

AUC IN DEATH THROES?

NEWS • ANALYSIS • OPINION

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ADVENTIST TODAY

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**SUPREME COURT DECLINES
TO HEAR CUC LAWSUIT**

**SABBATH SEMINAR ON
SEPTEMBER 24-25**

**SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY: IS
IT AN OXYMORON WITHOUT
THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY?**

**CHURCH CLOSET
KEEP DOOR CLOSED**

ADVENTISM AND HOMOSEXUALITY TODAY

What's in the Closet?

Let's Talk About Homosexuality

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I was sitting in an apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side talking with Jack. He grew up in an Adventist home, went to Adventist schools. Now in his forties, he still loved the church, still attended church, still served the church with his music even though he wasn't officially a member. Jack was a homosexual.

We talked about his sexual orientation, about the terrific struggles he'd experienced as he tried to make sense of himself, his church, God, the Bible. He had tried every form of "help" available. Still when his heart looked for a place to be at home, it could not imagine a woman. Celibacy seemed to him to be the right path, but he didn't see how he could live it. Not because of the sex, but because he could not imagine spending the rest of his life alone.

Jack was characteristic of many middle-aged and older homosexuals I met during those years. When they talked about themselves and the hunger that hounded their lives, they did not speak of sex, they spoke of home. Jack did not envy his married friends their sexual fulfillment. But he desperately coveted their sense of family. What Jack wanted more than anything else was a place where his heart could be at home.

I find the arguments from the Bible in favor of celibacy for homosexuals compelling. They are similar to the arguments for celibacy for unmarried heterosexuals. But there are several considerations which muffle my voice. First, to preach celibacy involves laying on others a burden I do not carry. Yes, I practiced celibacy through college and seminary because I was not yet married, but I was aware at the time that my continence was a "not yet." It was not a "never."

I am reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 23. "The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees are the authorized interpreters of Moses' Law. So you must obey and follow everything they tell you to do; do not, however, imitate their actions, because they don't practice what they preach. They tie onto people's backs loads that are heavy and hard to carry, yet they aren't willing even to lift a finger to help them carry those loads."

Secondly, requiring celibacy of a large group of people is asking for trouble. Celibacy has a long and venerable tradition in Christianity, but Protestant polemicists have frequently pointed out the predictable social havoc of the required celibacy of monks and priests: illicit liaisons, illegitimate children. Celibacy is not possible for most people.

Third, we have not yet developed a proper support system for those who are called to celibacy. Trappists are some of the most abstemious of monks, but they testify that their life is rich because the self-denial is lived in community. But outside a structured religious community celibacy for a homosexual means aloneness.

God said, it is not good for man to be alone. Unmarried heterosexuals routinely fill some of the empty space in their hearts with roommates and close, intimate friendships. But for a homosexual these kinds of relationships are full of impossibilities.

The Bible clearly presents life-long monogamous marriage as God's ideal for humanity, and the church should unapologetically present it as such. But should we exclude from our church those who cannot fit into this ideal?

Our denomination has long wrestled with a related question: what to do about families in cultures that practice polygamy. Polygamy is not God's ideal, but he gave explicit rules regulating it. How does the church respect the Biblical history and human reality while calling our members to a higher ideal?

The writers in this issue of *AT* are not strangers. They are members of our church. They went to Adventist schools. They are part of our family. I don't ask you to agree with them. (They don't agree with each other.) I ask you to hear them.

John McLarty, *editor*

*I write of male homosexuality because through reading, friendships and conversation that is what I've come to know the most about.

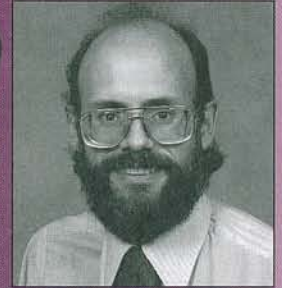


ADVENTISM AND HOMOSEXUALITY TODAY

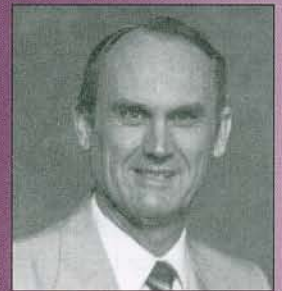
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ABOUT THE COVER:

Some areas of church life still hide behind closed doors. Are we brave enough to open those doors and take an honest look?

Cover by Richard Tinker

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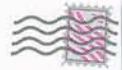
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FIRST CLASS

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Letters to the Editor
Adventist Today
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Sligo Leader on Sligo Turmoil

I was disappointed to see in your "Sligo in Turmoil" several instances of egregious lack of objectivity and of gross inaccuracy.

The search committee that recruited Pastor Oxentenکو included opposing groups: a few highly articulate, well placed persons in the Adventist hierarchy who subscribe to historical, critical, scientific, humanistic theology and those who subscribe to traditional Bible, gospel based Adventist theology. Their competition in thought and expression became so pronounced that the committee was almost derailed. The theological dichotomy seen in the search committee figured strongly in the macrocosmic brouhaha which the Potomac Conference/Pastor Oxentenکو situation has become. I should know, since I chaired that committee. I am not sure that "...the largest ethnic group is white..."

The assertion that Pastor Oxentenکو "cared more" for prayer meeting than other programs is patently untrue. He established a budget for evangelism which had long since died at Sligo, even as had prayer meeting. Ms. Valenzuela is far from being an objective source as it was she who served as the Conference's and Union's point person in communicating to the public. Ms. Valenzuela has shown that in her subjective loyalty to her employers, in support of their action against Pastor Oxentenکو, she is not far from slander in her pronouncements.

Conference president, Herbert Broeckel, sent the ministerial director to mediate between the senior pastor and those of his staff who were in rebellion, but the latter refused to accept him as mediator. Then the Conference president sent the Conference Counselor, Elder Roger Mace to counsel with Pastor Oxentenکو and his staff, and together they worked out the "Sligo Church Staff Covenant," dated February 10, 1999. The small group of members who were critical of Pastor Oxentenکو became more persistent in their contacts with the confer-

ence, though their criticisms were hardly substantive. The Conference President also insisted that Pastor Oxentenکو receive psychological counseling from Elder Mace who soon determined that this was not necessary.

Regarding the conciliation committee, it did not come to an impasse. In fact, it was working rather well in surfacing feelings and problems, and was beginning to explore possible or potential solution approaches. At one meeting Pastor Oxentenکو iterated that he was willing to work with the staff (his associate pastors) under the "covenant" that had been redacted, and Associate Pastor Norm Osborn (representing the staff) said she would, too. After three meetings of slow but careful and steady progress, however, the conference refused to schedule future meetings, but there was never an "impasse." I was a member of the Conciliation Committee and to say that Oxentenکو or anyone else was at any time belligerent is pure fabrication.

Regarding the meeting of 300 members at Sligo, it was out pouring of support for Pastor Oxentenکو. The manifestation of pain, bordering on anguish, hurt, and disillusionment was palpable. There was some clapping when speakers, one after another, recalled what Pastor Oxentenکو's ministry had meant to them, or pled with the conference officials for reconsideration of their sacking of Pastor Oxentenکو. I was there for the entire period and can attest that there were not "cat calls" or whistles but many instances of loud amens or clapping in approval and many, many outpourings of praise.

JOHN D. BUTLER, SR., PH.D.
VIA THE INTERNET

Church of God Needs AT's Candor

I really appreciate the candid, straight-forward articles in *Adventist Today*. I find myself a member of an independent Church of God because the leaders of United Church of God AIA, the Global Church of

God & the Living Church of God cannot stomach the realism your articles reveal. You are doing the SDAs a great service.

I am interested in making photo copies of the article "institutional Memory and Dissent in Adventism" in your March-April 1999 issue. Will you please grant me written permission to photo copy it?

Also, if it's not overly imposing, I am going to suggest to three publications affiliated to the churches of God that they run this articles. Can you give such permission?

PETER A. HUIZAR
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Readers Complain at the "Wrong Door"

The Jan/Feb issue of *AT* seemed to carry a few more than usual letter complaints about "airing dirty laundry," "not presenting a balanced view," departing from "objective and unbiased debate," "sniping and compromising," (that last per the "GC president"-no less!), etc. The statements are so curiously interesting in the light of the latest Folkenberg scandal reported in the same issue. Presumably such folks are more comfortable with a *Review* which is expert at gagging on gnats while swallowing camels. I hope we will hear more soon, from such protestors, in your letters column, now that the activities of the highest placed SDA officials has become grist for the newspaper mills. In the general tenor, that this exposure doesn't do the church any good, such complainers are right. It doesn't. But they complain at the wrong door. If there were no backroom deals and conflicts of interest activities, there would be no reports to "air." The sincerely distressed letter writers should take their discomfort where it belongs to the GC and union offices engaged in gamesmanship and power abuse.

FRANK R. LEMON
BANNING, CA

Beware of Generalizations About SDA Index

A sentence in Eric Bahme's "Fat Lady or Beautiful Bride?" (May-June 1999) leaves a seriously wrong impression: "Another look at the Adventist Periodical Index reveals 312 articles written under the subject of 'Tithe,' while nothing has been catalogued under the subject heading of 'The Gospel'." As editor of the *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index* since 1992, I should like to explain why this is so.

The *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index* relies on what librarians refer to as a "controlled vocabulary" of subject headings; that is, we seek to be consistent in the terms we use to avoid having a proliferation of almost-but-not-quite subject headings floating around.

This has become even more critical as the Index is searchable online and users shouldn't have to search for variant subject headings in order to find everything they're looking for.

We rely on the Library of Congress Subject Headings supplemented by a list of more or less "Adventist" terms. The term *The Gospel* does not appear in LCSH, because it is simply too vague. However, there are other, more precise terms that better describe the more specific aspects of the single term. The Index contains 220 citations featuring the term Grace (Theology), 224 for Jesus Christ-Crucifixion, 108 for Forgiveness of sin, 168 for Law and gospel...you get the idea. So it's not that there's no interest in the subject of The Gospel; you just have to know where to look.

