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**The search for
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God on trial?

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Dreamers and visionaries

Dreams are rooted in the past. Dreamers are people with experience, and experience is powerful. Based on their individual backgrounds, they seem to know what works and what doesn't.

Visions focus on the future. Visionaries have not yet lived a full life, and they do not know much about the past. But they have visions for the future. Visions have their power as well.

There is a problem when visionaries and dreamers do not get along. Ellen White said: "We have nothing to fear for the future [the visionaries] except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us" in the past [the dreamers] (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 31).

Some Adventists say that young people are the church of the future and that they need to await their turn for engaging in action for God. And yet many of those who launched the Advent Movement were young people who felt a call to act. God has prophesied that in the last days He will pour out His Holy Spirit, and dreamers and visionaries will join forces.

Something powerful occurs when dreamers and visionaries come together—the Holy Spirit brings about a catalytic action. The power of age, experience, and maturity merges with the vision, enthusiasm, and boundless energy of youth.

The key is coming together. Let some dreamers be involved in the planning, but let the visionaries take those plans to frontiers yet unknown. In God's great earth, in God's own time, there's room for everyone. It's time that we experience the power of coming together, working together, being together under the Holy Spirit.

Jesus showed us the way. He recognized the slowness of Nicodemus to march with His kingdom, but He had room for Him. He knew the zeal of John and James, just as much as the roughness and haste of Peter. He welcomed Mary Magdalene into His fold, and did not despise the widow of Nain. Both Martha and Mary had a role to play. While Lazarus marched with waving palms, Simon helped Jesus carry the cross. Together, Jesus said, it can be done. And He saw in the distance the kingdom of the future. His dream and vision fused to create the Christian community, and to that community He gave the dream of finishing the work and the vision of awaiting His return.

The time has come for us to translate the method of Jesus into the dream and vision of church planting and nurture. Older and younger Adventists need to come together. The young may not plan like the old. The old may not think like the young. But when older Adventists plan and act together with the visionary young, both will flourish, and become instruments of the Holy Spirit for the advancement of God's church and mission.

Let the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy begin with us: "I will pour out my Spirit..., your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28, NIV).



—José Vicente Rojas, *Director*

Volunteer Ministries, North America, www.hesaidgo.net

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Pertinent issues

I am impressed with *Dialogue* because it provides a forum for discussing pertinent issues that are of interest to Adventist young people around the world. You are performing a very useful service. Congratulations!

Floyd Greenleaf

Punta Gorda, Florida
U.S.A.

Ideal for thoughtful Christians

I recently got acquainted with *Dialogue* and was impressed by its excellent content. Each issue brings articles that are educational, inspiring, and challenging. It is the ideal journal for thoughtful Christians who want to connect their Bible-based convictions with the complex issues of our time.

Valeriano Kataya

Benguela, ANGOLA

More on telling the truth

The author of "Should we always tell the truth?" (*Dialogue* 13:2) proposes a very narrow interpretation of Scripture. The ninth commandment deals with truth telling as follows: "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor" (Ex. 20:16, NIV). A plain reading of this passage indicates that we should not tell a falsehood in order to damage or to hurt someone else. It forbids us to tell a lie in order to save the guilty or condemn the innocent—to do something against the great commandment of agape love; to deceive or cheat someone; to take advantage of others for our own benefit; or to avoid the consequences of our wrong actions. In

these cases, lying is truly a sin.

In the examples cited in the article, it is difficult to see who was damaged by the actions of the two Hebrew midwives in Egypt (Ex. 1:15-20) or Rahab in Jericho (Joshua, chapter 2). On the contrary, they protected the lives of others and helped fulfill God's plans for His people. They showed that they believed in the power of the true God. Did these women break the ninth commandment? Whom did they harm? Another example is recorded in 2 Samuel 17:20. The Bible does not condemn any of these actions. Similarly, during the Second World War many people endangered their lives in order to hide and save the lives of persecuted Jews. At times they had to lie. Should they have surrendered those they were protecting?

Jean Claude Magne

Seich, FRANCE

The author responds:

When isolated, the ninth commandment might be thought to prohibit only deception which may cause harm. However, contextual interpretation indicates otherwise:

First, the divinely-inspired Bible writers understood this commandment as prohibiting all deception (see Jer. 7:9, cf. Hosea 4:2; Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21).

Second, the Hebrew of this law can be correctly translated "You must not tell lies about other people" (Ex. 20:16, ERV). Reiterated, this commandment reads: "You must not lie to each other" (Lev. 19:11, ERV). Together these two statements exclude any and all forms of deceit.

Third, when Jesus quoted the commandment, He categorically stated: "Do not bear false witness" (Luke 18:20, NASB), leaving

no loophole for lying.

Fourth, rather than imitating individuals ignorant of God's laws (for eg., Rahab), or whose faith faltered (eg., Sarah), we must emulate Jesus, in whom there was no "deceit" (1 Pet. 2:21-22). Incidentally, in stories like that of Tamar's prostitution (Gen. 38), silence of condemnation does not determine morality.

Finally, any violation of God's ethical standards always results in spiritual harm (see Gen. 3; Rom. 6:23). Indeed, believers are to be "faithful until death," regardless of physical harm (Rev. 2:10).

"Lord, 'Increase our faith!'" (Luke 17:5).

Ron du Preez

Universidad Peruana Unión
Lima, PERU

A special gift

The Adventist Student Fellowship in my university organized an evangelistic campaign. At the end of meetings I decided to become a faithful follower of Jesus and to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On that memorable occasion the student leaders presented me with a special gift—a copy of *Dialogue*. I am now a baptized church member and a serious student of the Bible, while pursuing a degree in electrical engineering. Thank God, my life has gained new focus, meaning, and purpose.

Nkem Nnaji

University of Nigeria
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The search for extraterrestrial intelligence

by **Urias Echterhoff Takatohi**

*Does an intelligible signal
come from natural cause or
intelligent design?*

The search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) involves a number of projects. All of them have the objective of finding evidence of extraterrestrial intelligence through radio signals from space. The first of these projects was led in 1960 by Professor Frank Drake, astronomer and now director of SETI Institute. Project Phoenix is the main project of the institute, with an annual budget of \$4 million to \$5 million. It uses large radio telescopes to receive electromagnetic signals from nearby stars like the sun, that are less than 200 light years away. Besides the SETI Institute, other research institutions working on similar projects include: SERENDIP (*Search for Extraterrestrial Radio Emissions from Nearby Developed Intelligent Populations*); SETI@Home at University of California, Berkeley; Southern SERENDIP in Australia; Harvard SETI Group; and others.¹

Why do scientists spend all their efforts on these activities? A quick glance at the history of human thought may help us understand. Up to the 19th century, most of the Christian world believed that the cosmos and everything in it was the result of God's creation. Scientists paid little attention to questions about the origin of the universe and of life.

However, since the 17th century, scientists discovered regularities in nature that could be explained by comprehensive laws, sometimes expressed in a precise mathematical form. These natural laws and theories allowed predictions of phenomena and the development of technologies to control even nature itself. As a result, by the mid of the 19th

century, there developed the idea that a creator God was unnecessary to explain natural phenomena. The cosmos has become the ultimate reality. In this worldview, called naturalism or materialism, the search for an explanation of the origin of everything without reference to a Creator was a logical need.

This search for origins resulted in the theory of biological diversity, which eventually led to Charles Darwin's publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. About the same time, Pasteur approached the question of the origin of life experimentally, demonstrating that the old ideas of spontaneous generation were flawed. Nonetheless, the naturalistic worldview demanded that life appeared by an undirected combination of chemicals following the laws of physics and chemistry without the guide of an intelligent creative agency. Ernst Haeckel, a German biologist, and Thomas H. Huxley, Darwin's supporter, expected the process to be simple, for as yet then the details of living cells were unknown.

Despite early optimism, no adequate theory for the origin of life has been provided, even though textbooks in biology still quote the hypotheses of Oparin, the Russian biochemist (c. 1930) and the experiments of Stanley Miller at the University of Chicago (1952), as advances in that direction.

Although these experiments fail to explain the natural origin of life, naturalistic or materialistic assumptions require a belief that life appeared without the aid of an intelligent God. Considering the theory usually cited regarding the history of the universe and the Earth, appearance of life on the planet

occurred rather quickly. (According to this theory, the age of the universe is 10 to 20 billion years old, the crust of Planet Earth would be 4.5 billion years old and life appeared about 3 billion years ago.) Considering the existence of an estimated 400 billion stars in our galaxy, and about 100 billion galaxies, it would be reasonable that many of these stars might have planets like our Earth in which life may have developed as it did here, resulting in technological civilizations able to broadcast radio messages. This reasoning based on a naturalistic worldview is the motivation behind SETI projects.

The methodology

Several SETI projects search for narrow band radio signals, with a definite frequency like radio or TV signals. Natural sources of radio waves from space generally produce wide band signals, while radio or TV transmitters present a specific frequency. Making an analogy with sound waves, a radio or TV station emits a single note like a flute, while natural sources of radio waves produce a sound like a waterfall. Intelligent extraterrestrials, it is expected, would make radio transmitters similar to ours. It is also expected that any intelligent being who wanted to broadcast electromagnetic waves through space would use a frequency near 1420 MHz.² If a signal with such characteristics is detected, one should verify that it is not from a human source, since our radar devices, communication satellites, and other kind of human sources emit such waves.

If the appropriate signal is ever detected, the next step would be to verify whether there is any information in it like radio waves from our radio or TV stations. Information may be introduced in electromagnetic waves by small intentional variations (modulations) in frequency or amplitude. Present projects are working only to search for the proper signal. The search for a message in a signal, if one is found,

will require new instrumentation.

Another question concerns the possibility of understanding the message. If extraterrestrials are able to broadcast radio signals, they probably understand basic principles of science and mathematics and would use science and mathematics to build a common language.

Since the beginning of this research 40 years ago by Frank Drake, no convincing signal has ever been found.

Success in fiction

Carl Sagan, a recently deceased astronomy and space science professor at Cornell University and an enthusiastic science promoter, wrote a novel, *Contact*.³ The story describes the problems scientists have to face to obtain funds for their research, and proposes that a radio signal with the required attributes, coming from Vega, a star in Lira, 26 light years away, has been detected. The discoverer notices that the signal is transmitting a long sequence of prime numbers. As no known natural phenomena generates signals with a structure so complex and specific as prime numbers, the astronomers in this fictional account become convinced that the broadcast is from an intelligent source.

But how do we know whether or not a signal comes from a natural cause or from the design of an intelligent being? The best evidence that some effect was designed by an intelligence is its *specified complexity*.⁴ To understand *specified complexity*, consider the following example:

The sequence with the first two Roman characters, AB, is specified but isn't complex.

A random sequence with 40 characters, such as, GIV JFJMUUDWQCNTQVT NVXYALZFHMBHULVCXRTPE, is complex but not specified.

However, the sequence, SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE, is both complex and specified.

One can see the difference by determining the probability for obtaining

each sequence choosing characters by chance. Since each position in the sequence has 27 options (26 characters plus a blank space), a total of 729 (27 x 27) sequences with two characters may be achieved. The specified sequence with two characters is one in 729 sequences. On the other hand there are 27⁴⁰ (= 1.797x10⁵⁷) different sequences with 40 characters. (The number 1.797x10⁵⁷ is equivalent to 1797 followed by 54 zeros!) This number is so great that we can hardly grasp its meaning. It is more than 600 times greater than the number of all the protons and neutrons of Planet Earth added together. So a specific sequence made of 40 alphabetic characters is one in 1.797x10⁵⁷ sequences. To get such a specific sequence of this size by choosing random characters would be practically impossible. By experience, we know that such complex specified sequences are the result of an intelligent design.

Summing up, the search for extraterrestrial intelligence seeks radio waves with characteristics similar to those produced by transmitters constructed by humans. If such a signal is found, the next step would be the search for specified complexity in it. In other words, scientists are searching for some extraterrestrial radio transmission that unequivocally may be recognized as a product of an intelligent mind.

Unrecognized success

Great progress in biological knowledge was achieved in the last half of the 20th century. Many details, previously unthinkable, with respect to cell structure and function were discovered at a molecular level. One of these discoveries is the DNA molecule: the key for information storage and transfer in genetic material.

The DNA molecules have two complementary strings made of four different constituents, named bases or nucleotides that we will represent as A, G, C, and T. (We will not employ the usual bi-

ological or biochemical terminology.) A string of symbols may be used to convey a message as in written text. One may wonder, is it possible to have a language written with only four symbols?

In reality, only two symbols are needed to store written data. All coding in digital computers is made with strings of two symbols, 1 and 0. The text you are reading was originally composed using such a computer and uses almost 100 different printed symbols. How is this achieved? Strings of 1 and 0 are arranged in groups of eight as shown below. Since for each position out of the eight you have two choices, $256 (2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2)$ different symbols may be codified with strings of two symbols in groups of eight as in the example below.

11001010 01010010 10001011
11101101 01000101 10110111

Likewise in DNA. Four different symbols arranged in groups of three can define 64 ($4 \times 4 \times 4$) different “characters.”

How many bases are there in the DNA that encodes all the genetic information of a living being? The number of bases is different in different species. A simple bacteria like *M. genitalium* has 580,000 bases in its DNA. The *E. coli* bacteria has sequences adding to 4,670,000 bases. The fruit fly *Drosophila* has about 165,000,000 bases. Human beings have DNA sequences with a total of about 3 billion bases.⁵ The number of different sequences that can be created with 580,000 bases is a huge number that is hard to understand. It may be written as $4^{580,000} = 6.2 \times 10^{349,194}$. To write this number as a sequence of Arabic numerals, you would need 349,195 digits. Taking into account that a group of three bases represents a character in the biological alphabet with its 64 possible symbols, the genetic information of *M. genitalium* is equivalent to a text with 193,000 characters. This text you are reading has a little more than 11,000

characters. The genetic information of a human being with 3 billion bases would be able to make a text with one billion characters. That is equivalent to about 100,000 texts like this one. Even taking into account only about 5 percent of the 3 billion bases that are known to code proteins, the amount of information is staggering.

