

ORDINATION INITIATIVE

NEWS • ANALYSIS • OPINION

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**NEW ENGLAND MEMORIAL
HOSPITAL SHUTS DOWN**

**LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER TAKES
FINANCIAL HIT**



Millennial Madness

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Timeless Adventism

Leaving the New Jersey Campmeeting I met an old acquaintance, Dr. Richard Ruhling. We greeted each other, and I asked what he was up to. His face was all smiles as he told me the good news: Jesus would be here in five years or less. The tracts he was handing out presented the Biblical proof.

That was 1989. His five years are now ten.

Date setting has a long history in Adventism. We wouldn't be here without date setting. Jesus was going to come in 1843. No, make that 1844, 1847, 1851. These dates were not set by kooks out on the fringe of our community. Some or all of them were believed and taught by James and Ellen White, Joseph Bates and other leaders. And they were all wrong. And so were the predictions Jesus would come in 1964, 1994 and 1996.

But our church is maturing. To be sure, there are Adventist evangelists and campmeeting speakers who recklessly hint that the year 2000 is the year. But they are becoming noteworthy because of their eccentricity. They no longer articulate the center of Adventist thought.

In a recent editorial, "The Next Twenty Years," William Johnsson, editor of *Adventist Review*, outlined some of the challenges the church will face in the next two decades. These challenges have nothing to do with "the fall of Babylon" or the mark of the beast. Instead they are the outgrowth of the "success" of the church. The little Anglo American sect of the late 1800s has become a cosmopolitan church with a projected membership by 2020 of thirty million. In this global church how will we ameliorate racism,

What kinds of institutions should we be creating now to prepare for that future?

nationalism and tribalism? What kinds of institutions should we be creating now to prepare for that future? What does theological and spiritual unity mean in a church that includes Ph.D.s at Stanford and illiterate hill people in New Guinea?

If we knew Jesus were coming within the next couple of years we could ignore most of these problems. But we are slowly confronting the fact that responsible church leadership means planning for at least the next twenty years (and privately for the next hundred or two.) We can no longer manage Adventism as a short-lived, last-minute spiritual irruption whose only future is heaven. Instead of a theology and polity that makes sense for only a few decades at the end of time, we now have to develop a timeless Adventism which can grow and serve for hundreds of years.

It's a daunting enterprise. It threatens the emotional heart of Adventism just as surely as the passing of the first centuries challenged the end-time confidence of the early Christian church. How do you move from breathless expectancy to patient service? How do you change a church culture from one predicated on certainty that time (and trouble, heartache and evangelism) is almost over to a culture that embraces suffering, service and evangelism as the normal life of the church?

Change is inevitable; progress is not. In this larger, older church the function of a distinct clergy class will become more important to the unity of the church; we will have to work with great diligence to preserve the priesthood of all believers. Inequalities and patterns of domination that are normative outside the church will become normative inside the church when there are mass conversions.

My prayer is that our church will become less and less concerned with the calendar—4004, 1844, 2000—and more and more concerned with Jesus—through worship, service and theology. After all, it is through connection with Jesus that we become truly timeless.

John McLarty, editor

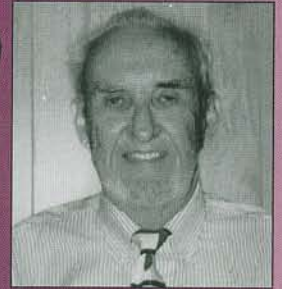


MILLENNIAL MADNESS

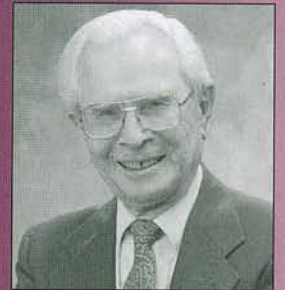
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ABOUT THE COVER:
 We are passing a milestone of hype and fear. Have we learned from the date setting errors that spawned us?
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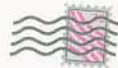
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FIRST CLASS

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Letters to the Editor
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On Homosexuality

Some of the letters in the September/October issue discussing homosexuality bothered me. So many people think that if a person says he is a homosexual he is having sex. This is absolutely not true. I have homosexual friends who are Christians and are celibate. The Adventist church takes the stand that the orientation is not sin, the act is sin... [showing] grace, to all people; is so hard for some Christians. I have experienced the bitterness and anger over my gay friends who came to a musical in the church where I was head elder. I was disappointed and hurt because the people who reacted so violently ...were my close friends and brothers in the church. ...Homosexuality is not a disease. It is not catching. It will not rub off. With God's grace, let's show them Christian love. Let's welcome them and use them wherever we can. Let's practice what Seventh-day Adventists teach.

E. E. WELLMAN
REDMOND, WASHINGTON

I feel sad apprehension for those who seek a spiritual, medical or psychological "cure" for homosexuality. It might be spiritually crushing to discover that God has planned no mechanism to undo the homosexual format he created. Scientific literature holds no evidence of actual "conversion," and spiritual attempts at cure have not stood up to examination or time.

Perhaps the interpretation some give to certain scripture is less than inerrant. Alas, a North American church which

cannot accept the reality of premarital sex may never come to grips with same-gender sex in useful ways.

DAVID BEE
VIA THE INTERNET

I ...congratulate you for this issue on homosexuality. I am no longer a SDA because I am gay and I'm not welcomed fully into the SDA church and its life... There are truths yet to be revealed (or at least studied outside of the closet). I have been a member of the Old South Church

...a North American church which cannot accept the reality of premarital sex may never come to grips with same-gender sex in useful ways.

of Boston, a United Church of Christ congregation for three years now. There were many years, prior to my joining Old South, when I felt that there was no church that would accept me and welcome me as an openly gay man and so I had no church home. I joined Old South because I found a spiritual home, the love and acceptance of Christian fellowship, and further, I found at Old South an active Gay and Lesbian Fellowship Group...

I am a former SDA church school teacher and active church leader. I worked for years within the Adventist Health Care System. All of my upbringing and education, through college, was

within the SDA system, and I still have strong emotional connections to the church and my spiritual roots. But I actually get physically and emotionally upset when I entertain the thoughts of going back to the SDA Church. My family... are always happy to have me come home, and I am always welcomed back to my hometown church, and I love to go there and see old friends and family, but I so wish that I felt really welcomed... A few years ago, the General Conference developed an out-

reach program for ex-SDAs, couching it in terms of "coming home." Only one problem, not only was the church not really open to welcoming all of us back, neither were the men who developed the program... So I'm very excited and pleased that *Adventist Today* has written on this issue.

GARY HILL
WATERTOWN,
MASSACHUSETTS

Creation Seminar

If the purpose of the Creation Seminar was to let us all know that committed Seventh-day Adventists are comfortable holding widely divergent views on Creation, it succeeded wonderfully. Participants wisely downplayed technical and evidentiary issues highlighting the community of divergence and its strengthening value to the church. Since there will never be agreement on the "truth" in Creationism, we can hope that the discussion will move to a more general (and useful for spiritual growth) debate on the "Inerrancy of Scripture."

DAVID BEE
VIA THE INTERNET

I found the September-October issue of *Adventist Today* most disturbing. In it, a number of supposedly Christian authors state positions in which they are willing to sacrifice the very foundation of their faith on the altar of "science"... Either we can believe exactly what the Bible says, or we can throw out the Bible. No other alternative exists... What should we do with science? ...The history of science is a story of discarded theories... No part of God's truth has ever been discarded for a "better" truth. It has always been true... But most of all, the Bible is the word of God and therefore it is true... If we drift to the idea that mankind arrived by way of evolution, whether by random or directed processes, then we have introduced death before sin in direct contradiction to the Bible (Rom. 5:12). If this is true, there is no hope of salvation, because the entire plan of salvation is predicated on the idea that there would be no death without sin.

TED NOEL MD
MAITLAND, FLORIDA

Thank you for the informative creation discussions reported in *Adventist Today*. Much of it was helpful; some debatable. I want to wonder why, in all of the discussions reported, and in a number of other recent SDA statements (including the recent Quarterly Sabbath School Lessons) no one, I think, ever mentions the position of Christ on the Creation matter. As Christ's followers one would think that we might be much interested in anything He had to say on those matters.

Actually, He said very little on the subject which suggests, since his focus was primarily on salvation, that it did not then rise to a level of great priority on His teaching agenda. He surely could have told us a lot about it, and the Flood, if He had wanted to do so—if we accept that "through Him all things were made and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). Christ's very few creation/flood remarks are tangential and

appear to have been spoken of simply as a "given," understood as such by both Him and His listeners. For example, when He responded once to the issue of divorce, as it was raised to Him, His reply was that "it was not so from the beginning," a pretty clear reference to Gen. 2:22-24 and the creation of man, woman and marriage in the "beginning." What "beginning?"

In His last visit with His disciples about things to come, He referred to "as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be..." Matt. 24:37 and on. Then there is the whole matter of the Sabbath of which He claims to be Lord. Our first introduction to it as a God-generated idea is bound up in Genesis to the story of Creation. While this does not say anything about when these things happened, nor exactly how (or how limited in scope in the case

As Christ's followers one would think that we might be much interested in anything He had to say on those matters.

of the flood), such words do mean to me that He accepted and endorsed Biblical creation and the Noachian story as they appear in Scripture, without equivocation. If He did, what am I to do? To believe about those issues?