DANIEL J. DRAZEN
ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

A Missionary Project

I regularly read *Ministry*, *Adventist Review*, *Perspective Digest*, *Signs*, *Adventists Affirm*, *Our Firm Foundation*...and *Adventist Today*, *Spectrum* and many non-SDA publications. And I subscribe to the San Diego Forum tapes.

We have pretty much followed the other Reformers. We have gone so far and no farther. While we no longer wrangle about

Armageddon, the King of the North, the open or shut door, we do tend to follow the party line, progress "be damned."

I have found *Adventist Review*, *Adventist Today*, *Spectrum* and the San Diego Forum (AAF) tapes very helpful in perceiving the status and the need to change. Yet without the acrimony of some of the "reform" publications. As a sort of personal missionary project, I have decided to send one-year subscriptions to *Adventist Review*, *Adventist Today*, *Spectrum* and San Diego Forum tapes to ten friends whom I know to be loyal and alert Adventists, yet open-minded and progressive.

FELIX A. LORENZ, JR.
NORCHVILLE, MI

We were informed by the G.C. Treasurer that we should not fail to perform our duty as faithful members of God's church.

Tithe-Paying & Church Bureaucracy

All work stops when *Adventist Today* arrives at our home. Keep up keeping us informed. My comments on the "Fat Lady" and withholding tithe involve being between a rock and a hard place. If I withhold tithe will it be likely that the bureaucracy will remain the same but that the hard working loyal and effective "underlings" will be out or their benefits cut? Back in 1995 we informed the G.C. that because there were serious questions of financial irregularities, we were putting our tithe in a holding account until things were cleared up. We were informed by the G.C. Treasurer that we should not fail to perform our duty as faithful members of God's church. We complied. That financial problem has still not been explained or solved as promised as of this date. So who's doing their duty? Now that Robert Folkenberg is on leave at full pay, what has changed? We fear we are supporting an organization which will not acknowledge its moral erosion and make the tough choices to really excise its tumors

and not simply hide them in other jobs. Speaking of fear, it is absolutely mindboggling that fear existed to the extent it did under R.F. Was the G.C. the Politboro or a Christian organization?

ELLY FITZSIMMONS
ROGUE RIVER, OR

Ferment Yields Life

AT serves a much needed dimension in Adventism. We are admonished in holy Scriptures to examine ourselves not just to constantly congratulate ourselves, as to how great we are, we have it all, all must learn from us. *AT* provides such a stimulus. Yes, occasional potentially destructive comments may appear in a journal devoted to giving

what a readership is thinking. Democracy is not served by giving only one side of an issue nor is the cause of truth appropriately served.

Keep up your needed input. Where there is ferment there is life.

Stagnation is associated with death. There is much diversity in our church, and it is a

sign of a healthy church. It was never meant to be that every Adventist should march lock-step with every command coming from a hierarchy thus simulating the Nazi war machine that brought down the most advanced nation in existence at the time.

A caveat must be mentioned. Issues can be debated that have no relevance to salvation but bedrock core doctrines of the Christian church must not be compromised under any circumstances. A college president denying the substitutionary death of our Lord is a prime example, and his defense of this heresy was published in one of our magazines that caused me to promptly cancel my subscription. Salvation by Scriptures alone, by Christ alone, by faith alone, through grace alone, must be our hallmark.

PAUL W. JACKSON
WALLINGFORD, PA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Supreme Court Declines to Hear CUC Lawsuit Over State Funding

LARA BEAVEN

The U.S. Supreme Court on June 14 declined a petition from Columbia Union College to review a federal appeals court ruling that allows the State of Maryland to investigate the role of religion at the college. At issue is whether CUC is eligible to receive state funding through a program for private colleges. Although three higher education institutions affiliated with the Roman Catholic church have received state funds through the program, Maryland officials have declared that CUC is ineligible for the money because it is "pervasively sectarian."

At press time, attorneys for the state and CUC were negotiating the scope and method of investigation. "We object to the whole procedure [of investigation] as unconstitutional," CUC President Charles Scriven said. The investigation, which Scriven described as "burdensome," will likely be comprised of both formal written questions and a review of documents. Questions will probably focus on the college's hiring and student admissions criteria, as well as its chapel attendance requirements, while documents requested may include faculty and student discipline records for the past five years, to see whether faculty and students are required to think and speak in a uniform, Adventist way, he said. So far, it appears the state wants to avoid actually sending people on campus, he said.

CUC first applied for funds through the Joseph A. Sellinger Program in 1990 but was denied because the state said the college was "pervasively sectarian." The Sellinger Program provides non-public colleges and universities in Maryland with a subsidy based on enrollment, on the condition that none of the money is to be used for sectarian purposes. CUC reapplied for the funds in 1995, in light of a Supreme Court decision that appeared to support the college's position that the state cannot deny funding solely on the

basis of religion. The college is seeking \$806,079 for programs in mathematics, computer science, clinical laboratory science, respiratory care and nursing—programs the college says are not inherently religious.

After being informed by state officials that reconsideration of the new application would be pointless, the college filed suit in federal district court in 1996, arguing that while no religion should receive special treatment from government, Maryland's exclusion of CUC from this funding source puts the college at a state-imposed disadvantage. The district court ruled in favor of the state in 1997. In 1998, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit, in a 2-1 decision, ruled that the state had failed to prove that CUC is ineligible for aid under the Sellinger Program. But the appeals court also sent the case back to the district court to determine if CUC is "pervasively sectarian."

CUC has been criticized by some in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for taking the issue to court. The criticism ranges from the procedural to the philosophical. The college's board of trustees approved the lawsuit, and the union leadership supports the college's actions. Although General Conference attorneys were familiar with the lawsuit from its

beginning, CUC did not seek formal North American Division approval before filing the case. Scriven said the college was unaware that such a division-approval requirement existed. It was never mentioned in discussions with General Conference and North American Division officials, and only came to light after the lawsuit was filed. Scriven said the college is trying to find a way to be responsive to these concerns, but explains that to withdraw the suit at this point, after much time and effort has been put into it, would be ridiculous. The college is represented on a pro bono basis by R. Hewitt Pate of the law firm Hunton & Williams and the Center for Individual Rights.

Other criticism is tied to concerns that the college is trying to disavow its Adventist mission and values and that it is acting contrary to historic Adventist principles. Concerns have also been raised that the case may pave the way for increased government regulation and threatens the religious character of Adventist colleges. Scriven emphasized that the college will never veer away from the vision and practices that make it a Seventh-day Adventist institution, and he explained that Ellen White had no objections to receiving government money when it fit with the mission of a college. Further, Scriven said that government influence is already pervasive in American society, including higher education. This case could help diminish government control, he said.

AT Sabbath Seminar On September 24, 25

Langdon Gilkey, a leading American theologian, will deliver the plenary address at the second annual Sabbath Seminar. This year the focus is Divine Creation, and the Seminar is cosponsored by *Adventist Today*, the Association of Adventist Forums/*Spectrum* and the host, the Loma Linda University Church, on the weekend of September 25. The Seminar will include discussions, lectures

and preaching, and be held on Friday evening and all day Sabbath.

Professor Gilkey, who has written several books on Creation throughout his life, wrote *Creationism on Trial: Evolution and God at Little Rock*, in 1985. At the Arkansas "Scopes II" trial Gilkey testified that scientific creationism is a religious doctrine that shouldn't be taught in public school science classes. Fritz Guy, La Sierra University theologian, will introduce Gilkey, the major professor in Guy's doctoral program at the University of Chicago. Gilkey, now retired in Charlottesville, Virginia, will speak early on Sabbath afternoon.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Fisher and Hokama Named Editors at Adventist Today

Diana M. Fisher is the new managing editor, and Dennis Hokama is the new news editor at *Adventist Today*. Fisher and Hokama fill positions formerly held by Colleen Tinker.

Fisher, 29, will be the first full-time staff member beyond Hanan Sadek, office manager for over 5 years. In addition to her work as managing editor, Fisher will also assume the role of director of development. With a BA in journalism from Walla Walla College, 1994, and an MA in religion and ethics from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, 1998 (both degrees earned with honors), Fisher comes well qualified to fill both posts. Further, Fisher is a proven development leader, having set up Portland Adventist Academy's development program as her first job post-college, and currently working as director of development for Loma Linda University's School of Allied Health. For the last year Fisher has served with three other young adults on the AT Board.

Because of AT's current drive to build a million dollar endowment, Fisher's talents in development were important in the decision to hire her. Fisher will work closely with the newly established Raymond F. Cottrell Endowment board, in addition to more general development of the subscription base and donations for operations. As editor, Fisher states that her goal is to bring AT out in a timely manner, foster more open, honest dialogue on vital issues, and emphasize the significance of spirituality for everyday life. Fisher begins her work at AT on October 1.

Dennis Hokama, 52, a teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District for nine years and a former real estate broker, has joined AT as acting news director. He is coordinating and writing news stories for both Atoday.com and the magazine. He comes with a breadth of knowledge of Adventism as a lifelong student of the church and related religious issues. A decade ago he wrote in-depth journalistic pieces for *Adventist Currents*. He graduated



Diana M. Fisher

Dennis Hokama

from Pacific Union College, majoring in the behavioral sciences and has pursued extensive graduate work in the field.

Colleen Tinker, who chose to resign in July, was most visible in her role as chief reporter on Atoday.com during the Folkenberg debacle, but well before then she had established a solid reputation as a lyric, lucid writer. She demonstrated an obvious care for the "little people" of the church, those least likely to be heard in the system. While covering the spiritual journeys of others she herself was wrestling with her spiritual identity. After much

prayer and soul-searching she has joined the Trinity Evangelical Free Church of Redlands. Feeling a significant conflict of loyalties she offered her resignation. "Colleen served AT with distinction for several years, and we respect her personal decision as much as we will miss her buoyant, persistent pursuit of the truth," commented Jim Walters, publisher.

