

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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**Forgiveness: A formula
for new beginnings**

**The long search for an
evolutionary mechanism**

**Healthy choices
and living options**

**Not everything for sale:
A biblical perspective
on economics**

Television and violence



Volume 12
Number

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Dialogue™, an international journal of faith, thought, and action, is published three times a year in four parallel editions (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) by the Committee on Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; U.S.A.

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1.
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DIALOGUE affirms the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and supports its mission. The views published in this journal, however, are the independent thoughts of the authors.

CIRCULATION INQUIRES should be addressed to the Regional Representative located in the area where the reader resides. See names and addresses below.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: U.S. \$12 per year (three issues). See coupon on page 25 for details.

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Dialogue has received correspondence from readers in 109 countries around the world.

Your survival kit for the new century

Can you remember when you were in elementary school and your teacher mentioned the year 2000? Back then you probably thought that the teacher (likely 32) was *really* old and that the new century was *many* years away. Well, here it is!

As you pack your bags to travel along the 21st Century Highway, make sure that you take with you the Christian survival kit. Proverbs 23:23 gives an indication of its contents: “Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding” (RSV).

Knowledge. As a thoughtful Christian, you are deeply interested in acquiring and keeping pace with knowledge in your chosen career. But knowledge is more than data. It’s information that you have organized and interpreted according to a Bible-based worldview. Real knowledge includes discernment—the ability to analyze and evaluate the flood of information that threatens to drown us. Discernment is anchored on the Christian values we have embraced. It allows us to make informed choices, to establish priorities, and to understand the consequences of a decision. In other words, discernment leads us to assume responsibility for our actions.

Wisdom. The second component of your survival kit is essential to every Christian. Wisdom is the ability to apply your knowledge and discernment to your whole life in order to achieve the desired results. Wisdom includes clarity of thought and commitment to firm convictions. It leads us to use carefully our time and resources, and to care for our bodies and the environment. Wisdom helps us to integrate our private devotional life with our active service to others.

The world we live in is fascinated by technology and information. It is also full of moral confusion and spiritual indifference. Many people today are persuaded by the ever-changing fashionable ideas that relativize what is true. As a result, honor is confused with fame, heroism with celebrity, and true achievement with popularity. All of us need to grow in wisdom, which is ultimately a gift from God (James 1:5).

Courage. Knowledge and wisdom are essential ingredients of your survival kit, but they can be rather passive qualities. Courage, the third component, will make them a positive, dynamic force in your life. Courage is the ability to face difficult choices with confidence. It helps us to swim against the current, to resist the strong pressures to conform to faulty patterns of thought and life, and to stand tall even when everyone around us seem ready to fall at the altar of compromise.

Courage leads us to be passionate about our Christian convictions, to put people before money, and to embrace the entire human family with active compassion. It keeps us navigating by fixed moral stars in the turbulent sea of life. Courage helps us to maintain hope alive in spite of the pain and sadness we all experience. It gives us the strength to hold onto our faith commitments no matter what.

When you combine knowledge, wisdom, and courage and apply them to your whole life, you will become a powerful influence for good in your personal and professional relationships.

And as the clock of the new century ticks away, we pray: Lord, “teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12, NIV).

Humberto M. Rasi, *Editor-in-Chief*

Opportune help

It was great to receive a copy of *Dialogue* just at the right time! I have completed the secondary school and am planning to begin studying medicine. But my father, who is not a believer, thinks that all Adventists are useless dreamers who lazily await the second coming of Christ without making any valuable contribution to society. After I showed him issue 8:3, that included articles and interviews with active Adventist professionals, he has softened somewhat his critical attitude. Thanks for your opportune help!

Adriana Angulo
Maracaibo, Zulia
VENEZUELA

Greatly appreciated

Dialogue is greatly appreciated in the South Pacific Division, where it circulates broadly in its English and French editions. The journal has something very important to say to the best and brightest among the young people of our church, many of whom are struggling to establish their faith at a critical time in their emerging adulthood. We trust that *Dialogue* will continue with its invaluable ministry many years into the future.

Lester D. Devine
Wahroonga, New South Wales
AUSTRALIA

Calling more poets

I wish to thank the Adventist writers from Finland, Philippines, and Singapore who responded to an earlier announcement and whose poems on the Sabbath were published in *El-Shaddai*, a Protestant newspaper. Opportunity is now open to more Adventist writers to send their best poems or prose pieces in English to be screened and selected for publication in the next issue. Deadline

Letters

for submission for this issue is April 1, 2000. Send contributions to Kucinta Setia, editor: 205 Ang Mo Kio Ave. 1; Floor 11, Room 1987; Singapore 560205. E-mail: gychyan@yahoo.com

Gan Yung Chyan
SINGAPORE

Include more poetry

I just finished reading three back issues of *Dialogue* that a good friend sent me. Congratulations! The journal is wonderful and, as a secondary teacher, I'm using several articles to enrich my classes. I suggest that you include more poetry in the future. To solve the difficulty of finding good literary translations, why don't you publish the poems in the original language along with a prose translation? Since most *Dialogue* readers are educated people, they will enjoy the experience.

David Morais
Dom Pedro, Maranhao
BRAZIL

Addicted to *Dialogue*

I am a foreign student pursuing a graduate degree at a public university. Before coming to India, you might say I was "addicted" to reading *Dialogue* in my home country. Its content was relevant and well presented, providing ideas that I could share with my non-Adventist friends. I liked the journal so much, that I brought several copies with me as reference, but have been unable to obtain recent issues here. If you are still publishing *Dialogue*, tell me how I can reconnect with this valuable source of information and inspiration that ev-

ery Christian student should read.

Samuel Muchira Njogu
Pune, INDIA

The editors respond:

Thank you, Samuel, for your encouraging letter. As you can see by the enclosed copy of a recent issue of our journal, Dialogue continues to be published, with readers in more than 100 countries. In order to receive future issues regularly, locate an association of Adventist university students in the area where you study or contact our regional representative (listed on page 2), asking him to place you in the mailing list. Best wishes in your studies and in your growing friendship with Jesus Christ!

Beginning the second decade

Dialogue has entered its second decade of publication, maintaining its high editorial standards and satisfying the most demanding expectations. From the Easternmost point of the Americas—Ponta do Seixas, Cabo Branco, Paraiba, Brazil—one of the journal's faithful readers wishes to express her gratitude to all the authors and heartfelt congratulations to the editors for this unique international theo-cultural publication.

Aurora Oliveira
Joao Pessoa, Pernambuco
BRAZIL

Attractive to non-Christians

Thank you for your quick reply to my request for sample copies of *Dialogue*, which I received a few days ago. You will

be interested to know what happened to the current issue. I glanced at the titles on the cover and took that copy to work with the intention of reading a few articles during a break. Well, someone took it without my consent. I tell you this to encourage all those who are involved in producing *Dialogue*. You must know that the journal addresses issues that prove irresistible even to non-Christians! May God continue to bless your good work.

Seth Pascal
London, ENGLAND

Sabbath challenges

In our local congregation there are many Adventist students attending state universities and I have been designated as their counselor. Although they have not yet been organized as a student association, they appreciate the content of *Dialogue*, particularly those articles that encourage them to honor the Sabbath as God's special day. We are seeking to secure an official resolution from the Ministry of Education, so that Adventist university students may be exempted from attending classes or taking examinations on the seventh-day Sabbath. We welcome contacts with other students facing similar challenges to their faith and ask for their prayers on behalf of their colleagues in Bolivia.

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Write to us!

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

Forgiveness: A formula for new beginnings

by John M. Berez

Forgiveness promotes new beginnings for both the forger and the forgiven.

Will God put flowers on Satan's grave?"

The question emerged from the passenger side of the car as I carefully steered my way through our first November snowfall, about twilight time. Where on earth did that come from? I wondered. Where do nine-year-olds come up with that kind of stuff? Then I noticed we were passing a cemetery where the falling snow had transformed headstones and crosses into delicate art forms. As Michael pressed his nose against the window, peering into the gathering darkness, he must have thought of the wooden cross that now stood in our back yard over a Great-Dane-sized mound of freshly turned earth.

A few weeks earlier, tragedy had struck our family. Nina, our Great Dane, had died. Abruptly. Without warning. I was returning home from work when she ran to the edge of the driveway happily barking to greet me. Suddenly—midbark—she collapsed. As I jumped out of the car and rushed to Nina's side, my boys, who had been playing in the yard, were horrified. They watched, pale-faced and silent, as I searched for signs of life. But there was no movement of her giant rib cage. Desperately, I put my ear to her chest. Silence.

"She's dead, boys."

I tried to sound casual, hoping it would alarm them less.

"No use calling the vet," I said.

But such a cruel reality required some cushioning, something to soften the harsh edges for young boys of five, seven, and nine. It required some softening for a dad, 37.

"I'll run into town and buy some roses, then we'll bury her in the back yard. You guys pick some wild flowers." I said it gently, giving each son a little hug. We had a graveside ceremony.

I no longer remember exactly what was said, but the memory of three small boys bravely huddling around a wooden cross, each clutching wildflowers in one fist and a long-stemmed rose in the other, still has a painful edge some 20 years later.

Michael is grown now, a third-year veterinary student. He never lost his interest in animals, and I never lost interest in his question. It still seems theologically relevant. What kind of God do we worship? Is He forgiving? Is He kind? Will he put flowers on Satan's grave?

Forgiveness and healing

The questions have psychological significance. In some 30 years of clinical practice I've become convinced that forgiveness is at the heart of the healing process, because forgiveness promotes new beginnings—both for the forger and for the forgiven.

In the movie *Groundhog Day*, Bill Murray plays a TV weatherperson assigned to cover Groundhog Day ceremonies in the small hamlet of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, where the local folk observe whether Phil, the groundhog, sees his shadow. But something seems to go awry and Bill Murray keeps endlessly waking up to Groundhog Day, finding himself trapped in the same routines with the same people over and over again. Behind this comic theme lies a profound truth—we all need new beginnings. And herein lies the power

of forgiveness: It offers us a way out of what one sociologist termed the “predicament of irreversibility”: “Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover. We would remain the victims of its consequences forever, not unlike the sorcerer’s apprentice who lacked the magic formula to break the spell.”¹

In the healing endeavor of psychotherapy, much effort is expended in helping clients learn to forgive—although it is not typically talked about in those terms. But at the core, forgiveness involves *letting go of past mistakes—your mistakes, the mistakes of others*. It means dumping your excess baggage: those trunks filled with shame and guilt about your own inadequacies and mistakes, those suitcases of bitterness and hatred toward others. If you can let go of your own past mistakes, a lot of unnecessary shame and guilt will go downstream. If you can let go of the mistakes of others, a lot of bitterness and pain will vanish.

“Easier said than done,” I hear the skeptic in you saying.

“Maybe,” I would reply, “but not as hard as you might think.” In fact, I would suggest that over the long haul, *not* forgiving is more difficult than forgiving. A steady stream of studies has shown that repressed bitterness or hatred is bad for health. Chronic stress or bitterness compromises the human immune system in a way that makes people more vulnerable to a wide variety of diseases.

Well, so much for the “hard sell.” Let’s think about how you can learn to forgive more easily. Understanding the process of forgiveness more clearly will help you forgive *more readily*.

What forgiveness is not

First, let’s look at what forgiveness is *not*. People frequently confuse forgiveness with other concepts, and this

sometimes prevents them from fully understanding and utilizing the genuine process.

Forgiveness is not fair. This is particularly difficult for some people to accept, especially if they are a bit obsessive. Such people long to live in a world that is orderly, punctual, clean, safe, and above all *fair*. But such a world is an illusion. Nowhere—not even in Scripture—is it suggested that fairness is obtainable on this planet. One of the essentials of a forgiving attitude is the recognition that *unfairness* is an integral part of reality.

Forgiveness is not appeasement or submission. Knowing this is especially crucial for persons who “forgive” out of insecurity, or out of fear that they cannot get along without their abusive spouses or their alcoholic bosses.

Forgiveness is not necessarily pardon. To pardon means to excuse an offense without penalty. The emphasis is on elimination of punishment. Certainly there are times when forgiveness may include pardoning, but frequently it does not. Parents, for example, ought to maintain a *forgiving* attitude toward their children (not harboring resentment or bitterness) but they ought not to pardon (bypass consequences). One can forgive a child for messing up the living room *and* insist he or she clean up the clutter.

Forgiveness does not require reconciliation. The idea that forgiveness requires reconciliation is, perhaps, the most important and widely held misconception. Forgiveness *may* include reconciliation, but it is not always necessary. In the story of Joseph or the parable of the Prodigal Son, reconciliation is the high point. But frequently, reconciliation is not possible or even desirable. In many cases of childhood sexual abuse, for example, the guilty perpetrator will not admit to having wronged someone in this tragic way. Forgiveness and healing in such cases often involves *disconnecting*: moving away, going off to school, starting a new job. It is often necessary that the

victim *not* remain close to the perpetrator. In such instances, reconciliation isn’t possible because the perpetrator won’t admit wrongdoing, and even if confession occurs, remaining physically close is not advisable. Reconciliation is like frosting on the forgiveness cake—great if you can have it, but not always advisable or available.

Forgiveness as reframing

Forgiving means *disconnecting* from the shame, embarrassment, ridicule, and humiliation of your past failures. It means living in the light of present potentialities rather than in the shadow of past pain. It also means *disconnecting* from the fantasies of retaliation and revenge you harbor toward those who have previously hurt you, and channeling the energy of that released anger into new projects with new people.

“That’s all well and good,” you might mumble, “but how does one do that?”