FRANK R. LEMON
BANNING, CALIFORNIA

I enjoyed reading the September/October edition of *Adventist Today*. What a lot of good follow up to the Quarterly's lessons on Creation. Those lessons, that might embarrass some, proved to be a wonderful launch pad for discussions at our church Sabbath School. A door was opened that I can't ever imagine being closed.

The article [by John McLarty on "God's Grief"] was very stimulating and I appreciate the intent of the essay.

OLE C. OLESEN
GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA

I cannot express how inspired I was to attend last Sabbath's [Sept 25] panel discussion on evolution and to see other Christians questioning the validity of Creationism. Before the seminar, I felt like I was the only person within my Adventist circle of family and friends who openly considered evolution as a real possibility. Coming from a nondenominational high school, I was astonished to see my professors at Pacific Union College refusing to consider and disregarding any evidence that supported evolution. They called carbon-dating an inaccurate means of determining the age of fossils, and subdivided the term evolution into micro and macro-evolution, stating that the first was true, but the second impossible. I was disappointed to see the closed-mindedness to non-Adventist perspectives on campus.

Now, as I am in the process of applying to medical schools, I am wondering how to approach my application for Loma Linda. I feel my options are limited. I can either try

and avoid the issue concerning my doubts about religion, or I can state the truth and say that I am still trying to find my answer. After watching last Sabbath's discussion panel, in front of a packed audience, openly question a fundamental belief of Seventh-day Adventism, I was relieved to see that I was not alone. I think the church is taking a step in the right direction by conducting these controversial forums where people can challenge, as well as solidify, their beliefs.

JASON TAN
LOMA LINDA, CALIFORNIA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
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Southeastern California Conference Supports Women in Ministry with Ordination Initiative

On October 21, 1999, the Executive Committee of Southeastern California Conference (SECC) unanimously voted to affirm several recommendations (see box next page) brought by Lynn Mallery, SECC president and the Gender Inclusiveness Commission (GIC). This event may be of great significance to furthering the progress toward fully including women in the call of Adventist ministry. Currently, SECC statistics place women in 10 per cent of the conference's ministry positions.

The recommendations came as a result of the work of the GIC. Commissioned by the Conference to formulate recommendations and implementation strategies, the GIC broke into two working groups consisting of an education sub-committee and a policy sub-committee. Seven SECC

Executive Committee members served as part of the GIC to increase communication links between the Conference and the Commission group.

"This is definitely a positive step toward progress, but I am waiting to see how the Conference will implement these recommendations," said Penny Miller, PhD, RN, faculty member in the School of Nursing at Loma Linda University. Dr. Miller served as chair of the GIC and is a member of the Executive Committee for SECC. "It is good to see officials from the conference taking a leading role in this process."

Dr. Miller said she is encouraged by the action taken by the Conference in moving the efforts of gender inclusiveness forward in the Adventist church at large.

Several congregations in the SECC have, in recent years, taken the initiative

to ordain pastors to a ministry at the local-church level. The executive committee became concerned about the "lack of uniformity in the criteria being applied to candidates and to the ceremony itself," according to recent statements made by the SECC.

When asked to comment about the October 21 vote Mallery stated, "This is a step to bring equality in our conference and that is the limit we feel we can achieve at this time."

One of the two pastors at the Loma Linda University Church applying for conference ordination is Jennifer Scott. Like Miller, Scott said she is encouraged by the current action being taken by the Southeastern California Conference.

"It's wonderful to have the local church involved," observes Scott. "This conference has been supportive in the

The following are the recommendations voted in concept:

In order that women and men who are ordained to ministry achieve the same standards of preparation, and that women receive confirmation by the Conference and an affirmation of their ordination to other denominational entities, it is recommended:

1. That the initiative to ordain a minister be seen as rightly originating among those who primarily benefit from a person's ministry—the local church.
2. That general guidelines for the ordination process by the local church be established by the Conference.
3. That a local congregation move into the ordination process in consultation with the Conference.
4. That the Conference also be mindful of ministers serving in churches or institutions that choose not to initiate the ordination process for their candidates and that the Conference be proactive for these candidates.
5. That the name of each candidate for ordination be recognized by the Conference Executive Committee.
6. That the name of the candidate for ordination
 - a. be forwarded to the Union for its approval, or/and
 - b. that the Conference issue a statement of support and approval for the candidate that is sent to other church entities.
7. That equal credentials be granted to all pastors, both male and female.

past of equality issues and is continuing that effort.”

Southeastern California Conference officials confirmed that although Thomas J. Mostert Jr., president of the Pacific Union Conference, was not present for the SECC Executive Committee meeting on October 21, he has been in communication with Mallery and is aware of the actions taken. On the topic of Union involvement, the SECC released a statement which recognized “that it does not have the authority to ordain pastors for world service without the approval of the Pacific Union Conference and the North American Division.”

Although some speculate about the actual effectiveness of the initiatives, the education action steps set forth by the GIC may make a difference in implementation. Some of the education action steps include: making sure all new hires agree with and support Conference position regarding gender inclusiveness, providing all new workers with Conference gender position papers, providing samples of appropriate ordination services for local church officers, encouraging women in ministry, developing networking and resources for women in ministry and many more.

An SECC release observes:

The October 21 vote emphasizes that there is both great value in, and biblical precedent for, a local congregation's initiative to ordain its pastor. The SECC decision is designed to standardize what has been taking place in local churches...These standards will be applied equally to male and female candidates and each will receive the same credential.

With these wheels set in motion, gender inclusiveness advocates are hopeful that affirmation of women in ministry at the local conference level will become the norm for all Adventist conferences. Only time will tell the full affect these recommendations will have on a future decision to ordain women at the Union, Division, or world church level.

No Joy in Stoneham as the Historic New England Memorial Hospital Shuts Down

SANDRA FURUKAWA

In the year that would otherwise have been noted as its centennial anniversary, the bankrupt Boston Regional Medical Center of Stoneham, Massachusetts, formerly known as the New England Sanitarium and Hospital, not only closes its doors but possibly those of its academy and church as well. Sadly, what was arguably the most significant health care facility in regard to the Adventist church's medical missionary history is now itself history. Not only are thousands of people saddened by the collapse of this hospital known for “people caring for people,” but many also question if the closure could have been avoided.

“I think this is really indicative of the health care environment. The hospital has been experiencing increasing debt, intense competition and decreasing reimbursement”—especially from health maintenance organizations and Medicare, stated BMRC spokeswoman Christine Hawrylak in an Associated Press article. Hawrylak added that Boston Regional lost \$7.8 million in the fiscal year ending September 1997.

It is true that the health care industry is rapidly changing and becoming increasingly more competitive, forcing many hospitals to close, merge, or struggle financially. However, while the factors stated by Hawrylak may have contributed to the center's collapse, an October 25th Boston Globe article by Dolores Kong instead asserts that misplaced faith, shoddy management, and poor judgment were actually the main reasons for the hospital's closure. The

Globe article alleges that, among other things:

- CEO Charles Ricks led the hospital deep into bankruptcy all the while denying to its trustees that there was cause for concern. Ricks “kept reassuring us, before the hospital closed ... that everything was going to be all right,” said Dr. Robert G. Leone, a trustee and former president of the hospital's medical staff. Financial records show that as recently as 1992, the hospital had net assets of about \$25 million and, a little over 10 years ago, its liabilities totaled just \$5 million; now, however, the hospital's debt is estimated at \$60 million—\$15 million more than its net worth.

...misplaced faith, shoddy management, and poor judgment were actually the main reasons for the hospital's closure.

- A long-promised rescue plan in the form of a too-good-to-be-true \$52 million investment offer by Doctors Community Healthcare Corp. fell through in February, leaving Boston Regional millions of dollars in debt and without enough time to revive other previous offers. Under the terms of the deal, Boston Regional would have retained a 20 percent stake in the hospital, Ricks would have remained hospital president, and the church and academy located on the hospital campus would have been able to stay. Instead, the deal left the hospital in worse financial straits than before after it borrowed heavily from a

Doctors Community-affiliated financing company in order to stay afloat until the deal closed and paid \$50,000 a month in management fees to Doctors Community last year even before the agreement was finalized.

- According to the *Globe*, the Doctors Community fiasco was just the final, futile business deal of what hospital officials describe as “a decade of hospital assets treated like an office slush fund and a bailout for poor investment deals”—including questionable financial and property transactions such as \$14 million of BRMC funds transferred over six years (despite the misgivings of trustees) to a money-losing physician practice, Boston Regional Medical Associates.

- The *Globe* also reported that in 1990, property records show that a relat-

entity bought a Medford medical condominium from a physician for \$125,000. The hospital converted the condo into a residential unit, which was sold in 1993 for \$55,000 despite it being appraised at close to \$100,000.

- Records also show that Ricks' compensation in 1997 totaled \$354,839, including bonus, country club fees, automobile allowance, and paid leave—a nine percent increase over the previous year. This is what he was getting paid at the same time the hospital defaulted on its bonds and slipped in its bond rating under his administration. Ricks' severance benefits also amounted to about three years' salary and, as part of his compensation package, he received an interest-free loan for a second mortgage on his house. Under the Doctors Community deal, he was to get a

Efforts by the *Globe* to interview both Ricks and Perez resulted in a written response from Ricks and no response from Perez. However, Perez did issue a statement to *Adventist Today* when efforts were made to contact him (see sidebar following this story). Ricks, whose phone number is unlisted, responded to a letter sent to his post office box in Kennebunkport, Maine. A reporter for the *Globe* also reached the Tennessee home of Charles Case, who shared use of the Cape Cod home with Perez, but he refused to come to the phone.