"Colleen had a wonderful, natural grace with words," said editor John McLarty. "Everything she wrote was smooth and clear. Her editorial criticisms were apt. Her devotional pieces touched my heart. The value of her work can be estimated by the fact that we are replacing her with two people. I'll miss both her writing and her good cheer."

There's another change in the editorial department: Last November John McLarty moved from southern California to Washington, where he is pastoring the North Hill SDA Church. While he continues as editor, his move means even more responsibility for the managing editor.

"Major transition is never easy," says Walters, "but with McLarty at the helm and now with a veteran news editor and two accomplished young adults in major roles (the second is Cal Tech student Greg Billock, Atoday.com webmaster), AT's future has never looked brighter."

Northwest Cowboy Campmeeting Is Real

GINA VYSKOCIL AMEY

If you were looking for a real "Camp" meeting, this was it. Five days of camp food, trail rides, music and preaching at a gathering in the mountains near Cle Ellum, Washington, June 30 through July 4. The gathering, organized by the Adventist Horsemen's Association, attracted riders and horses from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, British Columbia, Montana and California.

The featured speakers, Donny Harris and Leo Schreven, are evangelists, but both have cowboy backgrounds. Donny had been a highly successful, professional rodeo rider and Leo grew up on a ranch in Colorado. Both are first-rate yarn spinners.

The program also included author Cheri Peters and gospel singer Randy Pierce.

There were morning and evening meetings Thursday and Friday and all day Sabbath. The meetings were well attended by the mostly Adventist audience, but this was one campmeeting where the "out-of-meeting" activity was clearly as important as the meetings themselves. The surrounding ridges and nearby river bottom offered a variety of trails to meet every rider's need. And they were in constant use.

Fire regulations limited the group to only one open fire, and each evening, after the meeting, campers gathered around the fire to strum guitars, play harmonicas and sing.

Next year, cowboy campmeeting will be held in Baker City, Oregon. For further information contact Clara Werner (509) 787-2324, or Diane Vyskocil (360) 384-0354.

Scriptural Authority: Is it an Oxymoron Without the Doctrine of Inerrancy?

DENNIS HOKAMA

The conviction that Scripture is lame unless it's inerrant led Dr. Gordon Miller of Salem, Oregon, a practicing ophthalmologist and Sabbath School teacher, to conduct a nationwide survey of SDA "spiritual leaders" regarding their stance on the doctrine of inerrancy. Dr. Miller, a 1975 graduate of Loma Linda Medical School and La Sierra University, mailed out 585 questionnaires in the spring of 1999 to three categories of SDA spiritual leaders: Theologians from all SDA colleges, administrators (university presidents), and church pastors (in the Oregon Conference).

The survey consisted of nineteen affirmations and denials (Parts A and B), requiring "yes, no, or undecided" responses. These questions were derived almost verbatim from the Nineteen Articles of Affirmation and Denial that were issued by the International Council on Inerrancy following their summit meetings in late October of 1978. A pamphlet entitled "Explaining Inerrancy," which includes the Nineteen Articles along with a short commentary, was included with the survey questions.

Question five of the survey has particular relevance to Adventists:

"A. Do you affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive?

B. Do you deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it and do you further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament?"

Miller explains his view of the relationship between the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy through an analogy: Whereas the Bible is pure gold, the Spirit of Prophecy is a gold mine from which gold ore may be extracted.

Apparent contradictions or discrepancies in the Bible need not be seen as a refutation of the doctrine of inerrancy, says

Miller, because we can chalk it up to a deficiency in our present understanding that will be cleared up when God explains it in the next life. In the meantime, we can anticipate that future explanation by faith, and accept biblical inerrancy. Human interpretations and subsequent disagreements are inevitable, he concedes, but unless we can agree on inerrancy, we have no basis for even having an intelligent discussion.

If we admit to picking and choosing the parts of the Bible that we think credible according to rational criteria, argues Miller, then we are setting ourselves up as a higher authority than the Bible and cannot honestly claim the Bible as our authority for any doctrine. The result is man-made doctrines undeserving of our unre-served loyalty and commitment.

When asked how there could be true "biblical authority" if the final composition of the 66 books was the product of a post-biblical and therefore extra-biblical

editorial decision, Dr. Miller replied that "the Bible is a fallible collection of infallible books" and went on to explain that the church applied a threefold criterion for the New Testament. Each book had to be written or endorsed by an apostle, received by the church from the very beginning, and in conformity with the unquestioned core of the New Testament. Under these criteria, only six of the books included have been questioned, and only two or three of the 2,000 or so excluded books were seriously considered for inclusion. As for questions about its application to modern man, Miller replied that application is an issue of interpretation, which is a different issue from the question of infallibility.

Miller hopes that this survey and the discussion it generates will result in helping move SDAs toward inerrancy. He intends to get the results of his survey published in SDA periodicals like the *Adventist Review*, or failing that, in other conservative Christian papers. He declined to cite any preliminary findings, because he has had less than 10 percent of the surveys returned so far, but he did admit that very few SDA theologians had marked answers consistent with being inerrantists.

AT Sabbath Seminar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Following the plenary address a panel will convene to discuss, "What Are Adventists to Make of Evolutionary Biology?" The sponsors believe it is time to take a candid look at scientific and theological aspects of the topics in an open forum. A diversity of voices will be heard. Panelists include biologist Ron Carter of LLU, theologian John Webster of La Sierra University and pastor/writer John McLarty of *Adventist Today*.

William Loveless, senior pastor of the University church, is planning to address the topic in his morning sermon. During Sabbath School, AAF president David Larson will discuss the theology of creation.

On Friday night, another panel, chaired by theologian Diana Fisher, will explore the Adventist position of Divine

Creation from an historical and sociological perspective. Since Christian denominations—with few exceptions—read the Genesis account of Creation symbolically, how did Adventism come to its present stand? Given the church's commitment to science, progressive truth and a non-inerrantist view of Biblical inspiration, what are the tensions in retaining a view few Evangelical scholars hold? Historian Rennie Schoepflin of La Sierra University, biologist Jim Hayward of Andrews University and ethicist Jim Walters of LLU/*Adventist Today* will be panelists. On both panels, members will be given an initial five to ten minutes to state a point of view.

Sabbath vespers will feature an audiovisual display of God's great creation as caught by camera in physical creation and interpreted by classical composers in music. It will be hosted by writer Alita Byrd of the AAF.

Is Atlantic Union College in Its Final Death Throes, or Prospering?

CONTINUED FROM BACK COVER

Ashley's charges under the heading, "Atlantic Union stresses college will remain open in the fall." Although Lashley remained silent personally, Ted Jones II, AUC board chairman, made the following points:

- "The college is run by a competent team of administrators who are answerable to the Board of Trustees."

- The executive board met on Thursday to discuss Ashley's July 6 letter, and the full board would meet to discuss it at their regular meeting "later this year."

- "Presently, the campus at Atlantic Union College remains busy with various conventions and classes and looks forward to a good school year in enrollment for 1999-2000."

- AUC would open this fall "to continue its long-standing tradition and role as an institution dedicated to Christian education."

On August 4, Paul Della Valle of the *Lancaster Times* came out with a follow-up story entitled "College reeling from Ashley's criticism" that included excerpts from the "point-by-point response"

Lashley had prepared for the school's trustees. Lashley had subsequently authorized its release last week to the *Lancaster Times*, a rival of Nugent's *Telegram and Gazette*. Some of its salient assertions can be inferred from the claims attributed to Lashley and Jones in the article:

- Ashley's letter was full of misinformation; the school is in fact now in much better shape, both financially and in terms of enrollment, than it was previously.

- Theodore T. Jones, Atlantic Union Conference president and Board Chairman is quoted as saying, "Most certainly it (AUC) is (in better shape). The college is going full steam ahead. We are

anticipating a very good school year for the fall and going into 2000 and beyond. We have no plans for any shutdown."

- Ashley is criticized for not being a "team player," although Lashley hastens to add, "I wish therefore to openly forgive immediately."

- Jones, however, admits that they are in consultation with legal advisors to consider the possibility of a lawsuit for damages, although they wanted to handle Ashley's report in "a Christian manner."

She denies that it would have been more appropriate for her to have written a hard-hitting report in which she went as far as naming unqualified appointees before she left.

- Jones claims that the college's legal bills have been reduced to \$818,000 and that the school's overall debt is now \$7 million. The school has projected cash flow at least through August, 2000, and is in "absolutely no danger of a collapse but is actually in a period of great growth."

- During Ashley's tenure, AUC has received the maximum accreditation from national and Adventist educational organizations.

- Enrollment is actually increasing from the 500 full-time students they had last year.

- Ashley's criticism of Lashley's hirings and real estate transactions were

unfair, since his actions were overseen by standing committees.

- Both Jones and Lashley criticize Ashley for not making her concerns known while she was still an employee of the school.

Della Valle also spoke to Ashley by phone in August concerning AUC's response. "I stand by every single word. It is not something I did capriciously without considerable thought ... I felt somebody had to alert the board. I felt it was the principled thing to do." She expressed dismay that her report had been leaked to the press, because "this really wasn't an external matter, but you have to expect that there would be many consequences." She was motivated only by a deep concern for AUC.

Ashley also stands behind her statement placing AUC's indebtedness at \$11 million. "That it may be couched in a different way doesn't matter," she said. "It's still a debt that somebody has to pay—and that somebody is Atlantic Union College."

She denies that it would have been more appropriate for her to have written a hard-hitting report in which she went as far as naming unqualified appointees before she left. "I certainly could not have written that report while in the college's employ," she said. "That would have been unethical. But someone had to say it, and I guess it's got to be me," she told Della Valle from her office in Maryland.

When contacted on August 4 by *Adventist Today*, Ashley said she was still standing by her report but declined to make further comments. Since *AT* filed that report, numerous unsuccessful attempts have been made to contact AUC representatives. Their public relations department has informed *AT* that Elder Ted Jones is the only person allowed to speak to the media about the issue. He was contacted by phone on the morning of August 19 for only enough time to set up a phone interview for later in the day. However, when *AT* called his office at the time that was agreed upon, as well as several times afterward, there was only a recorded message.