What is “written” in these genetic information “texts” in living beings? We know that it includes all the necessary instructions for the operation of a living being, even though we do not fully understand its complex biochemical “machinery.”

Where did all this information come from?

Consider this essay you are reading. This was produced by an intelligence—in this case, a human being. No one can say that some automatic device has chosen characters by chance to compose this text, or that there is some natural mechanism that can put the letters in their correct places. The text is complex and specified enough to make it unreasonable to assume it appeared by chance or by an undirected natural cause.

If this is so with a simple essay such as this one, how much more so with genetic information, which is much more complex and specified than this text, and hence can be attributed only to an intelligent source. If this intelligent agency cannot be found on Earth, it must be an extraterrestrial intelligence. Biology and biochemistry since the mid 20th century, in their research about the molecular basis of life, have found clear evidence of the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence. Notwithstanding, naturalistic thought is so embedded in our culture that this achievement isn’t being celebrated within the scientific community.

One does not need all this knowledge to arrive at this conclusion. Long ago, before the beginning of modern science, David wrote about God the Creator:

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Ps. 139:13, 14, NIV).

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Notes and references:

1. See SETI Institute, available at <http://www.seti-inst.edu/Welcome.html>; What is SETI? available at <http://seti.uws.edu.au/main/what.htm>; SETI FAQ, available at http://www.space.com/searchforlife/seti_faq.html; Harvard
2. F. Drake, *Contemporary Radio Searches for Extraterrestrial Intelligence*. Available at http://www.seti-inst.edu/science/contemporary_radio.html
3. C. Sagan, *Contact: A novel* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985); Mass Market Paperback, 1997).
4. The expression “specified complexity” was introduced by William A. Dembski in *The Design Inference* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).
5. See: Functional and Comparative Genomics Fact Sheet, available at <http://www.ornl.gov/hgmis/faq/compgen.html>

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Meatless diet: Moving beyond intellectual assent?

by Mark F. Carr
and Gerald R. Winslow

*Do the arguments of
philosophy, science, and virtue
serve to establish a moral
obligation for vegetarianism?*

Meat eating and its industry are harmful to human beings and our environment. Vegetarianism is a better way of life. No doubt about that. But when we speak of vegetarianism as a “better way of life,” do we move beyond scientific investigation to the realm of values? Arguments for vegetarianism often do just that—from touting the health benefits of a meatless diet to raising issues of morality.

The question is: Is it morally obligatory to adopt a vegetarian diet?

Tom Regan, a prominent advocate for animal rights, helped to raise the discussion of what some call “ethical vegetarianism”¹ into the realm of morality. Regan believed that upon considering sound arguments, his audience should choose to become vegetarians. “Most of those who should happen to read this essay,” said Regan, “will be leading lives that, if my argument is sound, ought to be changed in a quite fundamental way.”² Like many others, Regan was not simply seeking to present a strong case for vegetarianism. Rather, he was setting out to change lives—to change not just the way people think, but also how they eat. But are the arguments for a meat-free diet sufficiently weighty to produce both intellectual assent *and* behavioral change?

Puzzling over these questions invites consideration of the arguments in favor of vegetarianism. While these arguments might be grouped in a variety of ways,³ we have selected five categories.

The health argument

Scientific study has now shown that animal protein is not an essential element of a human diet. Furthermore, cer-

tain studies show that the incidence of some diseases is significantly reduced for those who forgo meat in their diet.⁴ Some who approach the question from a Christian perspective argue that vegetarianism was God’s “original diet.” They point to Creation story and the plenty that God provided Adam and Eve in Eden. According to this view, people were designed to flourish without the use of flesh for food.

A second argument from the Christian perspective depends upon scientific evidence that the vegetarian diet is healthier. Because God intends our bodies to be the habitation of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20), we are obliged to live the most healthful lives possible. Thus, once one understands that vegetarianism is a healthier diet and once this diet is possible, it becomes the morally preferable diet.

Animal rights

Blending the language of utilitarian benefits with that of animal rights, some authors focus attention upon ethical duties toward animals.⁵ Crucial to this perspective is awareness of the harm and suffering experienced by animals when they are killed for food. It is considered immoral to cause such suffering merely to satisfy one’s dietary preferences.

Among the studies that culminated in their book, *The New Vegetarians: Promoting Health and Protecting Life*, Paul R. Amato and Sonia A. Partridge identified 11 reasons why people choose the vegetarian lifestyle. At the top of the list was a “concern over animal suffering or a belief in animal rights.”⁶ Widespread and

popular understanding of the language of rights makes this a particularly easy argument to accept. Sadly, however, the rights of unknown, unseen cows, chickens, and pigs are often overridden by the desires of the palate. Furthermore, both the philosophical foundations and the practical applications of the concept of rights continues to be difficult enough to establish for humans and, thus, even more difficult for animals.

Environmental concerns

Despite the efforts of advocates like Jeremy Rifkin⁷ and Francis Moore Lappe,⁸ and despite the huge success of their books, only a small number of people appear to have changed their diet as a result of environmental concerns. For example, Amato and Partridge's survey, noted above, found that only five percent became vegetarians out of concern for the environment.⁹ Thus, while environmental ethicists urge more careful methods of land use and conservation, they rarely, if ever, explicitly refer to vegetarianism as a moral obligation.

Social evolution

Under this rubric, we place a variety of authors and viewpoints that call for socio-political change. There is some overlap here with other categories. The work of Lappe, for instance, should be considered in more than one category. Consider Lappe's concern noted in the preface to the revised edition of *A Diet for a Small Planet*: "I had a more profound doubt...what of the impact, what of the direction that I was suggesting for people's lives. Would the readers of my book become so interested in, even fixated on, the nutritional nuances as to forget or neglect the *real message* after all?"¹⁰ (Italics supplied).

What was the "real message" Lappe sought to spread? More than anything, she wanted her work to highlight how individual diet "relates each of us to the broadest questions of food supply for all of humanity."¹¹

With the publication of the revised and updated edition, she was particularly concerned, not only with making cooking and eating simpler and better but also fundamentally with the "political and social significance" of our dietary choices.¹²

Stewardship

The principle of stewardship incorporates the concerns voiced by environmental ethicists and animal rights activists as well. Andrew Linzey, writing of stewardship from a Christian perspective, urges a radical change in the way Christians have interpreted their relationship to the entirety of God's creation. Linzey challenges the traditional Christian notion that this world and all that is in it was made solely for the uplifting of humankind. Humans remain unique in the orders of creation, and this uniqueness urges a special duty upon humans to take up the role of "servant species." As servants of all creation, stewards are to care for the creation, just as God cares for it. Drawing upon the theological concept of a suffering God, Linzey proclaims: "It cannot be sufficient merely to have a negative vision of what we should do to prevent suffering in the world. We need positive vision of how we can take upon ourselves the suffering of the world and transform it by the power of the Holy Spirit."¹³

Linzey insists that Christians must move beyond the notion that God only suffers when humans suffer. When we can fully accept the fact that "God suffers in all suffering creatures" we will be better able to accept our role as stewards.¹⁴ Unfortunately, for advocates of stewardship, like for the advocates of each of the other arguments, the audience is likely to give a simple response; namely, "Yes, but..."

Moving beyond "Yes, but..."

Each of the arguments noted above has enjoyed widespread acceptance in both philosophical and popular audi-

The rabbit's squeal

A few magnificent evergreens towered over the old guest cabin where we had focused our attention. Dad, my brother Pete, and I were out on our first rabbit hunt at Grandpa's farm in Michigan. The rabbits that made these trees their home were, according to Dad, particularly fast. Pete and I did not utter a word as we circled around the back of the cabin. We knew that if the rabbits heard us coming they would run away too quickly to allow for a shot.

I readied my .20 gauge shotgun as we rounded the edge of the cabin. Dad came around the other side, and just as he reached my peripheral vision I saw the rabbit bolt for the underbrush at the perimeter of the yard. Nothing could have broken my concentration on that rabbit as I kept it in my visual range as Dad had taught me. It came to a stop just this side of the underbrush that defined the yard. I knew that I would have to get closer to shoot it with my shotgun so I crept closer, but before I had shortened the distance between us, the hunt was over. The shock wave from Dad's rifle rolled over me at the same instant that I saw the rabbit collapse. By the sound of the rabbit's squealing I knew Dad's shot had not immediately killed it. The squeal was so intense and piercing we each hurried to the spot where it lay writhing in pain. Dad reached down and grabbed it by the hind legs, laid it out on the ground, put his foot on the rabbit's head and pulled. Blood spewed from the rabbit's body as its heart spent its final effort in sustaining life.

I'm sure I tried, but failed to hide the horror I felt inside. Dad must have seen it in my face, since what he said revealed his own need to justify his action in front of his two boys. "It's the quickest way to put it out of its misery," he said.

—Mark F. Carr

ences, but the number of those who are choosing the vegetarian lifestyle is not reflective of these levels of acceptance. People are giving intellectual assent to the arguments while enjoying yet another hamburger. It is true that vegetarianism is more acceptable now than it was 20 or 30 years ago, but why don't more people make this lifestyle change? And of those that do make the change, as Amato and Partridge's survey shows, why are they doing it largely out of concern for animals who suffer the cruel fate of human consumption?

Philosophical argument, personal conviction, and practical action

Advocates do an admirable job of describing the moral problems associated with meat eating, but when one moves

beyond description to prescribing obligations and personal actions, it is necessary to have the hearts of the audience. Changes in personal practice often emerge more from the heart than the head. Good arguments do not necessarily bring personal convictions to bear in lifestyle change. (Please read the sidebar stories to understand how both authors experienced the emotional motivation to move toward a vegetarian diet.)

Critical of many environmental groups, Sharon Bloyd-Peshkin charges that these groups have failed to "spread the 'V' word for fear of losing the 'M' words—members and money." Her observations about the issues environmental groups highlight and the methods used to do so further illustrate our point that the practical actions toward the

vegetarian lifestyle will arise only as persons are moved emotionally as well as intellectually. As Bloyd-Peshkin analyzes the reasons why environmental groups are not as likely to be vegetarians, she reveals that it is not so much a sound argument that persuades people to make difficult choices, rather it is the movement of peoples' emotions that brings concrete results.

Bloyd-Peshkin is correct to note that "the environmental impact of meat eating is too indirect." One is not moved to give up meat in the checkout line at the grocery store. However, one is moved to outrage and action when confronted with the scenes of animal suffering and torture that precede the appearance of their flesh on the grocery store shelf. As Bloyd-Peshkin puts it, one is "far more likely to...get mad about the industrial plant you pass on the way home; you see the filth coming out of its stack."¹⁵

Hume and the movements of human sentiment

Of course the realization that moral agents are moved more by emotion than reason is not a fresh revelation. David Hume's philosophical works highlighted this reality in the 18th century. But the hegemony of rationalism in the morality of Western society has served to prejudice its philosophers against using appeals to emotion in the process of making moral arguments. The use of emotion in a moral argument is often derided as sappy sentimentality.¹⁶

Hume refused to ignore the force of sentiment in the moral life of humankind. In fact it is the sentiment, felt in his day to be unique to humans, that distinguishes human capability for living a moral life. It is the "sentiment of disapprobation" that we as humans "unavoidably feel on the apprehension of barbarity or treachery" that causes us to pronounce such acts as criminal or immoral. Hume insists that human actions are never attributable to the "cool and disengaged" reason. Reason may

The pheasant's feathers

I was intensely proud of my new .12 gauge shotgun. I had earned the money for it by picking string beans. My goal was to learn the art of hunting pheasants, Canadian geese, and other "game birds," so abundant in the Willamette Valley of my youth. My parents seemed confident that 14 was old enough for this activity.

The first couple outings with my friend Bob were unproductive. Despite our best efforts and the fact that Chinese pheasants can be slow and noisy when they begin flight, we missed every one. Mainly, we had long walks on damp, fall mornings, punctuated with a few moments of exciting but inept shooting.

Finally, one weekend morning we went hunting with the "big guys," Bob's older brother and his friend. As the junior members, Bob and I were instructed to go to the far end of the cornfield and wait. The other two, along with their German short-haired retriever, would hunt in our direction. If they missed their targets, our job was to shoot the birds as they came flying in our direction.

And so it happened. A magnificent Chinese pheasant, a "rooster," flew up, was missed, and headed straight toward where I was crouched. I took aim and fired when it was just overhead. Feathers flew everywhere. The dog came running and fetched the largest part of what was left of the pheasant. It was nearly blown in two. But in what remained I could see the stunning white ring on the neck, the red and deep-green feathers of the head, and the rich stripes of the long tail feathers. Bob's brother took one look at the dead bird, pronounced it not worth taking home, and threw it in some blackberry brambles.

Covering disappointment and feigning bravado, I took one of the long feathers and stuck it in my hunting cap. Later, alone at home, I studied the feather. I could not erase the image of that colorful bird, minding its own affairs, and blown apart for no good reason. The irretrievable stupidity of it all overwhelmed me. I put the shotgun in the closet, sold it the following year, and never hunted anything again. —Gerald R. Winslow

convey “knowledge of truth and falsehood,” but it will never serve to attach valuations of virtue and vice, the essence of morality. Furthermore, reason can never motivate a person to action. Sentiment is the “first spring or impulse to desire and volition.” In Hume’s view, “The ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any case, be accounted for by *reason*, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the intellectual faculties.”¹⁷

Hume’s most prominent and capable defender today, Annette Baier, summarizes this point for us: “For any motivation to action, and for any evaluative reaction, ‘reason’ must ‘concur’ with some ‘passion’; the ‘head’ must work for the ‘heart.’”¹⁸ Thus it is the cultivation and practice of these human sentiments that allow for the practical reality of living a moral life.

