

Evolution Debate:
Goldstein vs. Taylor

The Day Saddam Came
to Sabbath
School



Bernie and Christina
Anderson—Breaking
Pornography's Grip



Adventist *Today*

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Adventist First?
or **Christian First?**

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COVER PHOTO BY RIKA GEMMELL

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Flesh, Spirit, and the Body of Christ

Andy Nash

When I was struggling financially, I was secretly glad that our close friends were struggling too—didn't want their kids to have nicer things than ours had. When I noticed a colleague using too many exclamation points, I concluded I must be superior to him because I knew more about the crucial exclamation point. When I get the most frustrated with my circumstances, I'm the least patient with my family. I struggle with anger; also pride; pretty much the whole seven, actually. I'm not very sociable unless there's a reason to be sociable. I escape from life in ways (television, sports news, elaborate vacation planning) that are less easy to condemn than other escapes (drinking, drugs, gambling), which makes me appear more "together" than I really am.

I don't have a racist tendency that I'm aware of. I care more about my children's happiness than my own; I would die for them in a heartbeat. I once gave an old sports car to a teenager who really wanted it. I worked for two years without pay to help erase a company debt. Most of the time I'm able to forgive quickly. I stick up for the underdog. I don't care much about the approval of the world or name-brand clothes; just show me the clearance rack. I'm not afraid to take on authority if it's for a good cause. I'm honest.

Flesh and spirit.

How can I, as a believer, be so complicated? How can you?

Because the kingdom of God is complicated. It's mixed in, said Jesus. Like yeast in dough. That's why you and I can be so bad—and so good—within a single day, a single hour.

Only one possessed the kingdom in all its fullness. The Man Jesus. Without concession to the flesh, with unquenchable spirit, only one had it all together: the loving, lacerated body of Christ. And yet the mystery: He invites us to be His body, to do together what He did alone. You will do greater

things, He told a broken bunch of followers, than I have done.

There's no way this can happen, though, when I act as though my like-minded buddies and I are the only ones who "get it." Okay, I don't personally connect with much of what 3ABN or Amazing Facts airs. But I look for the good. Ellen White (herself a complicated person) called this applying the gospel sieve. You can do it too. You can look for the good in all Adventist voices.

But hold on. Even a unified and whole Adventist Church doesn't equal the body of Christ. That's like saying a functional toe is the same as a functional body. It isn't. The wind blows where it wishes, and it's blowing in other churches, often harder. (What makes me think so? Over a year's time, I visited 17 other churches.) Baptist dynamo Beth Moore reminds us that when God looks at us, He doesn't see our dividing walls—our denominational lines. He only sees His kingdom, wherever it's found—and it's found in all churches.

But hold on. All of the Christian bodies put together don't come close to equaling the body of Christ. Every good thing, said Jesus' brother James (himself a complicated person), comes from above. Every good quality anyone has, every good thing anyone does—it's a piece of the kingdom of God. This includes Barack Obama's drive and Hillary Clinton's intelligence and George W. Bush's personal warmth. It includes the beauty of Robert Frost's pen, of Mariah Carey's voice, of Michael Vick's work with disadvantaged children. The kingdom of God includes the sole redeeming quality of the person you hate the most. No, they may not all have accepted the King, but they've all got a piece of the kingdom.

The wind blows where it wishes. It can blow here too when we recognize complexity and trade in our blanket judgments for a humble, teachable spirit.

How can I, as a believer, be so complicated? How can you?

Knowing About Him vs. Knowing Him

Amy Petersen's "Why Uncle Dan and Aunt Sue Lost Their Attraction" (Nov./Dec.) touched on the most important question in a person's life. The "Uncle Dan/Aunt Sue" phase of the Christian life is important and necessarily comes first. But the bottom line question—How do you get from knowing about God to actually knowing Him?—is the difference between not having eternal life and knowing you have eternal life (see John 17:3).

When we seek to know Him, He lets us find Him. That is a promise! When He makes Himself known to us, we experience the joy of realizing we are His. That thrill calls forth a flood of praise previously unknown to us. Finding Him and knowing Him causes us to realize that nothing else matters as much as continuing this relationship with our Lord and Father. So we seek, knock, and find Him.

FRED SPEYER
Paradise, California

Understanding Genesis

My first reaction was disappointment after reading Sean Pitman's review of *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives* (Nov./Dec.). Coming right after George Knight's excellent "Visions and the Word," I was initially happy to see *Understanding Genesis* featured in the book review section of *Adventist Today*. But Pitman spent many words explaining his own theological perspective and few reviewing the book.

He wrote, "It is very interesting to read what self-styled 'contemporary Adventists' have to say..." Are we still testing each other's orthodoxy on the basis of whether we understand all biblical narrative as literally factual or not? Will we continue to squeeze out our

thinkers and questioners, our scholars and our university students, because we refuse to consider trying on new lenses that could help us better understand God, the Bible, and truth?

In the final paragraph of his review, Pitman says, "So, how do we really know what God is like or even if he exists at all, if little in the Bible really happened as described? Sure, the creation story, the story of Adam and Eve in a perfect garden paradise, the story of Noah's flood, Jonah and the whale, or the virgin birth are all nice stories. Even as fables they may present some important truths, no doubt.