The answer is surprisingly simple: *by reframing*. Reframing means to *see something in a new light*. Tom Sawyer’s story illustrates the point. Remember the incident when Aunt Polly caught Tom sneaking in a window late one night? She decided to punish him by turning his Saturday into “hard labor.” He had to whitewash the fence.

Tom unsuccessfully tried to talk one of his friends into helping him. He thought of all the fun he had planned for the day and all the excitement his friends would be having while he worked on the fence. But Tom was getting nowhere. He decided to change his tactics, successfully *reframing* the task for his next encounter:

He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently—the very boy, of all boys, whose ridicule he had been dreading. Ben’s gait was hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. Ben stared a moment and then said: “Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?”

Tom wheeled suddenly and said: “Why

it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing."

"Say—I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther work—wouldn't you? 'Course you would!"

Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said "What do you call work?"

"Why ain't that work?"

Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: "Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer."

"Oh come, now, you don't mean to let on that you like it?"

The brush continued to move. "Like it? Well I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?"

That put the thing in a new light [emphasis added]. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticised the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed. Presently he said: "Say, Tom, let me whitewash a little."²²

Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer illustrates reframing as a process that allowed him to creatively escape the confines of Aunt Polly's penalty. The process helped Tom to transform work into play, punishment into profiteering. Reframing allows us to escape the confines of dichotomous dilemmas by moving to higher-order solutions. We need not be mired in the illusion that we must choose one of only two possibilities: work versus play, right versus wrong, thoughts versus behavior, freedom versus determinism. Too frequently we fail to reframe and creatively search for higher-order solutions. Reframing creates such possibilities.

Jesus and reframing

Forgiveness is the quintessential reframer, not only of moral dilemmas but also of life itself. Jesus often employed reframing to escape the dichotomous

traps set by the Pharisees. Consider, for example, the case of the woman caught in adultery. The Pharisees brought her before Jesus and made their charge: "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" (John 8:4, 5, NIV).

The accusers were setting a binary trap for Jesus: Is she guilty or innocent? Shall we stone her or disobey Moses? But Jesus employed "reframing" to move the discussion to a higher level. Reframing took two directions. First, Jesus moved from verbal communication to writing in the sand. Even more profound was the second direction. Jesus told the Pharisees: "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7, NIV). Thus Jesus nimbly reframed the discussion to a higher level—Who is perfect? Who is prepared to throw the first stone?

Consider another illustration of how Jesus creatively reframed the dead-end dichotomies of the Pharisees. When a lawyer asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus directed him to what the Scripture says: love God, and love one's neighbor as oneself. The lawyer feigned puzzlement, as if he couldn't determine precisely who his neighbor was. Jesus then reframed the discussion to a higher level and told the parable of the Good Samaritan, focusing on helping those in need. Jesus challenged His challenger: "'Which of these three [the Levi, the priest, the Samaritan] do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?'" (Luke 10:36, NIV). Jesus used the technique of reframing to help the lawyer arrive at the right answer to his question about eternal life. At the same time, He exploded the hypocrisy of the religious establishment and cut through the core of nationalism, racism, and other boundaries of exclusivity that divide God's children.

Reframing, thus, helps to change a situation from a peril to a possibility.

Nowhere does it work as well as in the area of forgiveness.

Forgiving Mugsy

Consider Mugsy. Mugsy isn't a bad dog. He isn't guilty of the usual dog offenses: He doesn't mess up my yard, chase my cat, or pick fights with my German shepherd. He doesn't bite, and he stays on his side of the street. He is friendly, and he loves children. However, Mugsy has one failing—Mugsy barks. That's not unusual behavior for dogs, but Mugsy barks unnecessarily, incessantly, or so it seemed to me.

I had moved to the country to escape the noise of the city. Everything seemed perfect. After dark, hardly a car passed our house, and I often fell asleep to the sound of frogs. All in all a bucolic setting with great potential for tranquility—until Mugsy moved in across the street.

Suddenly, I found myself sneaking out my back door to pick up my evening paper. I was trying to avoid Mugsy's vigilant eyes, because even the slightest movement in my yard set Mugsy barking for 20 minutes at a time. Mugsy has a very low barking threshold and a wide variety of seemingly innocuous stimuli trigger his vocal cords: movement, noise, shadows, familiar figures like the paper boy delivering the evening news or me taking it out of the box. I fantasized about long-distance surgery on Mugsy's vocal cords—perhaps operating with a radio-controlled laser. But Michael assured me that even in a high-tech veterinary school, he hadn't heard of equipment that made it possible to perform laser surgery on a dog without the dog's knowledge or the owner's consent. There would be no vocal cordectomy. Mugsy's barking equipment would remain intact.

So what's the point of the story? This: I've learned to forgive Mugsy for barking, and it's made an amazing difference in my sense of tranquillity. Here's how it happened:

One evening as I tried to sneak past Mugsy's watchful eyes, I thought I had been successful in carefully removing my paper—not a sound spoiled the serenity of the evening. But as I turned and began stealthily softstepping back toward my house it started: his barking, my anger.

But then suddenly, somehow, a new thought hit me: *Mugsy is the best burglar alarm system in the neighborhood! No one will ever walk up my driveway or enter my yard undetected as long as Mugsy lives nearby.* That put the thing in a new light, that *reframed* Mugsy. I had previously worried about such things, especially when riding my bike past homes prominently displaying signs that warned: "Protected by Sentry Security," or "Under Twenty-Four Hour Surveillance." I had never signed up for such services, but I had worried. Now, suddenly, I found myself smiling and mumbling to Mugsy "You go, boy!"

I didn't need a \$10,000-dollar security system. I had something far more efficient. I had Mugsy.

As I walked slowly up my driveway, accompanied each step of the way by Mugsy's music, I reveled in the thought of my superior security system. Mugsy was far better than motion-detection cameras or flashing lights. I had the finest security system one could hope for and the cost was absolutely free!

Seen in a new light (reframed), Mugsy suddenly became my friend. No more thoughts about laser surgery, no more wishing he would run in front of a passing cement truck, no more hoping his owners would forget to give him his heartworm medicine. In that single moment, in the darkness of my driveway, I forgave Mugsy. And it wasn't a teeth-gritting, gut wrenching act of will power. It was easy—easy as reframing.

So as you enter the new millennium, I hope that forgiveness by reframing will facilitate new beginnings for you. I hope you'll think of Nina, my Great Dane, and re-read *Tom Sawyer*. I hope

you'll take a fresh look at how frequently Jesus reframed issues. And once in awhile on a dark night, when you hear a distant dog barking, I hope you'll remember Mugsy.

John Berez (Ph.D., Indiana University) teaches psychology at Andrews University and is the author of four books: Understanding Tourette Syndrome, Sexual Styles, All the Presidents' Women, and

Beyond Shame and Pain (reviewed in this issue). His mailing address: Andrews University; Berrien Springs; Michigan 49104; U.S.A. E-mail address: berecz@juno.com

Notes and references

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 237.
2. Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 12-14.



Berkeley 2000 Join the Revolution!

The leadership of the Berkeley Adventist Student Association invites you to come to *Berkeley 2000*—an international meeting of Adventist college/university students, campus leaders, faculty, and chaplains at the University of California, Berkeley, September 13-16, 2000. Enjoy drama, music, devotionals, and fellowship. Participate in seminars, focus groups, general sessions, and worship.

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Chance or design?

The long search for an evolutionary mechanism

By Ariel A. Roth

*In the face of a futile search,
should we not turn to the
biblical model?*

After working late into the night, my friend was exhausted. He got into his car and started the long trip back to the college he was attending. He was driving along a sparsely traveled country road when weariness overcame him, and his car plunged into the waters of a stream beside the road. He survived the ordeal with severe injuries. With the nerves in the lower part of his spinal cord severed, he no longer had control of his legs. He was destined to a wheel chair for the rest of his life.

Healing took a long time. Fortunately, my friend was no ordinary person. He was not going to let his severe problems turn him into a burden on society. He decided to be a help to others and, in spite of all the obstacles he faced, he finished college. His engaging personality, perseverance, and dedication to God helped him as he successfully served as a teacher, editor, chaplain, and pastor. Many were blessed by his friendliness and understanding. Unfortunately, his legs continued to deteriorate to the point where they had to be amputated.

Interdependent parts¹

My friend's problem illustrates how the various parts of living organisms are dependent on other parts. We can illustrate this on a simple level. If we have a muscle moving a bone in a leg, that muscle will not work unless there is a nerve going to that muscle to activate it. But neither the muscle nor the nerve will work unless there is a system in the brain to control the activity of the muscle. The controlling mechanism in the brain sends impulses by way of the nerve to cause the muscle to contract

and move the bone. The three parts—the muscle, the nerve, and the controlling mechanism—are examples of *interdependent parts*. They need one another in order to function. These are systems where nothing works unless everything works. Some scientists refer to such systems as having "*irreducible complexity*."² The word *complexity* refers to systems whose various parts are related to one another. Systems with interdependent parts are abundant in all living things, and are usually much more complex than the simple example mentioned above. In our bodies we have at least 50,000 to 100,000 different kinds of enzymes. Most of these enzymes function in governing chemical changes related to other chemical changes performed by other enzymes. As such, they represent a vast array of interdependent parts.

The randomness of evolutionary changes

If 20 children are let loose in a toy shop, something is certain to happen. Assuredly, the well-ordered stock of toys will become less organized. The longer the children are reveling in the store, the more mixed up the stock will become. Active things naturally tend to mix.

The tendency of things toward becoming mixed up in nature runs counter to evolution, which postulates changes from randomly distributed molecules to "simple" life forms that, although small, are actually highly organized. Evolution is then further assumed to have formed much more complicated organisms with specialized tissues and organs that include flowers, eyes, and brains.

Some evolutionists suggest that the occasional self-organization of simple matter such as seen in the formation of a salt crystal, or the rare wave pattern that sometimes forms when chemicals migrate through solid matter, might be a model for the self-organization of matter into living things. But there is a vast chasm between simple crystals and the complexities of living systems. The development of interdependent functional complexity runs counter to the general tendency in nature toward chaotic mixing. This is one of the major problems of the theory of evolution.

Evolution usually places emphasis on the occasional random change in an organism's heredity mechanism (DNA). Such changes, called mutations, combined with natural selection, are considered to be the basis for evolutionary advancement. But such random events would usually tend to mix things up, not organize them. Neither random mutations nor natural selection have the foresight to plan ahead so as to guide the evolutionary process in the gradual development of systems with interdependent parts. Furthermore, mutations are almost always detrimental to living organisms. An estimate of one favorable mutation out of a thousand is being generous to evolution. In dealing with complex systems with interdependent parts, just a small change (mutation) can cause the whole system to stop working. It is somewhat like severing the nerves to the legs of my friend; it ruined the whole of his legs. Likewise, it is much easier to ruin a watch than to make one. Few would argue that there isn't a tendency towards randomness in nature. Naturalistic evolution needs to explain the opposite.

Natural selection: a problem for evolution

Charles Darwin developed the concept of natural selection. He observed that there is variation in living organisms. There is also overproduction of

offspring that results in shortages of food and space; hence, there is competition for survival. Darwin proposed that only the fittest of new varieties of organisms would survive, and they in turn would produce similarly fit offspring. Thus the fittest survive through the process called *natural selection*. This mechanism is often used to explain evolutionary advancement, despite the trend in nature toward randomness. While it appears that natural selection does function in nature as a means of eliminating weak or aberrant organisms, it faces a major problem when it comes to the evolution of interdependent systems, which represent most of everything that is alive.

That my friend had his legs cut off illustrates one basic problem faced by Darwin's natural selection model. Useless structures can be cumbersome impediments. We can usually get along better without them. The problem for evolution is that many parts of gradually evolving organs or systems would be useless impediments, like my friend's legs, until all the necessary interdependent parts had evolved. Until that time, organisms would get along better without these extra parts, and natural selection would tend to eliminate them. Only after *all* necessary interdependent parts are present can these parts work and thus provide any reason for survival through the natural selection process.

If evolution is for real, we should expect to see many examples of new developing organs or systems, like legs, eyes, livers, or new kinds of organs trying to evolve in those organisms that have not yet evolved them. Yet as we look at well over a million species that have been identified over the surface of the Earth, we do not seem to see any. This is a major indictment against the evolutionary concept. In a broader context the question is: How can mostly detrimental random mutations, which have no foresight, gradually produce complex biological systems that have no survival value until all interdependent parts are present? If

evolution has a way around this problem we should find many new organs and systems in the process of evolving, but they are not there.

The long search for an evolutionary mechanism

There has been a long and arduous search for a plausible evolutionary mechanism that would produce complex organized life. We shall look briefly at the past two centuries of this search. A summary is provided in Table 1.

Lamarckism. The French scientist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829) devised a mechanism for evolution based on his law of use and disuse. He proposed that use of an organ accentuated its development, and this improvement was passed on to the next generation. For instance, deer-like animals needing to reach leaves on the highest branches of a tree would, after stretching their necks for many generations, acquire longer necks and eventually emerge as giraffes. Similarly, he declared that if the left eye of children were removed for a number of succeeding generations, eventually there would be individuals born with only the right eye.

Years later the German evolutionist August Wiseman proved Lamarck wrong. He cut off the tails of hundreds of mice over many generations. The mice, however, continued to produce offspring with full-length tails. He concluded that this series of experiments proved that there is no inheritance of characteristics acquired during an individual's life.

Darwinism. Darwin proposed natural selection (discussed above) as an evolutionary mechanism. Darwin also stressed the broad theory of the evolution of all organisms from the simplest to the most complex. In this process, he placed special emphasis on the significance of minute changes, a concept that was soon challenged.

