

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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**The search for
Noah's ark**

**Science and religion:
Pursuing a common
goal?**

**From homo sapiens
to homo videns**

Who was Mary?

**Do we need
Adventist lawyers?**



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Dialogue has received correspondence from readers in 106 countries around the world.

The millennium that matters

Derek Humphrey's *Final Exit* is a disturbing book. It's as simple as a cookbook. The ingredients and procedures are clearly described. The results are guaranteed: quick, painless, and final.

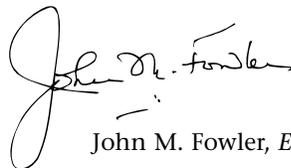
The book in a way reflects the priorities of our time and our culture. We want quick exits from difficult situations and, in the process, who cares about who gets hurt? Who cares about guilt? Who cares about anything, except that the "I" be allowed to reign supreme.

The book shows how to die by one's own hand. It does not show how to face death or how to cope with the perils of the living. The problem, though, is not death or even life. The problem is how to face the extremities of life or death, how to find a balance between anguish and serenity when the perils of life or the certainty of death come knocking at our doors.

The problem is going to increase, not decrease, as we end one millennium and begin another. The longer we live on this earth, the more challenging life becomes—in terms of its meaning, relevance, and relationships. This millennium began with the middle of the Dark Ages and is about to end with the enlightenment of the Information Age that seems to plunge us all into another darkness—a darkness of the soul: We have created a "human" after our own image, someone to pre-empt over the destiny of the future, without any reference to the sovereign God.

The final exit of the next millennium may well be the exit of God from our communities, our homes, and our lives. That means the exit of meaning, values, purpose, and ethics. That means the presumption of the human being to lead a life without worship or fellowship. Worship provides the eternal reference point—that above, beyond, and through all there is the Creator who made us in "His image" and placed us in charge of this planet. There comes our dignity. Fellowship provides the immediate reference point: that life is not an island, an accident of atoms, or a meaningless void. It is to be lived in fellowship of love and fairness with others. There comes our purpose. Where there is worship of God the Creator and fellowship with our fellow beings, there life takes on a divine resolve.

But for that to become real in our lives, we need to remember what happened two millennia ago: A Man called Jesus climbed a hill called Golgotha to set human beings free from meaninglessness. He proclaimed freedom from sin. He ushered in a kingdom of righteousness. He showed us the way of grace, to be grasped by faith. He taught us how to worship and fellowship. In Him is life everlasting—not to be counted in millennia, but in endless ages of eternity. Catch that, and you don't have a final exit. You only have a final beginning that may come anytime when that Jesus of the Cross returns again to take us home to reign with Him for a millennium—the only "thousand years" that really matters at this point in time (Revelation 20:1-4). That millennium to come opens God's great highway to eternity.



John M. Fowler, Editor

A great ally

As an Adventist pastor, working with young people and university students, I find that *Dialogue* is a great ally in my ministry. Not only do I find its content relevant and personally enriching, but also useful for sharing with those facing the challenges of life on the secular campus.

Josue Dantas

Sao Jose do Rio Preto, Sao Paulo
BRAZIL

A wonderful service

Congratulations for publishing "Interchange" in each issue. Through this feature I became friends with a reader in Africa and continued our contacts for several years all through our studies. You are providing a wonderful service by helping Adventist young adults to connect around the world. May God continue to bless you!

Sarah Eakins

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A brilliant initiative

The Adventist leaders who launched and continue to publish *Dialogue* deserve gratitude from thousands of readers worldwide. It was a brilliant initiative! As a law student, I find the journal informative, challenging, and educational—solid material to read and share. Allow me to make two suggestions. First, reprint relevant articles published in earlier issues, which some of us may have missed. Second, begin a series on each of the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs; do it in such a way that the articles will appeal to Adventists and our non-Adventist friends alike.

Evans Machera

Aurangabad, Maharashtra
INDIA

The editors respond:

We have reprinted in one volume, Christianity and Science, 45 of the most significant essays published in Dialogue on the

Letters

subject. The collection is available in English or Spanish for US\$10.00, including postage. Interested readers may contact us through the mailing address or the e-mail address listed on page 2 of the journal. We will seriously consider your second suggestion, Evans.

Invest in young adults

I just finished reading the editors' response to a letter from Nimrod S. Mangilog, a *Dialogue* reader from the Philippines (10:2) who wanted to receive the journal free. I was deeply saddened to read that you encouraged Nimrod, probably a poor Adventist university student, to subscribe with his friends to *Dialogue* so that they could all receive it regularly. Our church spends thousands of dollars to attract new members. An article in the same issue lists the multi-million contributions that the church receives as tithe and offerings, which are distributed to support projects around the world. Many educated young adults drift away from our church. And yet we don't seem willing to invest in them! Please find ways of making *Dialogue* available free to many more Adventist college and university students.

Bernardo Navia

Guanica, Puerto Rico
U.S.A.

The editors respond:

We understand your feelings, Bernardo, and to a considerable degree share them. In answer to Nimrod Mangilog's repeated requests, we did send him several complimentary copies of *Dialogue*, encouraging him each time to contact our regional representative so that Nimrod could be placed in the mailing list. Church leaders have established a plan to share the cost of producing and distributing *Dialogue* free among Adventist students attending public colleges and universities: The General Conference is responsible for the development and publication of each issue of the journal in four languages. The world divisions, in turn, cover the cost of printing and mailing the copies they order

for distribution in their areas. Only one of the four members of our editorial team receives salary; the other three volunteer their time to produce *Dialogue*. Fortunately, there is a growing number of Adventist young professionals who are subscribing to the journal, which helps to control production costs. As editors, there is nothing that we would like more than to find ways of expanding further the circle of *Dialogue* readers around the world.

Animal life is also sacred

Earl Aagaard (*Dialogue* 11:2) has argued for a divide between ethical responsibilities to fellow humans and to animals. Paradise is a place of non-violent life for animals as well as humans (Isa.11:6-9; 65:25; Gen. 1:29, 30). When humans, after the Flood, were permitted to kill and eat animals (Gen. 9:3, 4) they were enjoined from eating animal blood. Animal bloodshed is connected with human bloodshed (vv. 5, 6)—a difference of degree, not kind. Animal life is not as sacred as human life, but it is sacred. Lev. 17:10-14 declares that the *nephesh* (life) of the animal resides in the blood, so the blood should not be eaten.

In Acts 15 the apostles debated as to what restrictions should be applicable for gentile believers. Two restrictions come from Genesis 9—improperly killed animals and blood. Thus the sacredness of animal blood and human blood remain connected.

Aagaard has not solved the problem of "one race classifying other races as less than fully human." They just identify undesirables as subhuman and treat them with no more respect than Aagaard argues for animals. A rabbit with cosmetics spritzed in its eyes flinches and shows signs of pain. If we use that pain frivolously we diminish each other as well as animals. Vegetarianism isn't just about health.

Jim Miller

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The author responds:

Jim Miller raises questions that I hope will be explored in a future issue of the journal. However, my article (*Dialogue* 11.2) did not address the moral status of animals or the obligations of humans as "stewards" of the rest of God's creation.

Western civilization and Christian religion have traditionally taught that human life is sacred. Human beings (unlike animals) are never to be treated as means to another's end. Darwinism offers no foundation for this ethic. Unsurprisingly, western intellectuals with Darwinist presuppositions are urging abandonment of "sanctity of life" for "utilitarianism," "moral individualism" or some other euphemism for "might makes right."

Even some professedly Christian ethicists wish to subdivide the human family into "persons," entitled to life, and "non-persons," who can be killed when that seems "better" to the rest of us. Not coincidentally, "non-persons" are always the weak, variously including unborn children, damaged newborns, the mentally incompetent, those with expensive terminal illnesses, etc. The "personhood" ethic is incompatible with traditional western ethics and interpretations of Scripture. When professed Christians find themselves standing with Darwinists on this fundamental question of the sanctity of human life, it's time to examine the premises of this new variety of Christianity.

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The search for Noah's ark

by David Merling

*Does Mount Ararat still hold
the precious treasure?*

Noah's ark has fascinated everyone—from Noah's time to our own. From evangelicals to movie makers, from evangelists to youthful campus crusaders, the ark gets everyone's attention.

But where is the ark? Some in recent times have boldly declared that it has been found, and wonder why the scholars have not publicized the good news. As an archeologist, I ignored the questions for years for a number of reasons. First, common sense suggests that a wooden structure like the ark, exposed to thousands of years of rain, snow, and ice, and experiencing the annual process of freezing and thawing, would long ago have decayed.

Some have suggested that pre-Flood "gopher" wood had unusual strength. But we really know *nothing* about the "gopher" wood of Noah's ark. We assume it was a type of cypress. But was it as indestructible as some suggest? Maybe, maybe not. If it was, why do not paleo-botanists find samples of antediluvian "gopher" wood still littering the surface of the Earth? Surely, not all "gopher" wood became petrified wood; some of it had to have floated and remained on the Earth's surface after the Flood, just like the ark. What has happened to all that wood? My assumption is that, like the wood of Noah's ark, it decayed long ago.

Second, neither the Bible nor the writings of Ellen G. White—a respected author for Seventh-day Adventists—support the claim that God has preserved Noah's ark as a witness to those living in these last days. If Noah's ark is as important to God and final events, He would have revealed that message



View of the peak commonly called Mt. Ararat (5,138 m). Photo by D. Merling.

through His prophets (Amos 3:7). After Genesis 8, the Bible remains silent about the existence of Noah's ark. Further, the argument that Noah's ark has a special place in God's end-of-the-world plans undermines the biblical use of the rainbow as God's post-Flood, visible covenant between God and humans (Genesis 9:11-17). In fact, the rainbow, as a sign of God's dependability, is carried through to the Book of Revelation (4:3; 10:1).

From the biblical record, it's clear that Noah and his family left the ark behind them and looked to the rainbow as the sign that they could trust God. The ark was something of the past. The rainbow was the sign of the future.

For these and other reasons, I believed that searching for Noah's ark might well be a waste of time—until 1992. That year, I agreed to write two articles about the claimed discovery of Noah's ark.¹ Those articles were in response to claims by a Seventh-day Adventist that God had guided him in the discovery of Noah's ark and many other ancient artifacts. Since then, the subject of Noah's ark has taken up much more of my time than I ever expected.

Looking for the ark

What I have discovered is that there are some very sincere, committed Christians who are scientifically and enthusiastically looking for Noah's ark. There are also some whose work is difficult to classify. Most of the former group call themselves "researchers" and take into account all evidence: that which supports their beliefs and that which does not. In other words, they talk about both their positive and negative evidence as they seek to find the ark, wherever it may be.² They acknowledge that it has not been found, although they believe it still exists, and they are actively involved in looking for it.

There is another group of people who claim they have found Noah's ark. Many of them adopt professional-sounding titles and try to confuse the ill-informed with bogus claims. They ignore negative evidence to their claims and use false artifacts to support their conclusions. Sometimes this latter group is represented by journalists who, on slow news days, write about the finding of Noah's ark, while producing no substantiating evidence.³ This article will ignore this second group and focus on the serious ark researchers.

The search for Noah's ark has been largely limited to a region in eastern Turkey because of the biblical statement that the ark came to rest in "Ararat" (Genesis 8:4). Often missed in the reading of this verse is that it says the ark settled in the "mountains of Ararat." No specific mountain is named in the Bible as the resting place of the ark.

The name Ararat is the equivalent of "Urartu," a people and place of Old Testament times, located in what is today eastern Turkey. The Urartu were strong adversaries of the Assyrians. When Genesis 8:4 speaks of the "mountains of Urartu" it implies that the ark could be anywhere within the country of Urartu, since all of this region was mountainous. The size of this area, which in later times became Armenia and is now the



The circle surrounds the region inhabited by the Urartu people in Old Testament times. The x marks the traditional location of Mt. Ararat.

Kurdish part of eastern Turkey, is quite large (see map).

The highest mountain in the region is the 5,138 meter (16,852 ft.) Büyükağrı Dağı, which is commonly called Mt. Ararat. Mt. Ararat is located north of Lake Van (which was the heartland of ancient Urartu), just north of the town of Doğubayazıt. Actually there are two Mt. Ararats, a "greater" and "lesser" one. Both are the remnants of volcanos, and both stand out from their surrounding countryside. This mountain range is snow-capped year round with permanent glaciers. Obviously, searchers looking for Noah's ark have been attracted to this tallest of the mountains, not to one of the low lying hills or to a valley.

Specifically, people have claimed to have either found hand-hewn wood high on the slopes of the mountain⁴ or to have seen the ark itself. Testimonials to its existence are so numerous that this article does not have space to evalu-

ate them all.⁵ I have chosen three recent claims as examples of the anecdotal evidence that leads searchers to expect the ark to be on Mt. Ararat.

Navarra's reports

In his book *Noah's Ark: I Touched It*,⁶ Fernand Navarra, the French industrialist, reports his four climbing expeditions (1952, 1953, 1955, and 1969) to Mt. Ararat. His 1952 ascent led him to what he suspected was Noah's ark. In 1955, accompanied by his 11-year old son, Navarra discovered in a deep crevasse pieces of "hand-hewn" wood. He cut off a five-foot piece of the wood and later reduced it to several smaller pieces to pack them more easily. When reported in Europe, his find was seen by many as certain evidence that Noah's ark, or at least remnants of it, still existed.