Mom, Dad, I'm

Gay

KATE MCLAUGHLIN

It's an announcement parents are almost never prepared for. It could never happen to us. But Christians are not exempt from the effects of living in a sinful world, and more parents than you might expect are confronted by this challenging knowledge. Doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, mechanics, accountants, farmers—parents from all walks of life—have had to face it. I know. I am a minister's wife, and ten years ago I learned one of my sons is gay.

Danny, the youngest of our three boys, was a delightful child, full of energy and enthusiasm, friendly and outgoing, talented in music and writing, and most of all, deeply spiritual. In college he was engaged for over two years to Angela, a lovely girl of whom we were very fond.

And then, just six months before their wedding date, he called and told us they had broken their engagement. We were stunned! The news was totally unexpected. My husband, a busy church administrator, left a few days later for a lengthy overseas trip, and I tried to work through my disappointment and questions alone.

Over the next few weeks, the icy fingers of premonition that had clutched my heart at Danny's news began to draw out memories that had been buried deep in my subconscious. I began to remember how, as a little boy, Danny loved playing dress-up, especially with girls' clothes; how he always wanted to be the mommy when he played house with the little girl next door; how the older boys had teased him and called him a sissy when he started to school. I recalled his growing moodiness as he neared his teens, his long talks with the Bible teacher of the parochial high school he attended, about what I assumed were typical adolescent problems. I remembered that, although he had dated in high school, Angela was his first "real" girlfriend. And I remembered that there always seemed to be some older boy (always an outstanding, fine Christian boy) for whom he had a special admiration.

But it wasn't as much the specific memories as it was recognizing the uneasy feelings they had engendered, that slowly brought me to the frightening and unthinkable conclusion that perhaps Danny was a homosexual. I finally decided to call the college chaplain to whom Danny and Angela had gone for premarital counseling. Hoping against hope I was wrong, but already sure in my heart that I was right, I felt as if I were waiting to hear a

Kate McLaughlin is a pseudonym. You can contact her through an email support/discussion list at SDA-PFLAG@onelist.com and a website: www.glow.cc

McLaughlin publishes a newsletter for family members of homosexuals. The newsletter is *Someone to Talk To*, 13008 234th Street SE, Snohomish, WA 98296. A one-year subscription is five dollars.

death sentence as I dialed his number. I asked him if he could just tell me whether this was something I should talk to Danny about. It seemed like an eternity before he answered.

"Yes, talk to him, but be careful not to say anything that would drive him into a lifestyle neither of us would want."

I didn't hear anything else he said. Devastated, I hung up without saying good-bye. Raging through the house in shock and disbelief, I screamed and pounded the walls so hard that my arm ached for days afterward. That moment forever divided my life into before and after.

Looking back, I am so thankful I did not hear this news from my son. Hearing it from another party gave me an opportunity to deal with the violent emotions it called forth before I talked to him. After I calmed down a little, I realized that Danny did not fit the stereotypical picture I had of homosexuals as weird, perverted, and obsessed with sex. I realized what I had just learned did not change who he was—a wonderful, loving, talented and sensitive person. I began to wonder what he had gone through in dealing with this. Although I had a long way to go, by the time I talked to him I was at least able to listen and try to understand.

How have other parents handled this crisis? Over the past ten years I've talked to hundreds of such parents. One mother wrote, "My son made a special trip home to hand-deliver his letter explaining he was gay. What was most heartbreaking for me was realizing the mental and emotional agony he had dealt with alone and seeing him cry, not knowing what to expect from me as I read his letter. At the airport before he left I told him, 'You're in big trouble! You're stuck with me! You're the only son I've got, and I'm not getting rid of you!'"

One mother I know received the double blow of hearing that her son was gay and dying of AIDS. She felt that she had to show her disapproval by returning his letters and refusing his phone calls. Another mother shared how she and her husband, both church leaders who had modeled their home on Christian principles, could not understand when their beautiful daughter confessed that she was lesbian—weren't they all godless perverts? A couple who lost one son and his wife in an auto accident just before Christmas told how their other son came home for Christmas six years later and announced that he was gay. "Words cannot explain," they said, "the shock, denial and pain of another holiday trauma!" Another couple described the "almost unbearable agony, the searching for answers, the pleading with God, and the surrender" they went through.

Parents should forgive themselves for not handling this situation perfectly. Barbara Johnson, best-selling author of *Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and be Happy* and several other books telling about her discovery that her son was gay, admits that her reaction led to his disappearing from their lives for eleven years. She suggests that parents should stuff a sock in their mouths and say nothing when their child springs this news on them!

Once the first shock is past, parents face the task of working through their emotions of denial, guilt, anger, shame, sorrow, loss, resentment, depression and more. This is especially difficult because they usually feel there is no one they can talk to.

After finding out about Danny I didn't even tell my husband for several months. I thought of all kinds of reasons for not sharing the news with him: I didn't want to add another burden to his already heavy responsibilities. I wasn't sure how he would react to Danny; although I knew he loved him, I also knew he had never really understood a son who preferred Shakespeare to baseball. And I was afraid he might blame me, might think I'd been too soft on Danny and made him a sissy. It wasn't until physical symptoms drove me to my doctor, whose gentle probing drew out the story, that I found the courage to talk to Michael.

His reaction was so different from mine, but typical of many fathers. He took the news quite calmly, assuring me it was just a phase Danny was going through. In denial over the whole thing, he was reluctant to discuss it after that, so I still really had no one to talk to. Eventually, out of my great need, I talked to my pastor and a close friend. I found them both supportive; however, I sensed their discomfort. If I wanted to talk, I always had to bring the subject up.

Nearly a year passed before we learned some dear friends had a lesbian daughter. What a relief to be able to talk to someone who understood what we were going through! My heart goes out to a mother who says, "I've been struggling, heartbroken and confused, for nearly ten years. I don't know any other Christian woman whose heart

I began to remember how, as a little boy, Danny loved playing dress-up . . .

aches over this issue. I have felt so alone in this, but I know there must be others."

I am so thankful that God inspired and blessed our fumbling attempts to reach out to Danny, even when we didn't have a clue about what he was going through. In spite of mistakes on both sides, we knew that we loved each other. I firmly believe that the most important thing parents can do in these circumstances is to model God's unconditional love. We can lovingly let our children know we're praying for them, but it's not necessary to keep preaching. Our children know what we believe. They aren't going to assume we approve of their lifestyle if we don't keep reminding them that what they're doing is wrong! It helps to try to understand the painful struggles they have had to

go through alone for many years.

"Worst of all was knowing the terrible sense of isolation and fear he experienced for so long," said one mother who made that effort. "He tried to find a life and some degree of peace without the church for several years, but I remember with such poignancy the day he stood weeping in my kitchen and said, 'God loves me! I know he loves me!' He has been back in the church for years now,

serving faithfully, and is dearly loved by our congregation."

Danny, too, turned his back on God when it seemed that his prayers for deliverance went unanswered. But through several difficult years, during which he began living with another gay young man, we were still able to maintain a loving relationship. And five years ago he found his way back to God and made a decision to become celibate. But many stories do not end this way. And even in Danny's case, his return to church did not mean a return to the church he grew up in.

Another mother described her dilemma this way: "After reading several books on homosexuality, I still feel that acting on it is wrong. Which leaves me with the very real possibility of my son's eternal loss. That is something I don't want to think about. But (1) I can love him just as he is, and (2) I am thankful that God is in charge, and I know he can and will explain this whole gay situa-

tion. I'm trusting him to make 'gold' out of all these problems."

Someone else observed, "If we think this world may be all our children will know, that's all the greater reason for loving them as much as we can now!"

The most valuable lesson I've learned through this experience is that even in the blackest of times, God is always with me. I don't have to have answers to all of life's hard questions; I can depend on him to bring good out of tough situations. And I have learned that my job is not to judge others, but to love them as God loves me.

I hope you will never hear your child say, "Mom, Dad—I'm gay." But if that day should come, here's how to survive:

1. Realize you're not alone. Many other Christian parents have gone through the same experience.

2. Reassure your child that you love him/her. That's all you need to say. Remember Barbara Johnson's advice about stuffing a sock in your mouth! You want to be able to keep a loving relationship with your child, and almost anything else you say in those first terrible moments is not likely to be helpful.

3. Remember that God loves your child, and you. Even though the Lord may seem far away, he is right there beside you, feeling all your pain, hurting with you. Talk to him. Tell him exactly how you feel. Share all your perplexities. God will become more real to you through your sorrow.

4. Find someone to talk to—a good friend, a doctor, a pastor or, even better, someone else who has been through the same experience. Sadly, there are many good people who are so bound by their prejudices that they are not able to understand. Consider contacting a support group for parents of gays and lesbians. If you cannot find anyone close to you, or if your emotions are too fragile to stand the possibility of a rebuff, talk to a Christian counselor. It's very important to talk through your feelings with someone who will listen sympathetically.

5. Read widely, prayerfully, and critically on this subject. Ask God to help you sift through extreme views on all sides of this issue and guide you to a clear and compassionate understanding.

6. Try to understand that your child has already spent many years working through his/her confusion and pain. Be patient with your child, and be patient with yourself. It will undoubtedly take a long time to learn to cope with this situation successfully. Your child will make mistakes and you will, too. But love and a sincere desire to understand each other will cover a multitude of mistakes.

...how the older boys had teased him and called him a sissy when he started to school.