What does this mean for the advocating of vegetarianism? More is required in the effort to move people toward change in their dietary habits. Good philosophical arguments do not make vegetarians. Moral sentiments, however, more often do. We are encouraging the moral force of movements of the heart as an essential element of the argument for choosing the vegetarian lifestyle.

On the virtues of vegetarianism

Sympathy is one of a class of virtues often referred to as “other-regarding.” The principal focus of this trait is the object of attention, but it presupposes a certain ability in the agent to engage in altruistic and empathetic dispositions. Thus when some other person or being is suffering, we are moved out of sympathy to respond in a fashion that would relieve their suffering. Following Hume, Edward F. Mooney writes that sympathy is “the ‘mechanism’ whereby we sorrow in the plight of others and are moved to respond benevolently.”¹⁹

Compassion is closely related to sympathy in that it also is other-regarding.

Etymologically, its emphasis is upon a fellow feeling with the other; literally, to suffer with. There is a sense of shared community with other humans in this virtue—and for advocating notions of stewardship noted above, a sense also of an extension of this shared community to include all sentient and non-sentient beings. Like other virtues that involve engaging the emotions of the agent, compassion moves beyond a simple affective state to action. As Lawrence Blum notes, however, acting from compassion means that one will often act “very much contrary to one’s moods and inclinations” because it is fundamentally other-regarding. Indeed, even when one’s actions may not immediately eliminate the suffering of the other, it is “valuable to the sufferer for its own sake, independently of its instrumental value in improving” the lot of the other.²⁰

Conclusion

What practical effect will come from including the practice of sympathy and

compassion with the intellectual arguments for vegetarianism? Our contention is that if we move toward becoming a society in which these virtues are valued and practiced, we will see vegetarianism increase and meat eating decrease. These virtues will serve to move us beyond an intellectual assent to the arguments for the vegetarian lifestyle toward the actual practice of vegetarianism.

Does the weight of the philosophical arguments serve to establish a moral obligation for vegetarianism? Does the added element of virtue insist that meat eaters should become vegetarians? And, if so, should society take the next step of prohibiting the production and consumption of meat?

Pressing for moral or legal obligations remains problematic even in the face of powerful arguments for vegetarianism. We can no more require people to be virtuous than we can require them

Continued on page 27.

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Mixed marriages among Adventists

by Chantal J. Klingbeil

Global migration and modern communication create opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial courtship and marriage. What are we learning?

Not too long ago, we could have all expected to be born, raised, and married in the same little village. Most likely our life partner would have been the boy or girl next door. Naturally, we would have been of the same race, shared the same culture, and spoken the same language. Not anymore. With global migration and modern communications, we are mixing and mingling as never before. The Adventist Church has also expanded tremendously all over the world, uniting people from every race, culture, and language group. This raises the question of mixed marriages. Does the Bible say anything at all about this?

The biblical mix

Genesis 1-2 records God instituting marriage, and this act reveals some principles that set a God-fearing marriage apart from other marriages. God had a hand in the choosing of a partner. Adam and Eve were suited to each other, and the two became one flesh. Is it possible to become “one flesh” with someone who is not committed to serving and loving God, without distancing yourself from loving and serving God (Ezra 9:10-14)? If you do manage to hang onto God, is there any surety that the godly heritage you are supposed to give to your children will not be diluted or flawed?

The Old Testament strongly criticized and prohibited the marriage of the children of Israel with people of the surrounding nations. The prohibition (Deuteronomy 7:3; see also Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 13) is repeated at each major revival in Israel (see Ezra 9; Nehemiah

13). Some of these prohibitions may seem prejudiced in our modern world. But we must remember that such mixed marriages were tools of the evil one to keep God’s children away from His primary mission and purpose. For example, when Balaam could not curse what God had blessed, the devil had another weapon. He led the king of Moab to entice the Israelites to mix with his people sexually. He wanted Israel to become *one flesh* with people who do not love God, and thus God’s purpose and mission could be thwarted. The result for Israel was disastrous (see Numbers 25).

Nehemiah 13:23 makes an interesting connection between religion and culture. “Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah (NIV).” The fact that these children didn’t speak the language of Judah was enough to make Nehemiah rebuke them and call down curses on them (Nehemiah 13:25). Nehemiah himself, as the royal cupbearer, was most certainly fluent in the Persian and Aramaic languages, so his reaction couldn’t have been against foreign languages per se. The heart of the problem is, that if the children did not speak the language of Judah, how could they be nurtured in their religion whose Scripture and practice were in that language?

Religion is thus a key to understanding the prohibitions against intermarriage. The Old Testament is full of examples of foreigners who accepted Israel’s God and whose marriage to Israelites

was approved. Consider the story of Ruth, a Moabitess, who accepted the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16) and whose marriage to a son of Bethlehem provided the lineage in which Christ was born (Matthew 1:5). Similarly Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute, had a conversion experience and some time after the fall of Jericho, married Salmon and is included in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:5). Devotion and commitment to the God of Israel seem to completely eradicate the barriers of nationality and open the way to assimilation.

The Bible also makes reference to racial prejudice in marriage. Moses married Zipporah, a Midianite, but she was a worshiper of God. Because her complexion was dark and her race was different, Miriam, the older sister of Moses, treated her with contempt. The issue had grown into a full-blown authority conflict with Moses, and God had to intervene by severely punishing Miriam.

The New Testament does not deal so much with culturally or racially mixed marriages, but it does state that marriage with unbelievers is forbidden. Writing to the Corinthian Church, a culturally mixed congregation, Paul issues a warning against religiously mixed marriages: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14, KJV).

What Ellen White says

Ellen White has a lot to say on marriage and the choosing of a marriage partner.¹ She gives important key building blocks of a happy, successful marriage. She also reminds us that it is not just our happiness to be thought of, but also the health and happiness of the children to be born. In line with biblical teaching, she wrote strongly against marrying anyone who does not love and fully serve God.² To Ellen White compatibility was essential to a happy marriage. She wrote of "lifelong wretchedness" that would result in marriages where partners are "not adapted to each

other."³ Amongst other things, she also briefly addressed the question of racially mixed marriages. Even though the post-Civil War climate with the recent abolition of slavery formed the backdrop to her counsel, two important principles can be drawn. First, any couple considering marriage, especially a mixed cultural or racial marriage, should study if their marriage would lead to "controversy and confusion" in the home, church and the society as a whole. Second, the couple must think further than themselves and consider the cultural and racial inheritance that they would be giving their children in the particular community in which they live.⁴

The voice of experience

I sent a questionnaire to a few friends who are in culturally or racially mixed marriages. The 13 couples who responded come from every continent. The cultural, language, and racial mix are quite impressive. All couples are practicing Adventists. They have been married between seven months and 15 years. A few couples have children.

Were you aware of cultural/racial differences when dating, or did it seem irrelevant at the time?

- Cultural differences intrigued me, and also the similarities. I was always looking for something unusual or different, and I was happy to find someone who was not typical.
- The differences seemed irrelevant at the time.
- We were aware that there would be some differences, and tried to prepare ourselves for that, but we didn't think they would be a big deal, as our spiritual heritage is the same.
- One is aware of cultural/racial differences. But even if you are from the same culture or race there are other differences—the way you think and do. Maybe not as much,

but they are. It means that you have to work hard on communication.

- They were irrelevant. We met while we were working as missionaries in a country which was foreign for both of us.

After marriage, did the cultural/racial differences blend away or become more prominent?

- Cultural differences became more prominent after marriage. For example, one just assumes the other knows how to behave in a culturally appropriate manner, but it isn't always so.
- No, we found there were about as many differences as we expected.
- They blended away. Of course, our marriage was not a fairy tale. We had to work hard, and we needed to be aware of each other all the time. Compromise and consideration is the key.
- Both of us being Adventists, we found that the major differences lost the significance that we thought they would have.
- They became more prominent, not because of our personal differences, but because we moved to my husband's country.

Do you feel it necessary to learn your partner's language or live in your partner's cultural environment in order to understand your partner?

- If one partner has another language, make every effort to learn it. You will never regret it. The language may be less important than the relationship, but it can bring real divisions at family gatherings, etc.
- It is important to know about your partner's background and culture, since it will help you to understand why he or she reacts or thinks in a certain way.
- Yes, learning your partner's lan-

guage fluently will be helpful in understanding your partner better.

How do you cope with cultural conflicts in your marriage?

- Discuss them and compromise.
- Ask God to give you the ability to accept and love your partner for who they are and not to try and change them to fit your expectations.
- We talk them over, and try to understand each other. Or else we just talk and laugh about them.
- We try to stay calm. If things get tough, we both walk away and pray about it, and then come back and talk again.

Did your families actively support your marriage?

- At the beginning, no. Afterwards, they learned to love my husband. His mother accepted me right away but at times she has shown her discontent, and has even made racial remarks.
- My husband's family was openly happy about our marriage. They have helped us with our wedding plans. My family just said it's okay.
- Not initially. There has been a growth in acceptance.
- Yes, after the initial shock wore off for his family. One thing that has been hard for us is to have our parents far away from us.

Do you feel that your church has accepted and been supportive of your marriage?

- Most definitely. That's part of the reason why the two of us are together.
- Some of the members are very sensitive about us being from different races. Two years after we were married, one member apologized to us, and confessed that she did not think our marriage would work.
- For the most part, yes, though I

have heard of people in the church who believe that interracial marriages are being "unequally yoked" and therefore are not right.

- Yes, but being of the same color makes acceptance a lot easier.

What about your children? What culture/language heritage will you give them? Do you think it will be an advantage/disadvantage for them?

- The children do suffer in trying to learn and cope with two different languages and cultures of their parents.
- Having come from a culturally mixed home myself, I see lots of potential advantages. It exposes children to a broader perspective of life.
- Children are exposed to different ideas and ways of doing things as they grow up, to help them be more open-minded.
- Our home is pretty much a well-blended multicultural home. Our kids are raised with ideas and customs from both of our backgrounds. Hopefully, it will make them more accepting of other people.

Any final words for someone considering mixed cultural/racial dating or marriage?

- Pray. God knows a lot about culture. Communicate with the other person. If you meet someone of a different culture, make sure that you visit each other's homes and get to know the families. Things can look very different when interacting on a strange turf.
- More than differences, ask yourself: Do you both love and honor God above all else?
- Get some good counseling before you make the final decision. It helps you discover those areas that may be a source of potential conflict. It also helps to formulate

realistic expectations from each other.

- If we are compatible spiritually and have the same religious background, and are willing to be flexible on a lot of things, we could work out the differences.
- It is a small potato if your culture/race is different, but it is a big mountain if your religion is different. Make sure you believe in the same God! Discuss about kids, discipline, upbringing, names for kids, having pets, spending free time, chores in the home, etc. Learn to communicate openly and honestly. And be ready to compromise.
- Be flexible and ready to laugh. Talk to family and friends.
- Find out if this relation is your will or God's will.

Finally...

If you are dating someone who does not share your relationship with God and is not committed to making God first, now is the time to get out! Biblically speaking, such a relationship is clearly a bad idea. Marriages may be made in heaven, but they require extensive maintenance work. Don't play with the odds for a happy future.

Then, if you are considering cross-cultural or cross-racial dating or marriage to someone who does share your commitment to God, remember that you have more preconceptions to break and potentially more basic decisions to struggle over. However, with God in control it is not only possible but can be a blessing and joy as well.

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Ethics in postmodernism

by Raúl Kerbs

The postmodern ethic is shaky in its foundation, cynical in its claims.

Modernism held sway over Western thought over centuries. It stripped morality of its transcendent religious frame of reference. Away with God, was its cry. Even when it tried to shape a world without any reference to restraints, constraints, traditions, and above all religion, modernism did attempt to retain such values as work, saving, and the postponement of immediate satisfaction in order to attain a long-term benefit. What it did try to retain may owe their origin to a reference outside of the individual, but that was no immediate concern to modernism. Subjective self-expression was its goal. But when modernism reached its critical point, when the emphasis on subjectivism destroyed the need for objectivism, it eventually led to an almost "lawless" status in human history. Consequently, a new morality emerged. This new morality was pleasure-seeking, playful, individualistic, and geared to the present moment, denying the need to look to the past or gaze into the future. *Now* became its new mantra. As a result, there arose a stand against all efforts to place limits on individual freedom and fulfillment.

This new morality is at the core of postmodern ethics.

Postmodern ethics

At the foundation of postmodern ethics is an authority crisis.¹ The crisis involves traditional institutions (family, school, church, state, justice, police) through which modernism sought to organize a rational and progressive society. The crisis manifests itself in several ways: A society that worships youth,

and panders to their whims and fancies.² A culture where wealth is the sign of success and happiness. A consumer economy where "to be" is to buy, consume, use, and throw away. An identity marked by market acquisitions and not by ideologies.³ Gilles Lipovetsky, a contemporary French philosopher, has observed that in postmodernity "imaging" dominates reality. To be somebody is to be on screen or on a web site.⁴ What is seen defines what is; almost nobody cares anymore about what "really" is: the public image is the object of worship.⁵

Our postmodern culture has lost its love for the truth.

In contrast to modernism's work ethic and individual saving, today's ethic affirms the values of consumer spending,⁶ free time, and idleness.⁷ But this could not function without the exaltation of individualism, a devaluation of charitable causes, and indifference toward the public good.⁸ The pursuit of gratification, pleasure, and private fulfillment is the supreme ideal. The worship of personal independence and diversity of lifestyle become important. Pluralism provides a multiplicity of values, with individual options, but none with authenticity. Differences in ideology or religion are treated as fashions and superficial.⁹ The culture of personal freedom, relaxation, the natural, the humorous, sincerity, and freedom of expression emerge as something sacred.¹⁰ The irrational is legitimized through affections, intuitions, feelings, carnality, sensuality, and creativity.¹¹ All these take place within the framework of an axiom respected by nearly all: Minimize austerity and maximize desire, mini-

mize discipline and maximize understanding.¹²

At the same time, the media of mass communication and information, determine public opinion, the standards of consumer spending and behavior.¹³ The media replace religious interpretation and ethics with punctual, instant, direct, and objective information. They value what seems real now above concepts of good and evil.¹⁴ Paradoxically, the influence of the media grows in the midst of a crisis of communication. People talk only of themselves. They want to be heard but do not want to listen. They want communication without commitment. Hence the search for connection at a distance, invisible friends, hotlines and e-mail chat rooms, and friendships.¹⁵

A new shape to morality

What shape does morality take in the epistemological-social-cultural context of postmodernism?