After much negotiation and delay, Navarra returned to eastern Turkey again in 1969 on an expedition spon-

sored by the Search Foundation. Again, with much effort, near the same spot as his discovery in 1955, the group uncovered several small pieces of wood. Many believed, including the participants of the expedition, that remnants of Noah's ark had been found. Unfortunately, the evidence (i.e., the wood itself) testified otherwise. When Navarra's original find underwent Carbon 14 (C14) testing, the wood was found to be only a few hundred years old. Previously, when Navarra had his treasured wood evaluated by several institutes, each had given old dates, but they had used subjective visual guesstimates as the basis of their analyses and their conclusions.⁷ When the Search Foundation returned with its finds from the 1969 endeavor, they sent samples of their wood to several organizations for C14 analysis. According to the reports, all of the pieces of wood, including Navarra's original piece, dated to the Christian era⁸—not to Noah's time. Other mountaineers of Mt. Ararat have also discovered pieces of wood, but



Fernand Navarra with the piece of "hand-hewn" wood he discovered in 1955 on Mt. Ararat. (From Fernand Navarra, *Noah's Ark*.)

only Navarra's original find has been scientifically dated. One can conclude that finding wood on the mountain is, in and of itself, no sure proof of the discovery of Noah's ark.

Greene's photographs

Some claim to have taken photographs of the ark. Unfortunately, such photographs are always unclear long-distance shots that are open to a variety of interpretations. Or the photographs have become lost, stolen or otherwise unavailable. One of the most interesting of these stories is that of George J. Greene. In 1952 he was working as a mining engineer in eastern Turkey. One day, as he was flying near Mt. Ararat, he spotted what looked to him like a large ship near the top of the mountain. From his vantage point in the helicopter, he spent several minutes taking pictures of the object from as close as 90 feet. After returning to the United States, with photographs in hand, he tried unsuccessfully to organize a team and return to Mt. Ararat. None of his friends seemed interested. Surprisingly, no newspapers reported his story. After a number of years, Greene left the United States for other adventures. Unfortunately, he was murdered by bandits in British Guiana (now Guyana) and the pictures of the ark were lost, although about 30 people claim to have seen the photographs.⁹ Despite the impressiveness of this account, some who claim to have seen them are not sure that what they saw *was* a boat.¹⁰

Davis's claim

The most credible sounding anecdotal evidence of recent times is the report of Ed Davis, who claims to have viewed the ark from less than a mile away.¹¹ Davis was a U.S. army sergeant, stationed in Hamadan, Iran, during World War II. While there, he became friends with a young man named Badi, who was attached to the military as a civilian driver. From Hamadan, it is possible to



George J. Greene, who in 1952 photographed what looked to him like a "large ship" on Mt. Ararat. (From Violet M. Cummings, *Noah's Ark*.)

see Mt. Ararat on clear days. Badi told Davis that his family lived in a village at the base of Mt. Ararat and had visited Noah's ark many times. In fact, Badi's family considered themselves protectors of the holy relic. Eventually, Davis went with Badi's family to see the ark.¹² Badi's father, Abas-Abas, led the expedition but, before they left the village, Davis was allowed to see cages and other artifacts that the family said had been brought from the ark to the village.

Abas-Abas led the group on a three-day trek. They stayed in caves each night. After three nights, they were less than one mile from the ark. Davis could see it from that point. Unfortunately, their three days of hiking were spent in fog, with rain continuing night and day. Due to the poor weather conditions, they were unable to climb down from a ledge to the ark or to look inside it. According to Davis, the ark was broken into two parts, but both halves were (in 1943) well preserved. During this trek, no photographs were taken, but subsequently, Davis was given a picture of Abas-Abas' village. After he returned to



Astronaut Jim Irwin—seen here on the moon—later took many photos around Mt. Ararat, but without providing any conclusive evidence of Noah’s ark. (Photo provided by John McIntosh).

his military base, Davis penned these words in his Bible:

“Went to Ararat with Abas. We saw a big ship on a ledge in two pieces. I stayed with him at the big house. It rained and snowed for ten days. I stopped in Tarharan and got some supplies [sic] and got warm and rested up. Also some new clothes. Lt. Bert was glad I got back. He was scared for me. He was afraid I would get killed I think. I am glad I went. I think it is the Ark. Abas has lots of things from there. My legs are almost healed from the horse back ride.”

Many serious ark searchers considered Ed Davis’ story as prime evidence, not only for the existence of the ark, but also for its location. Only if the government would allow them free access to the mountain, they think they could find the ark, based on information Davis had provided.¹³ Davis even passed a polygraph test about his claims.

Conclusion

Still, I remain cautious. No hard evidence is available to see, touch, or consider. Evidence has to be weighed for credibility. Anecdotal evidence is minimal evidence, because it is so often unreliable. Have we not seen how in courtrooms eyewitnesses often disagree? Davis may have seen some-

thing, but what? In fact, astronaut Jim Irwin’s many flights and photographs in and around Mt. Ararat, including flights through areas suggested by Davis’s account, did not produce any pictures of Noah’s ark.

The natural inclination of Eastern peoples is to please their guests. This innate kindness may be one reason why some have reported sightings of Noah’s ark. A three-day trek, with fog and rain night and day, and a viewing of about a mile is not conclusive evidence. For a foreigner to be shown two natural outcroppings from the distance of a mile and to be told they are two halves of Noah’s ark, would not be unusual, especially if a family was trying to please a friend. It would not even be unusual for those outcroppings to be believed to be the stone-hardened Noah’s ark, in local traditions. This is not to suggest that such is the case in Ed Davis’ story. It is to say that, without objective evidence, it is not possible to know what anyone has seen, touched, or experienced.

As to other accounts, my own suggestion is that some of the older people who have claimed to have seen Noah’s ark when they were children, may actu-

ally have been visiting a boat-shaped geologic feature about 16 miles south-east of Mt. Ararat.

We have no evidence that Noah’s ark exists today. Did it ever exist? For that we have the security of the Word of God and the presence of the rainbow.

David Merling (Ph.D., Andrews University) is an associate professor of archeology and history of antiquity at Andrews University and curator of the Horn Archaeological Museum. His address: Institute of Archaeology; Andrews University; Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104; U.S.A.

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Notes and references

1. They were published in the *Adventist Review*, May 20 and 27, 1993.
2. See Don Shockey, *Agri-Dagh (Mount Ararat): The Painful Mountain; Artifacts From Noah’s Ark Found on Mount Ararat* (Fresno, Calif.: Pioneer Publishing Company, 1986), p. 38.
3. For example, the story of the Kurdish farmer Resit, reported in the newspapers in 1948. Supposedly, an entire Kurdish village saw the ark. A team led by an American college president set out to find Resit and view the ark for themselves. Unfortunately, after making the long trip, they could find no one named Resit nor his village nor anyone within 100 miles of Mount Ararat who had heard of the story. See Lloyd R. Bailey, *Noah: The Person and the Story in History and Tradition* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), p. 88.
4. Because there are no trees on the mountain or anywhere near it, the natural question is, “How else might wood come to be high on that mountain, unless it was originally part of Noah’s ark?”
5. Shockey suggests 200 sightings. See his book, *Agri-Dagh*, p. 41.
6. Edited by Dave Balsiger (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1974).
7. Rene Noorbergen, *The Ark File* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1974), p. 134.
8. *Ibid*, pp. 142-144.
9. See Violet Cummings, *Noah’s Ark: Fact or Fable?* (San Diego, Calif: Creation-Science Research Center, 1972), pp. 213-223.
10. See Bailey, p. 89.
11. See Shockey, p. 7.
12. *Ibid*, p. 37.
13. Shockey, p. 42.

Science and religion: Pursuing a common goal?

By **Mart de Groot**

In answering life's great questions, can religion and science complement each other?

The debate between religion and science is as old as they are. Religion, claiming to possess a special revelation from God, has often soared to dizzy heights and at times opposed science in its quest for truth and an understanding of the mysteries of life. Science, pretending to be humble by dealing only with what can be perceived through the physical senses, has also at times become arrogant, denying any role or even value for religious faith in human life.

And the battle rages on. But as we approach the dawn of a new millennium, is there a possibility that the matter of faith and faith in matter can have some talking point? What are the aims of Christianity and those of science? Can we conceive of common goals for both? Where lies the final answer to human queries?

Right at the outset, let me state where I'm coming from. I am a practicing Seventh-day Adventist Christian, affirming biblical revelation of truth, with a special interest in prophecy. I am also a professional astronomer, with a lively interest in cosmology, its order and beauty. My faith and my profession have not posed to me any unsurmountable problems. Out of that conviction I approach the questions outlined above.

What Christianity is about

The Christian faith is anchored in God as disclosed in the Bible. The Bible reveals God as One who created human beings (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:18, 21-23); who instructed them in how they ought to live (Exodus 20:1-17; Micah 6:8; Matthew 22:36-40); who saves them out of the predicament of sin (Ezekiel 36:26,

27; Romans 7:24, 25; Ephesians 5:25-27); and who promises to give them a future of eternal happiness and fulfillment (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21, 22).

Though the Bible was written by human beings, it claims God as its real author (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). This God invites us to get acquainted with Him (John 17:3). To enter into that special relationship that fosters the full development of our potential is the principal purpose of the written Word.

John pursues this theme, linking it with two other aspects of our relationship with Him (1 John 2:13, 14). First, to know God as One "who is from the beginning"—the Creator.* Second, to relate to God as those who "have overcome the evil one"—a victory rooted in God's disclosure through His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 5:4, 5). Thus, the Bible calls on us to have faith in God as Creator and Redeemer, the kind of faith without which it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).

What science is about

Science attempts, first, to satisfy human curiosity. God created us with an innate desire to inquire and to know. Consider astronomy, for example, which seeks to answer questions that men and women have asked since they started looking up at the skies. What are the stars? How did they come about? Do they affect our existence here on earth? But, apart from satisfying our natural curiosity, science also desires to probe and subdue nature for the benefit of humanity—a strong argument for supporting scientific research.

When God commanded Adam and Eve to "rule over" His creation (Genesis

1:26), it was with the clear idea that they would assume responsibility for the well-being of their environment— atmospheric, mineral, vegetable, and animal. In fact, God placed them in the Garden of Eden “to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15). So, from the beginning there was to be beneficial and responsible interaction between human beings and nature.

Nature and faith

If Christianity emphasizes the need to believe, and if science affirms the need to understand the world around us, is there a link between faith and nature? I believe there is, and to discover it we should look at God’s revelation in the written Word and in nature as His two books. When David stated, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1), he was not merely giving expression to poetry bursting forth from his musical heart. He was also expressing a fundamental concept of the biblical worldview: One cannot look at the wonders of nature without affirming faith in God. Since the glory of God is His character,¹ we can understand this passage as saying, “Nature declares the character of God.”

However, there is a potential problem. It may have been relatively easy for Adam and Eve to understand God when walking through the perfect Garden of Eden, but it must have been much more difficult for their children to have the same clear understanding, growing up in the midst of “thorns and thistles,” pain and tears. God’s handiwork in nature is so marred by the intrusion of sin that the reflection of His character in nature cannot be discerned as clearly as it was before the entrance of evil. This immediately raises the question: Has sin affected only the Earth, the human abode, or also our space environment?

Before space became the object of scientific inquiry and research, Christians

generally believed that humans would never be able to travel into space and contaminate the wider environment with sin. Psalm 115:16 (“The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man”) was taken quite literally to mean just that. Today we know better: We have left our footprints on the moon and the vastness of space has come under the continuous scrutiny of science. Thus, one may legitimately ask, Is there any place in God’s creation where sin has not entered or where its influence is not felt?

While we need not speculate on that which is not known or revealed, we still have this assurance: “The earth, marred and defiled by sin, reflects but dimly the Creator’s glory. It is true that His object lessons are not obliterated. Upon every page of the great volume of His created works may still be traced His handwriting. Nature still speaks of her Creator. Yet these revelations are partial and imperfect.”² “The heavens may be to them [the youth] a study-book, from which they may learn lessons of intense interest. The moon and the stars may be their companions, speaking to them in the most eloquent language of the love of God.”³ Thus, nature continues to speak of God. And then, of course, we have the written Word that proclaims the nature and glory of God.

Many see the two books of God as addressing different questions. One book tells us about nature, while the other tells us about nature’s Maker. However, though the two books are different, they both are examples of how God communicates with us. Through the one He speaks to us about His works—what is called the general revelation of nature. In the other, He speaks to us about Himself—what is known as special revelation.

General revelation answers questions about the physical universe: How does nature work? How is one thing related to another? How do we explain order and rhythm, chaos and decay, space and

time? These questions can be answered by observing the natural world and using the methods of the natural sciences.

Special revelation answers the questions that probe beyond the physical world: Why is nature as it is? What is the meaning and purpose of life? Are we answerable to a higher being? How do we relate to God? How can the issue of sin and its destructive power be resolved? Is there life beyond death? Answers to these questions presuppose the existence of a higher power or being, and fall outside the scope of natural science. That higher power—whom we call God—has revealed Himself through the Bible. There we can find answers to some of life’s great questions.

Since both nature and the Bible have the same Author who cannot and does not lie (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2), the answers obtained from the Bible cannot be in contradiction to those obtained from nature in those areas where both books have something to communicate. This does not mean that students of nature and students of the Bible always agree on how the information should be interpreted. The Bible itself makes it clear that it can only be understood by those who have spiritual discernment, that is those who, in their studies, take account of God’s Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6-16). This truth had already been proclaimed in Old Testament times and seems to extend the condition of spirituality beyond biblical studies to the investigation of nature. Thus, a knowledge of God and a recognition of His existence and wisdom are necessary for a deeper understanding of the problems posed by nature.

In striving to know God through the study of His two books, we must remember that we cannot obtain satisfactory answers by studying the one to the neglect of the other. Albert Einstein understood this principle of complementarity when he said, “Science without religion is lame; and religion without science is blind.”⁴

Common goals for science and Christianity

But we need not be lame or blind. Are there common goals for Christian faith and science to agree upon and common pursuits in which to engage? If nature and the Bible are two ways God has chosen to communicate important information to us, and if our pursuit of physical and spiritual endeavors can be assisted by these two books, then is it not logical that both science and the Bible, both reason and faith, should find a role in our intellectual and spiritual lives? In other words, should not our origin, purpose, and future be informed and guided by what faith and reason reveal to us?