Soon after the publication (1859) of Darwin's book, *Origin of Species*, many

scientists accepted the general idea of evolution. However, many of Darwin's ideas were questioned then and are still being challenged today. The biological historian Charles Singer candidly states that Darwin's "arguments are frequently fallacious."³ Among the most serious criticisms is the lack of survival value of small changes that are not useful unless they can function in a complex whole that has not yet evolved. Darwin was quite concerned about the evolution of the eye, which has a number of systems with interdependent parts. He suggested that natural selection was the answer to the problem, but did not address the question of interdependent parts.

The concept of "survival of the fittest" itself has also been severely criticized, possibly at times unfairly. However, survival of the fittest does not demonstrate evolution, as is sometimes purported. The concept cannot be easily tested; which, however, is not the same as saying it is false. But obviously the fittest would survive whether they evolved by themselves or were created by God. Despite these flaws, Darwin's basic idea receives support from many evolutionists.

Mutations. The Dutch biologist, Hugo de Vries (1848-1935), vigorously challenged the idea that minute changes provided the basic evolutionary mechanism. He argued that these small changes meant nothing, and larger changes, called mutations, would be necessary to respond to the environment. De Vries found support for his views around Amsterdam, Holland, where the evening primrose imported from America had gone wild and some specimens were found to be dwarfs. He considered this change to be a mutation.

De Vries conducted experiments by breeding thousands of plants, and noted major changes that he attributed to mutations. He believed these "new forms" to be steps in a protracted evolutionary process. Unfortunately for de Vries' theory, the changes he noted were only the result of combinations of traits

Table 1

The search for an evolutionary mechanism

| Designation and dates | Main proponents | Characteristics |
|---|---|--|
| Lamarckism 1809-1859 | Lamarck | Use causes the development of new characteristics that become inheritable. |
| Darwinism 1859-1894 | Darwin, Wallace | Minute changes are acted upon by natural selection causing survival of the fittest. |
| Mutations 1894-1922 | De Vries, Morgan | Emphasis on larger mutational changes. Natural selection not as important. |
| Modern Synthesis (neo-Darwinism) 1922-1968 | Chetverikov, Dobzhansky, Fisher, Haldane, Huxley, Mayr, Simpson, Wright | Unified attitude, changes in populations important. Mutations acted upon by natural selection. |
| Diversity Period 1968-present | Eldredge, Gould, Grassé, Henning, Kauffman, Kimura, Lewontin, Patterson, Platnick | Multiplicity of conflicting ideas. Dissatisfaction with the Modern Synthesis. Search for a cause for complexity. |

Table 2

Books by scientists, who do not believe in Creation, criticizing various aspects of Evolution

- Behe, Michael. *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*. New York: Free Press, 1996.
- Crick, Francis. *Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981.
- Denton, Michael. *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*. London: Burnett Books, 1985.
- Goodwin, Brian. *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots: The Evolution of Complexity*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994.
- Hitching, Francis. *The Neck of the Giraffe: Where Darwin Went Wrong*. New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1982.
- Hoe, Mae-Wan and Peter Saunders. *Beyond Neo-Darwinism: An Introduction to the New Evolutionary Paradigm*. London: Academic Press, 1984.
- Søren Løvtrup. *Darwinism: The Refutation of a Myth*. London. New York: Croom Helm, 1987.
- Ridley, Mark. *The Problems of Evolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Shapiro, Robert. *Origins: A Skeptic's Guide to the Creation of Life on Earth*. New York: Summit Books, 1986.
- Taylor, Gordon Rattary. *The Great Evolution Mystery*. New York: Harper and Row, 1983.

already present in the genetic makeup of the plants, and not new mutations.

Nevertheless, the concept of mutations, which represent new hereditary information, became accepted, largely because of the work of the American, T. H. Morgan. In experiments with fruit flies, Morgan found new permanent changes that are passed on from one generation to the next. However, the changes observed were largely degenerative instead of progressive, including loss of wings, bristles, and eyes.

Many non-harmful mutations would be required to produce a single useful structure. The problem is how to get these very rare events to occur simultaneously in an organism in order to produce a functional structure that might have some survival value. The noted French zoologist, Pierre P. Grassé, who suggests another evolutionary mechanism, affirms some of the same concerns and states: "No matter how numerous they may be, mutations do not produce any kind of evolution."⁴

Modern Synthesis. As evolutionary thought developed in the early part of the 20th century, several influential scholars helped shift the focus from mutations back to natural selection. The most important proponents were S. S. Chetverikov in Russia, R. A. Fisher and J. B. S. Haldane in England, and Sewall Wright in the United States. This time, the emphasis was on the process of evolution within populations of organisms, rather than in individual organisms.

The modern synthesis combined the efforts of a number of brilliant evolutionists, including Theodosius Dobzhansky of Columbia University, biologist Sir Julian Huxley in England, and Ernst Mayr and George Gaylord Simpson at Harvard University. The concept was dominant from the 1930s to the 1960s. The name "modern synthesis" originated with Huxley,⁵ the grandson of Darwin's champion Thomas Huxley, as he lauded the "final triumph" of Darwinism.⁶ Basically, it synthesizes varia-

tion by mutations with Darwin's concept of natural selection by survival of the fittest as applied to populations.

Many of the leaders of the modern synthesis stressed that, by the accumulation of relatively small changes, one could produce the major changes needed for large evolutionary steps like the change of a lizard-like animal into a turtle. However, the basic mechanism for complex evolutionary advancements remained unsolved. The modern synthesis may have been more an attitude of success than a precise synthesis.

Meanwhile, the disquieting voices of the paleontologist Otto Schindewolf in Germany and the geneticist Richard Goldschmidt in the United States were being systematically ignored. In contrast to Darwin's minute changes and the relatively small mutations suggested by architects of the modern synthesis, both were proposing rapid, large changes and different mechanisms. Schindewolf, who was familiar with fossils, suggested very sudden developmental jumps to bridge the large gaps between major fossil types. Goldschmidt, who was professor of genetics at the University of California at Berkeley, completely disagreed with the idea that small changes within species could slowly accumulate and produce major evolutionary changes. He considered intermediate stages to be useless for survival and felt they would not be favored by natural selection. Among the examples he cited were the formation of a feather, segmentation of body structure as seen in insects, the development of muscles, the compound eye of crabs, etc. Goldschmidt and Schindewolf raised important questions and soon, for a number of evolutionists, the modern synthesis no longer seemed tenable. The Swedish embryologist Søren Løvtrup, who supports evolution, points out: "And today the modern synthesis—neo-Darwinism—is not a theory, but a range of opinions which each in its own way, tries to overcome the difficulties pre-

sented by the world of facts."⁷

Diversity Period. New ideas about evolution soon appeared, some of them quite speculative. Recent discoveries, especially in molecular biology and genetics, indicated that older, simpler genetic concepts were no longer valid. All of this contributed to a variety of thought that prevails to the present. This stage—which can be collectively designated as the *diversity period*—represents an assortment of new and often conflicting ideas. They revolve around a number of basic questions, such as: (1) Can one identify the evolutionary relationships of organisms? Some have argued that the only way to tell if two organisms are really evolutionarily related is if they have similar but unique characteristics (*synapomorphies*). Such characteristics are hard to find. (2) Are evolutionary changes gradual or sudden? Some suggest sudden, but quite small, changes as reflected in some parts of the fossil record (punctuated equilibrium model). These small sudden changes do not answer the problem of the major gaps in the fossil record such as those found between animal phyla and plant divisions. (3) Is natural selection important to the evolutionary process? A number of evolutionists are suggesting that there are neutral mutations that they consider very important in the evolutionary process. Since these mutations are neutral, they are not subject to the influence of natural selection. (4) How does complexity evolve? Some computer-based studies have addressed the problem, but biologists have criticized these attempts as too simplistic. Biological systems are very complex, and we don't know all that much about many of them.

In the past two decades a significant number of scientists, who do not believe in the biblical creation account, have written books criticizing evolution, or major themes thereof. Table 2

Continued on page 29.

Healthy choices and living options

By Kathleen H. Liwidjaja-Kuntaraf

Proper choices lead to better quality of life.

At 21 Larry Harmon tried pot for the first time. "My friends," he said later, "tempted me." But soon pot turned into LSD, again at the enticement of his friends. He only took one-half of a pill, but that was enough to push him into a world without grounding: anxiety, panic, depression, and total disorientation. It was a bad trip. He felt he had not experienced the so-called "ecstatic" effect that was promised. He tried again with a quarter of a pill, then called home and told his mother he was tripping out on LSD.

Then it happened. Hallucinations quickly took control of him. The LSD changed and distorted his feelings, thinking, moods, self-awareness, judgment, perception of time and space. He walked out his room with a rifle, a bucket of bullets, and a sledge hammer. De-ranged, he drove to a Roman Catholic church. He got out of his car, picked up his hardware, entered the church foyer, and saw the church caretaker on a ladder, adjusting the clock. Bang! The caretaker fell to his death.

Next he turned into a one-man demolition squad. Grabbing the sledge hammer, he smashed the statues, leveled the altar, and broke the pews. He was having a "high trip." Later he confessed that he thought he was God's instrument to destroy Jesus Christ, whom he believed to be the devil. By this time, several students and a priest heard the noise and approached the church. Larry began to shoot at anything and anyone that moved. Soon the police arrived. Exchange of gunfire followed suit. Wounded, Larry began to run. Within seconds, he fell to the ground dead. His

last words were memorable: "God, why do I have to be the one to die?" His father, Attorney E. Glenn Harmon, in a statement to the press, said, "Police bullets didn't kill my son, but LSD did."

Really, Larry's journey to premature death began with a poor choice.

Results of poor choice

Choice is a gift God has given to every human being. However, when the gift is misused and poor choices are made, disasters inevitably follow. Consider the following facts for the United States in a single year:

- Annual arrests: 1.1 million for illicit drug violations; 1.4 million for driving intoxicated; 480,000 for liquor law violations, and 704,000 for drunkenness. The total AOD-(alcohol and other drugs) related arrests account for more than one-third of all arrests in the U.S.¹

- Crime: Alcohol is a key factor in up to 68 percent of manslaughters, 62 percent of assaults, 54 percent of murders or attempted murders, 48 percent of robberies, and 44 percent of burglaries.²

- Rape: Among jail inmates, 42.2 percent of those convicted of rape reported having been under the influence of alcohol or a combination of alcohol and other drugs at the time of the offense.³

- Property crime: In 1990, of those who were voluntarily tested, more than 60 percent of men and 50 percent of women arrested for property crimes (burglary, larceny, robbery) tested positive for illicit drug use.⁴

- Child abuse: In 1987, 64 percent of all reported child abuse and neglect cases in New York City alone were associated with parental AOD abuse.⁵

Further, the economic cost of AOD-related crime is mind-boggling: \$61.8 billion annually.⁶ Of course, no monetary value can be put on the human lives lost and the suffering associated with AOD-related problems.

The safe drug?

Poor health choices and use of illicit drugs extract an enormous price in terms of life, longevity, and social consequences. No one will disagree with that. But what about simple, over the counter, drugs? Even the humble aspirin taken for a headache or flu can impact body functions in the long run, causing heartburn, gastrointestinal upset, stomach ulcers, and bleeding. Just because drugs are dispensed without a prescription does not mean they are safe. A physician needs to be consulted even in their use.

What about prescription drugs? New drugs are discovered and introduced almost daily, but the “perfect drug” that will do its job with absolutely no side-effects still eludes us. For example, consider the drugs prescribed to control blood pressure. They carry a range of side effects, including weakness, fatigue, drowsiness, headache, mental depression, dizziness, bloating, sweating, indigestion, unstable emotional states, high cholesterol levels, and impotence. People who require these drugs may need to try several different kinds before they find one their system can tolerate. Thus, there is no drug that is *completely* safe. Even life-saving antibiotics carry potential problems such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, allergic reactions, and fungus problem. Prescription drugs need to be closely monitored by a physician, who can weigh the pros and cons.

Making healthy choices

Intake of any harmful substance is antithetical to God’s plan for human life. Paul states simply: “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.” And dare we damage or abuse God’s temple? Paul continues: “Honor God with your

body” (1 Corinthians 6:20).* “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Ellen G. White, an Adventist pioneer in health prevention and natural remedies, wrote more than a century ago several articles and books whose main concepts have been verified by science in recent decades. She stressed, for example, the mutual influence of body and mind as well as the impact of both on the spiritual life. Only when we have healthy bodies can we have healthy minds, enabling us to communicate with God and others in a clear way. “A pure healthy life is most favorable for the perfection of Christian character and for the development of the powers of mind and body.”⁷ “Since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual activity are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity. Whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. Without health, no one can as distinctly understand or as completely fulfill his obligations to himself, to his fellow beings, or to his Creator. Therefore, the health should be as faithfully guarded as the character.”⁸ In another of her works she outlined the basic natural remedies that ensure good health. “Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies.”⁹

Have these principles made a difference in promoting good health? Yes! Ever since 1950 Seventh-day Adventists have been, among the populations of the world, the most highly studied by researchers. Approximately 250 research studies have been published in scientific journals showing the benefits of the Adventist lifestyle. Results of some findings:

- Californian Seventh-day Adventist men live an average of 8.9 years longer than other Californian men. Adventist women in California live an average of

7.5 years longer than other women in that state.¹⁰

- Dutch Seventh-day Adventist men live an average of 8.9 years longer than other Dutch men. Adventist women in Holland live an average of 3.7 years longer than other women in that country.¹¹

- Norwegian Seventh-day Adventist men live an average of 4.2 years longer than other Norwegian men. Adventist women in Norway live an average of 1.9 years longer than other Norwegian women.¹²

- Polish Seventh-day Adventist men live an average of 9.5 years longer than other Polish men. Adventist women in Poland live an average of 4.5 years longer than other women in that nation.¹³

These findings have caught the attention of other researchers and government officials. T. Oberlin of Harvard University, speaking of the Adventist advantage, stated, “Such an increase in life expectancy at these adult ages is greater than all of the gains in life expectancy made in the past 60 years in this country as a result of all the advances in medical skills and knowledge, plus innumerable improvements of the environment in which man lives.”

