifice witnesses to the existence of a good, loving Presence in the world and the universe, a Presence

that influences many people to be loving and generous and help others quite apart from their own personal interests. There is no evolutionary advantage in so doing.

**5. I believe in God because of the good character traits many people still have despite strong negative influences.** I am referring to qualities, such as honesty, generosity, forgiveness, fairness, tolerance, balance, patience, determination, loving the unlovable, and so on. We admire all of these qualities because they are, in effect, divine qualities, modeled for us by God. Most of them are contrary to evolutionary principle, according to which dog eats dog. Many unbelievers, of course, have excellent characters; but isn't that an unacknowledged manifestation of God's influence in the world?

**6. I believe in God because numerous people, myself included, have experienced many instances of providential protection** against dangers and have had the satisfaction of seeing their lives turn out well and thrive against all odds, including extremely adverse circumstances. God, who created nature's laws, is not their slave; He can certainly make exceptions to them. This is what "miracles" are all about.

I believe God is ready to protect, guide, and bless those who believe in Him and are ready to obey Him. Of course, there are those who consider themselves too sophisticated or independent to submit to a Supreme Being, and they may not accept this at all. But does that mean it can't be true?

**7. I believe in God because dozens of careful, scientific surveys have shown that committed believers en-**

joy numerous advantages over nominal believers as well as unbelievers. Committed Christians are happier, healthier, usually more prosperous, live longer, and avoid many social pathologies much better than nominal believers or unbelievers. I believe in God not in order to reap such benefits. With or without those benefits, I can affirm the positive effect of belief in God on my life, my thoughts and my actions.

**8. I believe in God because the destructive effects of godlessness on individuals and entire societies are sadly evident.** These effects include lack of purpose, moral decay, crime, substance dependence, and a major deterioration of society in general.

**9. I believe in God because the alternative does not lead to what is good and joyful in human life.** Independent reason is unreliable, and the brightest human minds cannot be trusted to produce constructive systems of thought. For example, Plato wanted to replace the family with the state! Among other “enlightened” thinkers, recent philosophers such as Nietzsche proposed a morally freed “superman.” The result was the “will to power” that manifested itself in the horrors of Nazism. Sartre and Heidegger promoted existentialism, whose atheistic stance leads nowhere except to despair and meaninglessness. All these only show that unguided human thinking cannot be trusted. It has at times yielded egregious distortions and the most terrible evils—even from thoughtful philosophers.

**10. I believe in God the Creator because the alternative theory of origins—evolution—is full of logical anomalies and data gaps.** Consider the following:

- While there is evidence of micro-evolution in nature (changes that involve adaptation to the environment within the same kind of organism), there is no evidence that organisms, left to themselves, be-

come more complex and sophisticated. The opposite seems to be the case. Even mutations revert to their former entities.

- There is no evidence that organisms of one kind can become organisms of another major kind—either gradually or suddenly. No true intermediate fossils have been found. If the theory of evolution were true, many thousands of intermediate fossils should have been dug out by now. Quite to the contrary, the fossil record shows distinct species with few if any so-called intermediates.
- As for “punctuated equilibrium,” the hypothesis that rapid changes occurred in isolated places and then spread has not been backed by any evidence at all, as no such places have been found. It sounds more like a fancy explanation for the lack of fossil evidence than any application of the scientific method.
- The extreme complexities of the cell, the human brain, DNA, and even the simplest amino acid, just could not have arisen at random, even if given endless eons of time. This proposed “miracle of randomness” is wishful thinking by those who reject the idea of intelligent design. The statistical possibility of any such thing happening is so extremely small that it is

impossible for all practical purposes. Given all the time in the universe, a strong wind blowing through a junkyard could not assemble a Boeing 747. Nor can a human brain or the genetic code simply “emerge” as a result of random natural forces.