Consider the call of Isaiah: "Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing" (Isaiah 40:26). Here we have God's invitation to study His handiwork in the planets, stars, and galaxies. Why do we need such a study? First, to obtain a personal knowledge of God. Second, to discover that our Creator is great in power and that He is eternal. Third, to find out why God created this great universe. God does not want all of us to be astronomers, but He does want us to study and meditate upon His marvelous

creation. Both the study of this earth and the study of the extraterrestrial are given to us in order that we may not only know the greatness of our God but also the responsibility of being His stewards.

This raises important questions. Is stewardship the only reason for scientific research? Or do we have additional reasons? Scientific study of the physical universe and its more spiritual study with the purpose of knowing its Maker should go hand in hand. Therefore, I regret any separation between these two disciplines.

Note a recent trend in cosmology. Some 70 years ago, cosmology embarked on a course that has led to a seemingly satisfactory physical explanation of the origin of the universe. Although there are many details yet to be completely understood, the Big Bang model of the origin of the universe has been accepted by the large majority of scientists as a suitable framework within which it is hoped further progress can be made.⁵ The collaboration between astrophysics, particle physics and theoretical physics has led to great insight into the very first moments of the universe's existence. However, it has also led to a recognition that there is a barrier in time beyond which even our best theories cannot reach. The first microseconds of the universe remain shrouded

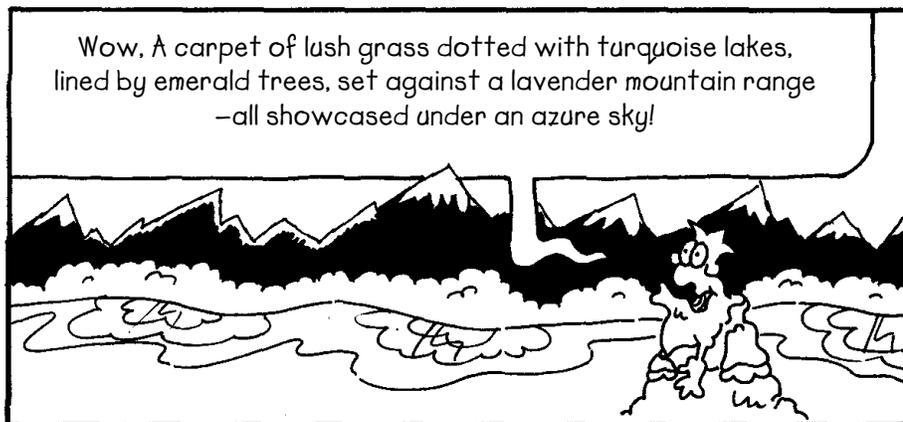
in mystery. Moreover, cosmologists have come to recognize that many aspects of the universe require a very fine tuning of initial conditions and of the values of physical constants. This time-barrier and the fine tuning have led to a renewed interest in the old questions about design in the universe, the possible designer, and what happened in that very first fraction of a second or even before.

While scientific investigations have provided many answers about how nature works, they have also raised more profound questions. Many of these relate to our deepest concerns about life, its origin, purpose, and future. No wonder, then, that some scientists suggest that only God can provide real answers to these questions.⁶ Others, however, have refused to admit any role for God, hoping that the continuing progress of science would some day answer our troubling questions. Still others claim that the deeper questions fall outside the scope of the natural sciences and are better left to philosophers and theologians. Let us look at these three attitudes.

Three attitudes about unanswered questions

First, God is the answer to all our questions, communicating truth either through the Bible or the church. While to many

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Christians this may seem an attractive option, we must realize the dangers therein. Imagine a 16th-century person who is unable to understand why the planets revolve around the sun. Most scientists and theologians of the time were teaching, supposedly on the basis of God's revelation in the Scriptures, that the Earth is the center of our planetary system. But one century later, Isaac Newton comes along and explains this mystery through the law of gravitation. The advance of science has offered numerous occasions in which earlier claims of God's miraculous and direct involvement had to be abandoned. This "God of the gaps" approach, which seeks to assign to Him all unexplained phenomena in the universe, is misguided and runs the risk of eventually making this "God" unnecessary. Those who believe that God plays an active role in our universe do so because they find in it many evidences of intelligent design and have established a personal relationship with Him.

Second, science is the answer to all our questions. Because of recent scientific breakthroughs, some believe that, given enough time, science will be able to answer all our questions. They ignore the obvious limitations of science and its tentative nature. Moreover, science is better able to answer the "how" than the "why" questions. God, who created us as inquisitive individuals, has chosen to disclose or make accessible to us certain things and not others. (See Deuteronomy 29:29.) Those that have been revealed are vital for our relationship with Him. When we enter into His eternal presence, we will be able to ask all those other questions whose answers are now shrouded in mystery. This is no licence

for being slothful or despondent in our current scientific endeavors. Rather, it should lead us to acknowledge that there are many aspects of God and His creation that are still hidden from us.

Third, philosophy or theology can provide the answers to our questions. Depending on one's individual mental make-up, one may choose between philosophy (metaphysics) and theology for finding answers to extra-scientific questions or try to combine them in some way. Christians will realize that, insofar as these disciplines are based on human reasoning and logic, they will always fall short of the mark when they fail to take into account the existence and power of the Creator of all things. This is precisely the weakness of all non-Christian philosophy and theology.

But even Christian theology cannot answer all questions. As our interpretation of natural phenomena is hampered by the barriers of space, time, and understanding, so our interpretation of the Word is imperfect. In addition, we are finite creatures whose mental capacity cannot fully comprehend the mind of the Creator. (See Isaiah 55: 8, 9; Romans 11:33.)

Conclusion

Human curiosity is not confined to the physical aspects of nature alone. It has also led to deeper questions on the origin, purpose, and destiny of human beings. God's intention in creating the universe and populating it with intelligent creatures was not only to provide us with many interesting fields of study, but also to lead us to Him as the Creator and, thereby, to a deeper insight into our existence as wholly dependent on Him.

One of Satan's most successful perversions is that he has managed to separate science from religion, and in the process has corrupted our understanding of our Creator and His saving relationship with us. Thus, philosophy divested from Christianity cannot answer difficult questions because it ignores the One who is the answer. Neither can theology by itself answer these questions if it limits itself to a study of special revelation alone. Nor can science alone provide the needed answers, especially if it ignores the legitimate role of God the Creator. Only when science, theology, and Christian philosophy collaborate—giving priority to God's revealed Word, the Bible—will we arrive at satisfactory answers. When we recognize God's omniscience and our limitations, and express our respect and love for Him, we will fulfill His original purpose when He invited us to behold His power to create and to save.

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From homo sapiens to homo videns

By Mario Pereyra

Are we moving from beings of thought and conscience to beings controlled by electronic image?

In the beginning was the Word," says John's gospel. Now one would have to say that "in the beginning was the image."—Giovanni Sartori.¹

The Bible has no problem defining the human: "In the image of God he created them" (Genesis 1:27, NRSV). But scientists have coined phrases and constructed taxonomies in order to define who and what the humans are.

In 1758, Carl von Linnaeus (1707-1778), a Swedish botanist, introduced the "system of human nature" that established the classification of species following an assumed evolutionary pattern. He catalogued the *Homo* (human) species as a branch of the *Hominids*, two-legged creatures. From there the search began for our presumed remote ancestors, including *homo habilis* (skillful man), *homo erectus*, and finally *homo sapiens*. Evolutionists contend that the latter has continued to evolve into the various kinds of contemporary men and women.

And now comes *homo videns*, a discovery by the Italian sociologist, Giovanni Sartori. His book, *Homo Videns: Teledirected Society*, has been a best-seller in Latin America, and its Italian version sold out in a few months. Sartori's thesis, although based on a questionable worldview, deserves our attention. He argues that evolution has turned backward since the 1950s, since *homo sapiens* is being dethroned by *homo videns*. The former is characterized by a large brain, the ability to walk perfectly on two feet and work skillfully with hands, the use of language, the fantastic development of culture, and other aspects described by anthropologists. Sartori agrees with the philosopher Ernst Cas-

sirer (1874-1945) in affirming that humans are essentially characterized by their symbolizing activity, "the ability to communicate by means of articulated sounds and meaningful signals."² From this it can be deduced that the human's "thinking and knowing as a symbolizing being are built *in* language and *through* language."³ So it is that spoken and written language are not only the base of culture but also the very essence of the nature of *homo sapiens*.

With the appearance of television in mid-century and the establishment of the television industry, Sartori maintains, human development was interrupted and reversed, for image perception began to replace abstract thinking. This process of involution was accentuated with the coming of cybernetics in the 1980s and with the appearance of the computer and multimedia technology. TV allows us to see at a distance things that are real, but the PC shows us virtual or simulated reality. Thus, seeing is privileged above speaking, the image is affirmed above the word. With the prevalence of vision, the symbolizing creature becomes the seeing creature.

Sartori declares that he doesn't seek to attack TV as a means of communication (although he emphasizes all its weaknesses) or the computer as an efficient information storage and retrieval system. His concern is with our dependence upon them, which develops when book culture is neglected. He argues that television impoverishes and makes us "more credulous and naive"⁴ and inactive. It also atrophies the gift for abstraction and understanding of problems, as it stimulates the concrete

thinking linked to the image on screen.

Images and concepts

One example that illustrates this is the classification of words in categories such as denotation and connotation. The first category includes words referring to observable things such as *book, table, house, dog, tree*, etc.—words that denote or point to specific objects or facts of which we have a mental image or representation. They are the basis for concrete thinking. Other words refer to ideas, such as *nation, sovereignty, liberty, justice*, etc. These expressions are not “visible,” but rather are concepts linked to abstract mental processes. Abstract language is responsible for the development of civilization and science over the centuries—that which really characterizes the human species. Sartori suggests that television “produces images and destroys concepts, and thus atrophies our capacity for abstraction.”⁵

At the core of his argument is the “video-child.” Statistics suggest that TV has replaced the baby-sitter and has become the child’s primary school (an entertaining and interesting school as compared to the boring school in a building). Watching TV before learning to read and write produces a negative mind-set for school learning. In addition, undue early TV exposure engenders a phobia against school books and

a tendency to respond only to shows, strident music, and the sensational. Children are dominated by impulse; they act before they think. TV, argues Sartori, “softens” the brain.

Reading, on the other hand, requires solitude, concentration, discriminating ability, appreciation for conceptualization, and reasoning. *Homo videns* “tires of reading, prefers the abbreviated flash of a synthetic image. It fascinates and seduces him. He renounces to logical links, reasoned sequence and reflection. By contrast, he yields to the immediate, heated, emotionally-involving impulse.”⁶ The TV addict rejects persistent effort, tenacious action, and research—in effect, the cultivation of one’s thoughts and actions.

One may think that these ideas are exaggerated and open to debate. Sartori replies: Look at the parts of the world where TV dominates, and what do you see? The dwindling of reading scores, the scarcity of critical thinking, the growing difficulty students experience in comprehension and composition. Logical reasoning on verbally postulated premises is no longer there. Thinking becomes dependent on the images received.

This image-based thinking has considerably increased with the introduction of the computer, the Internet, and the surfing of cyberspace, expanding

the ranks of *homo videns*. As in the case of TV, the impact of the PC depends on the use made of it. Is it instrument, entertainment, pastime, or does it become a drug, a mania? Generally speaking, people who surf the Internet tend to passive dependence more than interactive, productive work. One must recognize that the information superhighways of the Internet not only transmit a great mass of useful information, but also a lot of trash and foolishness. Furthermore, recent research reveals that surfing the Internet increases the level of depression and loneliness.⁷

The culture of the spectacular

Homo videns dwells in the world of the spectacular, dominated by the famous. From Tokyo to Buenos Aires, from Moscow to Washington, from Paris to Kuwait, no matter how different the situation or the culture, popularity dominates the market; the rating rules. Why is success defined in almost the same way anywhere on the planet? How do we get the impression that TV is the same everywhere? As we near the end of the century, every country in the global village has converted society into an audience, and the population into couch potatoes hypnotized by the magic of the spectacular.

There are auditions, programs, magazines, newspapers, and supplements—

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ever more bulky—devoted to informing about and promoting the spectacular. Not long ago those supplements were published only on weekends instead of every day. They contain entertainment, artistic events, theater plays, movies, and the all-powerful TV programs, the stars that shine in the splendid firmament of popularity. The entertainment industry sells the products that are the fashion of the day. The market of notoriety absorbs ever more and more time, structuring the values of *homo videns*.

The industry of the spectacular is not only omnipresent, but omnipotent. It hoards, manages, directs, or manipulates everything. The economy is dependent on the media. A negative comment by some well-known journalist, whether or not he or she knows anything about the stock market, can cause the fall of stock values and the ruin of strong industries or business enterprises. Politics is also captive to ratings. The media may give wide publicity to scandal, as in the impeachment of Bill Clinton. Politicians must now be good TV actors if they want to get the votes. Even the world of art, the intellectual and scientific world, are sensitive to the opinion of the media. Everybody wants access to the wide stage of fame.

Often one sees people's faces behind someone being interviewed on TV, hands raised to capture the attention, trying to get a piece of the action on the screen. In times past, people sought to cut a low profile and dresses were designed to disguise the shape of the body. But now fashion highlights the curves and the contours.