In 1980, Sidney Katz, a Canadian official, reviewed the data on the benefits of the Adventist lifestyle and said, “I’ve got some advice on how to improve the health of the Canadians, and at the same time, cut billions of dollars off our annual health costs. I think we should study the lifestyle of adherents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and then explore ways and means of persuading the public to emulate the Adventists in at least some ways.”

Steps in making healthy choices

So what do we do in changing to or adopting healthy choices? What shall we drink? What shall we eat? How much should we exercise? Shall we go to sleep before midnight or after midnight? Shall we take drugs to calm us down? The struggle between making

good and poor health choices is a continuous one. So, it is important to go through the steps on how to make healthy choices:

1. *Realize that God loves you and wants you to be healthy.* As the Apostle John wrote: "Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (3 John 2).

2. *Check out if your current lifestyle reflects God's recommended choices.* Study the health principles contained in the Bible and then review the writings of Ellen White on health. They are the safest guides in this regard.

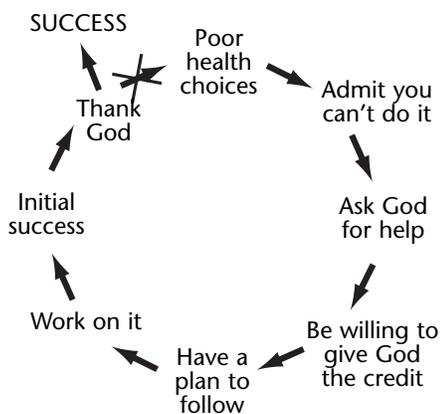
3. *Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the choice you made.* The more benefits you receive from making healthy choices, the more they motivate you to continue making the same choice throughout your life.

4. *Admit that you cannot make healthy choices by yourself.* Once you recognize your helplessness in making consistent healthy choices, you will look for an external source of strength.

5. *Draw strength from God continuously.* Consider the diagram below. Poor health choices can be broken and success ensured only when we admit our helplessness and allow God to empower us to make right choices.

Have a plan to follow

Take, for instance, the matter of diet. God does not want us to suffer from various diseases caused by eating wrong



kinds of food. Genesis gives us God's original diet for humankind: "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food'" (Genesis 1:29). Ellen White comments: "In order to know what are the best foods, we must study God's original plan for man's diet....Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator."¹⁴

The advantages of eating a plant-based diet are clearly presented in the Bible. Genesis chapters 5 and 11 document the life span of people who ate the plant-based diet before the Flood, and those who ate meat for food after the Flood. See chart, right.

Think of it. An average life span of 900 years before animal diet came into use, and 300 years after that. Of course, diet alone did not cause the deep fall in life span. The effects of sin have had their impact, too. But a change in diet brought in diseases that contributed to the reduction of life span.

Scientific findings are supporting the plant-based diet as the healthy diet. In 1995, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Health Education and Welfare in its updated "Dietary Guidelines" emphasized that "vegetarian diets are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and can meet Recommended Dietary Allowances for nutrients." This document acknowledges that:

- Grains are associated with a substantially lowered risk of many chronic diseases, including certain types of cancer.
- Antioxidant nutrients have a "potentially beneficial role in reducing the risk of cancer and certain other chronic diseases."
- Folate or folic acid contained in a plant-based diet "reduces the risk of a serious type of birth defect."

Thus from both biblical and scientific data we know that dietary choices affect our quality of health and living. Proper health choices lead to better quality of life. What we drink, what we eat, what

Life span of human beings

| Before Flood | | After Flood | |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Adam | 930 | 1. Shem | 600 |
| 2. Seth | 912 | 2. Arphaxad | 438 |
| 3. Enosh | 905 | 3. Shelah | 433 |
| 4. Kenan | 910 | 4. Eber | 464 |
| 5. Mahalalel | 895 | 5. Peleg | 239 |
| 6. Jared | 962 | 6. Reu | 239 |
| 7. Enoch | 365+ | 7. Serug | 230 |
| 8. Methuselah | 969 | 8. Nahor | 148 |
| 9. Lamech | 777 | 9. Terah | 205 |
| 10. Noah | 950 | 10. Abraham | 175 |
| Average | 912.2 | Average | 317.1 |

(not including Enoch, who was translated)

we put inside our physical system all have their effects. But good choices cannot be made easily. As in the moral and spiritual arenas, they require help from outside of ourselves. God has promised that help to those who maintain a long-term relationship with Him: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13 KJV).

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Notes and references:

- * Except where indicated, all Bible quotations are from the New International Version.
1. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Crime in the United States 1991," Washington D.C., 1992; see also "Drugs, Crime, and the Justice System: A National Report," Washington D.C., 1992.
 2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "Alcohol and Health: Sixth Special Report to Congress on Alcohol and Health from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, 1987."
 3. J. J. Collins and M. A. Messerchmidt, "Epidemiology of Alcohol-Related Violence," *Alcohol Health and Research*

Continued on page 19

Not everything for sale:

A biblical perspective on economics

by Leonard K. Gashugi

*The economic equilibrium need
not remain a pie in the sky.*

A boy of 12 looks like a child of 4 or 5. Emaciated, eyeballs turned inward, stomach protruding, he can barely crawl on the sands of southern Sudan. Hundreds of people stand in a queue outside a store in Russia, waiting for a loaf of bread or a piece of meat. In a country once rich in mineral and natural wealth, scores routinely die of hunger in war-ravished Congo. The evening news in the United States carries the good news of a new pill that can burn fat and keep people trim, providing a new cure for the ravages of plenty.

Each continent, each country, indeed every community carries the seesaw of plenty and poverty, the paradox of failure in the midst of success. The economic equilibrium still remains an unattainable pie in the sky by and by.

Is this because we live in a world with an insatiable want for acquisitions? Or is it because nations invest a substantial amount of time, money, and resources to improve economic productivity and compete in the international market, without much thought about improving not only their standard of living but also others? Or is it because the concept of global village has reduced human community to international integration of economic, financial, and communication systems, without the balancing concept of global compassion and sharing?

Forces that motivate and shape countries are similar to those that drive individuals. Individual success is for the most part defined in terms of material possessions and the value of one's own financial assets. We Christians are also caught up in the midst of these power-

ful market forces. We can either float with the current or rise above it. To seek the appropriate response to these seemingly invincible economic impulses, we need to turn to the pages of Scripture to help us draw some basic principles to live by as God's stewards.

First, we will begin with the Creation account to discover the original design for humanity and see how earthly systems were intended to function and relate to one another. Second, we will see the effects of the Fall and how it affected relationships. Third, we will look at how divine intervention attempted to restore some equilibrium to a system distorted by sin. Lastly, we will consider how our decisions will shape the final outcome for us as individuals.

The original design

The Book of Genesis leaves no ambiguity as to how the world came into existence. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).^{*} Within this created order, God established a certain hierarchy and a specific set of relationships. At the top of the created order are human beings, made in God's image (verse 27), and endowed with a special relationship with God that is maintained through communion and obedience (Genesis 2:17). The second relationship is one between man and woman, linking the human race together in a loving and collaborative union (Genesis 2:22, 23). The third relationship is one between God and the rest of the created order. Lastly, there is the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. The earth then gives them sustenance and in

turn they are given dominion over the earth. This cosmic balance hinges on a crucial test of loyalty on the part of human race. At the end of Creation, "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

In the economic model of the Garden of Eden, God provides what is needed for survival and well-being. "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden" (Genesis 2:16). Human response was to be one of trust and obedience, of work and concern for the habitat (Genesis 1:26; 2:15). Their obedience was tested by whether they would refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17).

The Fall

Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God affected every relationship. Human beings became estranged from God and went into hiding (Genesis 3:8). Adam, who had looked with delight at his companion, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," accused her of leading him into transgression (verse 12). The woman blamed the serpent. As a result, God cursed the ground, which would subsequently provide food and other necessities only by human sweat and toil (Genesis 3:13, 17-19).

The pull of materialism began after the fall. Genesis 3:7 informs us that "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (Genesis 3:7). Adam and Eve began seeking security in things of their own, making things rather than trusting God for their needs, including garments to cover themselves. Here we see an economic system beginning to evolve in which human beings seek self-sufficiency and autonomy, unknowingly under the influence of Satan. Thus human effort became essential for meeting basic needs. Even so, God showed Adam and Eve that He could still provide for them better than they

could provide for themselves. "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

Economic analysis focuses on how human beings interact among themselves and with the physical environment to satisfy their material wants. It does not recognize any other forces at play, although the Scriptures indicate that supernatural forces also influence human endeavors. This recognition offers Christians a different perspective on the forces at play and helps us know how to relate to our economic environment and to market forces. Since the beginning, the enemy has used economic activities and the pursuit of material well-being to provide a false sense of security. Undoubtedly this is one of his most effective ways to distract the masses from seeking true riches. It is, therefore, not a sheer coincidence that across nations and communities the response to the gospel message seems to be inversely related to the level of prosperity.

This economic system, in which we are all participants, is part of the drama that began at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We must choose which side of the drama we are on. As Ellen White said: "We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world...Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin."¹ Life on this planet was nearly obliterated as humankind took its eyes off the Creator to focus on worldly power and pleasure. As time passed, human beings deviated further from the original plan and "the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become" (Genesis 6:5).

The Fall and the Flood altered the balance between human beings and the rest of creation, rendering life vulnerable to the vicissitudes of nature. Materialism, accompanied by greed and self-

seeking to gain personal wealth, defined the contours of human living. Instead of tilling the soil and exercising dominion over the earth for the good of the community and the glory of God, human economic endeavors became focused on glorifying self. But God did not wish humanity to pursue such a path of self-destruction. He placed before the human race the ideal economic approach through two great events: the choice of Israel and the incarnation of Jesus.

The political economy of ancient Israel

God called ancient Israel to be a nation that would serve as a light to the world. He gave Israel an economic model that we do not typically find in a purely secular market economy. The linkages of the original equilibrium in the Creation model were reintroduced. First, God was once again recognized as the Provider of the land and of the strength to gain wealth (Leviticus 25:23; Deuteronomy 8:18). Second, the tithing system and sacrificial and free-will offerings became the avenue of human response to God's benevolence and human recognition of total dependence upon Him. Third, the principle of mutual obligation typified by the Sabbath (seventh) year as well as the Jubilee year when Hebrew servants were freed and property was returned to the original owner, emphasized the right relationship among humans and with the natural environment (Leviticus 25:1-4; Deuteronomy 15:12-15; 25:13-15). These provisions also addressed the issue of business integrity and economic inequality. They reminded the Israelites that God is the ultimate owner of all things, and His people are only managers.

An appeal for economic justice and compassion toward those in need mark the economic philosophy of the Pentateuch (Leviticus 19:13, 35; 25:22, 37; Deuteronomy 23:24, 25). Throughout

the Old Testament, Israel is consistently reproached by the prophets for oppressing the poor, for “their ill-gotten treasures,...dishonest scales,” and urged “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8-11). Unfaithfulness in returning tithes and offerings was considered tantamount to robbing God (Malachi 3:8, 9).

However, the economic reforms God sought to bring about failed to materialize due to greed and disregard for His counsels. Into that socio-economic context came the teachings of Jesus.

The economics of Jesus

Although the framework for restoring the equilibrium had been put in place about two millennia earlier, when Jesus appeared on the scene, the system was in decay and barely reflected the original design. Even the temple court in Jerusalem, meant to be a sacred arena, had been turned into a marketplace. In His most important discourse at the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus spoke pointedly on economic matters: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

Christ urged His listeners not to be overly concerned about their earthly needs. He pointed out how His Father provided for the rest of His creation, and assured them that they were even more important. In His encounters with people and in His parables, Jesus continued to stress the dangers of being preoccupied with earthly possessions. As Richard Foster observed, “Jesus spoke about money more frequently than any other subject except the kingdom of God.”²² When the young rich ruler declined the call to sell his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow Him,

Jesus told His disciples how hard it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:21-24). The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus also reminds us of the eternal consequences of ignoring the needs of our fellow human beings and devoting our resources to self-gratification (Luke 16:19-31). The ultimate economic advice that Jesus wants to convey is “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

Each of us is faced with the choice of whether to serve God or material possessions. According to Jesus, we cannot have it both ways (Luke 16:13). The Book of Revelation tells us that our loyalty to God will be tested by an economic embargo imposed on those who remain true to God. “He [the evil one]...forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:16, 17). Whether we remain true to God will largely depend upon our readiness to detach ourselves from material possessions.

We see this in how Satan tempted Jesus with earthly possessions during their encounter in the wilderness. “Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you bow down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only”’” (Matthew 4:8-10). There is little doubt that the seduction of riches is one of the most powerful and effective weapons in the devil’s arsenal to entice us—one that many consider harmless, which makes it even more deadly. Jesus’ advice to put the service of God ahead of every other consideration is our model and one sure way around anything the devil will

throw at us. We dare not allow him to dim our vision with a dazzling display of fancy gadgets that become obsolete overnight, leaving us forever chasing an elusive dream.