To sum up these brief comments on the theory of evolution, it seems clear that people who aren’t determined to insist that the existence of God is out of the question would find it more logical, based on the evidence (or lack thereof) to believe in an Intelligent Designer than in that faulty theory. Belief in God isn’t necessarily a recourse of lazy minds. After weighing the pros and cons on both sides, it is more logical to see an Intelligent Mind operating in the universe than to accept the “scientific” house of cards of evolution.

The above 10 reasons seem more than sufficient to accept the idea of Intelligent Design—and of an Intelligent, Loving Designer, that is, God. While I cannot prove that God exists, from all of the above I conclude that He *must* exist and, therefore, I must not resist—His love, His guidance, His plan for my life.

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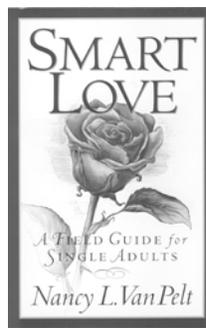
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**The Perils of Progress: The Health and Environment Hazards of Modern Technology, and What You Can Do About Them,**

by John Ashton and Ron Laura (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1998; 346 pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by David Dyjack.



**Smart Love,**

by Nancy L. Van Pelt (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Fleming H. Revell, a division of Baker Book House Company, 1997; 278 pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Selma Chaij Mastrapa.

Today's technological conveniences are frequently associated with negative effects on health and the environment. This book seeks to "empower readers to a whole new understanding of health" by identifying these hazards and showing how to reduce the risks. Although much of the information has been examined elsewhere, the authors have done a commendable job of summarizing complex issues into a highly readable format.

At the outset, the authors present us with the environmental challenges our globe faces, and place the blame on a consumer-driven society. Then follows a litany of health hazards associated with the reckless modern lifestyle that includes the following: food affected by irradiation, pesticide residues, and over-processing; drinking water contaminated with chlorine residuals, fluoride, and flocculants; and environmental contamination by industrial and technological waste.

The book excels when the authors examine material routinely omitted from environmental health literature. For example, melanoma, a potentially fatal form of skin cancer, is clearly on the rise in many parts of the world. Conventional wisdom suggests that the underlying cause of the disease is due to increased exposure to the sun's ultra-violet rays intensified by the erosion of the planet's ozone layer. However, the authors present evidence that suggests that reasonable exposure to sunlight is an integral part of good health strategy while "increasing exposure to artificial light" coupled with other factors may predispose one to skin disease.

The book does lack balance in some areas, and could benefit from additional material from professionals in specific fields. For example, the authors' advice on improving indoor air quality could actually exacerbate symptoms in allergy-prone individuals. The section on electrical technology ignores scientific data that challenge the authors' contentions.

Readers will find the book fascinating on environmental health issues, with practical advice at the end of each chapter.

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Most American adults will experience at least one unsuccessful love relationship in their lives. This prediction only increases the nagging anxiety among single adults about romantic involvements, particularly given a culture devastated by casual relationships and divorce.

The anxiety often turns into personal questions: How do I know if a relationship is the right one? How can I avoid the mistakes of the past? Van Pelt's absorbing book, *Smart Love*, attempts to answer these and other questions that arise from the sexual jungle in which young adults find themselves.

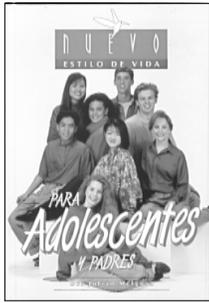
The book maps out the relationship maze by showing where the problem areas are, and where the high road lies. It works at "preventing unhealthy relationships and the heartache that follows" (p. 12). Among the topics discussed are: Self-worth, the Dating Game, Breaking Up Without Breaking Down, True Love and Infatuation, and Before You Fall in Love Again. Each chapter builds on the previous ones in a connected progression.

Written in a captivating style, the book can be read in one session without getting bored. Of course, it can be savored and digested slowly, one section at a time. The latter is recommended for those who want to increase their ability to process and internalize what fits. The author peppers her writing with pithy quotes and examples. The reader might want to have a marker handy to underline favorite passages.