The law of the spectacular that comes to the fore in *homo videns*, rules at every level. The main object is to be an actor, to be seen, to pretend, to play a role, no matter what the arena. Charisma, loquacity, the histrionic touch, the magic of collective hypnotism constitute the key to success. The principal value is no longer morality, holiness, unselfishness, intelligence, or art—but fame. The fa-

mous who shine in the powerful spotlight of popularity can taste with satisfaction the honey of glory. In previous times, one had to do something for the public good, to discover, invent, or write something important. One no longer needs excellence, intelligence, wisdom, or even money. It's enough to have an attractive figure, to seduce, make an impact, exhibit oneself on the stage of the communications media.

Hollywood was the first to discover the economic power that is built on fame, creating the celebrity industry. The fascinating power of fame transforms almost anything into something and moves fortunes. Models on the billboards, actors, singers, sports celebrities—anyone in the “fame sphere”—has become the advertising endorsement for consumer products. No matter the quality of the product, people will buy it because Claudia Shiffer, Michael Jordan, or Bruce Willis uses it. Ultimately, they themselves are the product. That's why the famous are besieged. The TV industry, journalists, photographers, pursue them without mercy, as in the case of Princess Diana. Reporters write books about them, and industries are built on the foundation of their fame.

How to reverse this involution

It is evident that we live in the age of images, supportive of fame and the spectacular. Perhaps the capacity for abstraction has not totally vanished, but surely the proliferation of TV screens has affected the capacity for reflection. After rushing home from work, millions find their principal occupation in curling up on the couch and playing with the remote control. Others sit enchanted in front of the blue screen of their computer monitor, and surf their dreams and fantasies.

For Sartori, the most important danger in all this is that *homo videns* is easy prey for the experts in manipulation of the collective will. Wanting in abstract and independent thinking, hindered in

achieving one's own identity, the *homo videns* is easily seduced by the magic of the technological panoply. Our Italian sociologist is particularly alarmed by video politics, the manipulation of the power of images by politicians and government. He notes that television “strongly conditions the electoral process, whether in the election of candidates” or in “governmental decisions” by distorting the proper functioning of democratic systems.⁸

Odina and Halevi assure us that fame is “the new gold standard by which everything can be measured,” reducing “our ideals to the devouring desire to be illuminated, though it be for an instant and only through simulation by the media spotlight.”⁹ Certainly the advent of the image culture has installed in today's mentality the hegemony of seduction¹⁰ and simulation.¹¹ Real events and objective facts have been relegated to second place. What has become important is their representation on the screen. Reality has shifted from the real world to the monitor screen, becoming “virtual reality.” We are now in the age of “seeing” rather than “being.”

Fame is derived from this context. It walks on the stage of appearances. It's a luxury vehicle for transporting fascinating aesthetics, but with an ethical vacuum. It relegates one's person to a world of simulation full of falsehood—a big lie. Dustin Hoffman, in launching one of his movies, ironically stated that politics and the movies are one and the same, causing one to believe that which is not true.¹² It is a glimmering mirage, a shell game, that magnifies the figure and exalts the ego to a ridiculous degree. There lies the death of certainties, of rational thinking, and of eternal values of the spirit. The eager seekers after fame have lost the human aspiration for religious transcendence, because the desire for notoriety does not bring with it that kind of metaphysical profundity.

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Who was Mary?

Mother of God or one chosen for a special role as the mother of Jesus?

by Jean Sequeira

When our daughter Jennifer was born in a mission hospital in Kampala, Uganda, my husband, our two-year-old son, and I were delighted. Congratulations poured in from different parts of the world. A letter from my in-laws contained an unforgettable sentence, "If it's a girl, her middle name will be Maria."

"*Maria?*" I said, incredulously. "Why *Maria?*"

My husband reminded me that while he is a Seventh-day Adventist, his family is Catholic, and all Sequeira girls are named in honor of Mary.

"But..." I started. Protestant feelings against venerating Mary surged through my body, "How can we name our daughter after the *Virgin Mary?*"

Since it is a family tradition, I gave in. My daughter was dedicated "Jennifer Maria."

A simple issue of name, but it stirred up some deep feelings, underscoring the dilemma many Seventh-day Adventists—nurtured in the Protestant lineage—might face.

The Protestant dilemma

James Hitchcock, history professor at St. Louis University, understands the Protestant dilemma: "Given their assumptions, these Protestant misgivings are also quite understandable, since an appreciation of Mary's place in the economy of salvation required centuries of inspired theological meditation on the relatively few biblical texts which mention her. Looked at merely through common sense, there is validity in the Protestant argument that, if God intended Mary to have a crucial role in the lives of Christians, she ought to have

been featured more prominently in the New Testament."¹

What do we really know about this special Jewish maiden?

What the Bible says

The Bible refers to Mary over 20 times.² Matthew honors her name in the genealogy of Jesus. The gospel speaks of her engagement to Joseph, and her conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit while still a virgin. Joseph wants to break the engagement quietly, but informed by an angel in a dream, he believes the story of her pregnancy, and assumes the responsibility of caring for her and her son. The Wise Men from the East visit the family and leave precious gifts for the child.

Mark mentions that Mary and Jesus' brothers and sisters are present when He preaches on Sabbath in a synagogue. Luke identifies Mary as a cousin of Elizabeth, whose husband Zacharias was a priest.

Luke provides a detailed narrative of Mary's encounter with the angel Gabriel who tells her that she has "found favor with God."³ She is to bear a child whose name shall be called Jesus, son of the Most High. Mary questions, "How will this be,....since I am a virgin?" After the angel explains to her that she will conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit to bring to this world its Saviour, she responds: "I am the Lord's servant,....may it be to me as you have said."⁴ Obedience and surrender follow faith.

During Mary's visit to her cousin, Elizabeth's unborn child leaps for joy in her bosom, recognizing the Holy Child's presence. Elizabeth, "filled with the Holy Spirit" cries out: "Blessed are you

among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" She later calls Mary "mother of my Lord."

"More humble than ever before, Mary set forth to magnify the Lord in those stirring lines (Luke 1:46-66) which have come down to us as the immortal Magnificat. It is Mary's hymn of praise to God for His wonderful works. This jubilant song pours from her heart and in its richness and sweep sets forth the wide range of her spiritual experience. In it we can see that Mary knew the age-old Psalms of her people and also the Song of Hannah."³

Joseph and Mary proceed to Bethlehem. There was no room in the inn for them. In a musty animal shelter, they turn in, and Mary gives birth to this child of promise. Shepherds come with homage after angels tell them of the Saviour's coming. Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

After the traditional eight days, Jesus is circumcised. Then, after 40 days, Mary prepares for purification rites. As Jesus is dedicated in Jerusalem's temple, pious Simeon, led by the Holy Spirit, reaches out to bless the child. Simeon praises God for sending light to the Gentiles and salvation for the Jews. His prophecy that a sword will pierce Mary's soul resounds many years later at the foot of the cross.

But Herod is already after the child. The family flees to Egypt. They return to Nazareth after Herod's death. Aged 12, Jesus accompanies Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem for Passover. Homeward bound, His earthly parents are terrified to discover that Jesus is missing. They return to Jerusalem and find the child conversing with the temple teachers. He tells his parents He must be about His Father's business. Again, the Scripture records that Mary "treasured all these things in her heart."

John describes the wedding at Cana in Galilee. When Mary tells Jesus that the supply of wine had run out, He reminds her, "My time has not yet

come." With implicit faith, she tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Soon they witness His first miracle.

Jesus remembers His earthly mother's needs. Dying on the cross, He leaves her in the tender care of John, His beloved disciple. Mary hears the joyful news of the resurrection from Mary Magdalene and joins the men and women in the Upper Room after the Ascension.

Sacred art and Mary

According to Roger Calkins, "The cult of the Virgin, which had its origins in the twelfth century, flowered in the thirteenth, and brought with it new at-

titudes about the role of the Virgin as the human Mother of God as well as the intercessor for Man's salvation."⁴

Along with the evolving cult, artworks depicting Mary also flowered. Many symbols were attached to her portrait: the lily denoting virginity; violets depicting humility; the enclosed garden her purity; a doorway symbolizing chastity, to be opened by the Holy Spirit; an open container and well-spring denoting her virginal state and the fact that God will fill Mary's empty womb with water from the well-spring of life.

Some artworks show Mary's hands cradling her Babe, pointing to Him, or

Recent Marian Apparitions

The Roman Catholic Church has reported an increasing number of Marian apparitions and messages, which include the following:

- Our Lady of the Rosary, Prouille, France, 1208. Thereafter, the rosary was preached and introduced as a remedy for heresy and sin. This apparition led to the founding of the Dominican order.
- The Black Madonna, Czestochwa, Poland, 1382. Painting attributed to St. Luke was displayed. In 1430, at the appearance of the Madonna, a looter died. The Black Madonna became the symbol of Polish unity.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe, Guadalupe, Mexico, 1531. Juan Diego, an Aztec Indian, claimed he saw Mary four times. His uncle was revived from death, and he received a message to build a church. Mary's image is preserved on a poncho. An estimated six million Aztecs were converted.
- Our Lady of Lavang, Lavang, Vietnam, 1798. During a severe persecution of Catholics, Mary seemed to have appeared and offered assurance that all prayers would be answered. A church was built in 1886, was enlarged in 1928, and was destroyed during the Vietnam war.
- Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Paris, France, 1830. Amidst troubles facing the throne and in the midst of world misery, cures and conversions were identified and attributed to a medal commemorating the appearance of Mary.
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Lourdes, France, 1858. Bernadette, 14, saw 18 visions of Mary. In one vision, she was told to dig a hole and bathe. A healing spring appeared, and Lourdes became a major pilgrimage site.
- Our Lady of Fatima, Fatima, Portugal, 1917. Three children saw many visions over six months. They were scared by a vision of hell. The visions mentioned the end of World War I and predicted World War II. Visions also spoke of the world being punished for offending God.
- Our Lady of Medjugorje, Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, 1981. Mary gave six young people ten secrets. Her message was simple: Convert, pray, fast, return to God, and expect suffering ahead as humanity nears self-induced catastrophe.

showing an attitude of benediction. Michelangelo's famous marble, *The Pieta* (1498-99), in St. Peter's Basilica, shows Mary in a superior position as the vertical line with the limp body of her Son across her lap adding a horizontal cross-bar to the sculpture. *Death of the Virgin*, a mosaic from Palermo, Italy, illustrates the thinking of the day. A miniature Mary wrapped in swaddling clothes represents her spirit being taken heavenward by Christ and the angels.

More veneration in art and literature may be noted. *A Hymn to Mary*—Old English poem—calls her "The Queen of Paradise,"⁵ coming from David's royal line, implying she is of noble birth! Not only is Mary seen as Queen of Heaven, but the *Mosaic in the Apse of Saint Maria* in Trastevere, Italy, shows Christ and Mary sharing the throne. An ivory carving in the Louvre, Paris, reveals how this occurred—Christ Himself crowned her!

A carving of the *Ivory Virgin and Child* includes an apple, reminiscent of Eden. Christ is the second Adam, so Mary, through her special relationship, is seen as the second Eve.

The Book of Hours in The Hague, Holland, contains an illustration, *Donors Kneeling Before the Virgin and Child*,⁶ in which Mary is shown mediating between humanity and Christ.

So, through the ages in European tradition, Mary emerges as co-redeemer, seated in heaven with Christ her Son.

Catholics and Mary

For Protestants to understand the elevation of Mary in Catholic theology, we must first consider the Roman Catholic view of the Virgin.

First, the perpetual virginity. Catholic theology teaches that Mary was a virgin before the birth of her Son, and that she remained so throughout her life.

Second, the immaculate conception. Christopher Kaczor says: "The Immaculate Conception refers...to Mary's exemption from original sin from the first moment of her conception."

Third, the bodily assumption. Mary's total person (body and soul) went to heaven (was assumed into heaven), unlike Christ who ascended, and unlike the saints whose souls ascended but whose bodies did not.⁷ This teaching for Catholics is a dogma (i.e., belief which cannot be changed). Mark Brumley explains: "The dogma of the Assumption means that the Virgin Mary now experiences in heaven that union of glorified body and soul which her son enjoys. She is no disembodied spirit, but a complete human person, body and soul, matter and spirit, reigning with Christ."⁸

Fourth, Mary the co-mediator. Eamon R. Carroll says: The "holy Church honors with special love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son." And further, "the entire body of the faithful pours forth urgent supplications to the Mother of God and of men that she, who aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers, may now, exalted as she is, above all the angels and saints, intercede before her Son in the fellowship of all the saints."⁹

Fifth, the appearances of Mary. In the last half of this century, the Roman Catholic Church has claimed at least 69 appearances of Mary.¹⁰ See sidebar.

Why are these supernatural things happening? According to a Catholic commentator, "the dream [of St. John Bosco] appears to point to two of the pillars of Catholicism as being essential during this time of great distress: the fact that Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist is the salvation of all who believe in Him, and that the Immaculate Virgin, Jesus [sic] mother, will always help all those who seek her Son. It is precisely these two elements of the Catholic faith that are strengthened, reinforced and brought to public attention by the recent reports of Marian apparitions and Eucharistic miracles!"¹¹

Seventh-day Adventists and Mary

Seventh-day Adventists, along with

our Catholic friends, believe Mary was chosen by God to play a unique role as mother of the Saviour. However, on the basis of the Scriptures, we reject the veneration of Mary's person, including the belief that she is in heaven and acts as a mediator between the sinner and the Saviour. The Bible teaches that we can approach Jesus directly through prayer and that He is our only mediator.¹² We believe that Mary, just like all other redeemed believers, awaits the resurrection.

Adventists also reject the concept of the immaculate conception. Paul's assertion that "sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12) applies to Mary as well. Ellen G. White comments: "The only hope of redemption for our fallen race is in Christ; Mary could find salvation only through the Lamb of God. In herself she possessed no merit. Her connection with Jesus placed her in no different spiritual relation to Him from that of any other human soul. This is indicated in the Saviour's words. He makes clear the distinction between His relation to her as the Son of man and as the Son of God. The tie of kinship between them in no way placed her on an equality with Him."¹³

How then should Seventh-day Adventists relate to Mary? Since we believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, we repudiate devotion to the saints. Catholic tradition has elevated Mary to a position in which she is venerated as almost equal with Christ. On the other hand, we could learn to give Mary the attention she deserves as the one especially chosen to bear and nurture the Son of God—the Savior of the world.