According to Lipovetsky, with the dawn of postmodernism in the mid-20th century, an age of post-duty has come to be. This age renounces absolute duty in the field of ethics.¹⁶ An ethic has taken shape that proclaims the individual right to autonomy, to happiness, and to individual fulfillment. Postmodernism is a post-morality age because it disregards higher, unconditional values such as service to others and self-denial.

Nevertheless, our society does not exclude repressive and virtuous legislation (against drugs, abortion, corruption, evasion, death penalty, censure, protection of children, hygiene, and healthy diet).¹⁷ Postmodernism does not propose moral chaos but rather redirects ethical concerns through a weak, ephemeral, painless commitment to values that do not interfere with individual freedom: It is not so much hedonistic as neo-hedonistic. This blend of duty and denial of duty in postmodern ethic becomes necessary because absolute individualism would destroy the conditions

needed to facilitate the search for pleasure and individual fulfillment. An ethic is needed that prescribes some duties to control individualism without proscribing the same. The postmodern moral concern does not express values, but rather indignation against limitations on freedom. The object is not virtue but rather the earning of respect.¹⁸ There is an effort to forbid everything that could limit individual rights. That is why the new morality can co-exist with consumer spending, pleasure, the individual search for private fulfillment. It's a painless, *lite* morality where anything goes, but where unconditional duty and sacrifice are dead. Postmodern has left behind both moralism and anti-moralism.¹⁹

But such a course results in an ambiguous morality. On the one hand we have an individualism without rules, manifested in family indebtedness, families without parents, parents without families, illiteracy, the homeless, ghettos, refugees, marginal people, drugs, violence, delinquency, exploitation, white-collar crimes, political and economic corruption, the unscrupulous grasping of power, genetic engineering, experimentation on human beings, etc. On the other hand there floats over society a spirit of hyper-moralistic vigilance ready to denounce all attempts against human liberty and the right to individualistic autonomy: an ethical concern for human rights; apologies for errors of the past; environmentalism; campaigns for saying No to drugs, tobacco, pornography, abortion, sexual harassment, corruption, and discrimination; ethical tribunals; silent marches; protection against child abuse; movements to rescue refugees, the poor, etc.²⁰

In this context, the neo-hedonistic morality of postmodern life translates into demands that pull in opposite directions. On the one hand, we have standards: You must eat healthfully, keep your figure, fight wrinkles, keep trim, value the spiritual, relax, be in-

involved in sports, succeed, excel, control violent behavior, etc. On the other hand, we find the promotion of pleasure and the easy life, the exoneration from moral responsibility, exaltation of consumer spending and image-making, valuing the body to the neglect of the spiritual. As a result, there is depression, emptiness, loneliness, stress, corruption, violence, pushing to one side, cynicism, etc.²¹

Postmodern morality in everyday life

To understand how much postmodern morality has affected life around us, consider two typical lists that postmodernism projects: a list of moral "duties" and a list of moral "permissions":

List 1: Typical "moral" duties in postmodern "ethics":

- Don't discriminate against any kind of lifestyle.
- Attend benefit concerts for charitable causes.
- Dial a number to make a donation.
- Paste an anti-racism logo on your windshield.
- Walk in a march against perceived injustice.
- Run in a marathon for a healthy life.
- Use condoms.
- Prohibit prohibition (everybody should be free to run his or her own life).
- Wear a ribbon to protest discrimination against homosexuals.
- Be an environmentalist.
- Donate your body organs.
- Regulate the workplace to prevent sexual harassment.
- Be faithful (as long as love lasts, but afterward ...).
- Condemn every kind of violence.
- Don't try to convert someone else to another religion.

List 2: Typical "moral" permissions:

- Provide sexual freedom, but no harassment, and watch out for AIDS.
- Corruption is better than being considered stupid.
- Smoke, but not in the non-smoking section.
- Have no commitments to rules, people, or causes that interfere with personal fulfillment.
- Prostitution is OK, but only in the red-light district.
- Lying is OK, but not during a political campaign.
- Divorce is OK, but only to attain personal fulfillment.
- Infidelity is OK, but only when love has vanished.
- Abortion is OK, but only to further family planning.
- Try anything in the pursuit of self-exploration, in search of personal fulfillment.
- Adapt religion to the commitment one wants to make.
- Drink, but not to excess.
- Collect success, fame, and money, at the expense of whomever.
- Have a good time; don't worry about the future.

"Conscience code" of a post-moralist

Postmodern ethics does not stop with such ludicrous lists. Postmodernism's spirit of ultimate freedom produces its own code of conscience. In an atmosphere of neo-individualism, a new type of ideological, social-cultural and ethical elements coalesce to gel a new kind of postmodern conscience. Its particulars would look something like this:

- I must not discriminate because I must have an open look and there are no absolute truths.
- I must donate money to charitable causes because I'm turned off looking at hungry children.
- I must walk in a march against impunity so that criminals will not

get off easy.

- I must live healthfully because my body is my tool to acquire success and pleasure.
- I should take an interest in some kind of religion because it might energize me.
- I should show a concern for serious topics so I won't look like a cheap materialist and copycat.
- I shouldn't criticize any lifestyle because anything goes and nothing works.

Critical evaluation:

A cynical morality

Having said all this, some may point out that postmodernist ethics is not all bad. Yes, there are some positive contributions made by postmodern concern for problems that threaten human life today. Healthful lifestyle, care for the environment, and the struggle against violence and discrimination are all commendable. Furthermore, postmodernism points out the theoretical and practical ethical failures of the past. But let us not be deceived. At its core, postmodern ethic does not have a moral motivation. In reality, it pursues the individualistic search for personal fulfillment and autonomy. While the motive behind all authentic ethics is to overcome evil with good, postmodernism is devoid of moral inspiration. It wants only to combat the excesses of evil *but does not want to eradicate evil*. It struggles against certain manifestations of evil without recognizing the root of evil. Its goal is the achievement of selfish autonomy—something against which the biblical portrayal of sin speaks so much.

How then can a moral system struggle against evil if its very foundation is the pursuit of self, which is, biblically speaking, the source of evil? Is it possible to achieve happiness within this kind of morality that postmodernism advocates? If happiness is the search for autonomy, personal fulfillment, the satisfaction of immediate desire, the con-

trol of excessive individual freedom without a true opening of the soul to one's neighbor and to God, then in this morality the search for happiness is a perpetuation of things as they always have been. More of the same: a mixture of life and death, pleasure and pain, success and failure, happiness and sadness. But this ignores what's behind the human search for happiness: the desire for something else, something different, something that will do away with these antithetical clashes. That "something else" is missing in the postmodern search for happiness. Its ethics settles for a trifle, for a lower goal; it argues that because traditional moralities, including Christian ethic, have not changed us for the better, it's time to set a lower goal and accept people as they are.

However, this attitude of resignation assumes that Christianity has truly been applied and failed, and on that basis we must judge the potential of Christianity to make a contribution as nil. But this assumption contradicts the postmodern maxim that there is no absolute truth. There is no truth, says postmodernism, on the one hand. However, it presumes, on the other hand, that traditional morality has run its course, that the human today cannot be improved on, that a radical change is impossible, and that we should resign ourselves to that. Who can know that, and how can it be known? It would appear that postmodernism has somehow managed to know for sure a few things about human nature and about the future, a knowledge which it denies to all the ideologies and religions of the past. That's why we consider that it is a cynical posture, affirming (implicitly) on the one hand what it denies (explicitly) on the other.

Raúl Kerbs (Ph.D., Universidad de Córdoba) teaches philosophy at Universidad Adventista del Plata, Argentina. E-mail: kerbsra@infovia.com.ar

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Floyd Murdoch

Dialogue with an Adventist birdwatcher

Spend an hour with Floyd Murdoch and you'll walk away a convert—to the joys of bird watching. Even if you've never ever looked for a bird, he'll have you convinced it's the most exciting thing in the world. For Floyd, bird watching goes beyond a mere hobby. It's a passion that opens up doors to bigger issues: creation, camaraderie, conservation, a God of love who creates beauty. It means a personal library of 1,500 books on birds. It means constantly taking groups of people on birding expeditions—both in the United States and overseas. It means establishing, raising money for, and volunteering hundreds of hours for a million-dollar nature center in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Floyd's interest in birds began in the fifth grade, when his Scottish father was principal of what is now known as Avondale College in Australia. His mother, an American, had always enjoyed birds and nurtured that interest in young Floyd. His passion for birding was re-ignited by the local school principal, and later a college lecturer.

His 1975 Ph.D. dissertation, "For the Birds: A History of Bird Protection in the United States," married Floyd's twin interests of history and biology. As part of his research he visited many national wildlife refuges, and at the same time spotted 678 bird species and broke the record for most bird species seen in North America in one year.

In his varied and distinguished career, Floyd has mainly focused on education. He has worked as a conference education director, high school principal, director of international planning for Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and a teacher at both college and high school levels. He currently teaches environmental science at Takoma Academy, near Washington, D.C.

Floyd has also served in many non-profit organizations such as the Audubon Naturalist Society and the American Birding Association—of which he's a founding and life-member. He has also volunteered his expertise in many public-interest arenas including the Smithsonian Institute.

Floyd loves to share his excitement about nature with young people. His wife, Lynetta, works in the North American Division office. They have two grown children, Michael and Jennifer.

■ *Floyd, let's begin at the beginning. Do you have a favorite bird?*

Yes and no. Actually, the kookaburra [Australian kingfisher] is one of my favorite birds. Some birds are so beautiful you want to see them time and time again. There's a certain excitement in going to look for a specific bird.

I remember when I was young, the local school principal in Australia took me out one Sabbath. He had a monocular—he couldn't afford binoculars—and he let me look at one of the egrets, a white egret. And I saw its beautiful, beautiful eye. I could actually see a little blue ring around the yellow eye. I was

hooked from that day on. I had to have a pair of binoculars, and I had to chase birds.

■ *What is the rarest bird you have seen?*

I've seen some that are now extinct, but the rarest I've seen is the Hawaiian crow. Some years ago, my wife, Lynetta, and I went looking for this bird with several Hawaiian Adventist pastors. We came to a mountain where it was supposed to be, and Lynetta decided to wait at the bottom while the rest of us spent several hours going up and down the mountain. We never saw the bird.

When we returned, Lynetta said, "Well, I saw a crow." She took us to where she had seen it, and sure enough the crow showed up. At that point there were 13 crows in the wild. Today there are none that survive outside of captivity. They have some in captivity they're trying to breed, but that's basically the end of that species.

■ *Do you have a favorite place to go birding?*

The tropical rainforest.

■ *You do some photography as well?*

Yes, I've taken many pictures, [see color insert], but it's hard to mix really hard-core birding and excellent photography. With photography you've got to sit and wait to get the right photo. Meanwhile, you're losing 20 birds you've never seen before because you're concentrating on the one.

■ *So how much time would you spend on your hobby?*

It goes in fits and spurts. About 20

years ago I said I'm going to spend at least two weeks a year in the rainforest jungles of the world—and I've done that. And there's a thrill in showing other people. Bird watching is a communal sport. It's no fun to go out by yourself.

■ *Someone reading this may say, "That sounds like fun." How do they start?*

The best thing is to find someone who's an avid bird watcher—they'll always be happy to take you out. Get a bird book, a pair of binoculars and go out with them. You'll be hooked—there are no former birders!

In the United States you can get in touch with the Audubon Society. In other parts of the world you should try checking on the Internet. Usually in almost every place in the world you can find people who are birders. If you can't find anyone, call the British Embassy. There's always somebody in the British Embassy who's a birder. And they're there for that reason, you know—they work in the embassy and have some title, but we all know they're really there to look for birds!

■ *So once you've built a network, what do you need?*

I would start off with a \$50 or \$60 pair of binoculars. It can be a little harder to get them in some parts of the world, but there are exchanges worked out where people with excess binoculars in America and Europe donate them. So if, say, you live in a developing country and are interested in birding but can't afford binoculars, you can probably join a bird club and check out a pair of binoculars like a book in a lending library.

■ *Do you think conservation is an issue Adventists should be concerned about?*

I'm amazed, really, that we don't do more than we do. I think Adventists should be at the forefront of enjoying the natural world—and protecting God's environment. The command to

Adam and Eve was to tend the garden. Not only is that an enjoyable experience, it also protects God's creation. If you protect a piece of forest that protects the watershed, you assure clean and reliable water all year, and also protect the birds.

The planet can't sustain the destruction that's been going on. In many countries of the world there's no real old forest left. I hope the Lord will return before all the forests are gone.

■ *I hear reports that birds fly all the way from South America to North America without stopping.*

They do fly that distance, but not without stopping. The arctic tern travels around 20,000 to 22,000 miles—all the way from the southern tip of Punta Arenas in Argentina/Chile to Alaska and the Arctic Circle. And it does that twice—once up, once back. Of course it stops along the way a lot.

Probably the greatest distance they would fly without stopping would be from Venezuela across to Florida or Texas. Even the miniature hummingbirds—the small ruby-throated hummingbirds—will fly 500 miles without stopping. You can imagine how many wing beats that is.

■ *That's phenomenal. How do they do it?*

They eat a lot of insects before they leave. That fattens them up, and when they reach their destination they're very weak, and then they switch to nectar—mainly for the summer.