"To avoid getting into a destructive relationship," the author counsels, "be ruthlessly honest about your own brokenness. You need healing before you begin dating" (pp. 25, 26). Such a self-analysis must begin with self-respect. "Healthy self-respect frees us to pay attention to others" (p. 29).

Even though the stated audience for this book is the post-college, post-career, or post-divorce single adult, it would be fascinating reading for any person who is in a serious love relationship or recovering from a broken one. The author is candid and spares no punches, while presenting God's ideal for healthy loving relationships.

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**Para adolescentes y padres,**  
by Julian Melgosa (Madrid: Editorial Safeliz,  
1997; 191 pp.; hard cover).

Reviewed by Jorge M. Bruno.

**P**ara *adolescentes y padres* is an attempt to understand adolescents and their parents from a multi-disciplinary perspective: sociological, medical, anthropological, and spiritual. Melgosa, a professor of psychology with years of youth work in Spain and England, has achieved a delicate balance between the subtle interactions of the positive and negative poles of the complex life of the adolescent in Western culture. At the same time he has succeeded in interrelating the problematic juvenile with the disappointed parents. The result is an emergence of optimism and hope in the fragile spectrum of parent-teen relationships.

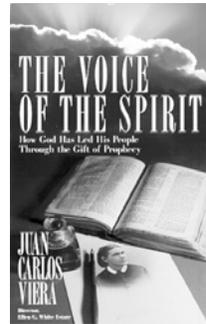
The book is organized into eight chapters that deal with the common challenges encountered during adolescence, such as physical and psychological changes; how to study with success and elect a vocation; the relations of adolescents with family, friends, and groups; personality, emotions, and affections; drugs; sexuality; and finally moral values. Each chapter is illustrated in full color, and has many summary boxes with specific data, graphs, self-evaluations, advice, and reflections that enrich the book and make it practical.

Three suggestions may help future editions of this valuable book. First, a less-expensive edition would make it more accessible to more readers. Second, because adolescents spend a daily average of up to eight hours listening to popular music and watching television, the book should include a section on this vital topic. Third, the spiritual perspective needs to be strengthened. Instead of the limited attention it receives, the book should present the religious perspective in the strongest possible terms, offering Jesus Christ as the best friend and counselor, and the Bible as the best source of reliable answers and transforming power.

In summary, Melgosa's is an excellent book. I recommend that parents buy it, read it, and then share it with their adolescent children. The book is a good resource for useful dialogue between adults and adolescents.

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**The Voice of the Spirit: How God Has Led His People Through the Gift of Prophecy,**

by Juan Carlos Viera (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1998; 118 pp., paperback. Also available in Spanish from the same publisher, under the title *La voz del Espíritu*.)

Reviewed by Alberto R. Timm.

**T**he book is a result of a lifelong study on the role of prophecy among God's people. Juan Carlos Viera, director of the Ellen G. White Estate, presents his findings in this carefully written analysis of the "relationship between a divine message, perfect and infallible, and a human messenger, imperfect and fallible" (p. 7).

The book is divided into seven chapters: (1) the divine instrument, (2) the human instrument, (3) the divine presence, (4) human history, (5) divine counsel, (6) human writings, and (7) human interpretation of those writings. Experiences of both biblical and Ellen G. White are used not only to illustrate the principles involved but also to deal with the nature and authority of inspired writings.

In chapter 6, Viera turns to Ellen White's statement that "it is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21). What does this mean? Viera says that it means that expressions like "inspired books," "inspired letters," and "inspired writings" cannot be "taken literally" but only symbolically (pp. 81, 82), because while the "message" of those writings is inspired, its "text" is not (p. 94). Reading only the content of that chapter, someone could be tempted to assume that the author is not so far away from the unorthodox view that the Scriptures cannot be considered as the Word of God but only a human expression (testimony) of that Word. But such a one-sided assumption has to be re-evaluated in the light of the previous chapter of the book, where the author himself states that even those portions of Ellen White's writings in which she does not use the expression "I was shown" cannot be taken as "less inspired than those that contain" this expression (pp. 77, 78).