Perhaps we should heed Luci Shaw, a poet and publishing executive, who writes, "It could be different if we avoid both extremes, and look at Mary clearly enough to see the woman shown us in the Bible. Not only was she a simple

mortal, unpretentious enough for us all to identify with, but she nudges our self-centered 'me generation' toward the path of the God-centered, the faithful, the obedient."¹⁴

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- 9. Eamon R. Carroll and O. Carm, "Light on Our Blessed Lady," *Catholic Dossier*, *Ibid*.
- 10. Available at: <http://www/members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian12.html>
- 11. Available at: <http://wwwmembers.aol.com/bjw1106/marian1b.html>
- 12. See Matthew 7:7-11; John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23; 24; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:24, 25; 9:15; 12:24; 1 John 2:1.
- 13. *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1898), p. 147. In this moving literary portrait of Jesus, Ellen White makes several references to Mary: Her poverty (pp. 44, 50, 52); her faith in Christ's birth (98); her role as Jesus' first human teacher (70); her misunderstanding of Christ's mission (56, 82, 90, 147); her sharing in His suffering (56, 90, 145, 744); her perplexities at home (86, 89, 90, 321); her hopes at the wedding of relatives in Cana (145); her spiritual relation to Christ (147); and Christ's tender provision for Mary at the crucifixion (752).
- 14. Luci Shaw, "Yes to Shame and Glory," *Christianity Today*, (December 12, 1986), p. 22.

Homo videns

Continued from 15

That is why, today more than ever, we need to rediscover the sense of being over and above the fallacies and "strategies of illusion"¹³ and to find the certainties of the essential values. What are those higher goods that guarantee authentic fulfillment of one's being? They are the courage to forge a personal identity based on the eternal values of love, faith, truth, integrity, and justice. They consist in learning: To listen to the voice of God. To perceive the sublime touch of beauty, the mysterious call to a life of service. To swell into fulness the stream of vital energy, and to take risks for the joy of living. To develop moderation, patience, authenticity, to not be carried away by anger. To learn that there is a place for tenderness, for hugs, for the human touch, even in small things. To open the gate to the land of hope. To lift aloft the banner of a new ideal. And so many other tangible and substantial realities of the humankind, in place of the artificial games and fatuous splendor of the famous who are at the service of *homo videns*.

Those who reflect seriously on contemporary cultural trends are lifting their voices in alarm over what they see in lost capacity for analysis, for autonomous decision-making. They are frightened at a population being "tele-directed" by excited or extravagant charlatans, people who triumph in the TV world, who lead us to lose our vision of the higher values of the mind and of the spirit. These students of today's society call us to return to books, to cultivate the habit of reading, to develop critical thinking, to become not mere refractors of the screen content but thinkers with minds of our own.

To all these, we must add another supreme imperative: a return to the Word, to the Holy Scriptures, which not only

favors thinking, but establishes ethical principles and transcendental values that are essential to life here and to life in the hereafter.

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9. See M. Odina and G. Halevi, *El factor fama* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1998).
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Leona Glidden Running

Dialogue with an Adventist linguist and scholar

An accomplished scholar. A learned linguist. A respected teacher. With all that, add grace, dignity, and a Christian role model, and you have Dr. Leona Running. Born in central Michigan two years before the end of World War I, she graduated from Emmanuel Missionary College two years before the beginning of World War II. Armed with a major in French and minors in German, English, and education, she was well equipped to begin her career as a language teacher in 1937. In 1955 she received an M.A. in Biblical Greek and Biblical Hebrew from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and 9 years later she earned her Ph.D. in Semitic languages from Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Running's outstanding service to the Adventist Church began in 1937 in Laurelwood Academy in Oregon as German and French teacher and later also librarian. Then she served as a secretary at Pacific Union Conference office, Voice of Prophecy's Foreign Language Division, and the Carolina Conference. From 1950 to 1954 she worked as a copy editor for Ministry magazine and in 1955 began teaching biblical languages at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, then in Takoma Park. In 1960 she moved with the Seminary to Andrews University as professor of biblical languages—a position she held until her "official" retirement in 1981. Thousands of students from around the world have passed through her classes, with fond memories of her scholarship and compassion.

Dr. Running has published numerous articles and reviews in various church and scholarly journals and coauthored William Foxwell Albright: A Twentieth-century Genius (1991) on the life and work of this leading Semitist. Her distinguished and long career has brought her numerous awards. Dr. Leona Running enjoys her "retirement," still teaching in her specialty as professor emerita at Andrews University.

The saddest note in her life was the death of her husband, Leif H. (Bud) Running, in 1946 after a surgery. They were married in 1942. She also has other difficulties and sorrows, but is thankful for God's unfailing help and guidance, and the opportunities to use her God-given talents.

■ Dr. Running, tell us a little about how would you define yourself.

I have often been referred to as "the first Adventist woman teaching biblical languages." That is not true, but I am the first woman to become a full-time faculty member of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

■ You were born and grew up in difficult days. What motivated you to pursue a good education?

My parents. They strongly believed in Christian education, and they sacrificed much to send my younger sister and me to Adventist schools. They believed and instilled belief in me that God had a plan for my life in His work. Despite several difficulties, I always felt I must work for my church.

■ Why is the study of biblical languages important for a minister?

How would you like to go to a dentist who says: "I didn't bother to learn how to use my tools because it's too hard"? Biblical languages are the tools of a minister. They help you go to the original text and learn for yourself what it says. They help you evaluate the many translations. They give you authority. But I always tell my students, "Don't even say the word 'Hebrew' or 'Greek' from the pulpit. Just tell your people what the original says. And they won't go out saying, 'Look how much Hebrew and Greek our pastor knows.' Instead, they'll say, 'Our pastor makes the Bible speak to me.'"

■ How did you get interested in ancient languages?

I love languages. While working on Ministry magazine with the Seminary next-door, I had an opportunity to study the biblical languages. I began by taking two Hebrew classes. After two years I registered full-time and completed my M.A. in 1955. Then the Seminary hired me to teach the first and second levels of Greek and Hebrew.

■ That was over 40 years ago. How did you get to doing a doctoral program at Johns Hopkins University?

During my first year of teaching in the Seminary, one of my mentors urged me to work towards a doctoral degree. I started doing it in education. But when my department chairman heard of it, he disagreed strongly. Dr. Siegfried Horn, the great Adventist scholar, was not only my colleague but also a former teacher. "Leona," he urged, "You must go to Johns Hopkins and get a proper degree in your proper field."

■ *What was your reaction?*

Disbelief. "Could I? At Johns Hopkins?" I asked myself. As far as I was concerned, Johns Hopkins was on the moon! Well, no harm in trying. I passed all my incoming language requirements in one pleasant hour by conversing with Dr. Albright in German, switching to French and Spanish, then translating several selected Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. He didn't ask me to translate from the Latin Vulgate although I had been studying Latin on my own for six weeks. On the basis of my knowledge of the other languages he accepted my simple statement that I could read the Vulgate as well!

■ *Can you share something of your experience in writing your dissertation?*

My dissertation involved the Syriac manuscripts of Isaiah. The world's leading Syriac scholar taught at a seminary in Chicago and had agreed to guide me through the research process. One summer I was awaiting the arrival of microfilm copies of Isaiah manuscripts I had ordered from the British Museum, the Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Vatican Library and other sources from Europe. While doing research, I was also teaching classes. Besides Greek and Hebrew, several times I taught Akkadian (cuneiform), Egyptian (hieroglyphic), and Syriac, close to the Aramaic that Jesus spoke, and this was helpful. My 400-page "monster" of a dissertation included 147 pages of handwritten Syriac presenting the 3,339 variants I had found. We had no computers with the foreign scripts then. I had to write the 147 pages of Syriac by hand twice, with enough pressure on the pen against a metal ruler to make a readable impression on two carbon copies, as I needed six copies and we didn't yet have photocopy machines.

■ *A doctoral dissertation defense is a sort of "rite of passage." Anything significant about that "ritual"?*

January 30, 1964 was the memorable day of my oral examination. The examining committee sat around a long table: the chairman of the committee, chair of Classics, the chairman of my department of Near Eastern Studies, an Arabist, and an Economics professor, included because my dissertation contained statistical tables, and the chairwoman from the Department of German, knitting at my right. In fact, it was fun! Each person was allowed 10 minutes to question me. My chairman began with easy questions to get me started. The time slipped by rapidly; the experience felt very satisfying. I waited out in the hall while the verdict was being decided. That didn't take long, and they soon called for "Dr. Running" to enter. After the graduation ceremony, it seemed to me that I had been liberated. But I did not have all the answers. Higher education is a humbling as well as enlightening experience.

■ *Was that the greatest event in your life?*

No, it was not. The most important event in my life was my marriage. My husband was already a liberated man in those times. We were equal partners. I still miss him.

■ *As you said earlier, you are the first Adventist woman to become a full-time faculty member of the Seminary. How did you feel in that role?*

Socially speaking, it did not bother me to be the only woman in classes at the Seminary and Johns Hopkins, but what was really difficult was going to faculty banquets that are overwhelmingly for couples! Now, in academic terms, I probably gave myself a mental block when I joined the Seminary faculty, restricting myself to languages and methods of teaching. I left the exegesis and theology courses for the men, who preferred that kind of teaching. When the Seminary moved to Michigan, Dr. Horn nominated me to the Chicago Society of Biblical Research, where in 1981-

82 I served as the first woman president.

■ *What is your major satisfaction teaching biblical languages?*

To work with young ministers in training, young women more recently as well. What fun to open a door into a room they never before could have entered, and let them see all the treasures stored there—looking at the original biblical text, seeing things they had never noticed! It's a great satisfaction seeing my students applying their knowledge teaching or pastoring or as administrators all over the world. Sometimes they call me for advice or help, or just to say Hello. That means a lot.

■ *How do you see Adventist higher education today?*

I'm proud of it. Except for my Ph.D., I completed all my education in our schools. And it's important that, in college, all our students get a good biblical background and not just limit themselves to a secular liberal-arts program.

■ *What would be your advice to Adventist students in secular universities around the world?*

I would hope they all have a local church that really nurtures them. If they don't have one, they should organize a group to worship and study. While on many campuses you cannot do any open evangelism among your peers and your teachers, you can live your faith and share it quietly. That will arouse curiosity and questions. They may say, "I have a different idea about Adventists since I met you." Then you are ready to say, "Come and see." In any case, be open, be available, be helpful.

Interview by Roberto Clouzet.

Roberto Clouzet is a doctoral student in educational psychology at Andrews University.

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Carlos Puyol Buil

Dialogue with a Spanish pastor, scholar, and administrator

A powerful preacher. A prolific writer. A man of strong faith and convictions. Add to this Christian kindness, humility, and an inquisitive mind, and you have Carlos Puyol Buil. Born in Zaragoza, Spain, Carlos grew up during the Second World War. Political dictatorship, economic hardship, and very little opportunity shaped in his youthful days a nonconformist spirit, with a vision for a better future.

At 12, Carlos came in contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which at the time was barely tolerated. Four years later, he was baptized—in spite of the opposition of his parents. His rebellious spirit gave way to obedience to God's call to enter the pastoral ministry. He started his ministerial training in Madrid and completed it at Collonges-sous-Salève, France. At 19, he met and later married Rosa María Salvador Terraza. Their only child, Carlos Miguel, was born in 1968.

Puyol served initially as pastor, Bible teacher, and education director. He obtained, at the request of the church, a university degree in history. At 33, Puyol was elected president of the Spanish Mission. His new responsibilities coincided with the last years of the Franco régime. The Adventist Church experienced the end of its ghetto status, and began to be involved in public evangelism.

As a respected pastor and head of the church in his country, he played a major role in the visit of the queen of Spain to the Madrid Adventist church—the first time ever that a member of the royalty had attended a Christian, non-Catholic religious service.

Attracted to the academic life, Puyol became president of Sagunto Adventist College. Later he was appointed president of the Spanish Union. Busy people accomplish much, and during those years Puyol completed a Ph.D. in history. His dissertation (746 pp.), on the Spanish Inquisition, was published under the patronage of the Spanish High Council of Scientific Research. In 1994, Puyol returned to pastoral ministry. The following year he was elected secretary of the Euro-Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists—his current position.

■ Considering the circumstances, your conversion appears miraculous.

Conversion is always a miracle of divine grace, in which providential circumstances, hereditary or acquired receptivity, and the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit are jointly at work. A previous preparation, often unconscious, precedes the conversion process. In my case, I have to ascribe it to the influence of my mother, a devout Cath-

olic, who inspired in me the search for God.

■ You had a very independent spirit. How did you choose to join a church which, at first sight, seems characterized by rules?

Christ promised that it is truth that gives true freedom (John 8:32). The gospel frees us from sin and from whatever other form of bondage we may be under. It allows us to recover the value of

human dignity. I found in the norms of the Adventist Church a way toward personal improvement and liberation.

■ Tell us about your experience as a ministerial student in Spain during those years.

It was thrilling. Since the authorities had closed the seminary, we attended classes in the homes of our teachers, taking notes on our knees. There were no dormitories. We stayed with church members. We spent the holidays working as literature evangelists, participating in church life and, whenever possible, helping out pastors in evangelism.

■ What were the major problems faced by young Adventists at that time?