Psst...Spread the Word

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If you like what we're doing with the "new" *Adventist Today*, we'd love for you to partner with us.

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But they say a whole lot more if they are *really* true. Is Genesis just an interesting tall tale? Or did it really happen? How about life after death? Is heaven real, or just a tall tale? Does it matter?"

Pitman's phrase "they say a whole lot more if they are *really* true" suggests that he has narrowly identified truth with literal fact. He seems to be insisting that the question "Is that story really true?" means "Did that story really happen?" This narrow definition of truth and dichotomous reasoning risk missing the richer, more-than-literal implications so often portrayed in the Bible. Finding out that a story in the Bible is metaphorically or symbolically true, a fable perhaps, instead of something that actually happened, need not weaken our assurance of the Bible's reliability or oblige us to take God or the Bible less seriously. It can, in fact, broaden our understanding of the profound truths God has for us. And only those who insist on literal interpretations will lose faith if the story of Jonah, for instance, is discovered to be a parable to explain an important truth and not an actual event.

Unanswered questions can be prickly things, and examining truths "without the potential of physical testability," as Pitman puts it, can be frightening for some people. The alternative, however, of making the basis of our faith a simple matter of affirming a "right" set of church recommendations or a certain set of beliefs will only impoverish our Christian experience.

Those who devalue metaphorical language, call symbolic stories "tall tales," and define the profound truths portrayed in myth as somehow *less true*, not to be taken as seriously as literal facts, or not "*really* true," miss a great deal of what the Bible can tell us. They also risk an abrupt loss of assurance when new realities are revealed. And new realities—new

truths—will always be revealed. Let's open our minds and hearts so that we will be ready to accept them, and each other, as we struggle to interpret truth.

BEV ELLEN CLARKE
Penticton, British Columbia, Canada

The review of *Understanding Genesis* is a prime example of keep-God-in-the-box thinking. I found the book exciting and mind-stretching. Ivan Blazen explains in his chapter on Genesis 1 that Moses was writing first to the children of Israel, who had been in slavery surrounded by many gods and polytheistic neighbor nations for longer than our country has existed. He was seeking to teach them that there is One God, the God who made the heavens, earth, sea and all that in them is, gave them the gift of the Sabbath, and chose them for His special people. What an insight! It makes such good sense.

The Bible does not answer the “when” questions: When was Satan cast out of heaven? How much time elapsed before the planet was “furnished” (see Gen. 1:1 in the *Septuagint*) for the new order of being God was planning to create? Perhaps we need to reread Job 38 and 39 to put our questions and doubts in perspective. It seems reasonable to me that God had been creating His vast universe from eternity past. Fortunately, the Bible is very clear that we are created in God's image, we are His children, and He wants us to walk with Him and to know Him intimately. What an awesome God to care so much about this speck in His vast universe!

It is also clear that we are sinners in need of a Savior, and that the risen Christ is that Savior who is coming back for us. The Bible is abundantly clear for its purpose. Let's not try to make it say more than it does.

I found nothing in the book that shook my faith in the gospel or the Sabbath. We seem to forget that God has two

books that “shed light upon each other.” The church had to finally accept the light that His book of nature shed when scientists discovered that our planet is not flat nor the center of the universe, but not before much struggle and some had been burned at the stake for their belief. We are to be thinkers and open to what new insights and light God gives us. Yes, we do have to be like the Bereans and compare it with Scripture, but not with our preconceived ideas of what we think the Bible writers were saying. Realizing that they wrote at a time when we thought the earth was flat, held up by

pillars (Psalm 75:3), and covered with a tent or canopy (Psalm 104:2) is helpful.

Understanding Genesis may be a stumbling block to some, but to others it is giving hope and keeping them from giving up on the church. Thank you, *Adventist Today*, for publishing it.

PATTI HARE
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida

LETTERS POLICY

ADVENTIST TODAY welcomes your letters. Short, timely letters have the best chance at publication. Send to atoday@atoday.com or to Letters to the Editor, ADVENTIST TODAY, P.O. Box 8026, Riverside, CA 92515-8026. Please include full name and location.

An Adventist Today Conference at Sea

Adventist Today would love to have your feedback on an idea we're exploring: a five-day conference, “Stand Up and Rock the Boat: an Adventist Today Conference at Sea,” on a world-class cruise ship. If you've ever wanted to take a cruise vacation (and do something besides eat and gamble), this is a great opportunity.

Here are the general specs:

ITINERARY: Dec. 15-20, 2008 (or alternate date), out of Ft. Lauderdale, with full-day stops at Cozumel and Belize.

VESSEL: Royal Caribbean's Navigator of the Seas, a state-of-the-art ship with the finest accommodations, multiple pools, even a climbing wall and ice skating rink. (Go ahead and Google it.)

COST: just \$668 and up per passenger, depending on room type. Rate includes a discounted fare from Royal Caribbean, all port charges, taxes, and gratuities, *all meals*, and a \$99 conference fee. (*Adventist Today* will waive the conference fee for all passengers under age 30. We'd also like to find full sponsors for young adult

leaders—get them involved early.