According to the *Globe*, Ricks placed the responsibility for the hospital's closure on prior administrations leaving the heavy bond debt and lack of managed care contracts; on the intense competition among local hospitals; and on Doctors Community and its affiliated financing company, National Century Financial Enterprises, which allegedly abandoned the deal after a year of promising to complete it.

“We were able to turn around a lot of things but could not survive being left at the altar. I have spent several hours with the creditors' attorneys who have indicated to me that our board and management made the only, decisions we could, based on the offers and choices we had,” Ricks wrote.

Even though they were not in office when some of the earlier decisions were made, current church leaders also defend the hospital and the church's role.

“It's always easy to second-guess the past, especially when something goes bad, and wonder if we shouldn't have done something different and better,” said Halvard Thomsen, president of the church's Southern New England Conference, who acknowledged that he had joined the hospital board only after it had decided to go with Doctors Community. He added that he has been a member of two Adventist hospital boards and “in neither case has the ecclesiastical representation overshadowed the businessmen and the business minds at all.”

Still, others say there are still too many questions and not enough answers. “It just doesn't seem right. How does a hospital close in three weeks after being

“It's always easy to second-guess the past, especially when something goes bad, and wonder if we shouldn't have done something different and better,”

ed hospital entity bought a Cape Cod home from a physician's wife for \$175,000. Individuals familiar with the transaction report that, after extensive remodeling, the house was primarily used for personal and entertainment purposes by then hospital CEO Francisco J. Perez and former top-ranking church official Charles Case. In 1995, the house was sold at a loss of more than \$40,000, not including renovation costs. Other sources claim that the representation of this situation by the *Boston Globe* reporting is inaccurate, but no other scenarios have been confirmed.

- Also in 1990, property records reveal that the same hospital-related

\$280,000 base salary, plus an up-to-20 percent bonus, along with a termination amount equal to six months' salary.

- Hospital officials also report that in the year or so before the center's closure, the administration eliminated the finance committee, stopped providing managers with monthly operations reports, and notified department heads that there was no need to come up with an annual budget. Meanwhile, the hospital spent millions of dollars on medical services and facilities such as a renovated maternity wing and surgical care unit plus a new breast care center, which included a mammography machine, paid for through community fund-raisers.

Statement of Frank Perez

What has happened to the Boston Regional Medical Center is a tragedy for the community it served, for the dedicated physicians and employees who gave their lives to it and for the corporate church. Each administrator who served that institution from the 1970's to the present would have his own perspective on what happened and why, and some might choose to point fingers at predecessors or successors. Further, comments already made to the press are incomplete, out-of-context and create more rumor and gossip than fact. Already, this process played out in the press has hurt people unnecessarily and, in my opinion, unfairly. I do not wish to worsen an already difficult situation. Lastly, it has been nearly six years since I left the institution. I only know what I found when I arrived and what I did about those challenges during my tenure.

here 100 years?" asked Diana Gould, who ran the development office and was one of BRMC's chief community fundraisers. "Unbelievable devastation was done."

At the time of its closure, the hospital had to lay off 600 full-time and 300 part-time employees. "It's a wonderful hospital and everybody's crying," said a dejected X-ray technician to a *Boston Herald.com* reporter. The technician, who declined to give her name, added, "I'm not looking for another job yet. It's like family."

According to many employees and patients, Adventist or not, the 100-year-old Boston Regional was a very special, caring place of priceless historic value and great potential. In its early days, when it was known as the New England Sanitarium and Hospital, Ellen White visited and wrote favorably of it, stating that its location provided patients with "the most favorable conditions for recovery of health" (Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 13, p.3). Later, when the hospital was known as New England Memorial, the wildly popular alternative-medicine practitioner and author, Dr. Deepak Chopra, taught in the family practice residency program. Church members lament the fact that such a historically significant Adventist institution—more significant than even the well-known Loma Linda University Medical Center—has been lost and, with it, a beautiful estate, a school, and possibly a church.

Being that the buildings for both the Hospital Church and the Greater Boston Academy are also located on Boston Regional's scenic 41-acre parcel overlooking Spot Pond, a jury trial was conducted to decide whether or not the land on which the buildings are built should be regarded as part of the bankrupt hospital estate.

At the same time that the jury trial was going on at the US bankruptcy court, a hearing on the sale of the hospital property was also underway across the hall. The hearing was an effort by creditors representing the bondholders and other major creditors to clear the grounds so the property could be sold. According to the *Boston Globe*, the unusual back-to-back timing of the two trials was so that the jury's verdict could be reached in time to decide the sale of the hospital property. The October 29th split verdict of the jury found the church independent, but the school as part of the estate. The *Boston Globe* reported on October 30th that the verdict had jeopardized the sale of the property since the only bid on the hospital (for \$20 million) was contingent on both the church and the school vacating the property.

Both sides seemed surprised by the jury's ruling, which was reached after nearly five hours of deliberation. It has not been determined what the potential buyer, Gutierrez Co., a Burlington-based commercial real estate firm, or the creditors committee will do. (Phone calls to both parties were not returned as of

when this article was written.) Possible scenarios include Gutierrez rescinding or modifying its offer, or the creditors committee appealing the verdict on the church.

One of the lawyers for the church and school, Charles Glerum of the Boston law firm Choate Hall & Stewart, commented, "I imagine now that everyone knows what the jury's decision was... the parties will sit down and try to sort out a solution that works for everyone." He refused to say whether his team would appeal the verdict on the school but said, "My clients were of course dismayed by the decision with respect to the school, and gratified by the decision with respect to the church."

If the academy shuts down, its 94 students will immediately begin classes at the nearby Edgewood Elementary School. Since the 96-student elementary school is already at full enrollment, according to an unhappy EES parent, it will most likely have to convert its gymnasium into additional class space for the remainder of the year.

Whatever the reasons for its closure, it's clear to see that the loss of the Boston Regional Medical Center has resulted in a hurting community that will need a lot of time to heal.

"This [hospital estate] was our birthright, it couldn't be sold. Here it was cast away," said Dr. Will Horsley, who was chief of ophthalmology as well as one of the many Adventists who worked there. "They lost a church and an academy, and they got less than zero."

Loma Linda Area Physicians Get a Reality Check:

The Flagship of Adventist Institutions Takes a Financial Hit

DENNIS HOKAMA

Loma Linda University Medical Center's Credit Deterioration

A recent series of draconian belt tightening moves by Loma Linda University Medical Center has sent shock waves through Loma Linda's physician and health-centered community. For outside observers, a visible sign of LLUMC's worsening economic situation was the announcement on May 21 by Standard and Poors that it had lowered the rating on Loma Linda, California's \$60.69 million health-care revenue bonds to "BBB-" in March, from

Market Works. Because the interest rate on these bonds were set in advance of their issue, the subsequently lowered rating will not affect the revenue bonds in question, but will raise the interest rate on subsequent issues of revenue bonds of that agency which must be sold in order to refinance the next batch of bonds that come due. Once a bond falls below "investment grade" level, however, it is no longer just a matter of percentage points, because the bond may become ineligible even for consideration by some institutional investors.

A municipal health care revenue bond is a municipal I.O.U secured strict-

Health Care Foundation which the Medical Center helped establish in 1995. The Foundation owns, staffs, and operates a number of medical clinics. The Foundation contracts with physicians within the Loma Linda University Faculty Practice Plan (LLUFPP) to provide all physician services to clinic patients. When the Foundation began to lose money, the Medical Center, as the sole corporate member of the Foundation, covered the deficits, which in the year 1998 alone, amounted to \$9.3 million.

The \$60.69 million revenue bonds make up only a fraction of LLUMC's total indebtedness. According to Gus Cheatham of the Medical Center's Office of Public Affairs, LLUMC's long-term debt as of December 31, 1998, was \$297,065,833. Unlike the revenue bonds in question, these bonds are not affected by LLUMC's credit because they are insured, and therefore have an "AAA" rating. The total assets of LLUMC and affiliates were \$611,949,145 as of the same date.

The Recovery Plan

Behind the scenes, the Medical Center was trying to come to grips with the financial crisis. In November of 1998, David Moorehead, MD resigned as president of LLUMC and its Board began a search for a replacement.

On January 28, 1999, Dr. Lyn Behrens, then serving as president of LLU, was appointed as interim president of LLUMC as well. On March 24, Behrens was appointed as full president of LLUMC, while retaining the presidency of LLU. The integration of LLU and LLUMC had been planned for some time, but Behrens ascendancy to LLUMC president made that academic. The University itself was in a much stronger financial position at the time, although the fates of the two institutions were as inseparable as twins joined at the head. In the months that followed, Behrens and a senior management team in consultation with Ernst and Young, began a consolidating, structural reorganization and initiated a draconian program of cost cutting in an attempt to

"...there is a strong possibility that the aggressive \$42.3 million turnaround will be achieved and the Medical Center will break even for the 1999 year."