To keep the Sabbath in school and at work. But the problems increased during military service. Practically all the young people of my generation spent time in military prison for their religious convictions. Some faced a “war council” (military court) and spent years in prison. Marriage presented another challenge, since it required the approval of a bishop, which was normally granted only for Catholic weddings. Years were spent in desperate waiting. Those who could, got married abroad, as I did. But some yielded to pressure.

■ Your doctoral dissertation is on the Inquisition. Could you have written on that topic in the early years?

No. The archives of the Spanish Inquisition were open only to scholars authorized by the Roman Catholic Church. At that time, studies about the Inquisition were strictly apologetic in nature, i.e., they tried to justify the his-

torical reason for that institution. For centuries, the topic was taboo. No university professor would have dared to direct such a research project.

■ *Did you have anything to do in the creation of AEGUAE, the Spanish association of Adventist university students and professionals?*

Although the initiative was taken by the students of our churches in Catalonia, I immediately understood that it was a project that deserved the full support of the church administration. It was important to create an organization in which our intellectuals would feel that they were well represented and where they could express their concerns, study in depth our fundamental doctrines, and create the necessary means for a loyal cooperation with the general goals of the church. The foundations were laid, and there was never a split between the association and the church administration. This year, AEGUAE celebrates its 25th anniversary. An international convention is planned, with guests from all European countries. The theme will be “The Bible and Mediterranean Culture.”

■ *Your privileged relationship with the king and queen of Spain is well known. How did it all start, and what is the current situation?*

At the beginning of 1976, as a sign of the new winds blowing over Spain (Franco passed away in 1975), our church was invited to hold a seminar on Adventism at the Department of Contemporary Humanities of the University of Madrid. The queen was a student in this department and attended all the classes. At the conclusion of our seminar, she expressed her desire to visit our church in Madrid. The queen came on a Sabbath, and that day we were having the Lord’s Supper. The queen was moved by the experience. Sometime later she asked that I join the team of teachers of the foundation, “Contemporary Science and Thought,” which orga-

nizes, for her and a select group of persons, seminars and colloquia on current issues. I have been active in this group for almost 20 years, witnessing about our faith whenever there is an opportunity, advocating religious liberty, and emphasizing spiritual values in the midst of secularization. I meet the king at official receptions granted each year to Spanish writers in conjunction with the awarding of the prestigious Premio Cervantes. Last year Safeliz, the Adventist publishing house in Spain, published a book on the queen written by the president of the foundation mentioned above. One chapter relates in detail and with pictures the queen’s visit to the Adventist church.

■ *Minority churches in Spain today enjoy religious freedom that would have been unthinkable 40 years ago. Could the Spanish model influence other Hispanic countries?*

I hope so, and something is already taking place. Through different steps, between 1978 and 1992, a constitutionally based agreement has been reached with Protestants, Jews, and Muslims in Spain. There is clear separation of church and state. Religious plurality is formally recognized, and the fundamental rights of each religion as well as their exercise, in private and in public, are guaranteed by the state.

■ *The Adventist Church lived courageously in Spain during times in which it was barely tolerated. What are the challenges it faces in the current climate of freedom?*

The main challenge confronting the church in all secularized countries is evangelization—how to reach postmodern people with the gospel. We have often failed to adapt to the new social context, to identify the real needs of individuals before providing the answers. On the other hand, paradoxically, we run the serious risk of losing our identity, of slipping into global ecumenical uniformity.

■ *You are a teacher/scholar/evangelist. Now you devote most of your time to administrative tasks. Are you sometimes frustrated? Is it difficult to keep the vision of your call, while serving as a division secretary?*

My basic call is not to be specifically a teacher, a scholar, an evangelist, or a church administrator. My call is to be a servant of God and of His church, and this is fully implemented in each of the ministries mentioned above. Although I recognize the existence of spiritual gifts and personal talents, I am afraid of restrictive calls that condition the availability of God’s servants. I accept the necessity of specialization in the church, but only as an instrument to fulfill God’s will. For this reason, I was never frustrated in my different ministries.

■ *Being realistic, what could be done in favor of the Adventist intellectuals of Spain that has not been done yet?*

It would be profitable, I think, to organize from time to time courses or seminars, adapted to their specific backgrounds, that would allow them to combine, without mental traumas, the requirements of science and those of faith in different disciplines. The necessary means should be provided so that the largest number of people may participate. Our intellectuals deserve special attention. The investments made in their favor will be like the seed sown “on good soil” (Matthew 13:23).

Interview by Pietro E. Copiz.

Born in Romania, Pietro E. Copiz (Ph.D., University of Michigan) served as university professor and education director of the Euro-Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists before retiring near Bern, Switzerland. E-mail: 104474.3026@compuserve.com

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Life in all its tenses

by Austin C. Archer

Rooted in the past, anchored to the present, and hoping for the future, life can be lived in full.

He was an outstanding musician. He loved music and thrilled everyone with his talents. He had so much sunshine to offer. It was a joy to be around him.

But no more.

At first it seemed like a routine headache. But it got more intense. Soon a steady fever came on. With it a loss of memory—at first, of small things, then bigger things. Soon he could not recall his daughter's name.

By now everyone knew Clive was in serious trouble. A virus seemed to have destroyed his hippocampus—that part of the brain vital for processing memories. Clive was not dying—at least, not then. But he was losing his memory.

How does memory work? You remember the food you ate yesterday, the people you were with, the things you talked about. You are able to do all that because the hippocampus helps you to file the information away in your memory. Later you can reconstruct those events. That little area in your brain about the size of your thumb provides you with a link to the past, and therefore meaning in the present, and a purpose for the future.

Clive lost that capacity completely. He could no longer remember his past. He lives in the present, adrift. His consciousness is from moment to moment, without any great significance. He sits in his room, with a deck of cards and a diary. He plays alone an endless game of solitaire. Occasionally he looks at his watch and records the time in his diary and writes "I am now awake for the first time." Whenever his wife walks into the room, he greets her as a long-lost love,

with hugs and kisses, and says to her: "I've never seen you before. This is the first time I am seeing anybody at all."

His friends from his days as a choral conductor come to visit. His wife leads him to the music room. He protests that he has never played any music, and has no knowledge of how to read music. But she reassures him as he enters the room, greets his friends, sits at the piano, and leads them as he plays, sings and conducts Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*. As the strains of the great music ends, Clive retreats fitfully into his world of hopelessness. For even as the music ends, he cannot remember what he just did.

The past

Now, consider your own past and your own walk with God. Is your spiritual memory intact? What makes your past relevant? What makes your present meaningful? What makes your future hopeful?

Can you remember when you decided to follow Jesus? Or when you decided not to? Can you remember why you did? Can you remember the last time you had a real talk with Jesus? Or is your past experience with Him a distant, forgotten memory?

Clive had done significant things in his past, but he could not remember them anymore. He could still do things he had learned. He knew how to write and spell and play the piano, but he had no awareness that he had learned them. They had no lasting impact on his life.

Those significant things that God has done for us in the past can be forgotten, or they can be taken for granted. Those promises we have made to God can fade into the past and cease to influence our

lives. Those things you have done for the Lord in the past may not thrill you any more. In short, is Christ as real to you as when you first believed? Do you still have what the risen Jesus demands of the church at Ephesus—that first love (Revelation 2:4)?

The present

Turn to your present. Is your relationship with God a growing experience in your life? How meaningful is your present walk with Jesus? Is it a vital and living friendship, one in which you are constantly building on the past?

Clive's present is a round of activities that may have meaning in themselves, but because his experiences are unconnected by memory they are, in effect, meaningless. Much of what he does is just ritual. Could it be that your spiritual life has turned into a ritual—a meaningless cycle of religious activities, enjoyable while they last, but nothing to be missed when they are over? They do not contribute to growth. Peter admonishes us: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18, NIV). Growing requires connection with our roots, renewing the decisions we made for Christ. If we live without this connection, we become frozen in the past. Our lives become an absurdity.

The future

And what of the future? Clive has no future because he has neither present nor past. He is, as it were, doomed to repeat his limited present. But for us it can be different. Whatever our past has been, whatever our present, in Christ there is hope for the future. Paul summarizes this well:

"Therefore, since we have been [past] justified through faith, we have [present] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand [present]. And we rejoice in the hope [future] of the glory of God" (Ro-

mans 5:1, NIV).

Salvation claimed in the past is worthwhile only as it is continuously renewed in the present. We must keep our commitment current. Then, and only then, do we have a present that is meaningful and full of growth, and a future filled with infinite possibilities.

Stay connected to Christ. The past, the present, and the future will then forge together to make your life whole, meaningful, and hopeful.

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Three useful books

The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church, and School,

*by Tom Phillips and Bob Norsworthy
Bethany House Publishers, 1997; 230 pp.; paperback.*

How to Stay Christian in College,

*by J. Budziszewski
NavPress, 1999; 144 pp.; paperback.*

Adventist Ministry on the Public University Campus: A Sourcebook,

*compiled by Humberto M. Rasi
AMiCUS, 1998; 293 pp.; spiral book.*

For more information contact AMiCUS; 105541.3200@compuserve.com

Why so many Bible versions?

Why do we have so many versions of the Bible? What makes a good translation? Should Seventh-day Adventists have their own version of the Scriptures?

Translating the Bible from the original languages is never complete. Why? First, new discoveries of Bible manuscripts provide additional information to help recover the words of the Bible's authors. Even the discovery of a small manuscript fragment containing a few words that are not in the available manuscripts may prove valuable for deciding what a Bible author actually wrote in a particular verse.

Second, translators' knowledge of the ancient languages of the Bible continues to increase as archeologists uncover additional documents and inscriptions that use the languages of the Bible, or closely related languages.

Third, our own language undergoes constant changes. Words and expressions either drop out of use and are replaced, or take on new and different meanings. This process has been speeded up by mass communication.

Fourth, some new translations target a particular type of Bible reader who needs the message of the Bible expressed in a particular way. For example, some of the most recent translations are designed for reading out loud because translators recognize that many people prefer to listen while the Bible is read aloud to them.

What makes a good translation?

What makes a good translation? First, it should be based on the oldest and best available manuscripts. Since the oldest Bible manuscripts were either not available or not used consistently

until just over 100 years ago, Bibles translated during this century tend to be closer to what the authors actually wrote than those translated before that time.

Second, it should accurately translate the Bible writer's words or thoughts. There are two main methods of translation: the formal and the dynamic. Those who use the first approach translate *words* and let the reader decide what these words mean. Most older translations were prepared according to this method. Those who utilize the dynamic method translate the *thoughts* of the Bible writers by using modern expressions that sum up what those writers meant. Most, but not all, modern translations follow this method.

Which is best? Both can produce good translations, but both can fail to transfer all the Bible writer's meaning into the translation. Bible readers doing serious Bible study can combine the strengths of both methods by using a formal and a dynamic translation side by side.

Third, it should translate the manuscripts into a clear and easy-to-read language. Many modern translations rate well on this point.

Who produces the best translations?

Who produces the best Bible translations? Bibles translated by individuals are usually called paraphrases. They are easy to read and understand; in fact they tend to make Bible reading more exciting. Dr. Jack Blanco, an Adventist professor, has published one such English paraphrase, *The Clear Word Bible* (Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1994). Paraphrases, however, run the risk of reflecting the doctrinal and other preferences of the author. At times, they may

include concepts that are not really in the Bible!

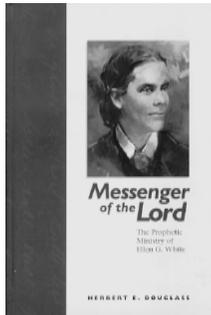
Having Bibles translated by a group limits the amount of bias that goes into a translation. For devotional reading, paraphrases have their place, but for serious study, translations by groups are more reliable.

Should Seventh-day Adventists have their own translation? Some have suggested that we make our own translation, using the skills of many Adventist Bible scholars around the world. However, such a move would bring suspicion of doctrinal bias, and would limit our ability to read and study the Bible with other Christians if we used our own version instead of a standard one.

God's message for all people should be clear enough regardless of the translation. The arrival of a new translation presents us with the unique opportunity to broaden and deepen our understanding of God's message through His Word.

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



**Messenger of the Lord:
The Prophetic Ministry
of Ellen G. White,**

by Herbert E. Douglass (Boise, Idaho:
Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1998; 586 pp.,
hardcover).

Reviewed by Floyd Greenleaf.

Few questions have plagued Seventh-day Adventists as much as that of offering a definitive explanation of the ministry of Ellen G. White. Adventists have believed in her prophetic role in the development of the Advent Movement, but the church has never been free from doubters. Consequently, since the 1930s, less than 20 years after her death, a succession of authors have sought to validate her ministry. With *Messenger of the Lord*, Herbert E. Douglass—a well-known theologian, educator, and author—becomes the most recent writer on the topic.

The previous authors—F. M. Wilcox, A. G. Daniells, L. H. Christian, F. D. Nichol, and T. H. Jemison—wrote primarily to establish the theology of the gift of prophecy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and then to demonstrate Ellen White's gift manifested. Douglass differs from the previous approach in that his primary emphasis is not on the theology of the gift of prophecy, but rather on removing doubts about Ellen White's function in the prophetic office. He is obviously responding to the questions appearing during the 1970s and 1980s when some Adventist scholars charged that she plagiarized, that her personal life contradicted the instructions she gave the church, and that her writings contained errors and therefore needed revision. They challenged her ministry but not the theology of prophetic ministry itself.

Ironically, these were the essential problems that church leaders and college teachers of religion and history discussed in Washington D.C., at the 1919 Bible Conference, but left unsettled. Much of their debate revolved around different views of the nature of inspiration, principally verbal versus thought inspiration.

After scholars resurrected virtually the same questions during the 1970s and early 1980s, the church could not postpone an open exchange of information and interpretation. Consequently, the heart of Douglass's book is Section VI, "How to Listen to the Messenger," where he spends nearly 100 pages discussing the principles that should guide Adventists when reading Ellen White.