CONFERENCE: inspiring Christian speakers, substantive seminars, breakout discussions on current Adventist issues, a Rook® tournament and a special Christmas concert. Plus, plenty of time to enjoy the ship itself!



If you're *interested* in this conference at sea, please email us right away at atoday@atoday.com. If we have enough interest, we'll post more details and sign-ups at www.atoday.com. (Conference will be limited to 400.)

Come to Our School—We’re Listed!

What does it actually mean when Adventist colleges say they’re listed in *U.S. News & World Report’s* Best Colleges?

By Melanie Eddlemon

Adventist high school seniors across the country are about to make one of the biggest decisions of their lives: where to attend college.

Universities stuff their mail boxes with slogans like “One of America’s Top Schools” and “Ranked Your Region’s Best College.”

Most of these claims stem from *America’s Best Colleges*, an

annual publication created by *U.S. News and World Report* ranking around 1,450 of the country’s colleges and universities.

The seemingly authoritative rankings tend to arbitrate reputation among academic institutions. Many colleges boast their stand at the top of the line-up, parading their status across web sites and

PR magazines. But are these rankings helping or hindering students deciding which college is best for them? Does the strict hierarchy published by *U.S. News* really quantify the worth of an education at a respective institution? What do the rankings actually mean?

A vast amount of research is condensed each year to create *America’s Best Colleges*. *U.S. News* first categorizes colleges according to their mission. Each college is placed in one of four categories: national universities, liberal arts colleges, master’s universities, or baccalaureate colleges. The latter two are further divided by geographic region (West, Midwest, South, and North).

National universities are those like Andrews University, which offer both master’s and doctoral degrees, as well as a wide range of undergraduate degrees. Colleges classified as liberal arts colleges grant more than 50 percent of their degrees in liberal arts disciplines.

Most Adventist Colleges are classified as baccalaureate colleges, indicating that at least 10 percent of degrees awarded

are bachelor’s degrees. These institutions grant fewer than 50 percent of degrees in liberal arts disciplines. Among these colleges: Southern Adventist University in the South and Pacific Union College in the West. Master’s universities are those schools who provide education at the graduate level as well as offering an undergraduate curriculum. Walla Walla University and La Sierra University are both categorized as master’s universities.

Once an undergraduate school has been grouped with its peers, it is evaluated and given a score in seven areas:

- peer assessment (a measure of the university’s reputation among other college presidents, provosts and deans of admission)
- graduation and retention rate (number of students who earn a degree within 6 years and who return to the school after their freshman year)
- faculty resources (student-faculty ratio, class size, faculty salary, level of education among professors, full time faculty)



College	Full-time, Undergraduate Enrollment 2007-2008	Peer Group	U.S. News Ranking
Andrews University	1,733	National Universities	Third tier—group 131-187 of 258
Atlantic Union College	566	Liberal Arts Colleges	Fourth tier—group 187-248 of 248
Columbia Union College	1,033	Baccalaureate Colleges (North)	Third tier—group 33-45 of 61
La Sierra University	1,578	Master’s Universities (West)	Fourth tier—group 88-116 of 116
Oakwood University	1,771	Baccalaureate Colleges (South)	30 of 93
Pacific Union College	1,394	Baccalaureate Colleges (West)	14 of 37
Southern Adventist University	2,451	Baccalaureate Colleges (South)	22 of 93
Southwestern Adventist University	878	Baccalaureate Colleges (West)	Third tier—group 20-28 of 37
Union College	886	Baccalaureate Colleges (Midwest)	28 of 95
Walla Walla University	1,635	Master’s Universities (West)	39 of 116

Note: For each peer group and geographic region, the top half of schools are ranked numerically while the rest are placed alphabetically into third and fourth tiers. It’s important to note that the college rankings shown here are not apples-to-apples comparisons. Schools ranked within regions and peer groups should not be compared to schools in other regions and peer groups.

- student selectivity (admission requirements for incoming freshmen)
- financial resources (average spending per student)
- alumni giving
- graduation rate performance (for national and liberal arts colleges only, the difference between expected and actual graduation rates)

Each area has been weighted depending on which areas are considered most valuable to students. The data come from extensive questionnaires, statistics, research findings from other organizations, and information pulled from the schools' web sites.

Every school receives a composite score based on its score in the seven areas. For each peer group and

geographic region, the top half of schools are ranked numerically while the rest are placed alphabetically into third and fourth tiers. Schools separated by only a few spots in the rankings may reveal only slight differences in academic quality, if any at all.

Although the research process is systematic and extensive, skeptics question whether academic quality can be measured statistically. Some call the rankings "lame science," claiming they are merely part of the *U.S. News* business plan. These critics point out that the formulas are based partially on subjective data such as the opinions of peers, and do not place enough focus on "output" measures. They argue that the resources pouring into a college, not the quality of

students flowing out, determine the final scores. But proponents of the rankings maintain that input and output measures usually go hand in hand: The way the world treats a college degree is directly related to the status of the college that awarded it.