"BBB." On October 28, S & P further lowered LLUMC's bond rating to "BB-." Behind the scenes, LLUMC management is attempting to stop the hemorrhaging by the end of 1999.

Bond ratings range from a high of "AAA," which is held by blue chip companies, to a low of "D," held by companies already in default on their debt obligations. Bonds with a "BBB" rating and higher are considered "investment grade" bonds, and many trust investment managers are forbidden from investing in any bonds lower than "investment grade". Bonds with a "BB" S & P rating or less are considered speculative, and are often called "junk bonds," according to Robert Zipf, author of *How the Bond*

ly by the revenue from the health care facility the money is used for; in this case LLUMC. As Standard and Poors explained in their May 21 report, the lowered rating reflected LLUMC's poor first quarter 1999 financial performance (a loss of \$6.9 million), poor system performance in 1998, weak liquidity (only 43 days cash on hand in 1998), a high debt to capitalization rate (60%), and further projected losses stemming from LLUMC's "continued dilution of LLUMC's financial position from transfers to non-obligated affiliates to subsidize their losses."

The "non-obligated affiliates" refers, at least in part, to a nonprofit organization called the Loma Linda University

halt a further deterioration of its credit.

By April 30, the Medical Center's 1999 losses had mounted to \$16,864,669. At that time, according to Cheatham, the Medical Center instituted a \$42.363 million turnaround plan "intended to stop further losses and if possible, recover losses from the first four months." According to projections, that plan would achieve a net income of \$840,150 for 1999. By the end of October, their year to date losses had dropped to \$10,866,868. In a November 15 e-mail, Patti Pettis, writing for Cheatham, said, "...there is a strong possibility that the aggressive \$42.3 million turnaround will be achieved and the Medical Center will break even for the 1999 year." The Medical Center intends to keep most of their program in place into the year 2,000 and beyond.

The Foundation Subsidy

What is of great concern to many physicians is the Medical Center's future plans with respect to its support of the Foundation, which in 1999 cut back its subsidy to \$6 million, according to Cheatham, representing a decrease of \$3.3 million from 1998. Future "equity contributions" to the Foundation by the Medical Center, says Cheatham, will be "carefully evaluated by the Board of LLUMC on a quarterly basis."

The dynamic which underlies the willingness of LLUMC to subsidize the Foundation to their own apparent detriment requires an explanation. Tertiary teaching hospitals such as LLUMC demand the services of physicians in all the specialties to serve as "faculty," although they could never afford to hire them outright. They also have hospital beds that need to be filled with patients advised by those physicians. Few successful physicians, on the other hand, could afford to hire out to a hospital at the expense of their private practice, but do need the services of a hospital for their patients. Finally, patients need both hospitals and physicians, but not physicians and hospitals in collusion with each other to maximize their own profits at the expense of the patient, the taxpayer, or the insurance company.

In a capitalistic society, such need

equations are normally balanced with commissions or referral fees. In medicine, however, such practices are considered unethical and therefore forbidden. The industry's solution is to create a somewhat murky relationship called "affiliate," which is a cross between "employee" and "associate." On paper, at least, these affiliates serve as "faculty" in

Spartan economics, many physicians have had their Foundation incomes suddenly slashed and are now contemplating a future in which their practices must be profitable in their own right; a novel concept to some, perhaps, but not without some merit. This may result in an exodus of some physicians from the Loma Linda area in search of greener

The woes of LLUMC seem to be a microcosm of the health care industry in general on the eve of the third millennium.

return for certain hospital privileges and the prestige of being associated with a reputable hospital. However, in real life, this delicate, relatively cashless equation does not always balance nicely without some additional vigorish on one side or the other to stabilize it.

The non-profit organization LLUHCF, or "The Foundation," is a buffer which theoretically enables the needs of all sides to be met without a direct conflict of interest. Cheatham was therefore emphatic in denying that the Medical Center was subsidizing the Loma Linda University Faculty Practice Plan (LLUFPP). It was subsidizing instead, the Foundation, which managed and paid them. This is apparently a standard industry practice that is inevitable and probably necessary.

Subsidies of the Foundation had enabled LLUMC to maintain a stable staff in the vicinity of the hospital without creating a conflict of interest. The affiliates in turn, had been content to live and practice in the Loma Linda area without needing to be concerned about San Bernardino County demographics that could not otherwise support their practice.

With the Medical Center's new

demographics, and may signal a change in the dynamics of a city in which even the U.S. Post Office delivers on Sunday, but never on Saturday.

Medicine and Future of Adventism

The woes of LLUMC seem to be a microcosm of the health care industry in general on the eve of the third millennium. Medicare cuts due to the 1997 Federal Balanced Budget Amendment which cut patient care reimbursement to hospitals, frugal HMO contracts, and the de-mystification of medicine have squeezed the profits of hospitals in general, and have left few hospitals with "AAA" ratings, and many struggling to survive.

For the Adventist church, which has historically depended on the medical work as the "right arm" of its ministry and its financial touchstone, this is a development that may require a serious reevaluation of this historic relationship. The tragic recent demise of the Boston Regional Medical Center, which also took down Greater Boston Academy in its wake, and endangered the Hospital Church on its property, may be a precautionary tale of things that could go wrong.



Those who study prophecy are seldom diffident and are rarely without a text to back up everything they say. And while denominational evangelists still offer classic historicism, many others in the church are exploring diverse approaches. The following articles offer a sample of the variety in contemporary Adventist prophetic interpretation.

Why Study PROPHECY?

Some years ago, when I and some friends decided to start a Daniel and Revelation Sabbath School class at our local church, our pastor probed me with the question, "Why study prophecy?" My response, unfortunately, was, "Because it's there." If I could take another shot at this question, here's the answer I'd give:

RICK TOEWS

First, Daniel and Revelation contain the message of the gospel. In the prophecies of these books, Jesus Christ is portrayed as the lawful Ruler and Kinsman-Redeemer of those who will inherit the kingdom of God.

There is a special blessing for those who study the Revelation of Jesus Christ—for those who read it and take it to heart. God gave it to his servants to show them "what must soon take place." I would suggest that, while previous generations have been edified by this book, there is a special understanding for those who belong to the final generation—the generation in which the Second Coming of Jesus will "soon take place."

The book of Daniel concludes with the statement that "the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end," but that "those who are wise will understand" (12:9-10); the implication being that, when the time of the end comes, those who are wise will understand the prophecies.

And, of course, we are counseled in the writings of Ellen White to diligently study Daniel and Revelation.

What this comes down to is that we, as servants of God, should study the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation because our Master has given them to us for our instruction.

Many of us, however, possibly do not really believe the study of prophecy is worth our time. Here are two possible reasons for this attitude.

1. We generally believe that most of Daniel and Revelation is history and is therefore not relevant for us today. We are just waiting for the Sunday Law, the Mark of the Beast, the Plagues, and the Second Coming.

2. Perhaps many assume that even if we were to study the prophecies, we could not really be sure of understanding them. Probably some of us have tried studying before and have made little real progress.

If we think the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are either irrelevant or incomprehensible, regardless of the counsel we have been given, most of us are probably not going to spend a lot of valuable time with what appears to be an exercise in futility. Too many other things demand our attention.

I developed an affinity for Daniel and Revelation early in life and several years ago began to study with renewed interest. Given my background, perhaps I can comment on the above reasons why studying might not be a high priority with some of us.

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First, I do not believe that most of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation have already been fulfilled. Some have; I would suggest that the majority have not. The focus is in the future, not the past. (Yes, there have been lots of historical “fulfillments;” however, the real application of many of these appears to be ahead of us.) It is therefore in our interest to see what Daniel and Revelation have to say to the generation that will live to see Jesus come. After all, it really is possible that we are that generation. The prophecies are relevant for us today.

Second, while we may not be able to anticipate newspaper headlines based on Daniel and Revelation—and I, for one, do not see much point in attempting to—the rest of the Bible gives us plenty on which to base an understanding of the prophecies in these books, as they relate to God’s plan of salvation. If we ask for the guidance of the Spirit as we study our Bibles, he will give us the understanding he sees fit. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is not a largely incomprehensible mystery. We can gain at least a basic understanding of it.

From personal experience, I can give another reason for studying. Maybe it’s just the way my mind works, but I have found the study of Daniel and Revelation fascinating and spiritually rewarding. If you, like me, experience a sense of exhilaration when the light goes on upstairs after trying to solve a puzzle, I recommend to you the study of prophecy.

We do not serve a God who gives us a reading assignment and basically tells us to just learn it and don’t ask questions. He gave us hearts and minds to love him, question him, and know him better; and he has given us the Bible, including the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, as a playground—an exploratorium—in which to exercise our hearts and minds. When we enter this fascinating realm with our Guide and Teacher at our side, we open ourselves up to an adventure of spiritual understanding that makes us want to keep coming back for more.

Let me offer some examples.

Revelation contains the prophecy of the two witnesses. Historically, we have understood this prophecy to refer to the Old and New Testaments, and there are lessons to be learned from that perspective. On the other hand, if we look at Revelation 10-11 from a different angle, we can see a prophecy that might well be called, “Acts of the Apostles, Round Two.”