The final outcome

Economics is about making choices as to how best to satisfy our material wants within a limited temporal horizon. But Jesus said, “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). The Bible evaluates our choices within the framework of eternity. Bible prophecies indicate that we are moving rapidly toward the end of this earth’s history. On that day, God will destroy all who have made this world their all, along with everything that they treasured here. But there is a new earth that will be inherited by those of whom this world was not worthy (Hebrews 11:38). If we keep our eyes focused on eternal realities, the folly of trading the goods of this world for the joys that await the redeemed will become obvious. Meanwhile, we cannot afford to lose sight of some vital biblical economic principles.

General biblical principles

1. *God created the world to provide for our physical needs and for those around us.* Nowhere in the Bible is mere abundance condemned. In fact, the Bible names a number of godly men whom God blessed with riches, such as Job, Abraham, and David, none of whom was corrupted by riches. For Christians who are similarly blessed, Paul gives the following advice: “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that

they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

2. *Preoccupation with earthly possessions is a snare set by the enemy to distract us from true riches.* Again, Paul shares the following insight: "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Timothy 6:9, 10). Given the prevailing obsession with material success that we find across the globe and Satan's awareness that his time is short, we must be on guard and avoid being entangled in this highly seductive pursuit.

3. *The Bible does not discourage us from engaging in secular economic activities as long as our employment is honorable and our dealings are honest.* Many of the individuals who lent financial and other material support to the early Christian church were well-to-do business people and gifted crafts persons. The list includes Aquila and Priscilla who were tentmakers in Corinth (Acts 18:2, 3) and Lydia who was "a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira" (Acts 16:14). Another rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, took upon himself the responsibility of ensuring a dignified burial for the Saviour he had chosen to follow. There are undoubtedly many modern-day believers who have given sacrificially to advance God's kingdom on this planet, and all of us can participate regardless of the means at our disposal. Remember the widow and her two mites!

4. *We should cultivate simplicity.* "Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf" (Proverbs 11:28). Riches are often a temporary blessing that can be lost in a moment. Paul counseled members of the church at Philippi: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but

in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). We are called to be the light and the salt of the earth, and our task is to shed light where there is darkness, and to provide savor where life has lost all meaning.

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* All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version.

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Eardell Jenner Rashford

Dialogue with an Adventist judge in New York City

A Christian who loves her Lord. A Seventh-day Adventist who is active in her church. A judge who dispenses justice in New York City. A woman who cares for the community in which she lives. That's Eardell Jenner Rashford.

Eardell was born in Harlem, New York City. From elementary to tertiary level, she attended Adventist schools. In 1971 she received the Jurist Doctor degree (J.D.) from Howard University School of Law.

While attending law school, Eardell was active in community service, devoting time to the Washington, D. C., Neighborhood Consumer Information Center, where she was responsible for the investigation of consumer complaints. Upon completion of law school, she served as a law clerk for the New York City Legal Society. Later she was employed by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, and the Community Board Assistance Unit, where she continued until 1980.

In the 15 years that followed, Attorney Eardell Rashford handled commercial property cases for the New York City Division of Real Property. During that time, she served as an arbitrator in Small Claims Court for the city and the Better Business Bureau. In July 1995, Rashford was appointed a Judge of the Housing Court of the City of New York.

Dedicated to God, her church, and the community, Eardell gives glory and honor to God for what He has done in her life. She is a lifelong member of the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Harlem, serving the congregation wherever she is needed from assistant church clerk to meeting the nurturing challenge of Sabbath school teaching. She has also been a legal advisor to the Northeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and member of the governing board of Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama.

■ Judge Rashford, please tell us what helped shape you to be what you are.

Having been brought up in an Adventist home, God has always been foremost in my life. I am a product of Seventh-day Adventist education, thanks to the faithfulness of my parents in providing it for me through the years. I was born and brought up in Harlem, which is in uptown Manhattan, New York City. I now live in the Bronx, where I serve as a Housing Court Judge. All along, I have had a strong commitment to the communities in which I live and function,

including the civic community, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Adventist educational institutions that have played major roles in shaping my life.

■ Have you always wanted to be a judge?

As a child my first dreams were of being an auto mechanic, since my father was an auto machinist. While in high school, I dreamed of becoming a lawyer. After I entered the legal profession, I was impressed to pursue serving on the bench. I felt God was leading me in that direction.

■ How did you enter the court system?

It was by choice. In September 1994 I applied for an opening in the Housing Court. There were 100 to 150 applicants for the position. After being interviewed by a subcommittee of the Housing Advisory Council, 40 were chosen to go before the full committee. At each level the exams were oral, which required the kind of concentration and focus judges need in their work, as well as the ability to respond appropriately. The process was a very demanding one. Out of the 40, four applicants were selected to appear before the New York City Bar Association. The process here was more detailed, eventually leading to an interview by the full Judiciary Committee of the Bar Association, then by three members of the Office of Court Administration, and finally by the Chief Administrative Judge of the City. I waited almost six months for the results of the interview. When the results finally came in February 1995, I was surprised: I was not selected.

■ Were you discouraged? Did you assume that perhaps the doors may not open again?

No, I was at perfect peace, even though from February to June 1995, the only encouragement I received from the Office of Court Administration was a letter stating that if something became available I would be considered. Then, a sitting judge died unexpectedly, and I was called for the position. I realized that the peace I had experienced throughout the lengthy application and waiting process was a gift from God. He knew what was ahead; I did not. It was a wonderful time of deepening trust in Him and seeing His plan for my life un-

fold after so many months of not having any indication of what the outcome would be. I was greatly blessed by the experience.

■ *What is your term of service in this post?*

Five years. In New York City, judges are selected, elected or, more often, appointed by the mayor. As a Housing Court Judge, I function as a hearing officer, and was selected by internal appointment of the Office of Court Administration.

■ *Has your religion created any challenges for you in your work?*

No. We have no Sabbath problems. The New York City court system in general is very considerate of religious preferences, perhaps because of the diversity of religious affiliations of the people that live in the city. I am open about my beliefs. Every year in the Fall—when the sun begins to set earlier—I hand in a note explaining that I will be leaving earlier on Friday afternoons because of my religious beliefs, and there has never been a problem concerning this.

■ *Please tell us what your day in court is like.*

Court hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, I may spend time after that on decisions reserved earlier in the day. In my current role, I try cases as well as settle them. My court has a case load of 50 to 100 cases a day. Naturally, not all cases are resolved in a given day. My regular schedule involves working on 30 to 40 cases each day to seek resolution. Each morning we make a speech to remind people that they are in court, and advise them on how they are expected to conduct themselves. I sit on a high bench, and this maintains a distance that helps to instill respect and maintain decorum in the court. I don't often smile in court, so as not to give the impression of favoritism for one party or the other, but I'm known for my patience and understanding.

■ *In a courtroom a judge often encounters situations that can be both challenging and frustrating. How do you relate to such instances?*

If someone thinks being a Housing Court judge is aggravating, he or she probably shouldn't be one. I do have a pet peeve, though, and that is people interrupting each other—lawyers interrupting adversaries, or either of them interrupting me. In my court, I make it clear that everyone has a chance to speak. Interrupting is not allowed and really not even necessary, under the circumstances. Consequently, everyone gets a chance to talk in my court.

My judicial perspective is that every problem has a solution. The tenant or the landlord, or both, may not like the solution, but every problem has a solution, according to the law.

■ *In talking about your work, you exude joyousness. What makes your work so enjoyable?*

I enjoy it because of three reasons: I am helping individuals; I am applying the law; and I am applying the law tempered with mercy for both sides. It's challenging to know how to apply the law. It's exciting because I don't know what will be presented. It may be a routine case or a unique one. In any event, it's always a surprise. Studying the intricacies of the law to determine which aspect should be applied in a given situation and how it should be applied is also creative.

■ *Your life revolves around the law so much. How do you relate to that on a personal level?*

I like being involved with the law and applying it. I trained as a lawyer, and lawyers are supposed to be honest people. They have a code of ethics that says they are supposed to be honest, so it's just part of who I am. I like my work on the bench.

■ *Has your work had an effect on your faith?*

Yes, my work has made my faith stronger. I trust in God more. I lean on Him for help so I will say the right things. I pray a lot for wisdom—on and off the bench.

■ *As a woman judge, do you see any particular dynamics at work?*

There are times when a woman judge may not be as readily respected as a male judge by either lawyers or litigants, so I demand that respect. I maintain an air of respect that I expect of them while they are in court. The gender issue is just one more facet that I keep in mind in my goal of instilling respect for the court.

■ *What do you feel about Adventists in court?*

I believe the court system should be a last resort for a Seventh-day Adventist Christian—after exhausting the reconciliation and resolution steps outlined in Matthew 18. Individuals have to have some way of resolving problems. For Christians, the best recourse is Matthew 18, but when that does not yield the desired results, one should have access to legal remedies.

■ *Is being a judge financially rewarding?*

[Laughs.] Money isn't the most important thing in life. A young attorney in his/her first year out of law school on Wall Street makes more money than I do as a judge. I believe that being happy with what you're doing is the most rewarding thing a person could have.

Interview by Betty Cooney.

Betty Cooney is a communication specialist and has worked for many years for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most recently she coordinated the Millennium Prophecy Seminar, aired via satellite from New York City.



Alois Kinder

Dialogue with an Adventist businessman in Austria

Optimo is a manufacturing company that represents Christian optimism at its best. It had its birth in Braunau, Austria, the town where Hitler was born. There ends the comparison between the two. Founded in an abandoned cowshed to provide work opportunities for students at the nearby Adventist Seminary in Bogenhofen, Optimo has had a unique history in post-war European business. Its primary function is to put people to a good night of rest. Modern beds, bedframes, and mattresses of all types, manufactured with high-quality standards under the brand name of Optimo, are well known in Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and many other countries.

In the beginning, during the post-war economic struggle, Optimo found itself a dwarf fighting for survival in the midst of manufacturing giants. It had to compete with 17 other companies in the bed-making business. But after years of steady growth, Optimo is today the larger of two bed-frame makers in Austria. From a little cowshed, the company has grown to become a manufacturing center that operates from six enormous halls, producing 2,000 bedframes a day as contrasted with 1,600 per year in 1955.

The man behind this remarkable success story is Alois Kinder. But he would be the first to deny any such personal credit. To this Adventist businessman, all glory must go to God. Kinder sees Optimo as a business that was born with a great dream, and it is that vision and faith that helped in the success and growth of this company.

Alois Kinder is a self-made man. At the end of World War II, he and his German family had to flee Yugoslavia, leaving everything they had. The flight took Alois to Austria where he worked on farms and took care of cows. But God had other plans for him. At the suggestion of a cousin, Alois joined the Adventist Seminary in Bogenhofen. The seminary business manager saw an industrious potential in Alois and drafted him in getting Optimo on its feet. Alois immersed himself so fully in the project that he soon became the head of Optimo, and turned it into what it is today.

Retired in 1996 and with the day-to-day operations of the company in the hands of the next generation, Alois Kinder continues to bear witness to what God can do through committed and faithful individuals.

■ *Would you see yourself as a self-made person?*

Not quite. You see, I was never alone. I always felt God's guidance in my life. Everything I have done—including Optimo—is a gift from God. He gave the talents, the motivation, and the ability to move ahead. He helped me turn every liability into a possibility. I did not

have formal education. The war caused my family to leave our home and everything we had in Yugoslavia. But then, I was never alone. God was good to me.

■ *From the time you founded Optimo, you immersed yourself so fully into this project that all who knew you said that you were married to Optimo.*

Even my wife has made that kind of joke! But success in any endeavor cannot come without total commitment. Of course, that does not mean one should get so preoccupied with business that it affects one's relationship in other areas, such as God or one's family.

When we were building up the company, I found myself torn between my desire to achieve success in business and my duties as a husband and father. It was not uncommon for me to work well into the night and then go on a business trip. There were occasions when I hardly had any free time to be with my family. However, I always knew I could not let business diminish my love and closeness to my family. More important, my wife and children knew that, too. The household was in my wife's very capable hands. She had a great understanding of my situation. And I am grateful to God that our three daughters had the same feelings.

■ *The business world today is a harsh place where human kindness is hard to find. Has this been your experience, too?*

Life seems to have changed dramatically in recent years. Right after World War II, when poverty was common, people were not as arrogant and indifferent to one another as they are today. In those days, when I visited clients, I got to know them and also their families. "Take a look through the house!" was an invitation I heard often. I knew the children. Often these children would become heads of their parents' business and then become themselves my clients. In those days, human kindness was expected and freely given. Today, in the age of super technology and

sharp competition, everyone and everything seems to have become part of a gigantic machine. An invisible wall has risen between individuals—in the community, in the workplace, and even in the church.

■ *You mean coldness and mistrust have crept in everywhere?*

For sure. Let me tell a personal experience. Not too long ago I was visiting a client, and he told me, “Mr. Kinder, kindly sit here, and please do not go through the furniture store!” I was surprised and unsure as to how to react to such statement. Although I wanted to walk around in the store, as I usually do, I was prevented from doing so. The explanation came later. It was feared that I could be spying for the competition. A ludicrous idea, but that is how things are today.

■ *In the difficult world of business, is it possible to practice Christian principles? Would you encourage Adventists to enter the business world?*

Yes, I certainly would. But it is important to have solid principles and to stick to them. Practically all my business partners know that I do not drink or smoke and they refrain from certain activities when I’m in their company. They accept this and, in fact, they respect my principles. People like to do business with those who have a reputation for integrity. As our Lord said, “Simply let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No”” (Matthew 5:37, NIV).