To provide a setting for his statements, Douglass quotes at length from Ellen White, frequently citing passages on which critics have based a complaint. From there he proceeds with

explanations. In some instances, he denies the validity of the questions that critics have raised. A case in point is his discussion of plagiarism, where he summons the support of a Catholic attorney who studied both the charge and the evidence and concluded that Ellen White did not plagiarize.

Messenger of the Lord is published in the format of a college textbook. Its 47 chapters are heavily documented and filled with questions for discussion. Additionally, Douglass provides nearly 40 pages of appendices. This sheer bulk may intimidate some readers, but once into the book they will find the prose reader-friendly.

As convincingly as Douglass writes, he will not end the debate about Ellen White. He obviously began with his conclusion already in mind, but he is candid and informative, absorbing and thought-provoking, and skillfully uses historical perspective. No thoughtful reader can dismiss his book as solely an apologetic treatment of the topic. It represents the most serious study that the church has produced about Ellen White, a statement for which Adventists have been waiting for decades.

Floyd Greenleaf (Ph.D., University of Tennessee) served as history teacher and administrator at Southern Adventist University. He also authored The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean (1992), which was reviewed in Dialogue 5:3. He is currently updating Richard Schwarz's Lightbearers to the Remnant (1979), a history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. E-mail: fgreenl@peganet.com

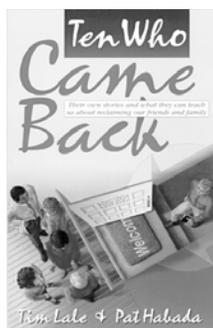
Revolution \,rev-ə-'lūshən\ *n* 1a : a radical or complete change.
b : an activity or movement designed to effect fundamental changes.

12th Century A.D. The Revolution begins. The Waldenses.
1376. Oxford University. John Wycliffe.
1401. University of Prague. Jan Hus.
1506. University of Basel. Huldreich Zwingli.
1517. University of Wittenberg. Martin Luther.
1531. University of Paris. John Calvin....
21st Century A.D. Berkeley 2000. You.

Join the Revolution.

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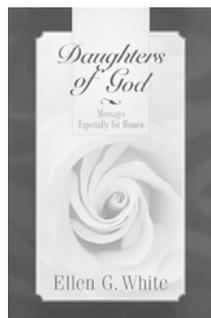
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Ten Who Came Back,
by Tim Lale and Pat Habada (Boise, Idaho:
Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1998; 160 pp.;
paperback).

Reviewed by Lucio Altin.

director of Family Life for the Italian Union. He lives near Rome with his wife Daniela and their son Cristian. His e-mail address: altin@ri.tws.it



**Daughters of God: Messages
Especially for Women,**

by Ellen G. White (Hagerstown, Maryland:
Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1998; 275
pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Nancy Vyhmeister.

Have you read *Ten Who Left* by Fred Cornforth and Tim Lale (same publisher, 1995)? Did you feel angry, sad, confused? Or did you conclude, like Morris Venden, that most of these ten were never in the church, to begin with—not for lack of knowledge about God, but for lack of a deep personal relationship with Him (see *Never Without an Intercessor*, same publisher, 1996, pp.106-109)?

Now this book, *Ten Who Came Back* by Tim Lale and Pat Habada, tries to give some answers to the questions raised in the first book (reviewed in *Dialogue* 9:1). But even if you haven't read the first one, this one will certainly provide a constructive approach regarding "backsliders" and their unique predicament. No polemic spirit, no sterile regrets or guilt trips, but only authentic concern.

Some factors that seem to facilitate the return of those who left are: (1) early positive memories of childhood in a Seventh-day Adventist church and family; (2) an Adventist education, although this may be at times a negative factor; (3) prayers by others and the persons themselves when faced with the choice of either complete surrender to or total rejection of God; (4) a marital crisis and concern for their own children's upbringing in the Lord; and (5) warm personal contacts, mostly scarce during their absence and yet determinant at the moment of re-entry.

Of special interest is chapter six, where Lale writes a self-interview, reporting his own reaction to the awful death of his parents as missionaries in Africa, his own search for meaning beyond doctrines and behaviors, until he discovered God's true character. Lale also learned that his "life goes to pieces very quickly" when he stops submitting himself to God, and that he could "prove God to be right by keeping faithful to Him no matter what happens" (p. 92).

The book, somewhat like a qualitative study without technicalities, does not claim to be exhaustive, but achieves its purpose in stimulating concerned members to prepare for reaching out more effectively to the hurting ones out there. Or perhaps in here.

Lucio Altin is an Adventist pastor who teaches psychology and serves as

Prepared by the Ellen G. White Estate, this compilation of materials for and about women is intended "to be an encouragement, an inspiration, and affirmation to women around the world" (p. 12). The feminine design of the book seems to reaffirm this intention.

Some of the quoted selections are only one paragraph long. Most are considerably longer, thus providing the context of specific statements. The reference for each quotation gives the original source or the available published source, together with the date of writing. In some cases background information is provided. This attempt to set Ellen White's writings within a historical or biblical framework is one of the most helpful features of the book.

Topics are presented in 22 chapters, the order of which does not follow a clear organizational scheme. Chapters on women in ministry (1 and 7) bracket chapters on women in the Bible (2 and 3), on personal prayer life (4), and professional life (teachers and physicians, Chap. 5 and 6). Most topics relevant to women have been included; yet, a chapter on the headship/equality issue is not included; nor one on abuse. Yet, Ellen White addressed these issues.

Ellen White wrote extensively on the participation of women in the life and ministries of the church. Sections on teaching, medicine, neighborhood ministry, temperance work, foreign missions, and women's ministry reflect this emphasis. At times, one cannot distinguish between the activities recommended for lay women who are fulfilling the servant task of all disciples and the work of women who are "church workers."

Ellen White's writings on self-respect (Chap.12) do not seem to be addressed exclusively to women. Yet the letter of encouragement to Martha Bourdeau in the same chapter points to the need for women to respect themselves, to trust in Jesus, and to recognize their lives as precious in the sight of God (pp. 145, 146). The letter closes with a transcription of

the hymn "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," the sentiment of which Martha was encouraged to appropriate as her own (p. 148).

Selections on influence (Chap. 13), modesty (Chap. 14), balance (Chap. 15), and healthful living (Chap. 16) are appropriate to all women. Equally relevant is the advice that women should be competent to run a household (p. 212), take care of themselves (p. 213), and learn a trade or profession (p. 214). I found most interesting the portion of an 1884 letter to the "matron" of the St. Helena Health Retreat, urging her to "wake up, and put to the task" her "almost-paralyzed energies," and chiding her for having caused the loss of hundreds of dollars by her poor management (pp. 214-216). Some things do not seem to change!

The last two chapters, "When Sorrow Comes" and "Woman to Woman," contain excerpts of personal letters written to grieving women. They show a warm, caring Ellen, in tune with her own feelings and willing to reach out to comfort and be comforted by other women.

A set of five appendices closes the book, although the rationale for selecting these pieces is not apparent. Appendix A tells the beautiful story of Mary Magdalene at Simon's feast, and concludes with encouragement for all women who are willing to flee "to Christ for refuge" (pp. 236-240). Appendices B and E portray Ellen White's public activities and marital life. Especially poignant are the 1876 letters written by Ellen to her close friend Lucinda Hall. In these she shares her deep concern over the treatment she is receiving from James, who has become difficult and demanding after suffering from repeated strokes. These glimpses of Ellen White show that she was, after all, a woman like the rest of us.

While the book attempts to steer clear of the controversy over the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, Appendix C, "Exhibits Relating to the Ordination of Women," contains a combination of Ellen White excerpts, historical information, and letters from C. C. Crisler, written in 1916 (pp. 248-255). This document was prepared by the White Estate in 1990. Appendix C, "Use of the Tithe" (pp. 256-259), seems anomalous in a collection of writings to and for women.

The book shows Ellen White as responsive to women and their needs. It depicts women in the church as a force to be taken into account and as the special object of God's loving care. This compilation can bring strength and understanding to the women and men who read it.

Nancy Vyhmeister (Ed.D., Andrews University) teaches at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and serves as the editor of Andrews University Seminary Studies. Her address: Andrews University; Berrien Springs, Michigan 49904; U.S.A. E-mail: vyhmeist@andrews.edu



Apocalipsis y el fin del mundo

by Mario Veloso (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1998; 228 pages; paperback).

Reviewed by Máximo Vicuña.

Dr. Mario Veloso, a church administrator and theologian, turns his attention in this book to end-time events as found in the Book of Revelation. The author approaches the study in three sections. First, he presents an overview of Revelation, giving the reader the book's theme, focus, context, and outline. Second, he deals with what he considers the core of the Apocalypse: the transcendental theme of the Remnant. This section identifies the Remnant, its mission, and the dangers that arose during the period 1798 to 1844 and continue to this day.

Thirdly, the author focuses on Revelation 12:17. He sees this passage as the turning point in Revelation, and a transition from the first part (historical, chapters 1-12) to the second part of John's book (eschatological, chapters 13-22).

Based on Revelation 12:17, the author clarifies the identity of the Remnant and its mission to prophesy, evangelize, and enlighten. He also reviews the dangers that the Remnant will face: indifference, persecution, apostasy; and religious confusion. By "religious confusion," the author means that "strange desire that the remnant church should not pretend to have special doctrines nor assume to have a life style different from the rest of the churches. Be one among many, without pretending to be the true church" (pp. 65,66).

Veloso's commentary is a warning against such indifference to the calling and nature of the Remnant. His book is particularly timely in light of the impending third millennium and the parallel rise of speculations about the end of the world. Following the principles of historical interpretation and using clear and objective language, the author has given a readable, reliable interpretation on the major issues in the Book of Revelation.

Máximo Vicuña (Ph.D., Universidad de San Marcos, Th.D., Andrews University) served as professor of theology and rector at Peruvian Union University and currently teaches Spanish language and literature in the United States. His address: 37 Ledgecrest Drive; Worcester, MA 01603; U.S.A.

Do we need Adventist lawyers?

By Karnik Doukmetzian, Esq.

Twenty ago, as my generation was considering its career choices, becoming an Adventist lawyer was seldom an option in many countries. Church members would take aside those who wanted to study law and counsel them to choose another career. Misperception of the role of a lawyer led to misdirected advice, often resulting in frustration among young people. They wanted to serve their fellow believers and the community at large through the legal profession, but their church preferred that they enter the ministry or become teachers or physicians.

I recall an incident just after I had graduated from law school. I was participating in a church program on religious liberty when a member asked me pointedly, "How can you be an Adventist and a lawyer at the same time?" I have even heard some people say that Ellen White had warned against such a career choice.

The fact is that Ellen White gave a quite different—but still challenging—counsel on this subject: "It requires more grace, more stern discipline of character, to work for God in the capacity of a lawyer, ... carrying the precepts of Christianity into the ordinary business of life, than to labor as an acknowledged missionary in the open field. It requires a strong spiritual nerve to bring religion into the...business office [shall we say, courtroom?], sanctifying the details of everyday life, and ordering every transaction to the standard of God's Word. But this is what the Lord requires."¹

The false dichotomy of practicing attorney versus practicing Christian still persists. Many see these two activities as mutually inconsistent. An attorney's

daily routine brings constant challenges to one's Christianity and religious conviction. There are times when we have to reconcile the skills of our profession with the moral demands of our faith. How do attorneys, knowing the guilt of their clients, continue to pursue a line of defense that might result in their acquittal? How do attorneys, in the pursuit of "truth," weigh and present evidence that may be counter to the interests of their clients? How do attorneys deal with clients who, under oath, will falsify testimony for their own advantage? These tensions between the law and one's highest aims are constantly resolved by the committed Christian lawyer. Abraham Lincoln once noted that "a person who wants to practice law should resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer."

The law profession has been around since the beginning of time, enjoying its own kind of humor. A doctor, an engineer, and a lawyer were arguing over whose was the oldest profession. The doctor asserted that, of course, a physician removed Adam's rib to create Eve. The engineer countered, "Of course, an engineer must have designed the Garden of Eden." "I have you both beaten," the lawyer gloated. "Before Adam and Eve, before the Garden of Eden, before creation, there was a state of chaos, and who do you think created the chaos?"

The French Emperor Napoleon once said that "the practice of the law is too severe an ordeal for poor human nature. The man who habituates himself to the distortion of the truth, and to exultation at the success of injustice will, at

last, hardly know right from wrong." Was it not William Shakespeare in *Henry VI* who said "Let's kill all the lawyers!" Is there any doubt why those of us who entered the practice of law faced the hurdles we did or why countless others were successfully counseled not to enter the profession for fear of "losing their faith and their souls"?

A sense of justice

Despite such obstacles, Adventist legal pioneers led the way, placing beacons for those of us that followed. They braved the criticism and followed their dream. These pioneers were motivated not by the church member's or the world's view of lawyers but by a sense of justice and missionary zeal, to become advocates on behalf of those whose rights had been trampled and to witness in ways no others could. Their actions increased awareness that Adventist lawyers were contending for the faith in arenas that only they had access to.

At the time I entered law school in Canada, there were three Adventist attorneys in the whole country. In a few years, that number has increased to over 30. The same can be seen all over the world. Not only are the ranks of Adventist lawyers increasing, but more and more of us are finding that serving the church in an official capacity can be just as fulfilling as private practice. The Office of General Counsel (OGC) at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists maintains a list of Adventist attorneys around the world. At last count that number exceeded 1,000 in 68 countries. The OGC also publishes a bi-annual magazine called *JD* which, in addition to articles about lawyers, also carries a full roster of Adventist attorneys.²

Today, many who have followed their dreams have become respected practitioners, been appointed to judicial positions, serve in legislatures, teach in law schools, defend the oppressed, shape law so that others might benefit, uphold religious freedom, and serve the

church in capacities too numerous to mention.