John’s vision of the angel coming down from heaven robed in a cloud and with a rainbow above his head is reminiscent of Jesus’ ascension before Pentecost. John was among those who, at that time, were told, “This same Jesus will come back in the

same way in which you have seen him go.” This happened shortly after Jesus told his disciples that they, with the Holy Spirit, were to be his witnesses (John 15:26-27; Acts 1:8).

Of the two witnesses, Revelation 11:4 says, “these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.” This imagery is taken from Zechariah 4, where Israel was assured that the Lord’s work of rebuilding the temple would be accomplished not by mere human effort, but by the power of the Spirit of God working through the human agent.

If Revelation 11:5-6 were read as a prompt on the TV game show Jeopardy, the correct response would be, “Who are Moses and Elijah?” This does not suggest that the two witnesses might be Moses and Elijah, but it does suggest that the ministry of the two witnesses will be like that of Moses and Elijah. It was Moses who delivered God’s people from slavery in Egypt, and it was Elijah who sought to reconcile the people of Israel with their God. The last prophecy in the Old Testament is the assurance that, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, God will send to us the prophet Elijah. He will “turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6).

Another example: The seven trumpets begin in Revelation 8. Given the obvious sanctuarial setting of this prophecy—and of Daniel and Revelation in general—what might the Feast of Trumpets tell us about the trumpets in Revelation? Further, there is a familiar story in the Bible that prominently features seven trumpets depicted in Joshua 6. In fact, it appears to be the only other such place in the Bible. This parallel may be significant for interpreting the meaning of the seven trumpets in Revelation.

Revelation 13 speaks of a beast coming out of the earth. This beast is called the false prophet in Revelation 19. There is a story in the Old Testament of a false prophet rising up from the earth found in 1 Samuel 28. It is worth considering what these two false prophets might have in common. The one in the Old Testament was personating the prophet Samuel. Based on the description—like a lamb—whom might the one in Revelation be personating?

I hope this has piqued your interest in beginning, or renewing, your study of Daniel and Revelation. As far as possible, use your Bible as your commentary, and pray for divine guidance and understanding. With the Holy Spirit as your Teacher, you will come to see the good news of the gospel in prophecy, because it really does point to Jesus Christ as our lawful Ruler and Kinsman-Redeemer.

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Undated 1844 Adventism

JOHN MCLARTY

According to Adventist tradition, the judgment hour message had first gone out in 1844. Noah and simple arithmetic brought us to 1964.

Messiah would come. God said so to Abraham, and his children struggled to keep alive their hope. But a millennium passed and more, with nothing to show but heartbreaking cycles of revival and apostasy. Prophets blew on the coals of hope, offering cryptic assurances of deliverance and a deliverer. Last of all, the prophet Malachi spoke, reaffirming God's intention to send Messiah, the Anointed One. Then 450 more years. No prophet. No messages. No events on the prophetic chart—just interminable waiting. Finally another millennium rolled and Messiah was born.

He was here thirty-some-odd years, a mere whisker of time against the backdrop of millennia, then he was gone again, leaving a promise, "I will come again." For years, his followers breathlessly anticipated him. But decades passed, then centuries, and gradually, reluctantly, the waiters settled in for the long haul. His promise was not denied, but you can live in breathless expectancy for only

so long. Sooner or later you have to get on with life.

The Middle Ages happened.

With the end of the next millennium in sight, people again began to speculate. Dates were predicted—1843, 1844, 1851, 1914, 1964, 1994, 1996—and passed. Now here we are at the turn of the millennium, and Adventists and others are breathlessly watching the calendar and the sky. Surely Messiah's return cannot be long delayed.

I am unconvinced. I cannot invest my heart in another round of frenzied expectation. Adventist history is too much with me. It's as though I were there on October 22, 1844, with a chart in my hand that proved beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus would return before the day was over.

I read church history and the New Testament and notice the desperate, fervent hope of an imminent return. Jesus said he would be here soon. And he said that somewhere around 30 A.D. Then there were the Montanists three hundred years later, with a prophetess and a hope of the Second Coming.

But before all that, before I read Adventist history or checked out the Montanists or read the New Testament with adult eyes, there was 1964. At campmeetings, in the halls at church, in conversations with my teacher at school I heard the rumor. This was the year Jesus would come. Noah preached for 120 years. "As it was in the days of Noah so shall it also be..." According to Adventist tradition, the judgment-hour message had first gone out in 1844. Noah and simple arithmetic brought us to 1964. Pinpointing the year did not violate the "no man knows the day or the hour" text since the verse didn't say anything about not know-



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ing the year. My parents did not move to the country. We didn't do anything drastic, but I remember the excitement. Jesus was coming. The wait was almost over.

About this same time Billy Graham was quoted in the national press on the subject of the Second Coming. He was asked when Jesus would return. It would be improper to set a date, he said, but he couldn't see how earth could continue more than five years. It was a wonderful confirmation of our own certainty. Jesus was coming soon.

The letdown was gradual because we weren't sure of the exact end point of the 120 years. Did they begin January 1, 1844? October 22? Did we use Jewish years or conventional years? Nineteen sixty-four passed. And 1970. And I headed off to college, not heaven.

Five years later I was taking eschatology from Roger Coon at Pacific Union College. He presented a detailed picture of the Adventist understanding of last-day events. The Sunday Law, the plagues, the ecumenical movement. Then he supplied us with hundreds of quotations from secular sources to show there were trends already present in American society that were moving us rapidly toward the final fulfillment of the Adventist prophetic outline.

The class left me perplexed. Dr. Coon did a masterful job of marshaling evidence. He did not use obscure sources. His quotations were from *U.S. News and World Report*, from *Newsweek* and *Time* and from *The Wall Street Journal*. It seemed to me that if you accepted his premises, his conclusions were beyond question. But I had already begun to question his most fundamental assumption: that Bible study can yield reliable information about the timing of Jesus' return.

I left Coon's class convinced that if there was anything to this business of matching world events to Bible symbols, Jesus would return in five years or less. And in spite of my suspicions, deep down I hoped Coon was right. That was twenty-five years ago.

Coon was wrong. Not in any specific dogmatic assertion he made. He was careful to avoid offering any statement of how many years he thought time would last. He was wrong because he followed the Adventist tradition of trying to measure our distance from the end of human history by the skillful manipulation of Bible symbols.

If you research this kind of Biblical interpretation you find yourself in a maze where everything has meaning and everything is connected to everything else, but nothing is what it appears. There are countless practitioners of this kind of prophetic interpretation. And each system works. If you start in at point A with the interpreter and don't ask too many hard questions you'll end up at point Z. Along the way you will have looked at hundreds of Biblical passages which appear to offer some kind of linguistic, symbolic or spiritual support for the particular scheme you're following.

There are just two problems with this approach to Scripture. No two of them are the same. And not a single one of them has stood the test of time. The predicted events don't happen. Jesus has not yet returned.

So what should I as an Adventist make of all this prophetic date setting?

First, I acknowledge it as part of my spiritual heritage, both as an Adventist and as a Christian. Adventism did not arise as a sophisticated philosophical/theological statement about eternal truths. It arose out of passionate, almost fanatical conviction that the Bible predicted something was going to happen—something that did not happen. Of course, in this respect Adventism is merely a microcosm of the larger world of Christianity whose first-century pioneers understood Jesus' words about returning "in this generation" as applying to them.

There are no immaculate conceptions in Christianity. The religion as a whole and its major subdivisions have been birthed in movements that combined the sublime and the silly, the noble and the goofy. When sophisticates work too hard to distance themselves from the blunders and naivete of their spiritual forebears, they often create mirror images of them. You cannot get to the truth by refuting error.


Second, having acknowledged my personal and spiritual connection with date setters and builders of prophetic mazes, I deliberately look beyond the obscure and cryptic prophecies to the spiritual core of the Bible and all prophecy: the Messiah.

Adventism inescapably includes hope for a coming deliverer. It does not include date setting, not even the approximations hidden in words like "soon" or "this generation." The date setting eccentrics of Christianity are merely the froth of waves splashing against a great berg of hope that has moved through Jewish, Muslim, and Christian thought for millennia. It is the berg that matters. Messiah will come.

In the most extensive "last days" discourse in the Gospels (Matthew 24, 25), Jesus' disciples ask him when the end of all things will occur. Jesus begins answering their question but gradually shifts their attention away from the question of when to the question How does one prepare? He ends the discourse with a series of parables. The first one cautions against putting off the Second Coming and lapsing into cruelty and drunkenness. But in the next parable, The Ten Virgins, it is precisely those who are certain the lord is coming "soon" who are the fools.

The last two parables, The Talents and The Sheep and Goats, have nothing to do with time. The first one turns on the question: What do you think of God? In the second the crucial question is: How have you treated your neighbor?

I am an Adventist. I believe in a judgment and an end to human history. But I have no interest in attempts to date, even approximately, the Advent. According to Matthew 25, I don't need to overly concern myself with deciphering Revelation's cryptic symbols or all the obscure prophecies of Daniel and Ezekiel or the complicated imagery of Leviticus. Instead I am called to prepare others and myself for the Advent by understanding and proclaiming the character of God and by serving my neighbor.

If I do that, then whenever the Advent occurs, I'll be welcomed into the joy of my Lord and hear his affirmation, Well done. 