While high school seniors should not use the rankings as a one-stop shopping guide for their futures, they should consider *America's Best Colleges* as one more tool in their toolbox, understanding that factors such as location, social atmosphere and spiritual climate are not captured or evaluated in the study. Ultimately, students are not guaranteed success by enrolling at America's finest university, but by determining to bloom where they are planted.

"Red Books" Play Tours Southern California; DVD Next

A head-turning play written and performed by Adventist young adults recently toured Southern California. *Red Books: Our Search for Ellen White*, an original production of the Dramatic Arts Society of Pacific Union College, performed at La Sierra University and three Adventist churches in the area.

The brainchild of Mei Ann Teo, 28, *Red Books* is an interview-based documentary production that travels through four generations of Adventists to excavate attitudes and perspectives about Ellen White, a founder of the Adventist Church. The play examines the larger issue of religious icons—why they are built, destroyed, forgotten—and their impact on a faith community.

"I came away from the performance even more solidified in my belief in the importance of the prophetic gift in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," said Jim Pederson, president of the Northern California Conference.

Deepthi Welaratna, a reporter from KQED in San Francisco, commented that *Red Books* is without a doubt a seminal moment in the history of Seventh-day Adventism."

A DVD of *Red Books* will be available early in 2008. For information about obtaining copies of this DVD, please contact *Adventist Today* at 1-800-236-3641.



Atlanta Pastor Reconciles With Georgia-Cumberland Conference

Five years ago Alex Bryan thought his days as an Adventist pastor were finished. Bryan had resigned in 2002 following disagreements with his employer, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, over how to most effectively reach unbelievers in the Atlanta area. Bryan's church plant, New Community Church, spent part of Sabbath mentoring inner-city children and renovating a homeless shelter. It also added a worship service on Sunday morning.

But on December 1, following months of dialogue, Bryan returned to employment in the same conference. Bryan said he felt an increasing conviction to minister again within the Adventist Church—and cited his renewed appreciation for Adventist doctrines, such as Sabbath rest and the rejection of eternal torment in hell. Bryan said he also missed the global community of Adventism.

"I'm excited to once again serve my spiritual family of origin," said Bryan.

Bryan will serve as pastor for mission and ministry at the Collegedale, Tenn.,

church. Following the decision of the Conference Executive Committee to employ Bryan, the Church Board voted by a 16-14 margin to affirm the decision.

"I understand the nervousness some felt," said Bryan. "I hope to rebuild these relationships in the days to come."

During the deliberations, said Senior Pastor John Nixon, the biblical story of John Mark was considered. As told in Acts 15, John Mark had at one point separated from Paul and Barnabas. Later, however, John Mark rejoined the ministry.

Conference President Ed Wright, who was pastoring the Collegedale church when Bryan departed, says that he hoped reconciliation would be possible. "Even when Alex asked to be released from conference employment, every effort was made to protect the possibility of his re-entry," Wright said. "In these intervening years, many have prayed that time and experience would reveal the path to reunion. When Alex expressed interest in rebuilding this relationship, and after months of open dialogue, it became clear that just such an opportunity was before us."

Will the Real Adventist Please Stand Up?

A recent research study by the Center for Creative Ministry revealed that only about one person in twenty can recall one true fact about the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Furthermore, one in ten gave the interviewer responses that indicate confusion about the identity of the Adventist Church. These included references to other religions such as, "They are the Mormons . . ."

Mostert's Arithmetic Challenges Readers

In the August issue of the *Recorder*, Pacific Union Conference President Tom Mostert's editorial raised a few eyebrows with an editorial called "0+0+0+0=0."

He was critical of Adventist members and pastors who he says modify their faith to fit their own practices and beliefs, specifically in the areas of sanctification, health, evangelism, and prophecy.

Mostert, who said reaction has been about 80 percent positive and 20 percent negative, told *Adventist Today* that he understands the varying response. "Anyone raised in a legalistic situation would see it through those eyes and probably have a negative response," he said. "Others see as I do some moving too far into a lifestyle that leaves out an important part of spiritual growth."

Mostert retired at the end of 2007. In his farewell editorial, called "Seven Treasures," he shares his favorite spiritual truths. "Though I am by nature a rebellious, lost sinner," he writes, "Jesus has died for my sins and offers full and complete forgiveness along with the free gift of His righteousness so I can enter heaven."



Tom Mostert



SHEEP

Georgia-Cumberland Leadership. Reconciles with departed pastor Alex Bryan. Great example of coming together that could inspire other conferences to do the same.

Questions on Doctrines Conference (see page 15). Organizers bring together all types for healthy discussion and healing. It doesn't get much better than George Knight, Angel Rodriguez, and Colin Standish serving communion together.

HYBRIDS

Let's Talk Only? Affable world church president Jan Paulsen continues to host made-for-video chat sessions with young adults and to urge young adult involvement. Dialog is important, but what young adults really want is to work alongside leadership.

Red Books. Play by PUC students gets high marks for excellence and candor. But some saying that perspectives of all Adventists not represented well enough.