■ *How extensive is Optimo’s business?*

At the beginning, Optimo was manufacturing only bed frames. Later, mattresses were added. Today, we can rightfully say that we are responsible for the restful and healthy sleep of the Austrians. I am not exaggerating when I say that most Austrians and many Germans sleep on our products. We deliver to 1,000 furniture stores in Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Scandinavia and

even Israel. Thirty-nine percent of the goods we produce are exported.

■ *Human relations play a major role in the success of a company. As an entrepreneur and a successful businessman, what would you say about this?*

Without adequate and proper human relations, nothing in life can succeed. Even when making difficult and perhaps negative decisions in business, one must not diminish the dignity of the other person. I have always tried to respect the human quality in others. This is very important. People become aware of this and tend to reciprocate. Such an approach has practical consequences too. Even to this day, trade unions have been unable to gain a foothold in our company and, as a result, drive a wedge between management and workers. They still come now and again to try to convince our workers to join them, but no one is interested.

■ *How do problems in the workplace at Optimo get solved?*

People in leadership positions need to show understanding and empathy. At Optimo, we seek to understand people from their perspective and then begin to tackle the problem. Some times it may be necessary to go some distance—that extra mile—to meet people where they are. After retirement, my special task is to dialogue with our workers. Many of them have numerous problems. Their marriages may be on the rocks. Women may need flex time to care for their family responsibilities. Each employee is different, and each problem is different. We try to listen. We show understanding. That kind of a relationship usually creates a good environment in the workplace.

■ *Company bosses are often authoritative with their workers. How is it at Optimo?*

A business can be run in two ways. First, the autocratic way. The manager lays down the rule, sets the objective,

and expects the workers to do the job. Work gets accomplished, but at a price. The second way is the more pleasant one. The administrator views the workers as partners. They are all in it together. There’s give and take. There’s cooperation. Work becomes a joint venture. This is what Optimo has tried to do. Often I have joined employees at the workbench. My co-workers are my friends. Often they have better ideas on how to perform a task faster and more efficiently. I recognized and honored them. We sought to achieve a common business objective together. With that kind of atmosphere in the company, one can accomplish much more.

■ *As a Christian and a successful businessman, what would you say is your business philosophy, and what would your counsel be to Adventist young men and women planning to get into business?*

My philosophy of business is rather simple. We are stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Whether it is business, industry, education, or any other profession, what we have is not ours. It is a gift of God, and we need to sense God’s ownership and manifest our stewardship. Success and personal fulfillment will come naturally with commitment to that kind of a philosophy. Adventist youth aspiring to enter a business or an industry must ensure that their doing so is motivated by a desire to fulfill God’s will for them. Materialism should hardly be the motive. Become a channel of God’s blessings, and you will see true joy and fulfillment in life.

Interview by Hans Matschek

Hans Matschek teaches English at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, Bogenhofen, Austria. Optimo’s address: Industriezeile 10; A - 5280 Braunau, Austria. E-mail: windisch@optimo.at

Facing sin

by David A. Pendleton

We all fall, but we need not remain fallen.

***Our hearts are restless until we
find our rest in God.***

— AUGUSTINE

There he was. The President of the United States admitting in a four-minute televised address to the nation of his participation in an “inappropriate relationship” with a young intern and that his previous remarks regarding the affair had misled the people of the country. One question kept coming up in my mind. How is it that an individual like President Clinton—with such impressive academic credentials, unquestioned intelligence, passion for public service, knowledge of the law, and savvy media skills—could choose to risk so much by doing something so utterly foolish? How could someone act in a manner so inconsistent with what he knows to be right and wise?

The question is akin to ones I asked many years ago as a college student at La Sierra University and Loma Linda University. My questions had to do with the meaning and the consequences of sin. Why is it that Seventh-day Adventist Christians continue to sin, knowing what we know? Why is it that we fall short of God’s ideal so often when we have been privy to so much light?

Having been raised and educated in the Adventist Church and an Adventist academy, I had grown up thoroughly versed in biblical theology. While I was

no legalist, I had, unfortunately, acquired the mistaken belief that correct theology, not the cross of Christ, was the key to salvation.

Fortunately, at La Sierra University, I came to understand that while appreciation of the Church’s 27 Fundamental Beliefs was necessary, it was certainly not sufficient to secure salvation. I gradually recognized that the experience of God’s grace I so desired came not from knowing *about* Christ but from knowing Him as a personal Savior. In short, right beliefs were not enough to guarantee right action. I had to have a right relationship.

The meaning of sin

Augustine is perhaps best remembered for his *Confessions*. Though autobiographical in form, the book is rich in theological content. In it he bares his soul to the reader, not out of a perverse hunger for fame, but out of genuine Christian concern and a prayerful desire to spare others what he suffered.

Augustine made serious personal mistakes along life’s way, and in the book he shares how only a relationship with God saved him from himself. He tells how lust had waged war with his conscience, how concupiscence utterly corrupted him, and how unchecked restlessness led him to be zealous in a manner wholly at odds with God’s ideal for his life.

One day, Augustine was out in the garden when he heard a little girl repeating over and over, “*Tolle lege, tolle lege*” (Latin for “Take up and read, take up and read”). Finding Paul’s Epistle to the Romans on a nearby table, he took it up and read. But he did more than focus his eyes on words. He encountered The

Word. Confronted by the awesome power, majesty, and love of Him who is Love, Augustine’s life was forever changed. The information he had read was important, but even more so was the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In focusing on God’s Word, he experienced Him who is the Word.

Augustine lived long ago, but his experiences speak to us today. We are reminded that the human predicament is a moral one. It has little to do with how much information we have and has a lot to do with whether we are in harmony with God. Augustine spoke of “The Fall” as signaling the origin of sin in this world. It was not God’s plan for us to be at odds with Him. To the contrary, God created us in His image, pronounced humankind good, and wanted to enter into a relationship with our first parents and all who would follow.

Adam and Eve were given all they needed to grow in an ever-closer relationship with their Creator. Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God instructed them. But they chose to disobey. Adam and Eve fell not out of ignorance but out of disobedience. Christ had to die not so much to convey information to us but primarily to establish a right relationship with us.

The Bible tells us that alienation is one of the results of sin (Genesis 3:10-13). The very first thing Adam and Eve did after having disobeyed God was to flee from Him to avoid His presence. Later, when confronted by God, they failed to admit their misdeeds. Instead, they stonewalled. They pointed to each other as the culprit. As a result of their sin, they fell away from God and consequently drifted apart from each other. Sin leads to the total disruption of rela-

tionships. Our horizontal or earthly relationships depend on a strong vertical or heavenly relationship.

God is not only the Creator of all that is. God is like a tree that unites all branches. Apart from God there is no unity. Without God we are alone. This is what Christ experienced on the cross: the absence of the presence of God.

A second consequence of sin is condemnation (Romans 5:18). As those who knowingly disobey God, we have incurred the judgment of God. A legal status of guilty has been pronounced upon us. And we live with the attendant slavery to sin. Sin not only disrupts our relationship with God; it also leaves us inclined against God and with a propensity toward sin. Adam and Eve did more than set a bad precedent; they have set us on a course from which we on our own strength cannot depart. We stand condemned. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).*

The triumph of the cross

Fortunately, sin and death do not have the last word. Paul continues in the same verse with the good news: "But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We have a loving God who does not want to let us go. And so He sent his only Son to die for us. "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5: 18, 19). Christ triumphed over sin while nailed to the cross, and His resurrection left no doubt about His victory. This is indeed good news.

We can rest assured that we are not alone. God is truly with us. For in dying on the cross, Christ exiled alienation. He has made it possible for us to be at one with Him and He is reconciling the

world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). Because of the cross, there is now no condemnation. God does not see a guilty verdict stamped on our hearts. Rather He sees Christ's robe of righteousness. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..., who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1, 4).

We shall continue to struggle with our fallenness (see Romans 7) because we are powerless to do good on our own. But God can transform and empower us if we allow Him. Indeed, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

Like Paul, like Augustine, like Clinton, and like all of us, we will find ourselves failing God. We will fall, but we need not remain fallen. God's grace is sufficient to lift us up and help us walk again the walk of faith.

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** All Bible quotations are from the New International Version.*

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Television and violence: A Christian response to the debate over effects

By Daniel Reynaud

In the wake of increasing crime, including shootings in the school and the workplace, the question is often raised: Does violence in television shows promote or motivate violence in real life?

Popular belief often portrays television as a major and direct cause of violence, and some research would seem to support this view. While there is still considerable confusion among academics over media effects, little has happened to change popular views on the subject. Popular criticism of television paints a picture of addiction, anaesthetizing viewers into passive automatons and hypnotized zombies. Television is often blamed for the perceived poor performance of children in schools, despite the fact that Western literacy rates have never been higher. The problem is that while literacy has risen, the demand for literacy has risen faster. Popular criticism of the illiteracy of the current generation of school children is a habit dating into last century, long before the age of television. Research has also dispelled the fear that television neutralizes creativity: children play just as creatively with television stories as they do with those they read in books.

Ironically, popular critics often claim that television has not only turned children into passive zombies, it has made them hyperactive with short attention spans and powerful inclinations to violence. But how television can do both at the same time is never explained. Exactly what does a hyperactive zombie look like? Behind this popular belief lies an assumption that individuals imitate specific acts of violence from television.

Hence the periodic calls made for stricter control of television content, particularly in relation to children's viewing time. Of course, many who call for television censorship do so not on their own behalf, but on behalf of those whom they feel are more susceptible to its influence. Typically we feel it's always other people who are badly affected by television, never ourselves.¹ Interestingly enough, children often have the same paternalistic thinking, feeling that programs do them no harm, while being bad for other children.

Behaviorist research

Sound research is needed to clear up such contradictory views. But the quality of the work in television has often varied, and results have often accorded with the opinions of previous researchers. The majority of the approximately 10,000 studies conducted on television violence have been performed within the framework of behaviorist theory. Perhaps the best-known experiments were those of Bandura and his associates, who demonstrated that children's viewing had a direct and measurable effect on their behavior toward large stuffed Bobo dolls. Those children who had seen a violent film about the dolls behaved with much greater aggression toward them than those who were given dolls without having seen the film.²

However, while many behaviorist experiments showed an apparent connection between viewing and behavior, there is considerable doubt as to the validity of the conclusions when generalized. Behaviorist research tended to ignore the way that artificially controlled

viewing conditions affected viewers' perceptions of both the television viewing and the expectations of their reactions. One child in Bandura's experiment was overheard by a researcher to say, "Look Mummy, there's the doll we'll have to hit."³

Such a reaction is not surprising. A child in an unfamiliar environment came to the natural conclusion that the film was modeling desired behavior toward the identical dolls he or she was shown. Current opinion is that the violence shown towards the Bobo dolls was at least as much a product of the children's perceived expectations of the experimenters as it was the result of their violent viewing. Furthermore, to assume that a child in this situation would then transfer the behavior to people is a fallacy. It would require that a child fail to recognize the difference in acceptable behavior toward a dummy and live people. In fact, children understand the modality of television from a reasonably early age, distinguishing in rather sophisticated ways between what is real and what is not. Audience studies show that viewers do not automatically adopt the values of a program. Rather, they usually resist television values that overtly contradict their own.⁴ Analysis of other behaviorist experiments showed that artificial conditions led to artificial results.⁵ In short, behaviorist research has too often failed to take account of the different ways in which audiences interpret television.

The problem for researchers and the public alike is that we are most likely to reach a conclusion about television violence that supports our preconceived

ideas. In order to arrive at intelligent conclusions about the effects of television viewing, we must first recognize our own preconceptions and expect that they may be modified, shaken, or contradicted.

Multi-disciplinary research

Research that combines the methodologies of various disciplines is providing the most useful conclusions on the effects of television violence. What is being discovered is complex and yet more in keeping with common sense than earlier conclusions. Logic would argue that if the behaviorist conclusions were right about immediate and measurable effects from watching violent television, then most Western societies would be full of violent people. While violence is a major problem in Western societies, it does not peak after episodes of violent shows, nor are the majority of television watchers generally considered violent.

In any case, representations of violence on television do not follow actual patterns of real-life violence. For example, police shows frequently portray officers with drawn guns, whereas a survey of American police officers revealed that, while fulfilling their duty, on average they fired their gun once every 27 years.⁶ Most real violence is less spectacular and usually more personal than that typically depicted on television. It is wise to drop the idea of a one-to-one correlation between television violence and real life.

Another complexity is the problem of dealing with the nature and degree of violence. While everyone agrees that cold-blooded murder with an iron pipe is violent, women are more likely to rate a verbal confrontation as violent, while men are more likely to confine their definition to physical force. Essentially violence is an act which is defined socially, not purely behaviorally.⁷ For example, cutting open a stranger with a sharp knife might be rated violent, unless of

course the "victim" was a patient and the "aggressor" a surgeon with a scalpel. But if the surgeon was a Nazi experimenting on concentration camp prisoners, our view might change again. In each case the behavior remained the same. Only the changing social context caused a difference in interpretation. Sports such as football and boxing routinely valorize violent behavior that would be unacceptable on the street. Even violence by police toward criminals is usually interpreted as less violent than exactly the same actions performed by criminals toward police.