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The Prophetic Task of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the **Next Millennium**

LARRY CHRISTOFFEL

Seventh-day Adventism understands its prophetic task as preparing the world for Jesus Christ's second coming by proclaiming the three angel's messages of Revelation 14. Discerning and sharing the meaning of Revelation 14:6-12 is crucial for the church's successful accomplishment of its mission. In this article, I will examine several key phrases in the three angels' messages.

The Gospel

In all his canonical writings, John uses the noun, "*euaggelion*," translated "gospel" only in Revelation 14:6. He uses an infinitive, "to preach" (from the verb, "*euaggelidzo*") only in Revelation 14:6, and the verb "announced," (from "*euaggelidzo*") only in Revelation 10:7. Both the noun and verb forms carry the connotation of "good news," the noun representing the message of good news itself, and the verb, "the proclamation of good news." Especially significant is the linking of the proclaiming of the good news in Revelation 10:7 with the Seventh Trumpet Angel (Rev 11:15-18). The "gospel" is thus linked with the "judgment" (Rev 10:7; 11:18; compare with 14:6,7), rewarding the saints (Rev 11:18; compare with 14:12,13), and the destruction of the enemies of God's people (Rev 11:18; compare with 14:8-11).



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In both Revelation 10:7 and 14:6, the Greek words for gospel indicate an eschatological, or last day, establishment of God's kingdom, paralleling Jesus' association of the gospel with the kingdom in Matthew 24:14.

The first angel proclaims the "eternal gospel." The third angel speaks of the "faith of Jesus." The faith of Jesus as it is used here is the believer's faith in Jesus, who, throughout the book of Revelation, is the slain Lamb (Rev 1:5; 5:9, 12:10-11, etc.). This clearly demonstrates a strong parallel with Paul's understanding of the "gospel" in relation to the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ (See Rom 1:16, 17; 3:21-26; 1 Cor 1:17; 15:1-4).

Two great challenges facing the Adventist church in the next millennium are: understanding the meaning of the "gospel," or "the faith of Jesus" and demonstrating the relationship of this "gospel" to the "commandments of God" in relevant terms (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

Further elucidation of John's understanding of the "gospel" is found in the actual words of the first angel of Revelation 14:7, "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment has come."

"The Hour of His Judgment Has Come"

John believed that the time of the end was near. While Daniel was told to "close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end" (Dan 12:4), John was instructed, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near" (Rev 22:10). Seven statements in the book of Revelation declare the nearness of the end (Rev 1:1,3; 22:6,7,10,12,20). "The hour of his judgment has come" refers back to the judgment at the cross (compare John 12:20-33; 16:7-11; Rev 2:7-12) and forward to the judgment of rewards and punishments (Rev 11:15-18; See also Rev 6:9-11). It also has reference to the present standing which believers have in the judgment through faith in Jesus (See John 3:16-18; 5:22-24).

John believed "the hour of his judgment" was present reality and had already begun. The original readers of the book of Revelation would have been struck by the urgency of the statement and encouraged by the assurance it held out to them.

If we as Adventists give significance to 1844 in our interpretation of "the hour of his judgment," we must do so in a way which does not ignore the past, future and present dimensions of the judgment as explained above. The Atonement completed at the cross must not be eclipsed by our judgment hour message. Adventism ought to take seriously the interpretation of Daniel 8:14 that was introduced a century ago. In 1844, God raised up a movement which would restore the "daily," or truth about Christ's priestly ministry (i.e. the gospel). What the little horn power obscured, Adventists must preach with clarity and power (See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, "Daily, The").

Babylon and the Remnant

The Apostle John used the title, "Babylon" for Gentile paganism (Rev 12,13), Christless Judaism (Rev 2:9; 3:9), and apostate Christianity (Rev 2:14, 20). John believed that, in the near future, a single coalition of religion and politics would institute a universal persecution of Christians (Rev 13). The three angels' messages were to alert the world to this inevitability.

To John, the "remnant" (Rev 12:17) were simply Christians. Promises originally given to the Jews were now to be fulfilled in universal dimensions, as "every nation, tribe, language and people" was called to respond to the gospel and to the Lamb (Compare Rev 7:1-8 with Rev 7:9-17; 10:1-11 with 10:11; 14:1-5 with 14:6).

Adventists, in their belief that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Remnant church of Bible prophecy, and that "Babylon" includes every false religion, face two challenges: (1) To what extent can we recognize other Christian churches as expressions of genuine Christianity, and unite with their members in fellowship, nurture and in the mission of taking the gospel to the world? (2) How much diversity can we tolerate within Seventh-day Adventism as a worldwide movement? This has implications for doctrine (i.e. reaching consensus on the meaning of the gospel, etc.), for church organization (i.e. centralization or congregationalism), for worship style, for gender inclusivity, and for many more contemporary issues.

The Mark of the Beast and The Seal of God

John saw a coming crisis which would polarize all the people of the world into two worshipping communities, one with the "seal of God" (Rev 7:1-8,) and the other with the "mark of the beast" (Rev 13:11-18; 14:9-11). The conflict for John was over whom to "worship" (Rev 14:7), and was related to the first table of the ten commandment law (Rev 13:4, 6, 14-17; 14:6; Ex 20:1-11). Even as he wrote, John's Christian contemporaries were having to decide whether Caesar or Christ was Lord. Nero had already persecuted the church, and Domitian had proclaimed himself Lord. John believed the final crisis was about to erupt.

The seal of God is related to the Lamb and his blood. By the "blood of the Lamb," the saints are redeemed (Rev. 1:5; 5:6-9), and Satan the Accuser is overcome (Rev 12:10,11). We should not miss the statement in Exodus 12:13, "The blood will be a sign for

you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt." The 144,000, marked with God's seal (Rev 7:1-8), have the name of the Lamb and name of his Father, written on their foreheads (Rev 14:1). Those who worship the beast are "all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (Rev 13:8).

Adventists have tended to define the keeping of a day (Sunday/Saturday) with the mark of the beast and the seal of God. The challenge facing the church is whether it will make the cross and the substitutionary work of Christ a central feature of the end-time conflict. Will Sabbath-keepers who reject Christ have the seal of God? Will Sunday observers who know Christ as their personal Savior receive the mark of the beast?

The Testimony of Jesus

Although the "testimony of Jesus" is not mentioned in Revelation 14:6-12, its appearance in Revelation 12:17, a passage parallel with Revelation 14:12, warrants some comments. John understood the "testimony of Jesus" to be a message from Jesus and about Jesus (See Rev 1:1-3, 10). An angel, as well as an apostle, could possess it (Rev 19:10). The "testimony of Jesus" (Rev 12:17) and "the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12) appear to be parallel expressions. Both, in their association with Jesus, reflect the gospel.

Adventists have long taught that one of the signs of the Remnant church is the "testimony of Jesus" or "spirit of prophecy," understood as Ellen G. White's prophetic ministry. Her writings, Adventists assert, "are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction" ("The Gift of Prophecy," Article 17, "Fundamental Beliefs," *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*). A significant challenge in the future will be to define in just what sense Mrs. White's writings are equivalent to the "testimony of Jesus" and in what way they are authoritative. Are her writings merely one exemplar of the testimony of Jesus or the only exemplar? What about the testimony of Jesus in the writings of the Apostle John? Can a Seventh-day Adventist disagree with Mrs. White's interpretations of Scripture and still be in good standing? Should we regard her commentary on Scripture as pastoral or exegetical? Should Mrs. White's writings be allowed to function as the infallible interpreter of Scripture?

Mrs. White's endorsement of historicism, Seventh-day Adventism's preferred method of prophetic interpretation, validates the church's unique interpretation of the book of Revelation. Is there room to include John's understanding of the meaning of the three angels' messages, making that the central thrust of our evangelistic proclamation to the world?

Is it possible that the defining feature of the Remnant has more to do with loyalty to Jesus as Savior and Lord than with our possession of a prophet? If we are going to share with the world the lifesaving "testimony of Jesus," then our message must say more about Jesus than about the Ten Commandments or last-day events. Jesus must be the center of our life and our proclamation.



Jerusalem

and

Prophetic Parallels

ROBERT A. ROACH

Jesus once said of Jerusalem, speaking of troubles to come to the ancient city, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luke 21:24) A few verses farther on in the chapter he spoke of his return to the earth, the second coming. The Romans overtook the city in retaliation for the rebelliousness of the Jews in 70 A.D. and sent away its people. The great Jewish Diaspora has sent Jews to nations all around the world.

The city has survived for centuries without Jewish control. It even became a treasured Islamic holy place. Many Bible scholars have speculated about what was meant by the phrase, "Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Did it mean there was a possibility that the Jews might gain control of it once again? And if so, did that portend the return of Christ? Most Christians believe that the Jews are still God's Chosen people.

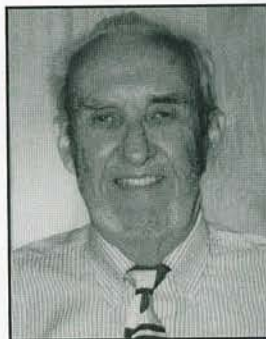
Some SDA scholars declared that the Jews would never regain control of the old city, because they were no longer "God's chosen people." In 1898, Edson White, son of James White,

said in his book, *The Coming King*, the fulfillment of Luke 21:24 "will be when the work of the gospel is finished."