GOATS

Board Representation. Too many Adventist boards, including Adventist Today board, still fail to represent women, minorities, and young people. Time to get with the program.

Got a nomination for Sheep/Hybrids/Goats? Email to atoday@atoday.com

ANALYSIS

Bull's and Lockhart's Challenge to Adventist Progressives

Authors of *Seeking a Sanctuary* argue that a theology with clear boundaries holds the Adventist Church together.

By Lisa Clark Diller

Seeking a Sanctuary, a highly detailed sociological study of American Adventism by Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, was the focus of the Adventist Forums Conference, held Sept. 28-30 in Santa Rosa, California.

Seeking a Sanctuary sustains a consistent thesis throughout 500 pages of impeccable research, arguing that Seventh-day Adventism, by withdrawing from American culture and opposing American values, paradoxically fulfills the American dream. Most controversially, its authors maintain that Adventism has not really made the transition from sect to denomination. While not Adventists themselves, Bull and Lockhart demonstrated a clear affection for the church they have chosen to study.

Lockhart started the conversation by describing what he sees as the “Golden Age” of Seventh-day Adventism, the fundamentalist era of the 1920s-1950s. He argues that the books published, institutions formed, and media outlets started in this era have shaped our identity to this day. In fact, it is to that time period, rather than 19th-century Adventism, that we refer when we think of “historic Adventism.” It was a very confident era in Adventist history, a time when we stabilized our theology so that we could be comfortable focusing all of our energy outwardly. After this, we became concerned with becoming a respected denomination in American Protestantism, and we are now more inward-looking, less confident.

Bull pointed out that the liberalism which began in the 1950s was a mixed blessing to the church. Distinctive doctrines and distance from American culture were what made us attractive

to converts. Religions are usually held together by the endoskeleton of ethnicity, but Adventism holds a diverse ethnic body together through its exoskeleton of theology. “Fuzzy theology” depends on culture to hold people together, and Adventism can transcend ethnic culture by retaining a distinctive, even sectarian, theology. He thinks this is a good thing.

Liberal Adventists in the audience found this disquieting. But Bull and Lockhart gently reminded us that most of the individuals in the room didn't actually represent American Adventism. Most Seventh-day Adventists in North America are first-generation members who don't have college degrees and who experience their church through the *Sabbath School Quarterly*, Revelation Seminars, and the local church. By contrast, those with access to Adventist media, who help form the identity and theology of the church, are most often college-educated, multi-generational Adventists who went to Adventist schools and who have worked for the church or its institutions. We often imagine that we represent the “real” church. But immigrants, converts, and the world church are changing the realities on the ground. And these newer Adventists appear to value the unique doctrines of the Adventist church more than multi-generational, institutionalized Adventists.

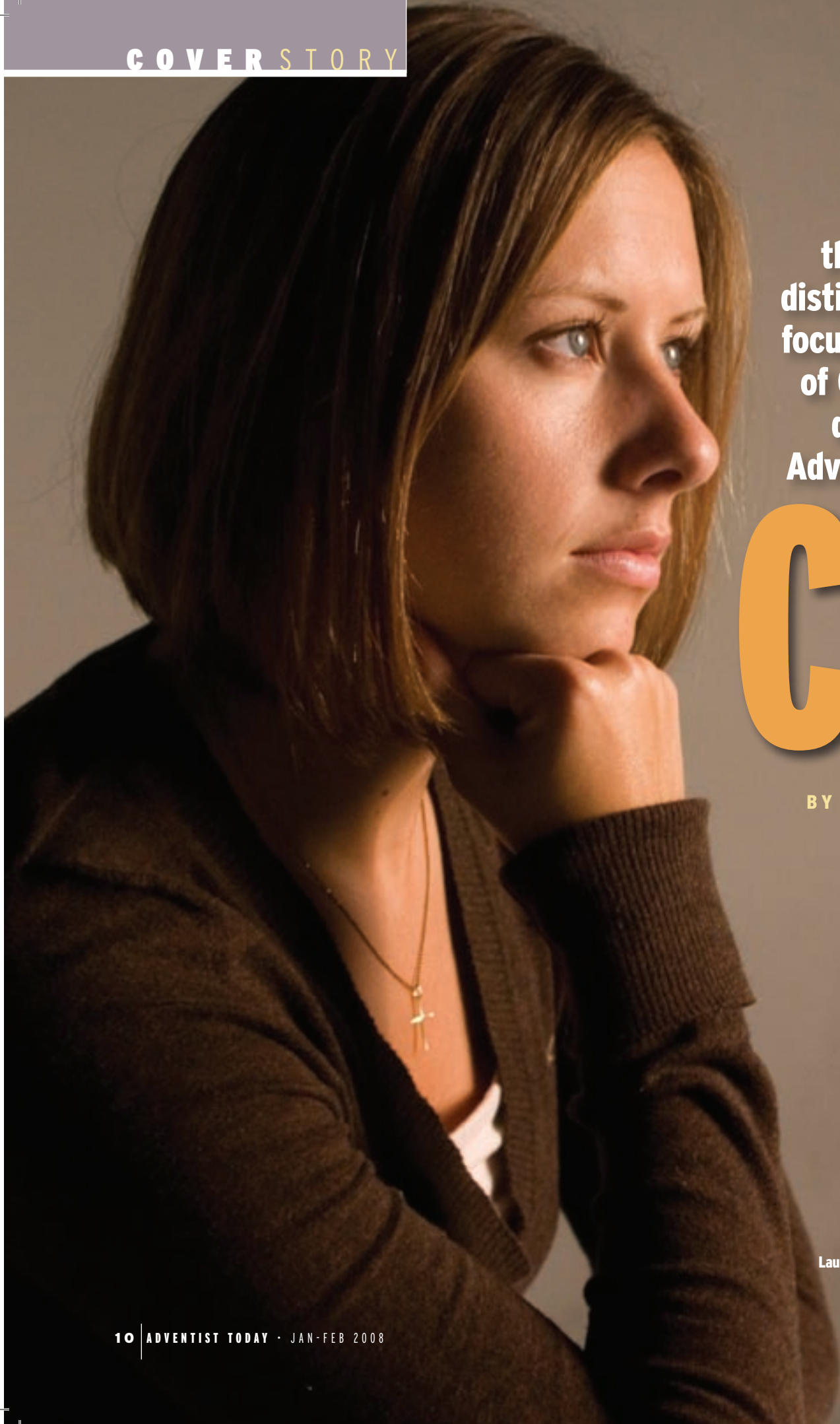
So who is going to form the identity of the church in the future? The institutionalized Adventists or the new converts? The most fascinating part of the conversation came when Lockhart imagined what the Adventist church would be like in 2100. The future of the church, he playfully predicted, is