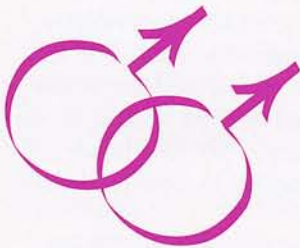
Reluctant Homosexual, Forgiving Marriage

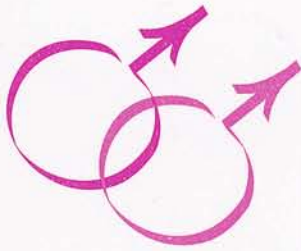
NORMAN BROWN

In high school and college I liked to work and got good grades, but I always felt like a failure, so I buried myself in studies. Spare time was spent looking at magazines like *Scientific American*. I never saw anything remotely interesting in *Playboy*. I didn't do sports. I dreaded open houses and banquets because of the refusals I would get after I sent an invitation. Some girls were kind enough to go out with me once or twice, but I never had a chance to disobey my mother's warning, "Now don't you go kissing those girls!" It came to the place where I almost hated girls outside the structured environment of the classroom.

I experienced my first sexual touching on camping trips during college. I initiated it, and my closest buddy seemed to go for it, but never reciprocated. Then he decided it wasn't right and said we would have to quit doing anything together. We had been so close. Why should doing something to make your friend feel good spoil such a wonderful friendship? I felt so alone. I felt some twinges of guilt, but I didn't see why we should have to go different directions.

Norman Brown is a pseudonym and he writes from Canada.

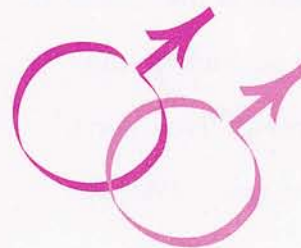




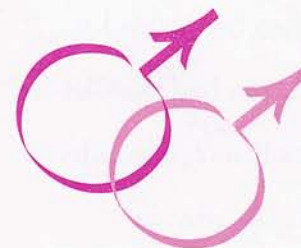
In my mid-20s I had frequent appointments in a city over a hundred miles away from my home and an acquaintance arranged for me to stay overnight in town with his friend Bill. On my first visit, after a simple supper of vegetable soup and home-made bread, Bill turned on his stereo and we enjoyed Brahms, Schubert and Tchaikovsky. I loved it. When bed time came we snuggled into the same double bed. I didn't think anything of it since the house was small, but as I drifted off to sleep, I felt a touch on my thigh. I was electrified as I realized this was not just a casual touch. I had always been the initiator before, but now someone was touching me! After that, I looked forward to my monthly trips but I was torn by questions. Why did I enjoy this so much? Why couldn't I get excited when I tried to imagine a girl touching me this way? I had always thought homosexuality consisted of anal intercourse, and I knew I didn't do that. But something about me was different.



Maybe I was just perpetuating my childhood view of God as a woman in a long black skirt checking to see where I had my hands.



I had been taught from childhood that masturbation was evil. I had read J. H. Kellogg's book describing the terrible things that follow in its wake. Mother's admonition not to touch myself or I wouldn't go to heaven still rang in my ears. The conflict between what I had been taught and what I did gave me a frightening picture of God. What would God think of what Bill and I were doing? Bill didn't feel guilty and assured me it was okay. Maybe I was just perpetuating my childhood view of God as a woman in a long black skirt checking to see where I had my hands.



A few years after I finished college, I experienced several bouts of severe depression and finally sought help. I was admitted to a psych unit. Not long after my hospital stay, I learned that a psychiatrist who had consulted on my case had labeled me a homosexual. I was stunned. A homosexual! I was sure I'd never done anything homo-

sexuals do. Was masturbating someone else homosexual? Surely not. Being branded worried me, but I knew myself better than the psychiatrist did. I was not a homosexual! I had just been too intimate with my buddies when circumstances put us in close quarters. I knew other fellows who had done similar things, and they weren't gay.

When I turned thirty, I had occasion to see a psychiatrist again. During our visit he suggested I get married. When I asked him about my sexual attraction towards men he assured me, "Don't worry! When you're married, your homosexual desires will disappear like the dew of the morning." He emphasized the potential negative professional consequences if I didn't marry. Up to this time I had never had a serious relationship or even kissed a girl, but some friends set me up with a woman, and we started dating. When that relationship didn't work out I was relieved. But I still thought I should be married.

Daily, I prayed, "God, you know me inside out. You know my strong points and weak points. You know my sexuality. If there is a girl anywhere in this world who could be a good mate for me, please lead me to her." Somehow I had the assurance in the depths of my heart that he would answer this request.

A year later, after months of wondering why God didn't find me a wife, I was introduced to Jill and to my amazement found myself attracted. She was on a medication known to affect sexual function. Add this to my attraction to men and we were looking at some real problems, but when I talked to my doctor, he dismissed my concerns. "Sex is just the icing on the cake," he said.

God had come through for me. We got married. If I had looked the world over, I could not have found a more perfectly matched wife—same rural upbringing and home values, same religion, and temperaments that seemed to mesh. She was a great housekeeper. And after a hard day, it was so nice to know she would be there waiting for me with a hug, a kiss, and supper. We held hands as we bowed our heads. Touching became part of our lives.

Jill's medications often suppressed her libido, but sometimes there was icing, lots of icing on the cake. I found, however, that my psychiatrist had been wrong, dead wrong, about my attraction to men. Even while we were making love, I would catch myself wondering, "What would it be like if..."

Because of a persistent health problem I've had to use medications with psychotropic side effects. I had experienced medically-induced depression but had never experienced the glory and pitfalls of

a manic high. Then it hit. It was a roller-coaster ride over the moon. Gone with the wind were inhibitions and cautions. I bought a new car with a price tag that ruined our family budget. And I called Bill.

I'd never understood why some of my married friends were attracted to other women, but now I was wildly attracted to Bill. I had carefully avoided all contact with him since my wedding, but now it was hard to remember I was married. My mouth was dry and my heart pounded. I felt alone and trapped. Would I lose my marriage because of sheer stupidity? Then I remembered reading about manic/depressives. Manic!...Manic!...Manic! I went to see my family doctor, who immediately arranged for a psychiatrist to re-evaluate my medications. Would Jill forgive me? Did she even need to know? In my heart I knew she did, or there would be an unhealthy barrier between us. Would she throw me out? As we lay in bed, I sobbed out my story. And I found I had a wife with a big heart, a heart that could forgive the man she loved. There is no gift equal to that.

I still knew hardly anything about homosexuality, and I was sure I wasn't one. But I went to the library and began researching. I found medical research, theological dissertations, and books written by noted psychologists. The more I read, the more inescapable the conclusion: I was a homosexual. But hadn't God said no homosexuals would be in heaven? And didn't he say, "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"? I felt doomed. I was angry with God because he was asking the impossible of me. He had given me a wife but had done nothing about my desires for men. I loved Jill dearly, but I couldn't get rid of my gay thoughts. I had prayed a thousand times that they would go away! My heart gradually hardened toward God and my emotions seemed numb.

That's when I noticed an advertisement for a start-up church. The ad included the phrase "Homosexuals welcome." I was still trying to tell myself I was straight, but I decided to attend their opening service. I didn't see anyone there who looked gay, but I mentioned to the pastor I was doing research on homosexuality. And a few weeks later, a well-dressed man named Mark knocked at my door. The pastor had asked him to come see me. I invited Mark in. Somehow he put me at ease. He showed no surprise or disapproval as I tentatively groped for words. I ended up pouring out my life's story, discovering in the process a depth of pain that I had scarcely admitted to myself, much less revealed to anyone else.

Mark, who had previously been a pastor, told me some of his own struggles. I was amazed. Here

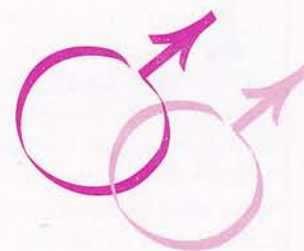
was a married man with children, a man devoted to God, who he said he was gay. Could I be gay? Mark invited me to join a men's group that met weekly. With great trepidation I went and found a group of fine-looking, well-educated men. Over half were married and two had been church leaders. Unlike most of them, I had not been sexually involved with a number of gay partners, but in spite of our different backgrounds, we were bound together by a common black cord of emotional pain.

In the honesty and openness of this group I gained strength and courage. I doubted that I would ever be free of homosexual temptations, but God had written a commandment, and I pledged again to be faithful to my wife. I decided gay attractions were no more an excuse for unfaithfulness than heterosexual ones. Jill was really supportive. We read books together, discussed them

**...but when I talked to my doctor,
he dismissed my concerns. "Sex is just
the icing on the cake," he said.**

and talked about our feelings. It didn't seem to bother her nearly as much as me.

Now it's 1999 and I look at life through my trifocals. Have I changed? Yes, there have been changes. I have a better understanding of God's will for my life. I have gained the friendship of some great men. I have a better understanding of others who are gay. I've learned it's okay for a man to cry. I've lost a huge load of guilt. While I don't trumpet it from the housetop, I'm no longer afraid to mention my orientation to anyone who needs to know. And maybe I'm starting to understand why God didn't answer my prayers for deliverance from homosexual temptations. Those temptations have lessened until they are no longer a big deal, perhaps because I was willing to work through some hard experiences with friends, or perhaps due to age. But does it really matter? I've come to the settled conviction: God is on his throne, and he is good!



Adventist,

I grew up in an Adventist home in the Midwest. From the time I was a teenager, I knew I was different. I always got along better with the girls than with the guys, so I had lots of girls who enjoyed my company. But I had no desire to know them sexually; they were just close friends. Because I was sensitive to others, I did spend a lot of time in

Husband,

elementary school with a classmate who had been crippled by polio. Not surprisingly I did not excel in sports.

By the time I reached college, I had explored sex with those of my gender, but not with the opposite sex. I knew I was different and that it wasn't something I could talk to my friends about, but I still did not know that the church considered this to be sin or even that what I felt had a name—homosexual.

I was also pondering what God wanted me to do with my life. In the eighth grade I had decided to become a heart surgeon, but then during a week of prayer my senior year in academy I felt called to the ministry. Not yet fully persuaded, the next fall at college I registered for premed classes. By the middle of that first semester the conflict between my desire to be a surgeon and the persistent sense of call to the ministry came to a head. I was confused and asked God to give me unambiguous direction. I needed an A in chemistry to get into med school at Loma Linda. If I didn't get it I would know I was called

Pastor,

to the ministry. (This was one of two times in my life that I have asked God for a sign and his answers seemed to be clear both times). When the grades came out I had missed an A by 12 out of a total of 1000 points possible.