■ *Some people say to keep bird-feeders is not good for birds.*

I have no problem with bird-feeding. We've cut down all their natural source of food, so in a sense we're just replenishing what would have been there before. It's great to assist birds, and it helps people enjoy them as well.

At the nature center in Hagerstown we have two windows with one-way glass and bird-feeders outside. It's amaz-

ing to see little kids go wild when they see the birds. They're all curious: "What is that?" "What's its name?" "Where can I see it?" It's a natural curiosity. If we can develop that in children, rather than have them sit in front of their video games day and night, it's more wholesome. It spreads a greater interest in a knowledge of the world, and maybe the children will pass it on to the next generation.

■ *Are many Adventists interested in bird watching?*

Yes. In fact, proportionately there may be more avid bird watchers among Seventh-day Adventists than any other segment in the general population. The number one birder list-wise is an Adventist, and the person who started the American Birding Association was an Adventist.

■ *Why so many Adventist birders?*

Because of our belief in creation, and the Sabbath as a memorial of Creation—a time to stop work, worship God, get out into nature, and look to eternity. Ellen White's writings are also very strong on nature, conservation, and the garden of Eden concept. Plus I think Adventists simply enjoy the natural world.

■ *Is bird watching a spiritual experience for you?*

Even though the world is marred by sin, I never look at a beautiful bird without marveling at God's creation. There are so many magnificent, colorful birds around us. Watching them leads one to a better understanding and deeper appreciation of God's creation and its inherent beauty.

There are more than 10,000 different birds in the world. Although some of these are of the same species as the Genesis kind, "devolution," as I call it, has made them all undergo some change.

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Maria Lee

Dialogue with an Adventist hotel manager in China

Maria Lee is a true first lady. To be able to work in a male-dominated society is one thing, but to excel in that world is another. Devotion to duty, a will to succeed, and doing the best in whatever is given charted her way to career heights—from managing linens in Hong Kong Adventist Hospital to managing a chain of hotels in Hong Kong. Mrs. Lee first attained the status of a hotel manager in 1987 and now holds an executive position in the Peninsula Group, New World Hotel, and China Travel Services Ltd.

In 1997, after working as deputy general manager of the Hong Kong China Travel Hotel Management Ltd., overseeing 21 hotels in Hong Kong, Macao, and China, Maria founded the Cheer Success Hospitality Management Ltd. She is now the general manager of Hong Kong's first cyber boutique hotel—the newly opened Best Western Rosedale on the Park, located in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. She also holds the title of Managing Director of Rosedale Hotel Management Ltd. Her most recent project involves the operation of Plaza Canton Hotel in Guangzhou, China, which has been renamed recently to Rosedale Hotel Guangzhou.

As hectic as her schedule is with managing all the hotels and implementing the new projects, Maria, who joined the church as a teenager, has not failed to keep herself from devoting her talents and expertise to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She currently serves as the lay representative from the Chinese Union Mission in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division Executive Committee. In addition, she is a board member of the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital.

■ Maria, tell us a little of your family background.

I was born in a family of four, and grew up with three younger brothers. When I was 11, I had my first work experience—a summer job tutoring kids, thus earning my pocket money while attending high school. It was this job that first gave me the opportunity to meet people from various backgrounds and strata of society. It also instilled in me a sense of responsibility and an independent spirit. My parents recognized this ability to take care of myself and raised no objections to my attending youth meetings, although I sometimes got home late in the evening.

■ I understand that you were not born in an

Adventist family. What were the circumstances that led to your joining the church?

I first became acquainted with the Adventist faith through a circuitous and miraculous route. My father, a smoker, joined the Five-Day Stop Smoking Plan in 1966 at the recommendation of a colleague. He was then invited to attend an evangelistic meeting conducted by Pastor Milton Lee, a veteran missionary in China. Two years later, my mother and I were baptized into the church after having Bibles studies with the pastor.

■ How about your educational background? Did you attend any Adventist schools?

I attended the Hong Kong Sam Yuk Secondary School and graduated in 1973. After working as a dietician at the

Hong Kong Adventist Hospital for one year, I was given a scholarship to study Food and Nutrition in Philippine Union College. Unfortunately I was able to complete only the sophomore year and had to return home because of my mother's illness.

■ And then?

I joined the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital as head housekeeper. At 21, I was the youngest department head. Later I completed certification as a hotel housekeeping executive, and then in 1985 obtained a diploma in hotel management from the American Hotel & Motel Associations. I also attended the General Manager Training Program at Cornell University.

After four years of service at the hospital, I accepted the job of assistant executive housekeeper at Peninsula Hotel, one of the top 10 world-renowned hotels. Since then my career has taken a turn upward. The first three months at Peninsula were tough. However, that experience helped me acquire a genuine management concept, as well as ethics involved in hotel management.

■ I understand you were interviewed by a journalist from the World Hotel Magazine.

The journalist wanted to find out what helped me to become the first woman general manager in Hong Kong. I have been perceived as a “futuristic” manager. I like new ideas and concepts and want to make things happen, rather than follow the trends of the past. I must praise God that I received my first leadership training through participating in youth activities of the church.

■ *What special features in your management style attracted the attention of the magazine?*

I guess it is the ABCDE management concept that I apply in my work, and I employed the “C” concept in building up the Rosedale.

A = Alignment, which means that all the staff have the same goal and the same vision. We cascade the company vision from the managerial level to the rank and file. We conduct training courses based on this concept for all the staff, including the newcomers. The impact is so powerful that everyone thinks he/she is part of the business.

B = Business is business. In hotel business, we have to know what our customers need and provide them with all the facilities that will enhance our business to ensure they have a nice stay away from home.

C = Concept. Our service is cyber-friendly, courteous, comprehensive, compact, convenient, competitive, clean, cozy, confident, consistent, committed, customer oriented, and always connected.

D = Dedication and devotion. Each of the staff is expected to be fully devoted to the company, dedicated to being a good leader and worker—providing good service to the guests, as well as being a good citizen.

E = EQ and ethics. Our ethics is to be sensible and rational in management decision, to make sure that we “walk the talk” and deliver what we are committed to. I always consider the Bible with its maxims and injunctions as my best management encyclopedia.

■ *You strongly believe that business and automation will be the future trend in hotel business. Can you tell how these improve guest service and operational efficiency?*

Automation sounds expensive, but it is a long-term saving issue. For example, in using the web-phone, guests do not need to carry their computers and can retrieve their mail by web mail world-

wide. The digital enhanced cordless phone (DECT) allows the guests to go for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or the business center without missing a call. Moreover, our overseas agents/corporate companies can access our room inventory instantly. For this reason, we have the win-win-win situation between the hotel, partners, and clients. This has resulted in more efficiency and proven cost-effective and time-saving. In addition, the elevators are locked and can only be entered by room keys. As a result, we have zero instances of theft and robbery, giving our in-house guest a sense of security.

Our intranet connections have created a paperless office which is environment friendly. There is no more delivery problem and delay, and confidentiality can be maintained. The in-house broadband access is a great benefit to our guests, and we are offering it free. This is one of the reasons for the corporate and fund managers to return.

■ *With the hectic schedule you have, how do you find time to contribute to the work of the church?*

In order to attend the annual meeting of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division, as a lay representative, I have to request four weeks of vacation, although my boss has only two. I am actively involved in the choir of my local church, organizing retreats and lay activities during Sabbath, as well as other church programs. I spend time in counseling fellow church members and praying for them. In addition, I strongly support all the church fund-raising projects as well as scholarship funds.

■ *Can you tell us how you witness to your non-Adventist colleagues and clients at the work place?*

In my dealings with my clients and colleagues, I try to adopt a Christian approach. For this reason almost everyone knows that I am a Christian and that I go to church on Saturday. In fact, I am

the only one who does not need to report for duty on Sabbath in a company with more than 2,000 employees. I have given my boss no reason to complain regarding my taking the Sabbath off, for I promised to work 44 hours every week, and I have often gone beyond the required hours of work.

Moreover, I love my job and do it with passion. In my dealings with colleagues, I adopt the guidelines from the Bible: I perceive the beauty in people rather than dwell on their weaknesses. I am a good listener to my subordinates, and I show respect for my boss. I deliver what I promise, and I appreciate the challenges rather than fret over the workload.

■ *What advice can you give those working in a non-Adventist environment?*

Adventist workers are being perceived as very dedicated and conservative. If we live up to our Christian standards and practice the principles in the Bible, we can be effective witnesses for God. It will also help if we maintain an open attitude and not be bothered by criticism leveled at us by those who believe that we are materialistic when we work outside the denomination. Just remember that we can still contribute to our church’s mission as witnesses to people who would not otherwise have any contact with an Adventist and learn about Jesus Christ. Commitment to our faith and devotion to our duty is the key.

Interview by Mary Wong.

Mary Wong (Ph.D., Michigan State University) was until recently director of children, family, and women’s ministries for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. She writes from San Jose, California. Her e-mail address: mhtwong@aol.com

Maria Lee’s e-mail: gm@rosedale.com.hk

Foundations

by Gary B. Swanson

Where are you building your house?

Once there were three brothers who never seemed able to agree about anything. On any given subject, if there appeared to be two viewpoints, they were positively creative about finding a third alternative. They were Republican, Democrat, and Independent; Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors; chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla. Ask them, What is the color of that automobile? and you were likely to get mauve, plum, and “looks more like puce to me.”

Their mother used to listen to them and shake her head and marvel to herself: *How in the world can these three sons of ours—all born and brought up in the same home—have turned out to be so different from one another?* At times it was kind of fun. But usually it was exasperating!

One day, early in their adult lives, Mauve, Plum, and Puce set out to seek their fortunes. It was time, their father advised them, that they establish their own homes. In preparing to do so, they had explored just about every resource that they could find about how to go about establishing one’s home. They consulted experts, checked the Internet, researched the library, even prayed about it.

To offer yet another alternative, their mother, in her quiet, humble way, suggested that they should give consideration to a timeless, traditional story about two men, one who built his house on a rock and another who built his house on the sand. The interpretation of this tale had always been rather clear because the teller of it had come right out himself and made the explicit appli-

cation to life. It appeared that there was really only one prudent choice, and the mother hoped against hope that in this case, at least, the three brothers would agree.

Alas, not so. As in everything else, Mauve, Plum, and Puce read the tale of the two houses from entirely different viewpoints. While the poor mother wrung her hands and considered that maybe referring to the two houses had been a mistake, her sons set off. With four points on the compass, this allowed for the three brothers to go predictably in different directions, even with one direction left over.

Mauve, ever the sturdy, sensible one, embraced the teller’s own original interpretation of the story. After an exhaustive survey of all the land available to him, he began to lay the foundation for his home on the most solid bedrock he could find. “No question what the story means,” he declared with an air of complete confidence.

Plum scoffed. “That’s a story from so long ago that it no longer applies,” he said. “Today we have such advancements in engineering and construction that we can build anywhere we please.” So he employed a contractor to begin immediate construction on a fine new home right down on the beach.

Puce had always considered himself of a superior intellect to the other two. “The story of the two houses *does* still apply,” he said, “but you have to read between the lines. We’re supposed to use our heads. If you want to extract the ultimate truth from that story, you have to consider the time in which it was told, the audience at whom it was

aimed, the *milieu*.” He liked the word *milieu* because it always confused his brothers. He thought that using so sophisticated a word showed his superiority over them.

The result of Puce’s reading of the story of the two houses was that he decided to build his home on the water! What better protection against rain and flood, he reasoned, than to build your home so that it would rise and lower with the water level? The folly of building on the sand was obvious to anyone; to build on rock meant the house would stand but what about the clean-up if a flood did come along? Who needed that?

No, to build on the water—a house boat—that had to be the answer. No such thing existed, of course, when the storyteller had first narrated the tale of the two houses. But modern thinking had provided an innovative solution to this rains-and-floods thing. “We’re supposed to keep up with the times,” Puce argued. “What’s the use of scholarship unless we’re prepared to apply it to everyday life?”

So the brothers built their dream houses, each in the location that suited him best. The three homes aroused a great deal of admiration in the community, for each was unique. The real estate section of the local newspaper ran a very readable article, complete with many photographs, featuring the human-interest angle of the construction of the three homes. It began, “Once there were three brothers who never seemed able to agree about anything...”

Suddenly contractors and agents all over the area sensed a real estate boom.

Clients began to describe what they were looking for in terms of the styles of homes that the three brothers had built: "I've been looking for a 'mauve-like' home"; "Don't you think that a 'plum' would look good in that location?"; "My wife just loves a 'puce place.' Can you find one for us?"

There was such a new interest in real estate that no one noticed the first light gusts and the first few drops of what later came to be called, "The Perfect Storm." At first it appeared that it was just going to be another bit of bad weather, the kind of thing that makes one joke, "Those weather people never know what they're talking about."

But this time the storm grew ever stronger, seeming to build up in its fury. In the words of the old, familiar song, "The rains came down and the floods came up." It was just that simple, just that fearful. When the water level neared their homes, Mauve and Plum had to clear out and head for higher ground. Puce, however, smugly watched the gathering storm from his living room window. "I guess," he said, "this will prove who is the wisest of us all!"

After an unexpectedly long season of furious, howling weather, the storm of the millennium subsided at last. Mauve returned to his home, found it still intact, and began the work of cleaning up. Plum's house simply no longer existed, so he decided after all to rebuild in a safer location. And when rescuers went to see how Puce had fared, they found nothing whatsoever. His home had lost its moorings completely and been swept away in the angry storm, never to be seen again.

As a newspaper article stated, "It appears that there are only two choices after all."

Gary Swanson is the editor of CQ, the former The Collegiate Quarterly, and the author of many articles. www.cq.youthpages.org

Mixed...

Continued from page 14.