The book provides helpful insights for both experts and lay readers in the important area of revelation and inspiration.

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## My journey to truth

by Edmond Cao

**M**ine is a journey of faith and truth, interspersed with miracles. I was born in an ordinary family in north-central China. My parents were fanatical followers of Mao. But after the death of the “great helmsman,” Buddha came into our home. Along with my parents, I as a child worshiped Buddha, although surrounded by the largely atheistic culture of China.

I knew little of Jesus. Nor did I care. Life was good. My parents, deeply religious now, provided a home filled with love and security. With them I followed the Buddhist worship and rituals, such as giving of alms—an important part of Buddhism. My parents taught me that the Buddha way is the way to achieve *nirvana* (the higher life). After all, life after death needs to be better than what we’ve got here, and that depends on what we do. So a daily struggle to be righteous is one thing my parents always insisted upon for their children in order to win inner peace and a better life in the next reincarnation.

I did just that. My objectives were simple: to eschew self, serve the less fortunate, be patriotic, and seek the higher life. But all along, I felt a sense of emptiness within. Was it just a feeling? Was it a mere fantasy? Or was it a deep spiritual yearning, created by a power beyond himself?

I did not quite know. But in 1991, suddenly a new world opened before me. That year I went to a small college near my hometown to join an English language class. The course was one of the many taught by volunteers from the United States as part of the emerging new relations between the two countries, and as part of China’s eager-

ness to open to her students and intellectuals a window to the wider world through English. In any case, a good knowledge of English is important in getting a good job, and I was looking for an opportunity to improve my English skills.

My teachers were two young men—Andy and Emery—intelligent, highly motivated, and willing to go the extra mile. They not only taught well, but also related to students on a one-to-one basis. We became friends, and soon I discovered that they were Seventh-day Adventists.

### Adventist friendship

They taught me English, and I taught—perhaps tried to teach—them conversational Chinese. We talked. We sang. We took walks together. They told me stories from the Bible. They introduced me to Jesus and told me what He had done for them and what He could do for me. But I was not interested in all that. After all, Jesus was a foreigner to me, and I had no interest in a foreign religion. I had my own religion. That was good enough for me.

But not for God. After five months of language study, I returned home. As I was leaving, Andy and Emery gave me a gift that was to change my life forever: two Bibles, one Chinese, one English. When I came home, I opened the English Bible, and in it was written: “Dear Edmond, I hope with all my heart that God will become your best friend, just as He is mine. The Lord loves you and so do I.” The Chinese Bible carried a written challenge: “Dear Edmond, remember, our minds are just like a parachute; they only operate when open.” I

took those words seriously and began to read the Bible, but most of what I read didn’t make sense. I gave up.

### Discouraged

But only for a while. I went to southern China where jobs were plenty. With my English, education, and other skills I was pretty sure I’d land a good job, but I didn’t. Discouraged, I returned home and worked as a tour guide. But I was not happy. The inner vacuum was getting larger and larger. As 1994 dawned, I turned to the Bible again. I read the Gospels. The seeds that Andy and Emery sowed seemed to germinate. Jesus took on a new meaning. He became real to me. Soon I became His follower. I started attending church on Sundays. I felt good and life seemed to beckon me to go to higher things. After all, I now had a very powerful ally on my side: my Friend Jesus.

A new spiritual horizon opened up before me. I learned that I am not an accident on this earth. God created me in His own image and placed me on this earth for a purpose. He is the One who created the heavens and the earth. I learned about sin, and how its entrance into this world has caused all the suffering that we see and experience. I also learned about the redemptive work of Jesus. But more questions began to creep up in my mind. How I wish Andy and Emery were close by to help me with answers.

For a long time I dreamed of going to the United States for higher studies, and now I decided to take the first step. I wrote the English proficiency examination, a basic for admission into any U.S. college, and passed it. I applied to uni-

versities in Oklahoma and Kansas. Both sent me the application papers, but I was not sure which to choose. "It's time to put my faith in God," I said to myself. After all the Bible promises that when we come to God in faith, He is able to do more than we ask or think. So I made my study plans a matter of daily prayers.