To be a minister I had to be married. For the next two years I dated a different girl every week or two. By the end of my junior year I was steadily dating the girl who would become my wife. But I was concerned about my same-sex feelings. When I sought

answers I was told it was just a phase, and that when I met the right woman everything would fall into place.

I did marry a wonderful girl, but the orientation did not change. I went to seminary then into a pastorate. I was very successful and loved my work more than words can describe. But still, I had my orientation to deal with.

Over the next fifteen years, nearly every week I was in the office of a pastor or psychologist looking for help to change my orientation. I tried fasting and prayer. I tried behavior modification techniques in a highly touted change

ministry. I even tried exorcism. But nothing worked. I often left a "help" session only to find the struggle more intense than ever.


Finally, my wife, seeing nothing was going to change, filed for divorce. It was the end of the world. My marriage, my close relationship with my son, who was the joy of my life, and my ministry were all finished. I attempted suicide.

Unsuccessful the first time, I made plans for a second attempt. However, when it came time to follow through, I couldn't. Sitting there, I decided that my life would end in God's time, not mine.

During the twelve years since leaving the pastorate, I have gone through tremendous struggles to know who I am while holding onto my faith in God and a relationship with the church. After twenty-five years in desperate pursuit of the miracle of "change," I eventually had to accept the fact that I am a homosexual. Whatever relationship I have with God and his church must of necessity include that inescapable fact. I have heard stories of "change," but I can only bear witness of what God has done for me. He has not changed me. I prayed and fasted, sought counseling and the help of the most highly recom-

Homosexual

mended "change" ministry. Others prayed for me, supported me, anointed me, even performed an exorcism. But God did not change me. Instead he loved and accepted me

To be sure, there have been times when I wondered if God was really there and cared and whether the SDA church was really a place for me to find spiritual support. But I am grateful for where I am now—at peace with God and living a fulfilled life-balancing work, an active role in my local SDA church (something many gay Christians find impossible) and service to my community. 

The Bible on Homosexuality

I am an Adventist, a Bible scholar trained at the Adventist Seminary at Andrews University, and am a homosexual.

JIM MILLER

For most of my life I handled my orientation by ignoring it studiously (in hopes it would go away). In 1994 I filled a dry spot in my scholarship by writing up a study on Romans 1:26. Years earlier, before I studied Hebrew or Greek, I heard of this one-and-only verse on female homosexuality. I looked it up, read it, and did not see how this verse could be read as describing homosexuality. Seventeen years and extensive training and study did not change my mind, so I wrote my thoughts and *Novum Testamentum* accepted it.

Until then I tried to ignore the subject. But with the publication of this article I decided to face the issue head-on. When I finally did study the standard texts used against homosexuality I found profound weaknesses in the assumed readings of these texts. Most important was the isolat-



Jim Miller is an independent Bible scholar with publications in a variety of scholarly journals and a book, *The Western Paradise: Greek and Hebrew Traditions*, Intl. Scholars Publ., 1996.

ed and piecemeal nature of the texts, something which made me suspicious as an Adventist reader of the Bible.

Very briefly, here are some of my findings.

Search the Scriptures

Most SDA Bible study series begin with a lesson on the Bible and its authority. Characteristically these introductory lessons warn against basing an entire doctrine or practice on a single verse or two. The purpose of this warning is clear enough. When a church takes Biblical laws, norms and prophecies as seriously as does the Adventist church, there will arise those who require baptisms for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29) or insist on Modalism based on a typological reading of Genesis 22:8. Isolated texts are far too easy to misunderstand or misapply.

This principle captures the problem of the texts usually used against homosexuals in the church. A number of the texts commonly used in condemnation of homosexuals simply don't apply. When these inappropriate texts are weeded out, the pertinent usable texts number five. Three texts are one verse long each and the other two consist of a single word (or two) in a list. The isolated nature of these texts ensures that there would be a variety of interpretations even if they did not apply to a controversial topic.

Inappropriate Texts

Some texts cited on the issue of homosexuality are simply inappropriate. The most famous of these is the attempted rape described in Genesis 19. The men of Sodom were not trying to seduce the strangers. They were making a physical attack on Lot's house to take the visitors by force. Judges 19 has a similar story in which the men of Gibeah gang-rape a woman. In Judges 19 the rape is heterosexual, but no one cites this passage in condemnation of heterosexual relationships. If the crime of Judges 19 (rape and homicide) is not used to condemn heterosexuals, why use the attempted rape of Genesis 19 as the basis for condemnation of homosexuals? Ezekiel tells us why Sodom was destroyed (16:49-50), and the cause had nothing to do with sexual orientation.

Sometimes Genesis 9 is inappropriately invoked. Ham's transgression has strong parallels with Lot and his daughters (19:30-36) and with Tamar and Judah (38:13-26). In short, Ham committed a form of incest by viewing the nakedness of his father. As the sin broke the generation divide, so also the curse crossed generations and fell on Ham's son Canaan. Notice that in Leviticus 18 the euphemism for incest is "uncover the nakedness of."

Another focus of attention is the supposed male religious prostitutes in ancient Israel and its neighbors. The presence of (heterosexual) female religious prostitutes does not invalidate other heterosexual relationships. So, if there were male religious prostitutes we learn nothing about male-male relationships which were not religious prostitution. Also, if we read the texts carefully (e.g. Deut. 23:17, 18) only the woman is specified as a prostitute. The man could be involved in her prostitution as a brothel owner who kept order and took its profits—not a savory person, but not homosexual either.

Many books cite Matthew 19:4 or Mark 10:6 where Jesus quotes Genesis 1:27 against divorce. Some claim that Jesus here is defining marriage as

heterosexual only, but that is not the topic at hand. The topic is divorce and remarriage, which Jesus treated as polygamy (because God does not recognize divorce). Hebrew and Greek lack the indefinite article, and this verse could be translated as "God made them a male and a female," excluding polygamy.¹ Maybe Jesus would specify marriage as heterosexual only, but this text is not the one to use.

If we go directly to Genesis 1, 2 the first marriage was indeed heterosexual. Does this define homosexual relationships as unnatural? These chapters do not speak explicitly on homosexuality, though they do define other lifestyles as unnatural, such as celibacy (2:18). The fact that celibacy was not part of the original created order does not make it evil. Use these chapters with care when excluding "unnatural" lifestyles.

The Five Texts

The five texts used with some validity against male homosexuality are Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. All are male specific. Leviticus 18 and 20 deal with two types of sexual transgression, incest and non-incest. The most common term in the non-incest laws is "semen," and most commentators find these laws to be misuses of semen, a controlled body fluid (Lev. 15:16-18). Of the non-incest laws only the ban on male homosexuality lacks support from other Old Testament texts outside Leviticus 18 and 20. Either ancient Israelite society had no major problem with male homosexuality or this is the weakest of the non-incest laws. Such laws must be applied in church subject to the same strictures used on other Old Testament law.

In the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1 use the term *arsenokoites* to describe a type of transgressor. Literally the term means, "those who lie with (have sex with) males". Romans 1:27 describes a common gentile practice where males lust for other males and have sex "male with male." The term "male" is significant in the ancient Jewish attacks on gentile sexual practices.

In the Roman Empire sex between adult men or between women was widely despised,² but men having sex with boys (usually slave boys) was widely accepted and treated as equivalent to heterosexual relationships.³ Jewish writers did not attack sex between adult men, because it wasn't an issue. They focused on the widespread gentile practice of pederasty (sex with boys). To attack these gentile practices they used the term "male," which was not age-specific, instead of

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“man” which was.⁴ Paul, who was Jewish, used this terminology.

In Romans and elsewhere Paul attacked a commonly accepted gentile practice, males who turned from females to boys. His comments do not fit sex between adult males because gentiles usually despised such relationships. The primary target of Paul’s attack, what his listeners would have thought of, was pederasty.⁵ It is possible to use these texts against modern homosexuals, but not necessary. If we demand a literal reading (any case of “male with male” sex, not just pederasty), then we must insist that it be applied only to those who turn away from relations with women. Any man who has no interest in sex with a woman would therefore be exempt—if indeed we use a literal reading of the text.

An Interesting Omission

Biblical law does not deal with female homosexuality, though it does deal with other intimate details specific to women. The one-and-only text which has been applied to female homosexuality (Romans 1:26) is nonspecific and probably describes heterosexual alternative intercourse.

Why the discrepancy? Why is female homosexuality ignored in the Bible?

1) No controlled body fluid (semen) is involved.

2) The ancients did not categorize relationships the way we do. The widespread idea of one class, homosexual, for both genders is a modern one. Usually the two genders of homosexual were considered separate classes. Indeed in Biblical sexual law most laws are gender specific. Leviticus 18:23 is a verse with two laws, one for each gender. This verse does not assume that what applies to one gender necessarily applies to the other. It is significant that the preceding verse on homosexuality speaks of the male only. In Jewish law there was no law against female homosexuality as late as the Talmud (5th-6th centuries). In Medieval times the rabbis invented the idea that the Canaanites practiced female homosexuality so they could use Leviticus 18:3 to outlaw female homosexuality.

There is no Biblical text which forbids female homosexual relationships. None.

Other Considerations

Due to space constraints we cannot begin to deal with the issues of law in the church. Why do we accept bankers in the church in spite of Ex. 22:25, Deut. 23:19-20 and 1500 years of church tradition? How could early Adventists be abolitionists in spite of the Bible’s tacit acceptance of

slavery? Is it significant that the incest laws were violated by Abraham and Sarah, by Jacob, Leah and Rachel, and even by Moses’ own parents (Ex. 6:20)? How dare Ellen White wear her hair in braids (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet.3:3)? When we evangelize in polygamous cultures, why do we favor divorce (of extra wives) as the solution to polygamy? Do we restrict meat-eating Adventists to kosher-killed animals (Gen.9:4; Acts 15:20)? Why not practice levirate marriage in the modern church? Why is “Love your neighbor as yourself” followed by a ban on vegetable gardens and most modern fabrics (Lev.19:18,19)?