Notes and references:

1. E. G. White, *Letters to Young Lovers* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1983) and *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1930) are well worth reading.
2. See White, *Messages to Young People*, pp. 439-442.
3. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1913), p. 189.
4. See White, *Selected Messages*, 3 vols. (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1986), 2:481-484.

Murdoch

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But I don't see too many gaps. The more I study about birds the more I'm convinced about the truth of God's creation. What we see around us couldn't have just evolved. There had to be a Master Designer.

Interview by Gary Krause.

Gary Krause is the communication director for Global Mission at the General Conference. As a boy, growing up in Australia, he enjoyed feeding kookaburras by hand. His e-mail address: GaryKrause@compuserve.com

Dr. Floyd Murdoch may be contacted at fmurdoch@ta.edu

Attention!

The 2nd European Congress for Adventist University Students will take place in Germany November 1-3, 2002 under the theme, "Celebrating A Heritage and Facing a Mission: Can Adventist Students Walk in the Shoes of the Reformers Today?"

Topics: "Luther and the Adventist Message," "Can Adventist Theology Be 'Modern'?" "Keepers of the Flame or Preservers of the Ashes?" "Katherina de Bora, the Wife of Luther," "How to Love God With All Our Mind." Reports on Adventist university students activities, and more.

Location: Feriendorf Eisenberg, DE 36275 Kircheim, Germany (25 km south-east of Stuttgart, on Highway A7, between Fulda and Kassel).

Lodging: Small group dormitories in several buildings.

Cost: Room and board available for 50 Euros per person (includes meals from Friday evening to Sunday noon).

Languages: Simultaneous translation provided in various languages via head phones.

Registration: Space is limited. Contact Therese Sanchez before September 10, 2002 via e-mail: therese.sanchez@euroafrica.org

Come and enjoy the international fellowship! See you at the congress!

For Your Information

Youth Department for more active campus ministries

by Alfredo Garcia-Marenko

The General Conference Youth Department is committed toward a continuous and active ministry to senior youth and young adults in the church. "Salvation and Service" are the key words that summarize the purpose of the Youth Department, and will continue to be the umbrella that covers the philosophy, ideals, organization, curriculum, programs and events of the department worldwide. Our youth are called to experience the joy of salvation, and serve the Lord and their fellow humans through several organizations the church spon-

sors: Adventurer and Pathfinder Clubs, Adventist Junior Youth Societies, Adventist Senior Youth Societies, Youth Federations, Master Guide and Adventist Youth Leadership Clubs, and University Student Associations. All these are important, and we cannot take away one and yet expect the whole to function healthily.

Perhaps the newest of these youth organizations is the University Student Associations, established to nurture and care for Seventh-day Adventist students in non-Adventist colleges and universities. A few years ago with the interdepartmental cooperation of the Youth, Chaplaincy, and the Education departments, a service to the youth in non-Adventist campuses was organized under the name AMiCUS (Adventist Ministry to College and University Students). The primary objective of this campus ministry is to provide fellowship, nurture, intellectual anchor that can meet the challenges that come to one's faith, and continued faithfulness to the truth that was once delivered to the saints.

That's why we consider ministry to senior youth a very special calling. Four priorities of this ministry that extends to all senior youth including the ones in non-Adventist colleges and universities are:

1. Devotional life to remain close to Jesus.
2. Youth evangelism.
3. Training and equipping youth leaders.
4. Various and balanced saving activities on behalf of our youth.

To keep these priorities in focus and implement them worldwide, the General Conference Youth Department Man-

agement Committee took the following action in one of its recent sessions.

Campus Ministry

WHEREAS, Adventist college and university students both in our Seventh-day Adventist institutions as well as in secular colleges and universities are to a great extent a privileged, intellectual group of our flock that need to be organized, nurtured, and trained for leadership and Christian service,

VOTED,

1. That in all Adventist colleges and universities the Campus Ministry and the Youth Ministry offices be organized under the leadership of the vice president for student affairs or any other person assigned by the administration, for the organization, functioning and coordination of all youth organizations of the church and the various clubs and associations of students.
2. That in all divisions, unions and conferences/missions the Youth Department work together with the Education and Chaplaincy Departments to organize and keep functioning a committee similar to the one organized at the General Conference called AMiCUS (Adventist Ministry to College and University Students), and following the guidelines voted by the GC Executive Committee.
3. That during the first part of this quinquennium all divisions, unions and local fields complete

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Dialogue for you, free!

If you are a Seventh-day Adventist student attending a non-Adventist college or university, the Church has a plan that will allow you to receive *Dialogue* free while you remain a student. (Those who are no longer students can subscribe to *Dialogue*, using the coupon on page 11.) Contact the director of the Education Department or the Youth Department in your Union and request that you be placed in their distribution network for the journal. Include your full name, address, college or university you are attending, the degree you are pursuing, and the name of the local church of which you are a member. You may also write to our regional representatives at the address provided on page 2, with a copy of your letter sent to the Union directors listed above. If these communications fail to produce results, contact us via e-mail: ssicalo@yahoo.com

Expand Your Friendship Network

Adventist college/university students and professionals, readers of *Dialogue*, interested in exchanging correspondence with colleagues in other parts of the world.

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Meatless diet...

Continued from page 11.

to eat certain foods, particularly at this stage in our societal evolution. Perhaps the time will come when the environmental and socio-political crises faced by human society on this planet will force policy makers to mandate such dietary practices. For now, we must settle for the notion that vegetarianism is simply morally praiseworthy.

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Notes and references:

1. "Ethical vegetarians" are not vegetarians who are morally upright persons. Rather, this term refers to vegetarians who choose this diet for ethical reasons. See Paul R. Amato and Sonia A. Partridge, *The New Vegetarians: Promoting Health and Protecting Life* (New York: Plenum Press, 1989), p. 35ff; Andrew Linzey and Jonathan Webber, "Vegetarianism," *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Gotthard M. Teutsch, "Killing Animals: Reflections on the Ethics of Meat Eating," *Universitas* 2 (1993): 98-107.
2. Tom Regan, *All That Dwell Therein: Animal Rights and Environmental Ethics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 4. Peter Singer, author of *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon Books, 1975) also moves the question beyond simple concern for the treatment of animals when he says that vegetarianism is "not merely a symbolic gesture....Becoming a vegetarian is the most practical and effective step one can take toward ending both the killing of nonhuman animals and the infliction of suffering upon them" (p. 165).
3. See William O. Stephens' article "Five Arguments for Vegetarianism," *Environmental Ethics: Concepts, Policy, Theory* (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998); Jordan Curnutt, "A New Argument for Vegetarianism," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 28 (Winter 1997) 3: 153-172.
4. For a good introduction to one line of research that illustrates this point, see G. E. Fraser, "Associations Between Diet, Cancer, Ischemic Heart Disease, and All-Cause Mortality in Non-Hispanic White California Seventh-day Adventists," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 70 (supplement, 1999): 5325-5385.
5. Peter Singer and Tom Regan are the two most prominent authors who fall under this category. Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1975) served to move the advocating of vegetarianism into the moral realm.
6. Paul R. Amato and Sonia A. Partridge, *The New Vegetarians: Promoting Health and Protecting Life* (New York: Plenum Press, 1989), p. 34.
7. See Jeremy Rifkin, *Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture* (New York: Dutton Books, 1992).
8. See Francis Moore Lappe, *Diet for a Small Planet*, rev. ed. (New York: Ballantine Books, ninth printing, 1978).
9. Amato and Partridge, *ibid.*
10. Lappe, p. xviii.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. xix.
13. Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 58, 59.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Sharon Bloyd-Peshkin, "Mumbling About Meat," *Vegetarian Times*, October, 1991, p. 72.
16. Tom Regan reveals this disposition when he writes in *All That Dwell Therein*, p. 4, that it is possible to suppose that vegetarians, "suffer from a perverse sentimentality." That they "represent a way of life where an excessive sentimentality has spilled over the edges of rational action." Thankfully, Regan rejects this response, but he does ignore the force of sentiment as he proceeds with his effort to provide a "rational foundation" for vegetarianism.
17. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, reprinted from the edition of 1777 (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 2d ed., seventh printing, 1995), p. 134.
18. Annette Baier, "Hume, David," *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (New York: Garland Publications, 1992).
19. Edward F. Mooney, "Sympathy," *Encyclopedia of Ethics*.
20. Lawrence Blum, "Compassion," in *Explaining Emotions*. A. Rorty, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 515.

Youth...

Continued from page 24.

the organization of new Adventist University Student Associations/Fellowships following the Sample Constitution and Bylaws for Student Association or an Adventist Christian Fellowship [available at the local Youth Department office], as well as a census of Adventist college and university students in non-Adventist campuses so as to continue furnishing them in a systematic base with the magazine, *College and University Dialogue*, local information, missionary tools, and other publications.

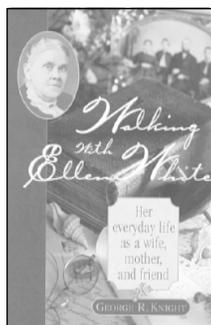
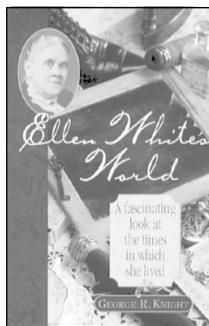
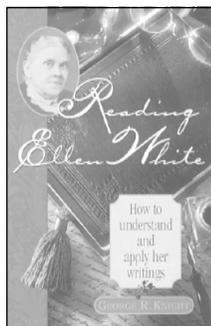
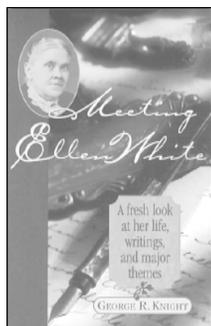
4. That each conference/mission appoint chaplains—denominational workers and lay persons/youth—to work for our young people in secular universities.
5. That local fields and unions organize every year a spiritual retreat or a congress for their university students.
6. That this ministry be implemented following the guidelines and ideas published by AMiCUS in the *Sourcebook for Adventist Ministry on the Public University Campus*.
7. That the General Conference Youth Department in cooperation with the Education and Chaplaincy Departments prepare a *Handbook for Campus Ministry*.

Let's work together to implement this important action around the world. The trumpets are sounding. Jesus is coming soon. Let the university students go to work in the name of the Lord.

Let them sound the trumpet in the secular universities and in the university communities. Maranatha!

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Books



The Ellen White Series

by George R. Knight (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1996-1999, softbound): **Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Life, Writings, and Major Themes**, 1996, 127 pp.; **Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings**, 1997, 140 pp.; **Ellen G. White's World: A Fascinating Look at the Times in Which She Lived**, 1998, 144 pp.; **Walking with Ellen White: Her Everyday Life as a Wife, Mother, and Friend**, 1999, 140 pp.

Reviewed by Nancy Vyhmeister.

George Knight, professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, is easily the best-known contemporary Adventist church historian. His prolific writings include several works on Adventist history, of which *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, *A Search for Identity*, and *Organizing to Beat the Devil*, in the Adventist Heritage Series, cover the same historical period as the four books of the Ellen White Series.

Knight's purpose in this series was "not so much to present new scholarship as...to make materials and ideas accessible" (*Walking*, p. 9). Rather than publishing a 600-page book, Knight preferred to produce four small, readable, interesting volumes.

Meeting Ellen White presents a concise biography "for the average reader," a survey of her writings, and an introduction to major themes that tie her writings together. Those themes include love of God, the Great Controversy, the centrality of the Bible, the second coming, the third angel's message and Adventist mission, and practical Christianity. This is Ellen White 101.

Reading Ellen White examines the way to understand White's writings. The first part considers the purpose of her

writings, their relation to the Bible, and the role of compilations. The second part points to important hermeneutical principles. Knight urges focusing on important, central issues and discovering the underlying principles, thus avoiding extreme interpretations. He also exhorts readers to take into consideration the historical and literary contexts of each passage. One chapter is dedicated to a study of inspiration, which is shown to operate on the thoughts of the writer rather than on words; this precludes infallibility and inerrancy (pp.105-112). This book is an excellent antidote to the all-too-common misinterpretations of Ellen White's writings.

Ellen White's World provides what Knight calls an "airplane view" of different aspects of the world in which she lived and wrote. Before the American Civil War, Ellen White's world was touched by millennialism (religious and secular) and reform in various areas—health, education, temperance, and abolition. Technological advances in publishing and transportation were also part of that world. In the religious world, several forces vied for attention: the growth of lay clergy (in Baptist and Methodist churches); the back-to-the Bible and "Sabbath" observance movements; and the rise of Mormonism, Spiritualism, and anti-Catholic feelings. Religious impulses following the Civil War included revivalism and millennial perspectives; the rise of Protestant liberalism, together with the conservative reaction; and mission to American blacks and lands beyond. Important social issues after the war were temperance, labor, women's rights, race, and recreation. Knight describes each of these aspects and shows how Ellen White related to them.

Walking with Ellen White introduces the human Mrs. White—a woman who lived in an everyday world with family, friends, and foes. The first part of the book presents a personal profile that shows her as persevering in adversity, dedicated to her goals, moderate, kindly, caring, yet altogether human. She appears as stern yet forgiving, timid yet confrontational. In part two, her marriage and motherhood are discussed, together with her finances. The third section of the book analyzes Ellen White's spiritual walk, as a woman of faith and prayer. The last section portrays her as a faithful church worker, committed to giving God's message, yet submitting to the church's mandate for her. Knight brings Ellen White to life and at the same time clarifies the scope of a prophet's work.

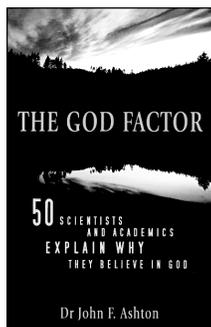
As one would expect, Knight's writing is lucid, his organization clear. His points are illustrated by stories that make the books come to life. Throughout the four books, Knight gives abundant references to primary sources, both published and unpublished. There are also numerous photographs illustrating the text. Once more, Knight has produced a winner!