Yet in 1948 the Jews were given permission by the United Nations to establish a homeland in Palestine, and in 1967 they captured the city of Jerusalem in the "six-day war." In 1980 they made it their capital. In the years since, millions of Jews have immigrated to Israel. Does this have prophetic implications? Some think it does.

In 1952 Arthur Maxwell wrote in *Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. 2, p. 230, "The recent dramatic restoration of Israel (1948) has focused the attention of mankind once more upon Palestine ...there is one prophecy concerning Palestine that we should all be watching with special care, said Jesus, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled...' mysteriously they were held back from achieving the most cherished goal ...what could be the reason? Only that the times of the Gentiles was not fulfilled."

In 1974 Roy Allen Anderson in his book, *All Eyes On Israel*, declared, "What is happening in



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Israel is one of the greatest signs of the Messiah's imminent advent in glory" p.17.

I have asked many SDA pastors and evangelists what they think and I get two answers: "Since the Jews are not God's vessel any more it has no meaning," or "I don't know." In 1980 Jean R. Zurcher in his Sabbath School Quarterly, "Christ of the Revelation," said, "If we cannot see that Jerusalem is an exceptional sign of the times, then might we not be placing ourselves in the same position as the religious leaders who know how to 'discern the face of the sky' but could not discern obvious signs of the times?" Zurcher went on to show that the history of this world is coming to its climax and that the restoration of all things is at hand.

In 1994, Arnold Wallenkampf in his book, *The Apparent Delay*, concluded, "So in the end time the fate of Jerusalem, the end of Gentiles' control of it, would be a sign for God's people to be ready for the end of probationary time, and an alert that Jesus is soon to come."

Ellen G. White had a comment on this statement by Jesus, suggesting that the times of the Jews and Gentiles are parallel:

"As the approach of the Roman armies (66 A.D.) was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), so may this

This seems so convincing to me that I now believe without doubt that we are the last generation.

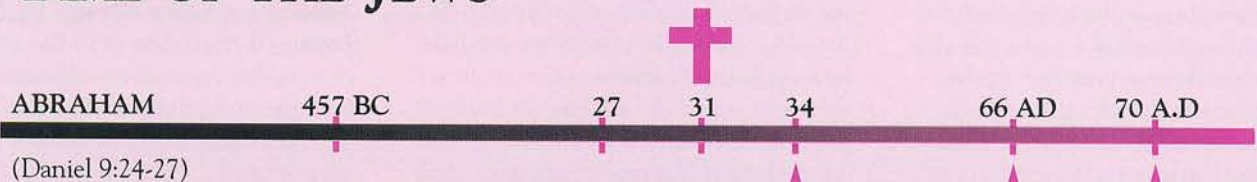
apostasy [referring to the national Sunday law in the United States] be a sign to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return" (*Testimonies to the Church*, Vol.5, p. 451).

The parallel between 66 A.D. and the national Sunday law in our times is clearly portrayed. No date is set, only an event. "The Savior's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world [the second coming with its destruction] that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon his law" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 36).

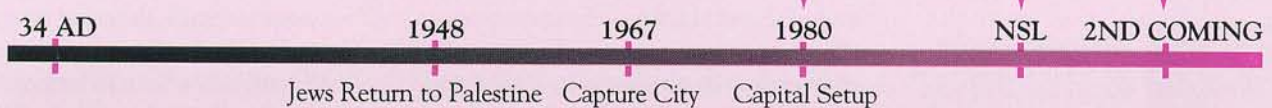
If the "time of the Jews" was represented by the interval between Abraham's day, 2000 B.C., to the fall of Jerusalem, 70 A.D., then the "time of the Gentiles" may run from Jesus' death in 34 A.D. to the second coming of Christ.

This seems so convincing to me that I now believe without doubt that we are the last generation. I have told academy students I was sure they would live to see him come. Will that not be a privilege?

TIME OF THE JEWS



TIME OF THE GENTILES



GRAPHS BY ROBERT A. ROACH
PRODUCED BY GRAPHICS STUDIO



millennial madness

RAYMOND F. COTTRELL

January 1, 2001 will usher in the third millennium of the Christian Era. Some think this event portends the imminent return of Christ. This naïve bit of pious fiction is based on the non-sequitur assumption that Psalm 90:4 (a day in God's sight is equal to a thousand years) makes the seven literal days of creation week prophetic of a predetermined seven-thousand-year history of our earth, the first six of which are allotted to man, in which he may "do his thing" and the seventh, or Sabbath rest, to God, which is equated with the thousand years of Revelation 20.

This gratuitous interpretation imposed on the days of creation week originated with Zoroaster, founder of a religion known as Mithraism in ancient Persia prior to Cyrus' capture of Babylon and establishment of the Persian empire in 538 B.C. Mithraism conceived of a cosmic battle between the good god Ahura Mazda and the devil Ahriman, and over the next millennium, became popular throughout the ancient world.

This esoteric interpretation of the days of creation week found repeated expression in Jewish apocalyptic literature during the intertestamental period, for instance in the apocryphas of Baruch (x1.3) and Ezra (v. 11-28ff), and last of all in the Secrets of Enoch, about A.D. 30 to 40. (Incidentally, the twentieth chapter of Revelation can be reproduced almost in its entirety from passages in these and other apocalyptic writings.)

For Christians, Revelation 20 added a



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Such was the result of the millennial madness that pervaded Christendom when the first millennium of the Christian Era gave way to the second.

new dimension to the thousand-year interpretation for each of the days of creation week. This is evident in the writings of several early church fathers such as Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, all during the second century of the Christian Era. The extracanonical Epistle of Barnabas (Ep. 15) refers to the six ages of the world, followed by a seventh thousand when "the Son of God appears, to put an end to the time of the unjust one [Satan], to judge the ungodly and renew the earth"—in literal Jerusalem. Jerome, however, held heaven to be the locale of the seventh thousand years. On the basis of his premise that the Catholic Church constituted the millennial kingdom of God on earth, Augustine construed the seven-thousand-year scenario allegorically. Millennialism was thus widespread in the early church.

With the approach of the second millennium of the Christian Era in A.D. 1001, this concept climaxed in an almost universal expectation that the end of the world was at hand and that Christ would soon appear. The capture of Jerusalem by the Turks in 1009 intensified that expectation, in view of the belief that Jerusalem must be in Christian hands to welcome the return of Christ. This belief precipitated the Crusades, which for a brief time, placed the city in Christian hands. Such was

the result of the millennial madness that pervaded Christendom when the first millennium of the Christian Era gave way to the second.

With the transition from the second millennium to the third a little more than one year from now, the legitimate anticipation of the second coming of Christ has—in some minds—revived the ancient concept of a predestined six thousand year history of the world, at the close of which Christ will return and reign with the saints in heaven for a seventh thousand. This time, the idea is fortified by Archbishop James Ussher's chronology, which assigns creation to 4004 BC. In view of the fact that Dionysius Exiguus, who in the sixth century of our era based our system of dating on the birth of Christ, but made a mistake of four years, six thousand years have now elapsed since creation (according to Archbishop Ussher).

In his book, *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, the late Dr. J. Barton Payne—a firm believer in the inerrancy of Scripture, a teacher at Wheaton College, and president of the Evangelical Theological Society—reflects wistfully on page 106:

"There has yet to arise a generation in church history in which at least some believers were not convinced that theirs were the closing days of the era. All, however, except those of the present generation, have proved to be mistaken; and it is not too much to suggest that those of the present could be too!"

Christ will return, as He promised. But the time of His coming does not depend on faulty exegesis, allegorical interpretation, or the scholarly guesswork of Archbishop Ussher. No one knows the hour, the day, or the year.



The Significance of the Year 2000

An Interview with Shigehiro Kinjo of Okinawa, Japan

DENNIS HOKAMA

Introduction

AT contacted Elder Shigehiro Kinjo, a native of Okinawa, Japan and inquired about his views on the significance of the approaching millennium.

Kinjo is a 61-year-old self supporting former SDA minister who has pastored in the United States as well as in Japan, and is a graduate of the Loma Linda School of Public Health and Japan Missionary College in Chiba, Japan. He now runs Sunrise Ministry out of Nakijin, Okinawa. He is editor and publisher of a paper called *Anchor*, that publishes about six times per year. According to his son, it has a circulation of about 2-300, with about 10 percent of his subscribers scattered across the United States. He is a well known figure in Japanese Adventism, although his uncompromising criticism of the church from a traditionalist perspective has made him somewhat of an institutional pariah. His views are fairly well known among Japanese Adventists in America as well. He has a son who is currently enrolled as a student at Loma Linda University's School of Medicine.

Communication for this piece were done strictly by e-mail. Kinjo's responses consisted of two e-mails which were spliced together in some instances. Other than grammatical corrections and some minor stylistic adjustments, the words are those of Kinjo. Personal comments were edited out. His views should not be interpreted as being representative of Japanese SDA members or ministers. Nevertheless,

he may represent some in the traditionalist undercurrent in Japanese Adventism.

AT: What significance do you attach to the coming of the year 2,000?

You ask me about my view on the year 2,000? I believe in the statements of Ellen White which say our earth's history is about 6,000 years old. She mentions that many times, as you know. Prophecies and world events seem to go hand in hand, crying out to our people of the shortness of time. The Lord seems to be using lay people to unfold prophecies about end times (2T 692, 693) which throw a flood of light on events to transpire (RH 25,1883). Trends and actions of the Vatican, Protestants, Secret societies, the New Age movement (modern spiritualism), and Economic, Environmental, and social crisis, all are tending toward the set up of a New World Order.