These questions have varied answers which include explanations about ancient customs, appeals to types of law, fine parsing of terms, and sometimes simple incredulity that anyone would actually expect modern Christians to pay attention to such a Biblical law. Know and understand that when a church community forbids certain members from lifelong lifestyle options, all the varied methods of law interpretation used in the church will be brought to bear on such a ban by one member or another. It’s only natural.

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tionships. None.*

In Conclusion

Major themes which run throughout Scripture may be viewed from many vantage points within its pages. But some issues are so minor as to appear only sporadically. Standard condemnation of homosexuality belongs in the sporadic category. The church does have the option of condemning homosexuality in both genders and all cases, but it will do so at the risk of continual and justified criticism. There is good reason to see the church’s use of Scripture on this issue as inconsistent, biased and ignorant of the culture and issues found in the Bible texts.

Notes

- ¹ See *Damascus Covenant* (Dead Sea Scrolls) 4.20-21.
- ² Martial 1.24; 7.67,70; 9.47, etc.; Juvenal 2 & 9.
- ³ Lucretius 4.1043-1055; Horace, Epode 11, Satire 1.2.116-119; Martial 2.48, 49; 10.42, 66, etc.
- ⁴ *Sibylline Oracles* 3.185,596-600,764; 5.166; psPhocylides 213-214; Philo, Vita Cont. 59; Special Laws 3.37-39; etc.
- ⁵ e.g. Athenagoras, Embassy 34.2-3 where he uses the term “paiderastai” to interpret Romans 1:27.

Paul on Homosexuality

RON SPRINGETT

There are numerous texts in the Scriptures that relate directly or indirectly to the practice of homosexuality. Because of space considerations, I have chosen to study here a primary New Testament reference to homosexuality in Romans. In the interest of brevity, documentation has been omitted. Consult my book, *Homosexuality in History and the Scriptures*, for documentation and a full treatment of other texts.

THE TEXT

"For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and improper conduct." Rom. 1:26-28.

THE FALL - PUNISHMENT OR CONSEQUENCE

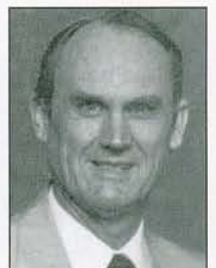
Just what is Paul saying in these verses? In the section under consideration Paul is showing how far humankind has fallen from the ideal or original state. In verse 24 he first uses the words, "God gave them up". I doubt that these words, repeated in verses 26 and 28, imply that God abandoned the fallen

to the power of sin as a punishment. The permission to sin is not necessarily a judicial or punitive act. It is not helpful then to consider homosexuality a punishment for sin and to focus on it to the exclusion of all other sin. Such an opinion may lead to the judgmental question asked by the disciples, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). The answer really surprised them.

NATURAL VERSUS UNNATURAL

The two key terms in the verses referring to homosexual relations are the expressions "natural" and "unnatural," and much depends upon what Paul meant here. The crux of the issue turns on why Paul concludes that homosexuality is unnatural. Paul uses the terms *para phusin* ("against," "beside," or "contrary to") nature and *kata phusin* ("according to") nature. There is no doubt that these terms are common Greek usage and that they are used at times to express an ethical judgement on homosexuality. This is true in Plato and Cicero, as well as other ancient thinkers, including two contempo-

Dr. Ronald M. Springett, a former professor of New Testament at Southern Adventist University, received his PhD from the University of Manchester in Great Britain. He now lives in Lake City, FL where he runs a small business and continues to do research and writing.



raries of Paul—the Jewish historian Josephus and a leading Stoic, Musonius Rufus. There is little doubt that the late Stoics deified “Nature.” Marcus Aurelius spoke of Nature as “the eldest of deities.”

Paul uses Stoic philosophical terms in Romans 1 and 2. But clearly Paul does not simply repeat Stoic terms with the same meanings they had in Stoicism. However, for Paul the word “nature” meant the providential ordering of the natural world, as with the Stoics. But apart from this agreement, the term has a completely different function for Paul.

The meaning of the term in Romans comes from a Stoic-Jewish storehouse. The direct influence of non-Jewish Hellenistic thought upon Paul has been exaggerated. His main background is Jewish, or better, that of Hellenistic Judaism. Paul, writing as a moralist and having occasion to deal with vices, ordinarily follows the classification used by popular

moralists of the time. Customarily vices were classified as sensual and antisocial. Many of the vice lists in Paul’s epistles demonstrate that he was familiar with this mode of classification.

Paul’s God, however, was not nature, but the supremely transcendent one, the Creator who formed the earth and made humans in perfection, whose work was blighted subsequently by the entrance of sin. Consequently, for Paul nature at present does not represent humanity’s true state. In a fallen world an appeal to nature to determine what humans should do or be is at best relative and at worst useless. In the context of fallen nature only relative distinctions can be made between the natural and the unnatural. For the Christian contemporary natural life is prelude to life with Christ, and it is validated as natural only because Christ Himself entered into the fallen natural life through the incarnation.

According to Bonhoeffer, “Through the fall the ‘creature’ becomes ‘nature’. The direct dependence of the creature on God is replaced by the relative freedom of natural life.” If that relative freedom leads us towards Christ and the original creation intent of God, it is deemed “natural,” but if it leads us away, it may be deemed “unnatural.”

Bonhoeffer also states, “From this there follows a conclusion that is of crucial importance, namely, that the natural can never be something that is determined by any single part of any single authority within the fallen world. And indeed whatever is set up in this arbitrary manner by an individual, a society or an institution will necessarily collapse and destroy itself in the encounter with the natural

which is already established. Whoever does injury to the natural will suffer for it.”

Here we see that the natural, even in the form preserved by God after the Fall, is a given. In the fallen world nature reflects the splendor of the glory of God’s creation and points forward to the restitution of all things.

But Paul’s perspective in the passage under consideration is not limited to our relative distinctions between natural and unnatural in the fallen world. Only God’s original intention for humans can be considered determinative for human essence, and this is revealed as his will in Scripture.

It is difficult to see what else Paul could mean by “nature” in our text, if not the world and humans as intended and as created by God. The “unnatural” comes as a consequence of the Fall and, therefore not God’s original intention and will.

This cosmic context of Romans 1:18-32 is generally recognized. Scroggs even suggests that in these verses the universal Fall is under discussion, which includes Jews as well as Gentiles. For these reasons homosexuality is not treated here merely as an expression of cultic idolatry, rather both practices are traced to the bad exchange that humans made in departing from the Creator’s original design.

As Field observes, “In writing about ‘natural relations’, Paul is not referring to individual men and women as they are. His canvas is much broader. He is taking the argument back, far more radically, to man and woman as God created them. By ‘unnatural’ he means ‘unnatural to mankind in God’s creation pattern.’”

Paul has in mind not only the casual and capricious sex swapping of the pervert, driven by lust and desire for flesh stimulation, but the basic divergence from God’s original creation scheme which all homosexual behavior represents.

The invert or constitutional homosexual may be seen as an aberration of God’s original creation. He/she may be considered depraved (as we all are to some extent) in the theological sense, but not in a moral sense.

In Romans 1 Paul uses the homosexual practices of his day to illustrate the depravity that follows departure from God’s will and original intent for mankind. It should not be forgotten that homosexual practices are only one item in a long list of vices. However, if homosexual acts could gain divine approval in any sense, surely Paul would have indicated how and drawn the distinction. He was not averse to doing such in other passages in the New Testament.

In a fallen world an appeal to nature to determine what humans should do or be is at best relative and at worst useless.

It should not be forgotten that homosexual practices are only one item in a long list of vices.

“Can We Talk?”

BEN KEMENA

While studies are few, research from Adventist academic institutions suggests that a significant number of Adventists have gay or lesbian family members and/or close friends. Adventist researchers have also identified a significant number of Adventists who are themselves gay or lesbian. The issue is not going away.

For individuals or families grappling with issues of sexual orientation, a broad-based team approach is best advised. This would include a licensed counselor or therapist, support groups, pastoral care, health care providers, teachers, and literature references. There are a number of psychosocial, biological, and spiritual issues to consider simultaneously when learning about sexual orientation.

In considering options, it may be helpful to review policies issued by professional health care organizations. The American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychiatric Association, and American Psychological Association have detailed policies regarding the treatment of homosexuals based upon more than a century of research. These policies are useful guides in assessing ethical behavior on the part of therapists, counselors and health care providers. Sadly, some counseling on homosexual orientation has been guilty of grossly unethical and abusive tactics.

To date, there is no credible evidence (independent professional peer-reviewed research) that sexual orientation can be

altered. There is good evidence that attempts to change sexual orientation can result in serious harm or detriment—and does not work. Perhaps more realistic for some is behavioral modification—typically a commitment to lifelong celibacy—but research shows that lifelong celibacy is rarely sustainable for the vast majority. Furthermore, while many Adventists condemn monogamous same-gender relationships, such condemnation may actually promote promiscuity rather than nurture responsible relationships.

In a 1994 survey, more than a third of Adventists admitted to having a homosexual as a close friend or family member. There is no “us” and “them” in this discussion—we are all members of Adventist families. While many may fear dialogue on this issue, Adventists must shame silence. We need to talk about homosexual orientation. We need to listen to those who have come to terms with their homosexual orientation, as well as to those who see lifelong celibacy or change as their desired option.

Besides professional help, it is often helpful to talk with others who have experienced some of the same challenges you confront. Below are a number of resources for Adventists who are wrestling with this issue. They represent a variety of viewpoints. Their inclusion here does not imply denominational approval or the endorsement of the author.



Ben Kemena writes from Denver, Colorado.

Redeemed

3315 San Felipe Road # 134
San Jose, CA 95135

This program actively supports Adventists seeking to change from homosexual to heterosexual orientation.