The problems I found with the books are minimal. To save space, in-text references and abbreviations are used. I would have preferred footnotes. More explicit information on the

photos would have been helpful. There is a degree of repetition, explained perhaps by the author's desire to make each book stand on its own.

The series deserve a wide readership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Pastors and laypersons will find them informative, fun to read, and faith-building. These books are also appropriate to share with non-Adventists who are interested in Ellen White and her work.

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The God Factor: 50 Scientists and Academics Explain Why They Believe in God,

edited by J. F. Ashton (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2001; 379 pp.; soft bound).

Reviewed by Kevin de Berg.

Here's a book that offers an academically respectable alternative explanation of reality to the materialistic and naturalistic theories in vogue in modern academia. Half of the 50 contributions deal with reason and faith, and the other half explore reason and experience. All contributors write from a biblical-Christian perspective.

The authors talk about belief giving insight into human nature; giving access to providential guidance in marriage and career; answering prayer, sometimes in the form of a healing miracle; leading to positive change in people's lives; guiding to an experience of peace and confidence; providing relief amidst adversity; giving a new purpose in life; and satisfying the deepest of human needs.

The authors also speak about design and complexity in nature pointing to God as the ultimate designer. Examples quoted include the intricate design of a single cell, the design required for flight, the fine tuning of the laws of nature, and symbiotic interactions in nature. These examples are always discussed, however, as evidences and not proof of God's existence. In fact, some of the contributors specify that there is no logico-deductive proof available because of the fundamental nature of God.

The section *Reason and Faith* discusses the role of belief in the life and work of respected authorities in both science and

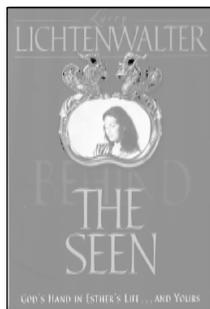
Christianity. More than one author speaks about how F. F. Bruce's *New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* helped them believe in the historical reliability of the story of Jesus, His recorded miracles, and His bodily resurrection. Both sections of Ashton's compilation feature prominently the influence of Godly parents and Christian friends in developing belief. Some authors relate that they never remember having been in a state of unbelief, belief being as natural as breathing. However, most authors have had to face the challenge of unbelief. Some of the essays insist that both public knowledge (science) and personal experience (faith) are required to access the physical and nonphysical realities of life.

Disappointingly, five of the authors do not really address the question, "Why I believe in God?" The larger part of their articles addresses the question of why they believe in creation as opposed to evolution, why they believe in a global flood, and why they are Bible-believing Christians. While these questions are important, the articles tend to detract from the positive impact of the remaining 45 articles, which deal with the issue of personal belief in God.

In my opinion, the most articulate contribution to the compilation comes from Philip Hill, Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering from the University of British Columbia. His article demonstrates that he has taken seriously the arguments of both skeptic and believer and considers truth is still an important goal of Christian belief, whether its impact on personal lives is positive or negative. "Despite its beauty," writes Hill, "I would abandon Christianity if I could be persuaded that it is false. There are those who say of Christianity, 'What does it matter if it is true? As long as it is comforting, why should I care if it is true?' But I don't see how it could be comforting if not true. Nor could I ignore it if it were entirely uncomfortable but nevertheless true. Thus to me the truth question is unavoidably important" (p. 51). However, Hill recognizes the importance of not only intellect in belief but also relationship. "Because Christian faith involves a relationship with God, it cannot indefinitely continue to be solely an intellectual exercise. Sooner or later, as in any good relationship, testing must give way to trusting" (p. 61).

Some of the authors introduce interesting but controversial ideas such as "sign theory," but the reader is not left uninformed about such ideas because useful references are given for further reading. Overall, the book is a worthwhile contribution to the study of belief in God, and its style is appealing to lay reader and scholar alike.

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Behind the Seen: God's Hand in Esther's Life...and Yours

by Larry Lichtenwalter (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2001; 160 pp., softback).

Reviewed by Wilma McClarty.

The story of Esther troubles, an uneasy inclusion in the canon. Martin Luther lamented its pagan elements. The New Testament contains not one allusion to the book. Neither is it referenced in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Additional problems horn in: Why no prayer? Why did a Jewess not only conceal her identity but also enter a sexually involved new-queen-for-a-pagan-king contest?

Commendably, Lichtenwalter does not gloss over the obvious problems a serious student of the book must confront. Early on he acknowledges the controversies. His purpose in authoring yet another analysis of the Esther saga is to show how God works *Behind the Seen*. The book's subtitle, "God's Hand in Esther's Life...and Yours" illuminates his purpose further.

Throughout the book, Lichtenwalter connects specifics in the Esther story to yet-to-come end-time events. These frequent parallels give a practical dimension to his commendable scholarship.

Using God-works-behind-the-seen/scene motif, the author develops his supports through stories, metaphors, and symbols, referencing well-known authors (Dillard, Swindoll, and Tillich), making use of popular personalities (Phil Jackson), and telling anecdotes, personal and otherwise, to illustrate

Attention, Adventist Professionals

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Encourage other qualified Adventist professionals to register!

connections (Androclus and the Lion; the Emperor's New Clothes). To him, the Esther narrative develops many themes: When one disobeys the world to obey God, history changes; God often works by using evil for good; God's leadings are revealed in coincidences; people need awareness of God's fingerprints in their lives; the need for the courage to own one's identity is essential; God is concerned enough to give His people a wake-up call before it's too late; troubling God's people spells doom for those bold enough to do so because help for God's chosen will come from somewhere.

The vivid vocabulary, the word images, the conversational tone—all captivate the reader, a user-friendly style characterizing the whole book: "a dysfunctional world navigating by a faulty moral compass" (p. 32); Mordecai's being "dressed like a Halloween scarecrow" (p. 68); the author's stating, "I want to make something clear" (p. 77); and the catchy chapters, "Beauty and the Feast," "When the End Justifies the Beams," and "Hang 10—Enough is Not Enough." More than just cosmetic, these clever titles supplement the themes as does the book's title, a unifying theme used throughout the entire book.

Behind the Seen does about as much as can be expected for 160 pages, but several areas could be revisited if Lichtenwalter ever does a revision. For example, he states that Esther asks the Jews to pray (p. 82); no, she does not; he presents Esther as being modest (p. 45), an unfounded assumption, as is the one about Esther's getting her relationship with God right before she could act. Also, Leland Ryken's books—he's a major biblical literary critic—were conspicuous by their absence in the bibliography. Finally, Lichtenwalter believes that "The author of Esther wants us to recognize that the Lord alone rescues Mordecai and that man has not had any hand whatsoever in his own deliverance" (p. 105). Because of the noticeable absence of prayer, God, and religious elements in the story, I'm not so sure such an analysis is valid. It may be Larry Lichtenwalter's wish, but arguably not the author's.

The book's strengths include its logical organization, historical scholarship, readable yet provocative content—a rare combination. But perhaps what recommends the book most is its making the Esther saga—that mesmerizing plot of beauty, palace intrigue, sex, revenge, and history—all very relevant to today's readers. Lichtenwalter enlarges the historical specific to connect with the universal. He asks, "Are you a Jew living in Susa?" (p. 51), struggling with your Christian identity; God is still at work behind the seen in lives today.

The book's epilogue ends with a promise and an appeal: "God can rekindle the flame!"; therefore, "Owe your identity to Him."

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God on trial?

by E. Edward Zinke

The time has finally come. It is the greatest event ever to take place in the history of the universe, and you are there. In fact, every one who has ever lived in the universe is there.

The setting is like a Greek amphitheater, only immeasurably larger, and shaped in a semicircle with risers so that all can see. The acoustics are superb.

Suddenly someone steps onto the stage. A distinguished man attempts to hush the crowd. Napoleon,¹ the famous general and former emperor of France, takes several steps forward. "We are here," he asserts, "for a very important occasion. This is not the trial of the year or decade, or even of the millennium. This is the trial of the ages—the trial of God. We would like to know if He is worthy to be God. We will examine His actions to determine whether or not He has acted wisely, whether He has preserved liberty and peace, whether He has acted in love and with justice.

"Our first task will be to determine what truth is so that we can have a basis for judging God. We will extrapolate principles of truth from our study of nature, history, and interpersonal relationships—the principles by which the universe operates. Then will come the time for the truth about God. If He abides by these universal principles, then we can make a rational judgment in His favor, and the universe can safely worship Him.

"The jury—well, that's you. You will decide. The prosecuting attorney—that's you also. And the judge—well, that is in your hands as well. And now, ladies and gentlemen—oh, and the angelic host, you are all welcome! We must

go to great lengths to make sure that we are fair with God. When we are finished, we want to make sure that we have a clear basis upon which to judge God. Does that sound fair enough?"

The crowd responds with a loud applause. Napoleon takes a bow. Stretching out his arms, he signals the crowd to settle down again.

"Well, then," Napoleon continues, "I suggest that in the style of the best of democracy, we choose a chairman—I mean, a chairperson. I recommend that we nominate a general to fill this function. Knowing how to persuade and organize people, generals can bring order out of chaos. I would like to suggest the name of Alexander the Great, that mighty Greek general who consolidated an even larger empire than mine."

Nero immediately stands to his feet, exclaiming, "Why would you choose Alexander? I was the emperor of the great Roman Empire that conquered Greece. I nominate myself, thank you!"

Napoleon proudly steps forward. "There will be no self-nominations. You must come to this task with greater humility. Otherwise, obviously, I would have chosen myself."

"Alexander is surely a great man, but he has too many enemies," a voice protests. "He can hardly bring consensus. Actually, that would be the problem with any general. Let's move on to another candidate." The crowd clearly agrees with the suggestion. Napoleon seems somewhat disturbed that they have so readily dismissed his candidate, but he quickly regains his composure and asks, "All right, any other suggestions?"

George Bernard Shaw stands to his feet. "We need a playwright, someone who understands human nature and the game of life, who knows how to act it out, so that we can grasp the issues more readily. I nominate Shakespeare!" Immediately it seems as if people everywhere are jumping to their feet to make nominations—poets, musicians, artists...

Finally Sir Francis Bacon, the famous philosopher and statesman, manages to get the attention of the vast throng. "I have been amazed at how far the scientific revolution has taken us. The foundation of discovery and knowledge, science has performed miracles of healing, provided mass travel and communication, discovered vast sources of energy, and allowed us to explore the depths of the seas and the outer reaches of space. We need a scientist who has the ability to synthesize all of this vast scientific knowledge. This will give us the best foundation for our verdict about God. I nominate Darwin."

Gently, Plato stands and captures the attention of the assembly. "Since my resurrection I have been amazed at the latest accomplishments of science. I understand as well the need to grasp the human spirit, and I support the effort to find an organizing principle for knowledge. But it is the task of philosophy, not of science, to integrate all of the human disciplines. I nominate Socrates, the father of philosophy and of human thought. Surely he is best qualified to guide us in the discovery process to a fair verdict; one that we all can assent to."

As Aristotle seconds the motion, you can sense relief that at last they have found the right person.

Socrates accepts the position and takes the chair. He is in deep thought as he begins. "Our work is surely the most important task that has ever been undertaken. We must be fair yet thorough. To do that, we need to study God's actions in all ages to make sure that He has been fair and honest, and has always acted out of love, justice, and with truth. It would take eternity for this assembly to undertake such a study. Therefore, I suggest that we break into subcommittees representative of different eras, geographic locations, and scholarly specialties so that we can carefully look at things from every angle."

The nature of knowledge

Socrates continues. "However, before we break into committees, I think it is important for us to agree on several questions. What is knowledge? What is truth, love, and justice? Then we must decide what principles will guide us in determining whether God has acted in harmony in each area."

Plato rises to his feet.² "I have given a lot of thought to this question of knowledge. It's quite self-evident that knowledge does not primarily come from the things we apprehend with our senses, but rather from what emanates to the mind from eternal forms. This is what enables us to integrate what we observe with our senses into knowledge."

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Somewhat disturbed at this suggestion, Socrates responds. "I recall our student-teacher days with fondness, Plato. Certainly you will remember that we determined that knowledge is first of all innate, that we are already with it, that we have only to discover it by means of dialogue."

Already the intellectual boxing match is under way. Aristotle presents his rebuttal and alternate suggestion. "As my predecessors and teachers, I have high esteem for both of you. However, I must respectfully disagree. Knowledge is really a little more concrete than what you are suggesting."

"You fellows from Greece," Immanuel Kant protests, "are assuming that there is a definite stable reality that is available to my mind that I can call knowledge. But in actuality, I cannot know anything for sure outside of myself, for my mind could be distorting what I see as reality outside of me. There is no way I can get outside of my mind to determine that there is any congruence between what I think I see and what is actually out there. If we really wish to judge God, we must turn inside ourselves, to our moral nature. That will give us the proper set of principles for coming to a verdict on God."

At that point Alfred North Whitehead rises to his feet. "I am somewhat perplexed by all of this discussion about knowledge. It seems that each of you has assumed that there is some definite eternal structure, whether inside or outside of us, that we can know. The only problem is this—reality itself is not static. It is in the process of evolution. In fact, God Himself is in process. If we are going to come to a verdict about God, we must decide from which era to glean the principles by which we will judge Him. We can hardly expect Him to be above the environment within which He is evolving at the time. Thus it would not be fair to use the principles of the twenty-first century as a basis for judg-

ing what God did thousands of years ago, for reality was rather primitive back then. On second thought, maybe we can grasp the principles that are driving evolution itself, that is, if they themselves are not in the process of evolution, and we can use them as the criteria for judging God."

Pilate can hardly contain himself. "Three thousand years ago I asked the question 'What is truth?' Now finally we are getting some good discussion. But it doesn't seem as if we have made a lot of headway. Can someone please help me? What is truth?"