Besides those signs of the times, the Y2K problem and the "season of calamities" should be seriously considered. Rome is waiting for catastrophic events to establish a New World Order. For the Marian Apparition movement (about the appearance of Mary, or the "Apparition of Mary"), 34,000 priests are engaged. In early 2000 year, some great thing might happen, so that the justification for One World Order can be made and Rome will take advantage of it.

Soon, the economy of the U.S will collapse and all world economy will collapse. National ruin will soon be realized. Our

church is theologically splitting into two groups: Conservatives and liberals. A Japanese SDA theologian recently said, "The separation between both camps is great and deep, which might be a dangerous situation," after interviewing most of the prominent SDA theologians on both the East and the West coast in the U.S. In the meantime, neither camp is giving warnings to the world.

I think the U.S. National Sunday law is very near. Once this happens, we will know that the time has come for Satan to work and for God to work. Then we'll see the prophecy of Daniel 12 is being fulfilled. The third angels' message has two phases; one is the "threatening warning" against the greatest deception of control of the world, the false millennium; the other is the great hope from the most holy place where Jesus is doing the final intercession for mankind. In the eternal gospel, both warning and hope are included.

No one set the time for the passing of the Sunday Law, or for the second coming of Christ, but once Sunday law is passed, we'll know the Lord's coming is very near. The time of visible "Shaking of Adventism" is at hand. But the character of Jesus will be perfectly reproduced, and unselfish service will be demonstrated through our church purified.

AT: What is your rough estimate of the believers (expressed as a percentage of SDA membership) in Japan whom you would classify as "conservative" in the

sense that you use that word to describe yourself and your group?


Our group is not "conservative". According to the Spirit of Prophecy's definition, "conservatives" are those who do not open their hearts to new light that the Lord sends time to time to his people. I believe in the 1888 message, the 1960 Awakening message by Brinsmead (pre-apostasy), which continues to the end of time, sending new light, a "flood of light". (The apostasy of Brinsmead does not mean that the message he presented in early 1960 is heresy.) Many people misunder-

stand without studying for themselves. It is a sad fact. The fact that Ballenger, Canright, and even Solomon apostatized, does not mean that the message they gave when they were in the Lord's hand, was heresy.

I cannot estimate the numbers of conservatives, (so called) in Japan. I would say 30 to 40%. But I hope you define the word "conservative" correctly. Since I am not in the ministry anymore, I can't know. You should ask someone in the ministry.

AT: How would you describe your present relationship with, and attitude

toward, the official SDA organization in Japan, and worldwide?

I fully believe the SDA church is the prophesied true remnant church. But she will take same roads as ancient Israel, which is foretold by Sister White. Until the great visible shaking, we should not step out from SDA church. This is not the Church leaders' church, but Christ's bride. Because sometimes I express wrongs and apostasy, they don't like me. But I love this church to which has been committed the Three Angels' message. 

Bishop Ussher and the End of the World

JAMES H. STIRLING

How long ago was the earth created, and how much longer will it last? Scholars since the days of St. Basil the Great, (330-379 A.D.) have been attempting to find answers to these questions from the Bible. St. Basil thought it began about 4000 B.C., relying chiefly on calculations from biblical genealogies. An Irish prelate, Bishop James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, arrived at the date for creation by using a combination of astronomical cycles, historical accounts, and several sources of biblical chronology. He wrote about his findings between 1650 and 1658. He placed the exact time for the beginning of Creation at midnight, October 22, 4004 B.C. (just 2,000 years before the birth of Christ. The last "4" was occasioned by the date for Christ's birth as 4 B.C.) Ussher's dates became popular as the result of being entered into the Great (1701) Edition of the English Bible, remaining there without explanation for 200 years. In 1900 the Cambridge University Press removed the dates.

But Ussher was also interested in how long the world would last. Since the Genesis account said the world was made in seven days, he reasoned that it should last seven thousand years, a thou-

sand years for a day. By his reckoning there would be 4,000 years from creation until Jesus was to be born, 2,000 until he returned at his second coming, and another 1,000 for the millennium described in the Book of Revelation. Ussher lived a comfortable distance from these later events, some 350 years away.

Will there be some hidden code in the Scriptures that points to another date?

As we look at his reckoning from our perspective, Christ should have made his triumphal entry in the year 1996, about October 22.

Few people today would invoke Ussher's name as authority for their conviction that Christ should come in the year 2000. However, because of his influence a great many people feel intuitively there is something about the turn of the millennium that warrants their confidence in that outcome. It is the world's greatest anticipated escape mechanism.

Admittedly, Christ could return whenever he sees fit. Human chronological schemes are not binding on him.

That possibility could include the final year of this century or the first of the new one. But what would be the likely effect on Bible-believing, hopeful followers if the long-awaited spectacular return with the trumpets and the angelic host doesn't happen for two years, or five years, or twenty-five years? Ussher's date has been pivotal for centuries, and now it is to be proven, yea or nay. What is there next? Will someone "discover" something in the "jubilee cycles" that provides an arithmetic solution to time's arrow? Will there be some hidden code in the Scriptures that points to another date?

Or is it possible that the followers of Christ who yearn for his appearing will learn to look somewhere else than the skies? Will they learn to take seriously what he taught about "being ready" personally to meet their Saviour, and focus on carrying out his mission to the world instead of wishing to escape it? If Christ desired that every human group was to have the opportunity to know his love and feel his redeeming grace in their lives, his followers have a long way to go to make that happen. There may be more people today in the world's burgeoning populations who have not heard about the gospel of Christ than ever before. What can we do about that?

On Cows and Travel Tips

DIANA FISHER

One of my favorite advertisements on TV right now is from the “got milk?” campaign. A single cow chews away on her dinner, minding her own business. The barn in the background is lit up as humans are heard celebrating with Dick Clark’s count down to the year 2000. Four....Three....Two....One...suddenly the lights shut down and everything is black and quiet in the barn except for the protesting human voice: “Hey, what’s going on?” The cow continues to chew. The slogan sums up by saying: “Cows: Y2K ready. Got milk?”

Contemplating the cow, I pose one question: as we travel from one millennium to the next, what are we going to pack?

As travelers through life, we all carry something (i.e. baggage). Our culture, subculture, neighborhood, environment, genetic pool and experience all influence who we are and what we pack for future excursions. As Adventists, we tend to have more bags than most of us can handle.

I remember at six, crawling under the cafeteria tables while my parents were on “Cafeteria duty.” What was I doing? Checking for jeans of course. I thought I was “Daddy’s Little Helper” as I ran to tattle on those academy students who were breaking the “no-jeans-in-the-cafeteria” rule. Little did I know I would learn to hate those rules when I went back to the same boarding school ten years later.

Now, as I venture into my 30’s, I don’t worry about what anyone wears—or doesn’t wear, for that matter. But sometimes, other silly issues creep into my life because of my Adventist “baggage.”

How Adventists or former Adventists respond to our baggage is one of the most challenging parts of our adventure into the next millennium. Here are the choices as I see it:

1. Rebel. Resist any packing and just flee with panic! Take the next flight to the farthest destination and don’t look back. Two problems arise with this response. First, we can never get far enough away. Second, we end up needing a toothbrush or a change of clothes. We buy the luggage that is avail-

How Adventists or former Adventists respond to our baggage is one of the most challenging parts of our adventure into the next millennium.



Diana Fisher is the new managing editor of *Adventist Today*.

able, but it’s expensive and not very well-made. Life is thrown together and not intentional. We come back home tired, feeling lousy and unfulfilled.

2. Never travel. Stay exactly where our heritage dropped us off. Sure, this saves packing anything and it’s risk-free, but we don’t experience anything but the inside of our living rooms. Where’s the adventure? Where’s the joy of discovering new worlds?

3. Overpack. We decide to travel, but can’t decide what is appropriate to pack and what to leave behind. So we cram the house in our backpacks. We end up exhausted from hauling all that guilt and bitterness around. Do we really need the list of “Do’s and Don’ts,” or the fights over what he believes or she thinks about this theological concept or that doctrinal issue? What will we really need in the future?

4. Take the essentials. To me, this is the best option. What are the essentials to keep while traveling into the next millennium? My list includes just one thing: Guidelines on how to treat myself, others and the world around me. That’s it! If I can remember the basic principles that Christ taught about loving God and others, I think I’ll be okay.

Here are just a few more travel tips for the road:

1. Although it can be done alone, traveling with others is a bonus—let’s find some travel buddies, even if they pack differently from us.

2. Listen to seasoned travelers. They have good advice about what essentials to pack and what to leave behind. They also know which roads are rough, well traveled or in-between. Sometimes we’ll be surprised by who has traveled the same path as us.

3. Remember, it doesn’t really matter what bags we were given, it’s how we travel with them and how we re-pack that makes the trip a joy or a burden.

4. Finally, the whole point is not the packing, but the trip—what we’re discovering about the world and the people in it.

As the countdown continues, I hope, like the cow, we can all be Y2K ready. Let’s pack just the essentials. Happy New Millennium and Bon Voyage!

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