The complex nature of violence

The complex nature of defining violence is reflected in the way audiences interpret violence. Children interpret television according to their own sense of social justice and order. They are capable of reading television as a series of codes, rather than as a literal representation of reality. Studies show that children are frequently aware of the staged nature of television shows and can point out their artificial nature. They can resist and even oppose the message of television, because they recognize the difference between representations and reality. For example, Aboriginal children in Australia have sometimes aligned themselves with the "bad" Indians against the heroes in Westerns, because they empathize with their social oppression.⁸

The way in which violence is portrayed significantly affects the degree of this impact. Children interpret certain television codes as pure fantasy, and the elements, violent or otherwise, are not taken literally. This is particularly true of cartoons, which contain more acts of violence per minute than any other form of television, but also applies to acted shows such as wrestling where cause and effect are obviously exaggerated. Children know that the violence is an exaggerated representation of conflict, which itself is an irreplaceable element

of any dramatic form, be it drama, quiz shows, or sport. Other codes are read more literally. Realistic drama can have a strong impact on viewers, young ones especially, because the codes conform closely to their perceptions of reality. Even then, as children grow older, they are able to distinguish between the actors playing roles and the events they portray. Perhaps the viewing that has the highest impact is documentary violence, seen on news, documentaries, and reality television shows, because children know that this is real.⁹

Social ideology also affects the interpretation of violence. While violent scenes are common on television, violence is not generally condoned in society, or at least it is channeled into highly regulated forms such as certain sports. This ideological structure influences the way children understand the violence they see on television, and makes them much less susceptible to it than say racist or sexist stereotypes, which are often supported by the social and ideological structures that the children inhabit. A child's family, school, church, and general social circumstances will have an important role in determining the effects of television on that child.¹⁰

We must recognize that television is not *the* cause of social violence in children or anyone else. In reality, life is much more complex than that. Violent societies existed prior to television, many of them more violent than today's Western society. Violent behavior is the product of personal, social, and economic conditions, and will not be solved by simply banning the box. It is easy to pick on a whipping boy for all of society's ills, but social violence does not necessarily increase with the arrival of television. For many years Japan has had significantly lower levels of violence than the United States. But Japan's television is generally rated as more violent. The difference must be explored in the cultures of each nation rather than through an analysis of violent media.

We must also ask to what extent modern urban societies depersonalize individuals. A city lifestyle tends to force people to ignore others around them on the bus, train, street, and elevator, even when they are touching. Which is the grater influence: the codes of fictional television dramas or the daily real-life impact of paying no heed to others?

This is not to say that violence has no effect or that it does not matter what is shown on television, or that children can watch anything. Extended exposure to other forms of violence in the media, including films and video games, may also have a detrimental impact. Common sense tells us that we cannot watch so much television without it having some effect, for, as 2 Corinthians 3:18 reminds us, it is by contemplating that we become changed.

Television: a culturizing force

Television acts as powerful culturizing force in its own right, and does affect children. In particular, television can have powerful effects on children under the age of seven. In the early years, children respond to television images in precisely the same way as they do to real-life people, failing to understand that one is an image and the other reality. Very young children need to be shielded from representations of violence. Young children find it difficult to understand how parents can cheer a football tackle yet punish them for doing the same to their siblings. Unfortunately, even many children's programs have levels of conflict too intense for young children, who can be affected by violence as tame as an argument. For pre-school children, the most benign programming is recommended.

Children also develop discrimination at different rates, and parents need to monitor their children individually, assessing their stage of development. Most parents are over-optimistic about the ability of their children to cope with vi-

olence, often for concealed selfish reasons. Preventing the child from watching some violence could force the adults to miss out.

It can be difficult to accept that perhaps television violence is not quite as devastating as popular belief would have it. The question arises that if television is not that influential, how come advertisers spend billions of dollars a year appropriating its persuasive powers? The answers again lie in the viewing process. Television is most effective when telling people what they already believe, and advertising reinforces socially acceptable, indeed socially rewarded, behavior. However, television violence has a reduced impact on people's behavior. Because we live in societies that by and large do not condemn violence, we learn that screen violence is a code by which stories are told, but not one by which real life is conducted. The exception would be, of course, children who grow up in a violent home. They learn that violence was an effective way for the strong to get what they want. In such cases, television confirms their beliefs. But we need to recognize that their violent behavior was learned from the home and their social environment, and merely reinforced by the screen. It is often such people who provide the evidence popularized in the media that television causes violence. Some even testify that it was particular films or programs that led to specific crimes. We need to carefully examine such claims for other factors that may have produced violence. For while television may contribute to the behavior of violent people, to argue that it is the cause of it is to fail to understand the influence of real-life experience in shaping attitudes toward violence. We also need to remember the Christian concept of choice, that even Adam and Eve in a perfect environment made a bad decision. It is so easy to blame television for choices that are ultimately our own responsibility.

The fact that the media itself promotes a view that the media causes crime may appear to be a powerful argument supporting the impact of television violence, but in fact it is in the media's interests to promote such a view. Ironically, by blaming itself, the media protects its profitability. The media never got anywhere by contradicting popular belief. Furthermore, if the media pointed out the real causes of violence, people would be distracted from the advertising that encourages them to spend more on themselves. The most effective way to reduce crime is not through tougher sentencing, more police, and the banning of violent programs, but by promoting effective relationships between people. If more people were committed to Christian social action, helping the unemployed find meaningful work, creating worthwhile activities for underprivileged groups, spending their surplus income on those less well off than themselves, all in the context of sharing the love of Christ, crime would drop significantly. But such behavior would interfere with television's goal of our spending more money on ourselves.

Solution to violence

Christians particularly recognize that violence is a product of our sinful natures, and cannot simply be cured by banning external influences such as films. Even social action would only reduce, not eradicate, crime. But the real solution to crime—the change of heart that the gospel of Jesus brings—is unpopular. It is easier to blame the media than to take personal responsibility. Again, there is no profit to the media in making people feel guilty. Its prosperity is in telling people that they are good, particularly if they purchase more products.

From a Christian perspective, perhaps television violence is the least of its evils, simply for the reason that most of us understand it to be socially unacceptable behavior. We are most at risk when we agree with the media, for television

is most powerful when it coincides with our values, for then we are often unconscious of its influence. The relative lack of protest from Christians about materialism, the cult of beauty, and the racism and sexism of the medium suggests that perhaps these values form part of our attitudes and are being reinforced by television. The religion of Jesus was, and should remain, deeply opposed to discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, appearance, or wealth. To some degree the violence debate is a smoke screen that conceals the real damage that television causes, by confirming our prejudices while allowing us to feel good because we condemn a lesser evil.

Daniel Reynaud (Ph.D., University of Newcastle), lectures in Media and English at Avondale College, and has published on a variety of media, as well as authoring Reading With New Eyes: Exploring Scripture Through Literary Genre. This article is adapted from his recent book, Media Values. His address is P.O. Box 19, Cooranbong, 2265, N.S.W., Australia. E-mail: daniel.reynaud@avondale.edu.au

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Chance...

Continued from page 12.

lists some of them. In general, these scientists believe in some kind of evolution, but admit to major problems. Darwin's model has been especially criticized. In the meantime, the search for an evolutionary mechanism continues.

Conclusion

Scientists often show firm support for evolution. While they generally agree that evolution is fact, there is much less agreement when details are being considered. Some of the most heated battles in evolutionary biology followed the modern synthesis. The well-known writer Tom Bethell emphasizes that "especially in recent years, scientists have been fighting among themselves about Darwin and his ideas."⁸ These disputes are seldom heard of, much less understood, by the general public. There is quite a contrast between the internal intellectual battles of the academic community, as found in the research literature, and the simple authoritative style of textbooks and newspaper articles. Some simplification in textbooks may be helpful in facilitating learning, but students should become more aware of the varied views in the evolutionary debate.

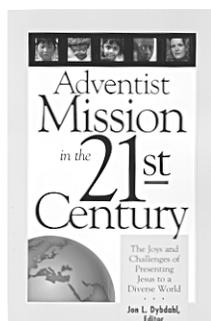
One can only look with a degree of respect at the persistent efforts of evolutionists to find a plausible mechanism for their theory. Their perseverance is commendable. One theory after another has been proposed over a period of two centuries. The general failure raises a sobering question: Is evolutionary thought more a matter of opinion than

of hard scientific data? After such a long and virtually futile search for an evolutionary mechanism, it would seem that evolutionary scientists should give serious consideration to creation by God as described in the Bible. There, God, as the designer of all, creates various life forms, including their complex systems of interdependent parts.

Ariel A. Roth (Ph.D., University of Michigan), who served as director of the Geoscience Research Institute and editor of Origins, continues involved in research and writing. His address: Geoscience Research Institute; Loma Linda University; Loma Linda, California 92350; U.S.A.

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1. For a discussion of the various issues considered in this article, related topics, and many literature references, see Ariel A. Roth, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1998), pp. 80-115, 130-144. The book will soon be available in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian. To locate the various publishers contact the author.
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Adventist Mission in the 21st Century: The Joys and Challenges of Presenting Jesus to a Diverse World,

edited by Jon L. Dybdahl (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1999; 314 pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Nkosiyabo Zvandasara.

At last we have a brilliant contribution to the understanding of Adventist mission as we face the unknown and the unpredictable in the 21st century. The anthology is a studied response to a perceived need for introspection on the joys and concerns of missions the Seventh-day Adventist Church will have to face in the new millennium. Thirty men and women from around the world and with a wide spectrum of leadership experience have provided a rich tapestry of the unchanging mission and message in a fast-changing world. The book has four main sections: the background; biblical and theological issues; strategies and methods; and finally, case studies.

The first section evaluates the current state of Adventist mission. The book commends the membership growth, admits shortcomings, and identifies challenges. The contributors dispel anxiety for the future by looking at how God has miraculously led the Adventist Church in the past.

The second section addresses some biblical and theological issues in Adventist mission. One key issue is that missionaries from the West are still in great demand, despite a history marred by their alleged or actual involvement in colonialism and other evils. Another issue is that the self-concept of Adventists “as light bearers” decries an elitist remnant theology. A correct self-understanding will enable Adventists to channel their resources toward mission in its varied forms. Evangelizing the world religions and the secular-minded, alleviating human suffering, and adapting Adventism to diverse cultures will become a priority.

The third section suggests strategies and methods for Adventist mission in the 21st century. Such strategies include the concepts of tentmaking and the megachurch, involvement of laypersons, women, students, and youth, and more defined participation by ADRA and Adventist World Radio. Whatever the strategy, prayer, faith, and commitment must undergird all approaches to mission.

The last section provides case studies on Adventist mission from Cambodia, Myanmar, and China. The book highlights the 1000 Missionary Movement, GO Mission Conferences, and Frontier Missions. It revisits the “Rwanda Tragedy” and draws lessons that ought to be learned. The book also takes note of the social change brought about by the spread of Ad-

ventism in Bolivia.

The book however, has one drawback common to most anthologies: lack of focus. But perhaps that may be its strength after all, as a multiplicity of perspectives on Adventist mission challenges the church in both the what and the how of the job ahead. Those seeking insight into the future of Adventist mission and craving for informed involvement, will find this volume valuable.

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Beyond Shame and Pain: Forgiving Yourself and Others,

by John Berez (Lima, Ohio: CSS Publ. Co., 1998; 160 pp; paperback).

Reviewed by Carlos Fayard.

On the day I received John Berez’s book on forgiveness for this review, I also found a brochure from Guilford Press, announcing *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Only recently has the topic of forgiveness received formal attention by psychologists. John Berez, a professor of psychology at Andrews University and a practicing clinician, contributes his thoughts as a mental-health professional and a Christian.

The author relies on Scripture, psychological theories, and his 30 years of clinical experience to forge this book in a way that is vivid, entertaining, didactic, and at times passionate. Berez provides Christians with much needed caution: forgiveness is seldom, if ever, easy or simple. It is a process shaped by several factors, including self-esteem and personality styles.

The book contains some invaluable gems, such as the author’s definition of shame “as the HIV of the soul.” Berez’s description of the histrionic personality is so crisp that the reader “gets the feeling,” not just a list of characteristics. He quotes very effectively from various literary sources to enrich the text and uses even popular songs to make his point.

If any criticism must be made, Dr. Berez can be faulted for being too ambitious in taking up so much in so little space. Indeed, some topics leave the reader wanting for more. For instance: How can Christians self-forgive, when they consider forgiveness to be a divine gift? Or how should Christians deal

with justifiably angry feelings?

The book is not a “how to” text. It reminds us all of how much grace is needed in our lives, and illustrates the elements in our humanness that preclude a full benefit from God’s gift of forgiveness. It is intended for the general audience and for those in the helping professions who take Christianity seriously.

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Comentario del Evangelio de Juan,

by Mario Veloso (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1997; 517 pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Eloy Wade.

Mario Veloso has done Hispanic Adventist scholarship a distinguished service by his latest work: a commentary on the Gospel of John. His commitment to biblical authority, principles of sound scholarship, and Adventist perspectives comes through clearly in this study of the fourth Gospel. He has met a growing need for in-depth and yet readable biblical commentaries in Spanish.

The study is the result of his doctoral dissertation and classroom experience. He avoids the common tendency in theological circles to structure the Gospel of John around a unifying sophisticated concept. Instead, he chooses a more dynamic perspective: the mission of the Son, which according to Veloso, is the basic structure of the Gospel.

The book is organized in a coherent and logical way, and its approach highly didactic. We are frequently informed that sections are divided into parts, and that these, in turn, are subdivided. In this way, the reader can follow easily the development of the commentary. In addition to the general bibliography provided in the book, each chapter ends with a basic bibliography that can guide the reader to additional sources.