I think of distinguished colleagues such Daniel Nsereko, dean of law at the University of Botswana; the late Jerry Wiley, vice-dean at the famed University of Southern California law school; Daniel Basterra, professor of constitutional law at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, judge of Spain's Court of Appeals and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director for the Spanish Union of Churches.

I think of Mary Atieno Ang'awa, judge of the High Court of Kenya; Justices Sevua and Salika who serve on the National Court of Papua New Guinea; Judge Terry Finney, retired, of California; John Bagnall of the Australian Compensation Court; and Peter Jackson, a circuit judge in Britain. All of these individuals have been the first Seventh-day Adventists in their respective countries to assume positions in the judiciary.

Judge Jackson perhaps sums it up best for these pioneering judges when he chose as the motto on his official coat of arms *Laudate Deum*, Latin for "Praise God." Judge Jackson explains that he chose that motto because "God has and is in charge of my life." The coat of arms also includes a cross at its apex, which is where Justice Jackson states, "I want Christ to be in my life." Each of these pioneering individuals has shown by example to those of us who follow that they are contending for the faith in arenas to which only they had access.

I also think of Lee Boothby, vigilant defender of church-state constitutional issues in the United States and beyond; Gerald Chipeur, constitutional expert in Canada on freedom of religion; and Mitchell Tyner, the helper of the faithful as legal counsel on numerous religious discrimination cases in North America. There are others who have used their legal training to better the life of church members, to protect the

interests of the church, and to provide counsel to church entities, so that they might insulate themselves from legal difficulties.

The listing above is not exhaustive but only representative of the many highly qualified and competent legal counsel who are devoted Seventh-day Adventists. Each lawyer in his or her own way has shaped, assisted, and counseled the church. Many give of their time and expertise to help their fellow church members, assist in church services, hold evangelistic crusades, and advise on religious liberty issues as only they are capable of doing.

The impact of a choice

Little did I know when I was questioned about my career decision the impact my occupational choice would have not only for me but also for others. Shortly after commencing my practice, I was approached by Adventist Church officials, who asked me to help a renowned barrister take on the case of a church member who had lost her job as a result of her religious convictions and decision not to work on the Sabbath. In order to prepare his case, this lawyer had to understand the Sabbath and its meaning for Adventists—that priestly absolution does not work in matters of conscience for Seventh-day Adventists. By the time preparation was completed, he knew all about the Adventist Church and its beliefs. This preparation helped him to present his legal argument before the Supreme Court of Canada which, in a landmark decision, ruled in favor of an individual's religious freedom and right to refuse to work on their day of rest, and an employer's corresponding responsibility to accommodate.

Seven years later, it was my turn to appear before the same high court on behalf of the church. It was another Sabbath accommodation case, one that

Continued on page 34

From Marx to Christ

by Alexander Bolotnikov as told to Gina Wahlen

Alexander (“Sasha”) Bolotnikov always considered himself to be a Communist. After all, his grandfather had been a colonel in the KGB, his parents had encouraged him to participate wholeheartedly in all of the Party’s youth activities, and he himself planned to one day be a nuclear physicist, designing missiles to help defend the Motherland.

But then one day, his dreams came crashing down. The very system that he loved and supported turned on him, denying the specialized training he sought. All because of one little word stamped in his passport—*Yevrei, Jew*.

That’s when Alexander decided to find out his real roots of what it means to be a Jew. The journey would eventually lead him to Jesus Christ.

We join him now as he is about to enjoy his first Jewish experience—a concert presented by Rabbi Shlomo Carlibach.

Kiev was known for its anti-Semitism and this concert was the first-ever public Jewish event in the city. Posters advertising the concert had been put up all over, so it was no surprise that a large number of Jews would be going to the Palace of Culture that Friday evening. I noticed that many of the men had put on their yarmulkes as soon as they entered the palace.

Walking upstairs to the first balcony, I found my seat on the front row. Never had I seen so many Jews—the 1,000-seat hall was nearly filled to capacity. For nearly every one of us, it was to be our first introduction to our roots, our first public affirmation of our cultural heritage.

As the lights dimmed, a middle-aged man with a full beard stepped on stage.

He was holding a guitar, and I could see a small band behind him. The stage lights came on and he began to speak in Hebrew with a Russian translator by his side.

“Four thousand years ago, there were great civilizations—the Moabites, the Babylonians, the Midianites, and the Jews. But today, where are these great civilizations? They are all gone—except the Jews. We are here tonight. After 4,000 years we are still here.”

Then beginning with the Exodus, Rabbi Shlomo Carlibach began to teach us our multi-millennial history through music and words. “Through this day and night, He made us alive!” said Rabbi Carlibach, referring to the first Passover in Egypt. “Who is this ‘He’?” I wondered.

The rabbi plucked the introductory minor notes on his guitar, which were quickly joined by a consistent, syncopated beat on the snare drum and cymbals, followed by words describing God’s deliverance of His people from all of their enemies down through history. Interwoven throughout the melody were several interesting and unusual sounds coming from drums, cymbals, clarinet and guitar. It was the first time I had ever heard such music, and I was immediately entranced.

The music, with its powerful words, made a big impression on me. The songs continued to roll over me—“Glorious Is He,” “For From Zion Comes the Law,” “Rejoice!” The rabbi had wisely arranged the concert as a musical survey covering Jewish history and faith—the Exodus, God and His glory, the Torah, the future redemption of Jerusalem through the Messiah.

As I continued listening, I found answers to some of my questions. “God is keeping the Jewish people,” said the rabbi. “He is to be glorified. We were in Egypt and He saved us. In Babylon and He saved us. All nations from that time have disappeared. But God has kept us alive and we have remained a separate people among the nations for thousands of years,” the rabbi said. As the music began again, the thought slowly started to dawn on me that here was more than culture, more than history. I began to realize that the Jewish culture is blended with and based on religion. The music I was listening to was not just folk music—these songs were about God. I realized that God was the center of Jewish thinking, and that Jews attribute all great historical events to Him. These were totally new concepts for me.

Rabbi Carlibach strummed his guitar, slowly at first, as he sang. After a couple of phrases, the tempo picked up quickly, with the chorus and tambourines joining in. Soon the audience began clapping their hands with the strong rhythm of the song. Then suddenly everything stopped. “What are you waiting for?” the rabbi asked. “Why are you so reluctant?”

In a moment, hundreds of us were on our feet. Several men from the chorus, with brimmed black hats, jumped from the stage to join us in our first Jewish dance.

Drawn by an irresistible urge, I left my balcony seat, and along with several other newly discovered Jews, headed down to the main floor. Here was something that felt like “mine”—but it was also something really, really unknown. In any case, I knew I needed to be there.

On the main level, I stood side by side with others. Shoulder to shoulder, we stood and grasped each other's arms and began moving sideways like a giant merry-go-round. The music picked up again, and the rabbi started where he had left off. Soon I began to feel that I was actually a part of this great nation with a long history, a nation that owed its existence and survival only to God Almighty.

Sasha continued his search, digging deeper and deeper into Jewish thought and tradition, and into the Old Testament. While he continued his search to find real meaning in life, his path crossed with those of many other interesting characters—ranging from Satan worshipers to Christians. The tension grew until finally he was faced with a decision he didn't want to make.

My mind was churning with heavy questions: What will I do with my life? What kind of future will it have? Will the Messiah ever come? And if He doesn't, what or who am I expecting? What reasons do I have right now for not believing the prophecy in Daniel 9?

I had been expecting the Messiah to come and explain these difficult passages, but what if He didn't come? Who would give me an explanation? And did an alternative explanation even exist when the text seems to indicate so clearly that the Messiah would be put to death before the destruction of the Temple?

But how could it be that for so many centuries such great rabbis as Rashi, Maimonides and others could not discover the meaning of Daniel 9? How could it be that the Talmud did not give a word of explanation? Indeed instead of giving an explanation, it only pronounced a curse upon anyone who would attempt to calculate the 70 weeks. And why was it forbidden to read Isaiah 53 in the synagogue? I remembered my various conversations with Tolik and Oleg where important ques-

tions about sin and the atonement had been raised. These questions were now screaming in my mind. How could I ever make atonement for my sins? Isaiah 53 says that the suffering servant can do it, but if I don't accept this suffering servant as my Messiah, what am I going to do with my sins?

Oleg's arguments were right. This "Kol Nidrei" prayer that we sang every Yom Kippur really didn't help solve the sin problem. It seemed like a ritual I went through to satisfy my feelings. Do I really do all that the Torah requires me to do? If not, then I have been a sinner for many years and I desperately need Someone to take my sins away.

What if Christ really is the Messiah? I wondered. And what if I accept Him? What will the other students at the Yeshiva think of me? I will be a traitor—the worst thing a Jew could ever be. They'll call me a *vykrest*—a Jew who has been baptized a Christian. *Vykrest* is a word full of shame. We were told that the *vykrests* were always our worst enemies—even worse than the Jesuits or the tormentors of the Inquisition.

As I continued wrestling with these seemingly unanswerable questions, another voice suddenly began to speak louder than my own thoughts: "Weigh all of the pros and cons. What is more important to you—to have atonement for your sins or not to be called a traitor? And even after you accept Christ as the Messiah it doesn't mean that you are turning your back on Judaism. You are not going to go back to the synagogue and try to do something mean and revengeful. Whom are you going to hurt by accepting Christ? Are you going to hurt the rabbi? How is your decision going to hurt the synagogue?"

The voice continued, "Your decision is your personal business. It is not anyone else's business. And by your decision you are not going to harm anyone else. But if you don't accept Christ and your sins are not remitted, isn't that going to hurt you? And if you find out lat-

er that Christ is not the Messiah, what have you lost by accepting Him now?"

The arguments were reasonable. There was nothing more that could be said. I had to make a decision, so I made it and fell into a calm sleep.

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Adventist lawyers

Continued from page 31

would have further strengthened individual rights and protections. Along with two other young Adventist attorneys, I appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada representing a church member. Our task was to have the court clarify the obligations of a labor union to accommodate and not block the employer's attempts to accommodate the religious convictions of an Adventist employee. To reach the highest court in the land was an accomplishment in itself; to advocate for principle and a judicial ruling that would impact countless others appeared to be an intimidating task—especially for three young lawyers. But God was on our side. He has promised that if we do our part, He will intervene and do His part. That intervention came when the members of the Court walked onto the bench. The panel of judges hearing the appeals included the person who seven years earlier had argued the accommodation case on

behalf of our church member. When the decision was rendered some months later, it was a unanimous decision granting every protection of the law that we had requested. In fact, the decision was authored by the very judge who years earlier had posited the very same arguments on behalf of the Adventist member.

We do not know why God allows certain events to occur, but each of us has been placed in our various positions for a special purpose. Our lives should be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit so that God's will may be done in our lives and we may be used as His instruments regardless of our calling or profession. If we are open to God's call, He will work through us in mighty ways and draw persons who need Him right to us. The legal profession provides such a unique opportunity to do so.

Are you considering law as a career? If your commitment to God and His truth are firm, the answer should be a resounding Yes! Not only to defend fellow human beings from mistreatment, exploitation, and abuse, but also to

share the gospel of Jesus in such unique ways that can only be available to one in this field of endeavor.

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Notes and references

1. Ellen G White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publ. Assn., 1930), pp. 215, 216.
2. *JD* is published in English in even numbered years by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and is available free of charge to attorneys and law students. Those interested in being listed or obtaining a copy, can write to Robert W. Nixon, Esq.; General Counsel; General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904; U.S.A. or use e-mail at bobnix@compuserve.com

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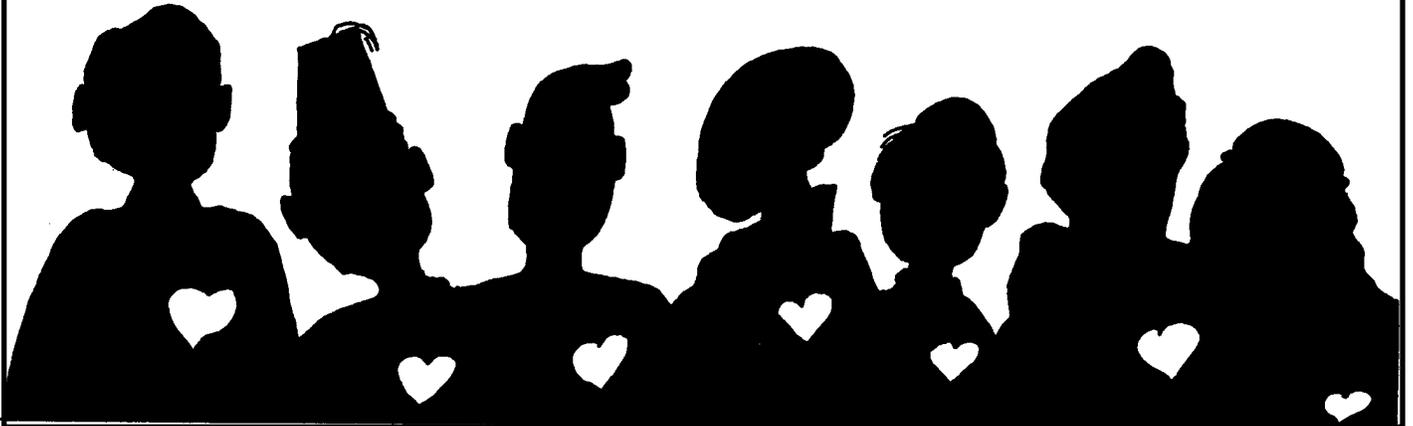
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Each one of us likes our own look.



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man looks on the outward
appearance, but the Lord looks on
the heart."**

—1 SAMUEL 16:7

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