Just then, an unexpected letter arrived from Andy and Emery, introducing me to Southwestern Adventist University in Texas. I read the university bulletin and liked what it had to offer. I sent in my application. Within a few weeks, the university not only sent an admission letter and visa documents, but also offered two generous scholarships. My parents could not have supported me in the U.S., and so the scholarships were just too good to be true. It was definitely an answer to my continued prayers.

But the money was not enough. In August 1996, Andy and Emery wrote to assure me of their own financial help. I just had a few months to get ready, but getting a passport in China was a long and tedious process. Once again, prayer was the only help I had. In November, the Chinese government issued new regulations simplifying the issue of passports. I got mine in record time—25 days.

#### **Answer to prayer**

"What do you plan to study?" my parents asked me. Without any hesitation, I said, "Theology. I want to be a pastor." Although I was not a Seventh-day Adventist, I always considered myself as an Adventist, and introduced myself thus to anyone I met. My interest in theology grew as a result of my wanting to know more about God and to make Him known to others.

But my answer shocked my parents. Their immediate response was one of anxiety.

"If you become a pastor," they asked, "can you get married?" I think they

were more interested in becoming grandparents than in my newfound joy in the gospel. Once I explained to them about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Adventist lifestyle, they did not object much. But not until months later when I wrote an eight-page testimony about my faith and my life at Southwestern were they convinced that I was not misguided in my decision. In fact, my testimony eventually won them over to the truth, and through them many of my relatives have accepted Jesus and are keeping the Sabbath today. I hope soon an Adventist pastor can be sent to my hometown, and a congregation for God's glory can be established there while I complete my studies.

In all these things, I see God's guidance. Without Him, I could not have traveled so far in my spiritual and professional journey. One more illustration of God's care in my life: When I went to the U.S. embassy in Beijing for my visa, there were about 300 people applying for a visa that day. I was No. 254. We were all nervous and not at all sure that we would get visas. As I waited my turn, I saw more disappointed ones leave the visa counter than otherwise. Each person was interviewed for about a minute. When my minute came, it was like a whole day—so uncertain, so unsure, so nervous. But I was confident that God would somehow work out my problem. And He did. I got my visa and soon was on the plane to the U.S.

But then the more important miracle came at the university itself. One day as I was walking on campus, I met Dr. Roland Hill. In the course of our conversation, I asked him if it was necessary for me to be rebaptized in order to be a Seventh-day Adventist. (I was already a baptized Christian.) "Yes," he said, and pointed out the great truths I needed to know and accept before I could be a Seventh-day Adventist. He invited me to study with him. Just imagine, a simple young man from a remote village in a faraway land being invited by a profes-

sor to study about God. It's committed people like that—committed to faith and faith sharing—that make all the difference between life and eternal life. My eyes opened, and I saw wonderful things in God's Word. Finally, on February 1, 1997 I was baptized. What a joy it is to be a Seventh-day Adventist!

Yes, my journey has been one of faith, truth, and miracles. I believe God does have a way of reaching out and touching people everywhere. No one is too far away, no one is too lost, and no one is too insignificant before Him. When we respond to His quiet whispers, He does the rest. And above all Jesus becomes a personal Friend—to guide, to guard, to care, and take us home.

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## Expand Your Friendship Network

**A**dventist college/university students and professionals interested in exchanging correspondence with colleagues in other parts of the world.

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If you are an Adventist college/university student or professional and wish to be listed here, send us your name and postal address, indicating your age, sex, marital status, current field of studies or degree obtained, college/university you are attending or from which you graduated, hobbies or interests, and language(s) in which you would like to correspond. (We will also list your e-mail address if you provide it.) Address your letter to *Dialogue Interchange*: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, U.S.A. Please type or print clearly. You can also use e-mail: 104472.1154@compuserve.com We will list only those who provide all the information requested above. The journal cannot assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information submitted or for the content of the correspondence that may ensue.