The book is both scholarly and reflective. The first is seen in the skill with which the author presents the main trends of interpretation of the Gospel, and focuses on the theological scholarship’s contribution to the understanding of the Gospel. The second is more personal and practical. Veloso takes time to tell what the Gospel really means to real life today—both to the individual Christian and to the faith community.

Reflections and devotional thoughts are woven through the book. An appendix treats selected theological concepts with greater profundity.

Besides several typographical mistakes and leaving some elements without adequate clarification, the book has one major weakness. In Veloso’s interpretation of John, the reader wishes that he would have freed himself completely from the historical precedence of basing theological arguments only on etymology and lexicography. The book also suffers from a lack of an index.

To say this is only to note how a good book can be even better. Those who seek to understand a biblical book from a biblical perspective will find in Dr. Veloso’s work a treasure on the teaching of John’s Gospel and a fresh appreciation for the Lord of the gospel.

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The Mainstreaming of New Age,
by Manuel Vasquez (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1998; 222 pp; paperback).

Reviewed by Merling Alomía.

Manuel Vasquez writes with authority. As a student of the Bible, he is knowledgeable about the grand scheme of the arch-deceiver in employing sundry spirits and movements to deceive the very elect. As a scholar, he has written extensively on the New Age movement and has analyzed the phenomenon in his doctoral project.

In the 16 chapters of the book, Vasquez covers the main thrusts of the New Age. He begins with the roots of this diabolic movement and progresses up to its modern and future role in the final events of world history. The author shows how the New Age has affected the moral and spiritual fabric of society and how it has undermined Christian doctrines and principles.

Vasquez devotes particular attention to the perils of New Age therapies. He defines carefully how New Age medicine affects today’s way of life and analyzes some 120 options presented as “New Age holistic health therapies” (pp. 122, 123).

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Campus ministry: How your church can be involved

By Daniel M. Forbes

They have been, perhaps, the best years of my ministry. Eleven years on the campuses of the University of South Florida and the University of Central Florida, working with hundreds of young people to keep them focused on the enduring essentials of life, even as they struggle to excel in the world of academia. Those years spent in the secular state systems of education, so indifferent to the ultimate meaning of true education, in order to create an organization and a forum where faith and learning can meet, and where religious commitment can be affirmed and nurtured without being ridiculed have been truly rewarding.

During those years I was able to draw up organizational constitutions and by-laws and set up campus ministry centers to which Adventist young people can turn to as oases of moral and spiritual values. From this ministry, I have learned many lessons, some of which may be useful to others who also wish to start such ministries. The excitement and the satisfaction I have experienced can be yours as well, if your local church wants to get involved in campus ministry.

Once you get interested, you, your campus ministry, and your local church will not be the same again. Here are some pointers:

1. Begin with prayer. No ministry succeeds without earnest prayer, and this is more so with campus ministry, where you have to deal with secularism of the campus on the one hand and the intellectually preoccupied minds of youth on the other. Invite God to lead you in your efforts and to give your congrega-

tion a burden to reach out to students on the local secular campus. Ask Him to open doors of opportunity to contact Adventist and former Adventist students, as well as faculty and staff who may consider themselves Adventists. Some of them may not be practicing their religion very well. They may even be hiding their faith from others for one reason or another. But you will probably find several students who are eager for someone to invite them to fellowship and worship. Perhaps they are waiting to know that you're there for them. Can you just imagine what they could do for your church on Sabbath morning if they were to show up and bring their friends with them and become involved in the life of the church? Solicit your pastor's full support to make campus ministry a part of your church's mission.

2. Begin a discovery process. Find out from the appropriate college/university office what is required to set up a registered student religious organization, and begin following the outlined procedures. You will more than likely need to have a few students to serve as officers in your organization. So look for willing Adventist students to fill those positions. You may even need to register for a class yourself to fill a necessary office or advisory position. But the payoff will be worth it when your group reaches full status as a recognized student organization. It will allow you to use the campus recreational facilities, meeting places, auditoriums, and many other services of the school for free or for a small fee for weekly Bible studies or other functions. You will also be allowed as a group to have information booths on

campus at designated sites and times. You may be able to give out advertisements and other material pertaining to your ministry. Perhaps you can even go on the school's Web site in an effort to get the word out to Adventist students and their friends that you are there to minister to them at their school as well as in your local church.

3. *Set up a spiritual home away from home.* Right from the start, make sure that the students know that your primary mission in setting up a campus ministry is to fill a need in their lives. Your church is theirs—a spiritual home away from home. Find ways to show them that you're serious. Let them know that you're happy to have them worship with you. Invite them to your church's fellowship dinners. Food is a great motivator for anyone, especially students away from home and living on a tight budget. Consider having a special Sabbath fellowship dinner regularly just for them. Plan to have a Sabbath program once or twice a year where your church emphasizes campus ministry. Involve the students in the Sabbath school and worship services. Use their expertise in new and creative outreach ministries. Help them to grow spiritually and exercise their gifts and talents for the Lord. You'll be surprised how quickly the word will spread about your caring church. Soon your church will be known as the place where students are appreciated and loved for who they are and what they have to contribute to your worship and fellowship. That alone can result in an effective program that will strengthen and enlarge your congregation.

4. *Envision a mission field for ministry.* Consider the college/university campus as a mission field, with great possibilities for nurture and witness. If your congregation gets involved in that kind of ministry, what blessings will result! I've seen it happen for myself. I am pastoring the University Seventh-day Adventist Church in Orlando, Florida. It first

got its name because of its location on University Boulevard. The church now considers the university campus part of its mission. In fact, it is a church for the university students. Each Sabbath the church overflows with young people who love their Lord and whose fellowship and worship enriches the rest of the congregation. Both the permanent members of the church and the pilgrim members of the university community make our worship, fellowship, and witness a very enjoyable and enduring experience.

Our church is the richer, the better, because of campus ministry. Try it, and you'll see the difference.

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AMiCUS has published a useful source-book titled Adventist Ministry on the Public University Campus. For more information contact Dialogue's editorial office.

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New Age

Continued from page 31

The author does well in showing the different and subtle ways that these therapies are related with the occult and the dangers that are involved.

In dealing with the "holistic New Age health principles," the author does not fail to show how flawed it is in the light of the *wholistic* health philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Hence his warning: "It is imperative that we become aware of the danger and how to avoid it" (p. 129) no matter how "innocent" it appears to be (p. 155), or how effectively it seems to "work" (pp. 170-174).

Similarly, the book deals with the "holistic" educational concerns of the New Age movement and shows how deceptive and dangerous such concerns are when studied in the light of the Adventist wholistic education, rooted in biblical priorities.

Even though the author mentions briefly the relationship between the New Age and "the last great deception" (pp. 195-200), he could have given us a wider picture of the prophetic implications of the New Age movement. The current activities of the New Age movement permit us to catch a glimpse of the numerous eschatological details that alert us about the things that are to happen soon.

To keep us alert about the deceptions of the last days and prepared for the ultimate triumph of God in the unfolding eschatological drama, Vasquez has made a valuable contribution.

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From the convent to the campus

by Claudia Camasca

The end of a search and the beginning of a new life.

At 22 I was Claudia no more. After six years of rigorous training at the convent in Caraveli, Southern Peru, my superiors declared that I was ready to take the vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty. With a commitment so total and with a decision that I felt was final, I took the oath and was given a new name: Mother Fernanda. But something altogether new and unexpected awaited me. Little known to myself, the Master Architect was drawing other plans for my life.

I was born in 1972 in Lima. My father worked in a cotton processing factory, while my mother cared for the home and for all of us—three boys and two girls. Ours was a devout Catholic family. Some of my relatives are involved in full-time religious service. An uncle is a priest and a missionary, and a cousin is the mother superior in a convent.

Religious devotion caught my interest early in life. Even as a child, I felt called to devote myself to God's service and to help others. That feeling grew stronger and stronger while attending a Catholic middle school. But how does one know for sure God's call to serve Him? For an answer, I turned to my religion teacher, a nun. Her counsel helped me to decide to become a nun. I was 15.

My father was startled and angry at my decision. "You are too young," he argued, "to take such a serious step." But I felt convinced that God was calling me to a conventual life. Torn between obeying my father, whom I loved and respected, and following God's call, I was not sure how to rearrange my life. One day I visited a friend's home, where I

met several nuns who encouraged me to follow my inner call. Later they came to our home and, after a long discussion, persuaded my father to let me go. He signed the papers that allowed me—a minor at 16—to enter the convent. It was a deeply moving moment for us all. Dad was crying, feeling that he was losing a daughter.

That evening, silence reigned in my home as I packed my bag. The following morning I was on my way to the distant convent in Caraveli. At the convent, life as a novice was strict. One must learn to serve God with all one's being. There were 200 of us in the convent, which also served as our school. I quickly settled down, rather happy.

The daily routine was demanding. We woke up at 4:30 to a brief devotional and individual prayers. At 5:30 we had chapel, where we prayed and meditated as a community. After mass, we had breakfast at 7:00, followed by classes in theology and dogma. Lunch at 1:00 was followed by individual study and various duties. We rotated among various services—cooking, baking, cleaning, and so on. After supper we had an hour free to sew and mend our clothes, and to write to our family. At 9:00 we prayed and had our invocations. Lights were off at 10:00 p.m. Another day ended to give way to a new one.

Each one of us had our individual cells. I liked best the silence and solitude of my time in meditation and prayer, away from noise and distractions. The study was intense, and I accepted all teachings with eagerness, because I wanted to become a model nun. My dream was to be a missionary, taking the

Catholic faith to isolated villages that had no priest and where religious life was almost nonexistent. My model was—and still is—the Apostle Paul, who after his conversion carried the gospel to many places, risking his life in the fulfillment of Christ's mission.

During my first few months at the convent, my father visited me at least once a month. Almost in every visit, he used to ask me, in a confidential tone, "Have you changed your mind, Claudia? I brought money for your ticket. Come home with me!" On one such visit I told him that my decision was firm and that he should not speak to me about that subject anymore.

Meanwhile, I moved quickly from novice to aspirant to postulant. After six years of training, I took my vows and began wearing the nun's habit. I became Mother Fernanda.

A visit home

Confirmed in my calling and armed with a new name, I returned home for a few days with my family. Everything seemed new and different, as if I had lived for six years on another planet. When I left home, my younger sister was just a toddler, and now she was a grown girl. What happiness to embrace my parents, sister, and brothers! Friends and relatives dropped in to see the new nun and catch up with all that has happened. Life has a way of changing so much in a few years.

As my two-week holiday was coming to an end, I became quite ill. I was rushed to a hospital. Everyone at home was scared. I was too. Tests showed that I had stomach ulcers, and my heart was

not in the best of shape. The physician prescribed a full range of prescriptions, including a month of rest. A month is too long to be away from the convent, and my father called the mother superiors for permission to let me stay home and regain my health. The mothers suggested that I should return to the convent to recover. My father dismissed the idea.

And I stayed home, hooked to a tube that fed me liquids. One day my mother's sister came to visit me. Aunt Martha is a Seventh-day Adventist. She was very concerned about my health, and asked if she could bring the Adventist pastor to pray for me and to encourage me in my recovery. The following day, the mother superiors arrived from Caraveli ready to take me to the convent. My father insisted that I would go only after my complete recovery. After a heated three-hour discussion, the nuns left very disappointed.

Later that day the Adventist pastor came to visit me. He was young, friendly, caring, and jovial. His wife and he were totally devoted to sharing the good news of the gospel. The pastor read a passage of the Bible, made a few comments about the power of God to heal, and then prayed for my recovery. Soon the mother superiors contacted my family again, demanding that I return to the convent immediately. But I could not return, as I was still recovering. Even as my body was regaining its strength, something deep within me was changing. I began reading the Bible with a new understanding, sensing that the Holy Spirit was my divine Teacher.

A new world opens up

Soon I started visiting an Adventist church. The hymns there were touching but totally new to me. I also began participating in a group study of the Bible, making my own comments on the passages that were discussed. Later I accompanied the pastor and his wife to an evangelistic program in a nearby town.

The experience was very satisfying. God seemed to answer several of my questions. I felt encouraged to know Him better at a more personal level.

One day, as we were driving back to Lima, I asked the pastor what was required to become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His wife and he were taken by surprise. I insisted, "Do I need to change my Catholic Bible for yours?" They laughed. "You need to be baptized," the pastor said. "Well, there is the river. I'm ready!" I replied. "Not so fast, Claudia," the pastor responded. "We must study the teachings of the Bible in depth and you need to make a decision that is well thought-out." I agreed and began attending another evangelistic series. The study of the Bible convinced me of the truth as it is in Jesus. I joined the Adventist Church through baptism.

A new world opened before me. After years of regimentation, I could make my own decisions about my life. Everything happened so fast that it was scary! Although neither I nor my family had the necessary funds, I enrolled in February 1997 at Peru Adventist University, near my home town. Since then I have worked and studied, and soon hope to be an elementary school teacher. I believe I will be able to share God's love with small children in school. During the summers, I combine the selling of Adventist books with witnessing to others for my faith.

Meanwhile, I have shared my new faith with my parents. My mother and sister were the first to accept the Adventist teachings, and a little later my father also joined the church. My happiness is immense, and I continue to pray for my three brothers. I live each day, letting God be the basis of my joy and hope, even as He guides my everyday life experience.

How does one know for sure that God is calling one? That question drove me on a seven-year search—from the turbulence of my teens to the security of

a planned life in a convent, to the assurance of freedom and hope. Meanwhile, I know that God's call can be certain only as we search for ourselves the truth in the Scriptures, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and have the courage to accept it.

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