non-white, non-institutionalized, still feminized, far less medicalized, retaining its present structure and theology, but with flexibility regarding culture.

For those of us who love our church and want to see it have a wider, more flexible identity regarding both culture and theology, there is a clear challenge. Bull and Lockhart reminded us that churches who are open about ideas retain their identity and unity only through a tightly shared culture. If we want to have a more diverse culture, continuing to pull converts from a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, we're going to have to accept that our core theology may remain somewhat narrow. Maintaining an identity while promoting inclusivity is a creative dynamic tension that Bull and Lockhart think propels Adventism forward, allowing it to “renew its traditions” and to continually appeal to new constituencies.



Lisa Clark Diller received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago.



They're Adventists, but rather than Adventist distinctives, their focus is the cross of Christ. Where do evangelical Adventists fit in?

Cau

BY DENNIS HOKAMA

Laurel Dominesey, Buffalo, New York

LAUREL DOMINESEY LOVES CHRIST. FOR HER, JESUS IS A “REAL PERSON” WHO WANTS A “REAL RELATIONSHIP.” SHE CONFIDENTLY IDENTIFIES HERSELF WITH CHRISTIANITY. CHRIST, SHE SAYS, IS EVERYTHING.

Dominesey, 20, attends church on Saturday, is enrolled at an Adventist college, and doesn't eat pork. She believes in living a moral life and is happy to be identified as an Adventist.

But quietly, she grapples with reservations.

As a teenager, Dominesey, who was born Catholic, became particularly impressed by Adventism when she went on a mission trip with two Adventist friends. She talks warmly about her first experience at her home church near Buffalo, New York.

“Nonjudgmental, accepting, welcoming ... they notice you,” she says. “And people see you for you.”

ght **IN THE** Middle

But when Dominesey left her small Adventist church near Buffalo and discovered the wider world of Adventism, she felt confused. In Buffalo, she hadn't considered the morality of jewelry or dairy products. “It was a shock. And it was frustrating,” she recalls. “People treated me as guilty of something. They assume you don't have this relationship with God.”

Ironically, it was Dominesey's relationship with God that offered freedom from the guilt laid on her. “Now that my heart has changed, I can see the good in Adventism,” she says, referring to individuals who have refreshed her with their authenticity. These individuals have helped her see the good things in the Adventist message, which she calls the “pilot light” that keeps her faith alive when emotion runs low—a foundation she supports and trusts.

In fact, Dominesey's hesitation about Adventism doesn't concern the fundamental beliefs themselves. “I don't think there is a problem with the Church,” she says confidently. “I think there is a problem with some of the people in the Church. We need to see people for who they are ... get to know their life. Let's talk about things that really matter.”

For Dominesey, what really matters is Jesus. Yet the seemingly half-hearted gospel message in Adventism leaves her in reservation.

Because the message that makes a wild fire of her faith seems to leave her church's pilot light at a flicker.

Renee Harms, 31, was born and raised in Adventism. She is a graduate of Walla Walla University and a former resident of Portland, Oregon, where she loved her home church.

Now that she has moved to a new city in Utah, she has been disappointed with what she feels is a lack of vitality at the local Adventist churches. "I have yet to find an Adventist church that feels *good* when I walk in," she says. "Generally, I sense an emphasis on religious Adventist practice before I get a sense of it being Spirit-filled."

In the meantime, Harms is surrounded by new friends who are sincere non-Adventist Christians, and she has visited various evangelical churches in her area. "They are so approachable, love the Lord, and have this positive spiritual energy that I admire!" says Harms. "So how could I say that they are lacking?"