Someone to Talk to... (newsletter)

SDA-PFLAG (Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays E-mail discussion list)

Leader: Carrol Grady, 13008 234th Street SE, Snohomish, WA 98296

Web site: <http://www.glow.cc>

E-mail: carrolg@hotmail.com

sda-pflag@glow.cc/discuss/SDA-PFLAG.htm

This group supports Adventist parents and families dealing with issues of sexual orientation.

SDABridges

Leader: Inge Anderson

Web site:

<http://www.glow.cc/discuss/SDABridges.htm>

E-mail: sdabridges@glow.cc

A discussion list for Adventist lesbian and gay people who see a monogamous same-gender relationship as the best way to reconcile their faith and their sexuality. The primary focus of this list is spiritual life.

Adventist Gay Youth

Leader: Eric, P. O. Box 51

Lancaster, MA 01523

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/~agy7/>

E-mail: agy7@hotmail.com

This group supports 18-29-year-old gay, lesbian, and bisexual Adventists

God's Rainbow

Leader: Jacquie Hegarty (aka Juliana Harvard)

1120 Grand Street, Alameda, CA 94501

Website: <http://members.aol.com/rainbowsda>

E-mail: rainbowsda@aol.com

This forum supports gay and lesbian Adventists.

Womyn Friends

Leader: Jacquie Hegarty

1120 Grand Street, Alameda, CA 94501

Website: <http://jhegarty.com/wf/>

E-mail: womynfriends@hegarty.com

This forum specifically supports lesbian Adventists.

GLOW (God's Love Our Witness)

<http://www.glow.cc>

This is a resource for conservative Christians concerned with issues of sexual and spiritual identity.

The web site avoids dogmatism on either side of the homosexuality debate.

Among Friends

Web site:

<http://www.glow.cc/discuss/AmongFriends.htm>

E-mail: AmongFriends@glow.cc

GLOWguys: A men's list

Leader: Ralph Seland

Phone: 403-746-5592

E-mail: Glowguys@glow.cc

GLOWwomyn: A women's list

Leader: Inge Anderson

E-mail: Glowwomyn@glow.cc

Discussion lists for Christians who have a primary attraction to their own gender and believe that ethical sexual activity is confined to heterosexual marriage.

SDA Kinship International

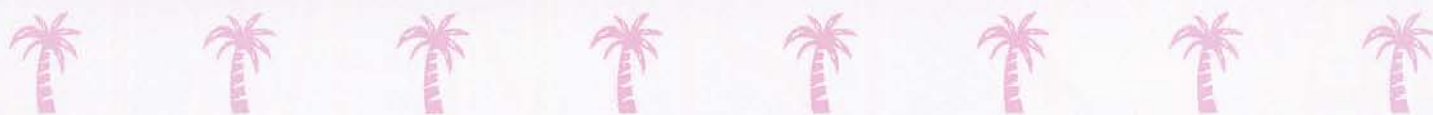
Leader: Darin Olson, P.O. Box 7320

Laguna Niguel, CA 92607

Website: <http://www.sdakinship.org>

E-mail: sdakinship@aol.com

This group supports gay, lesbian, and bisexual Adventists.



It's All Part of the Journey

JOHN MCLARTY

I'm a desert rat. There's hardly any place I'd rather be than wandering around in the desert. But sometimes it can be miserable.

I remember backpacking in Death Valley National Park. By seven o'clock we were headed up Cottonwood Canyon away from Death Valley proper. The canyon had almost no vegetation at all. No cactus, no brush. Just rocks and sand. By nine o'clock it was already in the eighties. It was not hard to imagine what the canyon would be like if it were a hundred or hundred ten degrees. It would be a perfect reflector oven.

About 11:30 we spotted the first cottonwood. Half an hour later we entered a cottonwood thicket and found the trickle of water that created the oasis. Further upstream we found an idyllic spot. Large trees shaded a grassy spot beside the runlet. There was not enough water to swim, but there was plenty for pouring over our heads and drinking. We stayed several hours until the heat of the day began to subside.

My own desert wanderings heighten my appreciation for the experience of the Hebrews on their journey through the desert from Egypt to Canaan.

The Hebrew people had been delivered from slavery in Egypt through series of spectacular events—the plagues, the escape from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. Leaving the Red Sea, they headed into the desert of the Sinai peninsula. It was barren and dry. After three days, they were desperate. They had found no water. They and their animals were dehydrated and facing death. Then in the distance they saw water.

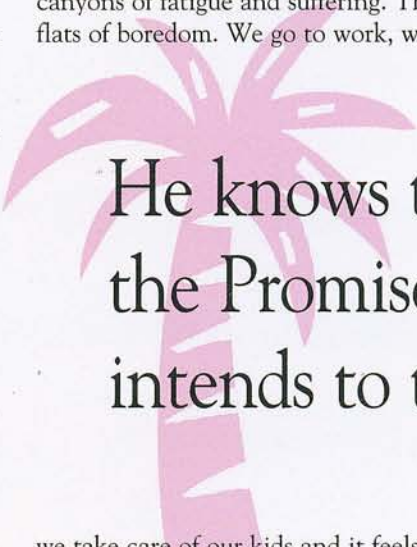
What a cruel disappointment. The water was unusable. It was bitter.

God worked a miracle and transformed the water so they could use it, but they named the place Marah, which means bitter. It was not a very pleasant place. Leaving Marah, they continued their journey. Their next camping place was a bit of heaven. Elim had twelve wells and seventy palm trees.

It must have been beautiful.

For most of us, our journey includes a lot of desert and a few oases. The spiritual challenge is to remember it's all part of the same journey. The drama of walking through the Red Sea, the drudgery of traipsing through the desert, the magical beauty of Elim were all part of the same journey to the Promised Land. God was leading all the time.

In our own lives there will probably be the dry canyons of fatigue and suffering. There will be salt flats of boredom. We go to work, we stay married,



He knows the way to
the Promised Land, and he
intends to take you there.

we take care of our kids and it feels like we're plodding through sand. And sometimes when we do reach an oasis, the water turns out to be bitter. Then there are those other times, infrequent, yes, but real. Times in our lives enriched by friends or beauty or tranquility or special contentment. And for a brief time we know we are favored by God.

Treasure the good times. They are gifts. But remember that the tough times and the easy times are all part of the same journey. God is leading through it all. He knows the way to the Promised Land, and he intends to take you there.

"Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters. Exodus 15:27 NKJV.

Ashley versus Lashley:

Is Atlantic Union College in Its Final Death Throes, or Prospering?

DENNIS HOKAMA

According to Gwendolyn Ashley, the recently resigned administrative assistant to five AUC presidents and five academic deans, Atlantic Union College has no funds to continue beyond the end of August, 1999. Her highly critical, four-page exit report also leveled charges of gross mismanagement against Sylvan A. Lashley, the president of Atlantic Union College. This confidential report was leaked to Karen Nugent of the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*, who wrote two articles about it on July 22 and July 24 of this year. The beleaguered president lashed back on August 4 by releasing his confidential point-by-point response to the *Lancaster Times*, a rival paper to Nugent's *Telegram and Gazette*. In it, the claim is set forth that AUC, far from being on the brink of collapse, is in fact experiencing a period of "great growth," and has made great progress, both academically and financially, during Lashley's tenure.

The July 22 article was based on the confidential report by Ashley, who left AUC in June to join Adventist Risk Management as an assistant to the President in Silver Springs, MD. The July 24 article focuses on AUC's immediate public response to the publication of Nugent's initial article.

It appeared under the heading "Former employee says Atlantic Union is on the verge of collapse. Trustees will discuss mismanagement charges of long-time assistant Thursday, July 22, 1999":

- AUC, with only 500 full-time students, many of which are students of color, representing 50 different countries, is on the verge of collapse because of mismanagement and cronyism by

President Sylvan A. Ashley, who was appointed to succeed James Londis in October of 1996.

- Theodore T. Jones II, Board of trustees chairman and president of the Atlantic Union Conference of SDAs, announced that a teleconference would take place today to discuss Ashley's report.

- President Lashley is quoted as saying, "We don't have a comment on it (Ashley's report)," while dismissing Ashley's allegations as the "musing from a disgruntled employee who was intending to leave the college for some time."

"Lashley placed unqualified, inexperienced friends and cronies in important positions. In some cases, they were unable to speak or write English well enough to be effective."

- Ashley admits to have been job hunting for the past 15 months because of her disappointment with Lashley's mismanagement. She declares that:

1. Under Lashley, enrollment has declined, fund-raising attempts have been feeble, faculty has been demoralized, a poor image has been projected, and there has been no marketing plan.

2. Lashley placed unqualified, inexperienced friends and cronies in important

positions. In some cases, they were unable to speak or write English well enough to be effective. In two crucial positions dealing with recruitment and fund-raising, he hired two of these friends at a time when AUC needed the very best in order to survive. These two were ineffective and have since asked to be reassigned back to teaching.

3. In the past year, AUC has put up most of its property for sale, except for the immediate college buildings and land, in order to generate cash flow.

4. In October of 1997, Bruce Wells, an AUC dean appointed by Lashley, approached surprised selectmen (equivalent to assemblymen) in nearby Clinton for permission to use a Clinton address to sell used cars out of the college parking lot in Lancaster in order to circumvent Lancaster's local zoning laws.

5. Ashley admits Lashley inherited an \$11 million debt from Londis, and an extremely difficult situation in 1996. But she claims that he ignored sound advice to make recruitment and fund-raising his main priorities, and instead wasted time and money by generating reams of strategy reports and adding budgets and layers of administration that were of no benefit to the college. As a result, the school was still more than \$11 million in debt despite the sale of property.

- Financial conditions are so deplorable that Lashley did not even present a budget or

financial statement at the November, 1998 board meeting.

- With projected cash flow lasting only until the end of August, 1999, and most of their real estate already sold, Ashley fears the college's collapse is imminent if Lashley remains in office.

Two days later, on July 24, Nugent followed that up with an article describing AUC's immediate response to

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