Lucifer steps onto the stage. "You are all doing so marvelously. I am very pleased with myself—at how well I have trained you to think critically. And as you have clearly demonstrated, things are not so clear-cut after all. We have not been able to agree among us about the nature of truth, love, or justice. But that is only natural. It is all right, for truth is really relative. There is no one given standard in the universe that we can universally agree upon with any degree of certainty. Each of us perceives truth individually, and so, really, we are accountable only to ourselves, not to anything or anyone else! We must emphasize our independence from God. Were it not for that independence, we would not be in a position to judge God as we are now doing.

"Those poor people down through the ages who have thought that they needed to live by the so-called Word of God—why, I met one of them out there in the wilderness of Judea 3,000 years ago, and look what happened to him—he was crucified, a most humiliating and cruel death. That's what he got for being so straight-laced.

"Well, I am delighted, absolutely delighted. We have brought together the most distinguished minds that the world has produced. I can hardly wait until we get to the verdict. Poor God, I wonder how He will come out! Let us

ascend into heaven, and exalt ourselves above the stars of God. Why, we could be designer gods ourselves, couldn't we? Oh, well, I didn't mean to delay the proceedings. It's just that I can hardly contain myself with the excellency of wisdom, knowledge, and judgment manifested here. Well, please get back to the trial so that we can—"

Words without knowledge

All of a sudden Lucifer finds himself interrupted. A voice like the sound of thunder echos through the amphitheater, but it is clear, distinct, and resonant. "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:2-7).*

"Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing" (Isaiah 40:13-15).

"There is no searching of My understanding. Keep silence before Me, Lucifer! Come near for judgment. Who in righteousness has called Me to My feet? Who gave the nations to Me? Who made Me ruler over kings? I, the Lord, am the first; and with the last I am He. Your molded images are wind and confusion [see Isaiah 40:28; 41: 1, 2, 4, 29]. Your designer gods are just that—gods that you have made and control.

"For My thoughts are not your

thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

Lucifer is speechless, and a long silence follows. Then that magnificent voice breaks it, bringing comfort to those who have served God down through the ages. "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). "Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing, and those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them—those who contended with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing. For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you'" (verses 11-13).

The assembly falls silent. As He has done so many times in the past, God reveals His love, righteousness, and justice. Who is a creature that dares to put God on trial? Just and truthful are His ways. Holy is His name.

E. Edward Zinke is a businessman and theologian. This article is adapted from the book The Certainty of the Second Coming, which he co-wrote with Roland R. Hagerstad (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2000). His e-mail: ezinke@aol.com

Notes and references:

- * All Scripture passages are quoted from the New King James Version.
1. No attempt is made here to judge historical figures. Only God can do that.
 2. I have not attempted to describe in detail the many and varying concepts of knowledge. However, the examples chosen illustrate the diversity of positions on the nature of knowledge.

Ethics...

Continued from page 17.

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1. Kenneth Gergen, *El yo saturado: Dilemas de identidad en el mundo contemporáneo* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1992) pp. 164-168.
2. Beatriz Sarlo, *Escenas de la vida posmoderna: Intelectuales, arte y videocultura en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1994) pp. 38-43.
3. Sarlo, pp. 27-33.
4. Gilles Lipovetsky, *El imperio de lo efímero* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1990), pp. 225-231.
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11. Lipovetsky, *El imperio de lo efímero*, p. 196.
12. Lipovetsky, *La era del vacío*, p. 7.
13. Lipovetsky, *El imperio de lo efímero*, p. 251.
14. *Ibid*, pp. 256-258.
15. *Ibid*, pp. 321-324.
16. Gilles Lipovetsky, *El crepúsculo del deber: La ética indolora de los nuevos tiempos democráticos* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1994), pp. 9-12, 46.
17. Lipovetsky, *El crepúsculo del deber*, p. 13.
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20. *Ibid*, pp. 14, 15, 55, 56, 208, 209.
21. *Ibid*, pp. 55ff.

Fides et Libertas

The International Religious Liberty Association publishes the journal *Fides et Libertas*, with articles on relevant topics. Readers interested in religious liberty may request a sample copy of the journal by contacting the publisher, Dr. John Graz, through his e-mail address: 74532.240@compuserve.com

Action Report

Helping the community in the Amazon basin

Two years ago the Association of Adventist University Students of Amazonia (SUAMA, in Portuguese) was established, with support from the Education Department of the Central Amazon Conference in Manaus. In response to the multiple health needs of the population in our region, members of the association approved the following objectives for our activities:

1. To encourage members to share their knowledge with the community through lectures on hygiene and other practical health topics.
2. To strengthen the connection between the Adventist Church and the inhabitants of the region through health clinics.
3. To awaken the interest of Adventist and non-Adventist students and professionals in providing voluntary service to the community.

4. To raise the awareness of church members and of the general population regarding the most common health problems and their prevention.
5. To express our gratitude to God for the talents He has entrusted to us by helping to raise the health standards of our fellow human beings in our region and in the country.

These initiatives received the enthusiastic support of Adventist health professionals and of the Manaus Adventist Hospital.

During the first year, we provided free dental and medical clinics, lectures on health prevention and visits to population centers located on the margins of the Amazon river. Almost 4,000 people benefitted from these free services. In addition, representatives of our association presented reports of our health



and educational activities to regional and national meetings of medical students and professionals.

We can be reached by mail: Rua Manicore, 639, Apt. 04; Cachoeirinha; 69000-000 Manaus, Amazonas; Brazil. E-mail: ricardo_faria@bol.com.br

—Ricardo dos Santos Faria,
SUAMA President

Adventist musicians in Cuba

Last year *Dialogue* reported on the activities of Adventist students attending the National School of Music in Havana, Cuba. (See “Witnessing for Christ through music,” *Dialogue* 13:2). The students needed musical instruments in order to better carry out their ministry. The photo records the moment in which members of “Grupo Creación” received an electronic keyboard, donated by friends of this musical group. Readers interested in supporting this ministry may contact them through their director, Omar Rojas (shumby01@hotmail.com) or through Elder Pedro Torres Sarduy (uciasd@ip.etecsa.cu), their counselor.



African students meet in India

The All India African Adventist Students Association (AIAASA) held its central camp meeting June 18-24, 2001, in the city of Jabalpur, attracting more than 300 students from various locations. The theme selected was "Adopted sons and daughters through Jesus," based on Ephesians 1:15.

The main speaker was Dr. Rudolf Cush, a pastor in India. L. F. Lyngdoh, youth ministries director for the Southern Asia Division, also spoke to the participants. Other speakers addressed topics of interest to students such as Bible prophecy, youth development and communication, preparation for marriage, and health and temperance.

The Sabbath program featured a variety of worship activities, including the



baptism of 10 students who were joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and a holy communion service. In the evening, the outgoing association president, Pastor Julius Bichanga, handed over the association leadership post to Nemwel Bosire, a graduate research student in Jabalpur. Other positions were also filled by election on that occasion.

Before departing on Sunday, the students enjoyed a picnic at a tourist site.

Interested individuals may contact the new AIAASA president, Nemwel Bosire, through his e-mail address: aiaasapres@yahoo.com

—Herbert Ogembo,
Outgoing Editor-in-chief

Students and teachers build church in Uganda

During a meeting of university students from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in the 1990s, funds were contributed to begin building an Adventist church on the campus of Kyambogo University, in Uganda. Teachers and community church members later provided additional support to continue the project.

More than eighty students currently hold services in the church, which is still unfinished. They and the university administrators are anxious to see this attractive church project finished.

Individuals interested in contributing funds to see this project completed to the glory of God may contact Dr. Hudson E. Kibuuka, education director of the Eastern Africa Division and *Dialogue* representative in the region. His e-mail: 100076.3560@compuserve.com



And on the fifth day God created winged splendor

Right Black-Necked Swan (*Cygnus melanocorypha*), 120 cm. Swans are aggressively territorial and will chase off or kill any other bird that tries to nest within its established boundaries.



Above Blue Crane (*Grus paradisea*), 120 cm. This elegant bird is an endangered species living in Southern Africa. It frequents the short green grass of pastured hillsides but will roost in water. Their mating rituals involve elaborate dancing that may last up to four hours at a time. Both mates will share incubation which lasts 29 to 30 days.

Below Right Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*), 31 cm. This bird is a specialty of the western North American mountain ranges and north country. It prefers high pine forests near treeline. Its behavior is quite similar to other members of its family which include the jays, crows and ravens—noisy, bossy, and show little fear even of man.



Left Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*), 50 cm. This bird is a favorite among cage bird fanciers. In some cities of Australia, where they are native, one can see them wandering the lawns of houses and parks like sparrows would in other parts of the world. They nest in hollows of eucalyptus trees and are very noisy with a wide range of squawks, whistles, and chatter.

Below Left Crimson Rosella (*Platycercus elegans*), 35 cm. This is another Australian spectacular parrot. Its bright red and blue colors will brighten any one's day. The immature birds are a beautiful green with small red accents in the face and under the tail.



Below Right King Vulture (Sarcorampus papa), 80 cm; wing span, 180 cm. A truly breathtaking giant of the neo-tropical forests, this vulture does justice to its regal name. Seeing its black-edged white body as it swoops down onto a tall dead snag and incredible multicolored bar-skinned head has caused many bird watchers' hearts to race. As is true with all other New-World vultures, these do not kill for food but rather are the street-cleaners of the forest keeping everything tidied up.

Below Right Mandarin Duck (Aix galericulata), 45 cm. This duck surely must rank among the world's most showy. The way they swim around strutting and bragging, it's obvious they are well aware of their superior looks. While they are often seen in zoos and there are a few escaped breeding populations in various parts of the world, they are originally from central-eastern China and Japan.

Below Great Hornbill (Bucerus bicornis), 105 cm. Hornbills—53 species—range over Africa and southern Asia. Their bills take on various unusual shapes, all oversized—some truly massive, and some with a second layer above the upper mandible. They generally nest in large old tree holes. Some are famous for shutting the female into the nest with mud, then feeding her and the young. This behavior seems to be a method of protecting them from marauders since the nest hole and cavity are so large.



Right Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus), 23 cm. The entire family of New-World flycatchers labels them all as tyrants—over 375 species. They are easy to recognize as belonging to this family by their aggressive insect-catching habits and dominant behavior toward other birds.



Right Hyacinth Macaw (Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus), 95 cm. To watch several of these endangered birds feeding on palm nuts only a few meters overhead in Brazil's Pantanal is one of a bird-watcher's most memorable moments.





Left Gray-Crowned Crane (Balearica regulorum), 105 cm. One of two species of African crowned cranes. Looking at this crane, would make one think they thought they were royalty even though they do look silly. Their courtship, which consists of a series of hops and prances, tend to only make them sillier looking.



Left Yellow-Crowned Night-Heron (Nyctanassa violacea), 60 cm. As the English name indicates, these birds are commuting to work at the same time most other birds are heading home for the night. While fairly common around coastal lagoons and estuaries, they are often overlooked because they sleep during the day well hidden in the trees.



Above Satin Bowerbird (Ptilonorhynchus violaceus), 30 cm. Related to the famous birds of paradise of New Guinea, bowerbirds have a curious habit of shaping an arched tunnel of grass and placing bright shiny or colorful objects in the entrance to charm the females with their wealth and good taste. This species uses only blue objects.

Left Northern Cassowary (Casuarius unappendiculatus), 140 cm. There are seven species of huge flightless birds known as ratites. The best known is Africa's ostrich. The northern or single-wattled cassowary comes from the lowlands of New Guinea and adjacent islands, and is considered endangered.

Right Regent Bowerbird (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*), 27 cm. This bird is much more striking in color than the satin bowerbird, with bright gold contrasting with the iridescent black. It builds a somewhat smaller tunnel or avenue, but likes to dance in front of its creation holding its favorite trinket in its beak.



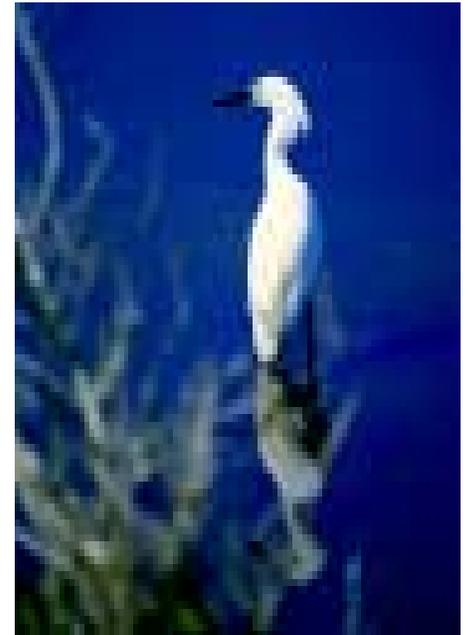
Below Scarlet Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*), 58 cm. A truly unusual sight can be witnessed driving along the wet plains of southern and eastern Venezuela. All of a sudden the large green stretches will become littered with large, bright red blobs. A closer look reveals that these blobs of red are actually large birds sticking their long curved bills into the soft mud in search of worm delicacies.



Right Ocellated Turkey (*Agriocheirus ocellata*), 85 cm. Endemic to the Yucatan peninsula, this bird is related to the various breeds of domestic turkeys. It has not been domesticated and prefers the humid deciduous forests and small clearings. It is quite elusive and wary in most of its reduced range. Its voice has been described as that of a motor scooter starting up.



Below Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), 55 cm. Two closely related species of small white herons are this bird from the Americas and the little egret of Eurasia, Australia, and Africa. The scientific name *thula* seems to come from the word thule, which was used by geographers of ancient times for the unknown northernmost parts of the world, or snow covered.



Above Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaja ajaja*), 85 cm. If the fields of scarlet ibis turns swampy, this larger strange-looking relative will join them. With its flat soup-ladle bill constantly moving side-to-side, it seeks small insects and other food-life in the muddy waters.