Pastor David Newman of the New Hope Adventist Church, a fast-growing and ethnically diverse congregation outside of Washington, D.C., has written extensively on the point of focus within the Adventist Church, particularly in North America.

"Adventism is experiencing great difficulties trying to decide whether the cross or the distinctives are our focus," Newman says. "Two weeks ago an individual emailed me the experience they just went through in their local church. The key lay leader in the church told the whole congregation that people who hear

about the Sabbath and do not accept it will not go to heaven. He continued that people like Billy Graham will not make it to heaven because he knows about the Sabbath but never accepted it. This mindset is especially prevalent in our smaller churches and in our rural churches."

Newman says that when people hear about New Hope, he wants them to immediately recognize that they are Christ followers before knowing them as Sabbathkeepers.

"Some people believe that we can have a double focus," says Newman. "That is impossible. Focus by definition must be on one object. The message of Adventism is not the Sabbath, end-time events, the sanctuary, health, etc. Important as they are, Jesus is the only way to eternal life. We believe that we can be thoroughly evangelical while being Adventist."

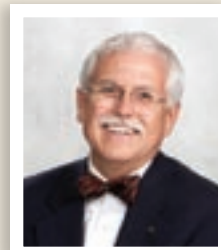
The perspectives of Dominesey, Harms, and Newman represent those who feel a love for and loyalty to the Adventist Church but who often feel disappointed in the lack of gospel emphasis within the Church. They also raise important questions, such as: Who are the true Adventists? What does one need to believe to be an Adventist? And, finally, is being an evangelical Adventist a redundancy or an oxymoron?

What Is "Evangelical Adventism"?

Many of the features of evangelical Christianity were baptized into Adventism in 1957, when the Adventist Church published *Seventh-*

Do you consider yourself an Adventist first or a Christian first?

I am absolutely, positively, and primarily a Christian. By that I mean that Christ, and Christ alone, is my reason for living here and my hope for enjoying eternity in the hereafter. I'm an Adventist because it is one of the best vehicles I know of



for expressing my faith in the love, mercy, grace, and justice of Jesus Christ. And while some Adventists detour into matters of secondary importance (health, prophecy, lifestyle, etc.), only faith in Christ can rescue us from this earthly experience. That's why I will always be first and foremost a Christian.

—STEVE CHAVEZ, MANAGING EDITOR, ADVENTIST REVIEW, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

Christian first; Adventist second. Adventism finds its identity within



Christianity, not Christianity within Adventism. The ongoing remnant of true Bible-believing Christians down through the centuries has gone by all kinds of different names, but always in the context of being Christian.

—CLARISSA WORLEY, PASTOR, SINGER, SPEAKER, AND WRITER, SALEM, OREGON

I have accepted Christ as my Savior; therefore, I am first a Christian. I have become a member of His church—the



Seventh-day Adventist Church. Simply stated, I believe the Adventist Church, though only 1 percent of all the Christian community, is most like the early New Testament Church in its biblical teachings and acceptance of the Great Commission to take the gospel to every creature on earth. I am in a covenant relationship with Christ. I express that publicly by being a part of and supporting His Church. Therefore I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

—G. EDWARD REID, STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR, NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine. It was written in response to questions posed by Walter Martin, author of the well-known book *Kingdom of the Cults* (original printing 1965).

Martin, a Southern Baptist who made a career out of judging who was a cult and who was not, met with a group of Adventist scholars in order to ascertain whether Adventism should remain classified as a Christian cult or if it belonged to the sisterhood of Protestant churches.

The Adventists who worked with Martin answered enough of his questions correctly to receive a passing score by his reckoning, and on that basis, Adventists were thereafter no longer classified as a Christian cult. Evangelical Adventism had been born, though some influential traditional Adventists were not shy in questioning its paternity.

Larry Christoffel, associate pastor of the Campus Hill Church and an assistant professor of religion at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California, is a self-proclaimed evangelical. He says that evangelical Adventism is “authentic Adventism”—that it is “Adventism as God meant it to be.”

In an article Christoffel co-authored, “Evangelical Adventism: Clinging to the Old Rugged Cross,” he lists six salient answers in *Questions on Doctrine* that presumably differentiate evangelical Adventists from historic Adventists.

1. Scripture, not the writings of Ellen G. White, is the basis of Christian faith and practice.

2. Jesus Christ is eternally God and sinless in His human nature.

3. The substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinners was finished at the cross, though He continues a mediatorial work in heaven.

4. Justification is through faith on account of Christ’s accomplishments and is not in any way based on our obedience to the law.

5. Jesus Christ and Him crucified is to be the center of Seventh-day Adventist belief and practice.

6. There are genuine, spiritually mature Christians outside of Seventh-day Adventism.

Some of the implications of these affirmations are that evangelical Adventists like Christoffel could not require baptismal candidates to avow any Adventist distinctive, so long as they declared “Christ and Him crucified.”

When *Adventist Today* spoke to Christoffel about this, he confirmed that he was happy to baptize people into Christ and did so without requiring any commitment to Adventist distinctives. But such a generic Christian baptism, he said, did not make them members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

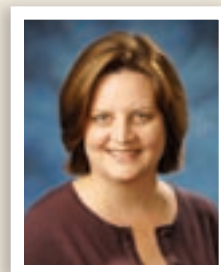
Newman handles the baptism issue somewhat differently. “Everyone who joins New Hope,” says Newman, “whether by baptism or transfer has to take a class with me. And in that class I tell them that New Hope is Christian first and Adventist second. Then I explain what that means.”

My answer to that question is a simple one: Yes. Which is the same answer I’d give to a question about which of my two children is most important, the first born or the second born? True, one came before the other. But for the life of me, I can’t imagine not having them both now. Which is how I feel about Jesus. The Lord



who knocked at my door with the invitation, “Come to Me and I will give you rest,” is the same Lord who on the eve of his death for me promised, “Don’t let your heart be troubled, because I will come again.” How can I separate His invitation that makes me a Christian from His promise that makes me an Adventist? Frankly, I’m glad I don’t have to, grateful that a Yes to Jesus is the way He’s invited me to live.

—**DWIGHT NELSON**, PASTOR, AUTHOR, RADIO AND TELEVISION HOST, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, PIONEER MEMORIAL CHURCH, BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN



Hands down, I consider myself a Christian first. It is important to keep organized religion “in its place.”

The non-sacred culture and dogma of an organized

religion can easily overwhelm the joy of Christianity. I refuse to allow this to happen in my life.

—**LYNN CALDWELL**, AMERICAN HUMANICS CAMPUS DIRECTOR, SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE DALE, TENNESSEE



I consider myself a Christ-follower. As this overlaps with Adventists and Christians, I am part of those communities as well.

—**A. ALLAN MARTIN**, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF DISCIPLESHIP AND FAMILY MINISTRY, ANDREWS UNIVERSITY, BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN

If by Adventist, we mean the most biblically-consistent Christian, then absolutely yes—I’m an Adventist first. This kind of Adventism is radically Bible-based, life-



transforming, intelligent, authentically evangelical and ecumenical, mission-driven but humble, gutsy but irenic, and spiritually vibrant! I call it

Adventisque, because it is Christianity at its best. As a theologically conservative body, it is the only credible eschatological movement capable of actually preparing a holy people to meet their holy Lord at His second coming. The Bible points to these “Adventing” Christians in the following words: Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12; cf. 12:17; 19:10).

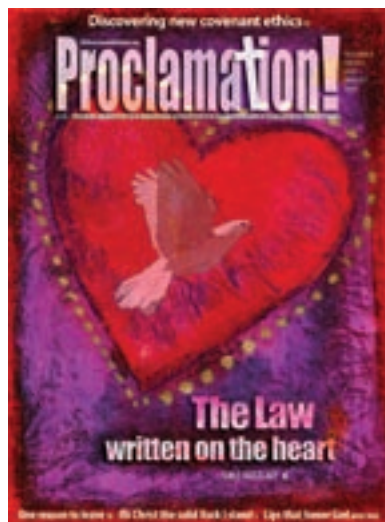
—**SAMUEL KORANTENG-PIPIIM**, PH.D., DIRECTOR, PUBLIC CAMPUS MINISTRIES, MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

With regard to a recurring concern for end-time events among Seventh-day Adventists, Christoffel believes that the gospel is inextricably linked to the Advent in the Bible itself, from Genesis to Revelation, citing Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 61:1,2, Matthew 24:14, and Revelation 14:6,7,14ff as examples. Therefore, he says, “Evangelical Adventism is a redundancy.”

Hopelessly Unchristian?

At the other end of the spectrum we have Colleen Tinker, a former Adventist who now edits a bimonthly magazine called *Proclamation!*. Published by former Adventist minister Dale Ratzlaff’s Life Assurance Ministries, *Proclamation!* has a stated circulation of 35,000, all of which are sponsored and mailed out free of charge to North American Adventist pastors and others.

Tinker believes that modern Adventism is incompatible with true Christianity. “The basic problem,” Tinker says, “is that



Adventism grew up from a root of Arianism, which continues to influence Adventism’s doctrines.”

Arianism teaches that Jesus was a created being, a doctrine that Tinker believes has severe theological implications. For example, says Tinker, if Jesus is not the eternal Almighty God, His death could not atone for the sin of creation, could not possess intrinsic eternal life, could not give us eternal life.

“One cannot simply graft the gospel onto Arianism and negate the influence of the original root,” says Tinker. “The root must be abandoned.”

Newman has followed the magazine’s arguments for several years. “They view the Adventist Church through a very narrow lens,” says Newman, who attended the Adventist Theological Seminary with Ratzlaff and had lunch with him last July. “Dale cannot understand how I can believe totally in grace, that you are saved by grace alone and nothing else, and still remain in the Adventist church. He sees the church as totally legalistic, totally focused on its distinctives, with no appreciation for the gospel.”

Newman describes *Proclamation!* as “strident,” comparing it to the tone of Walter Rea’s *White Lie*, and says *Proclamation!* buttresses its points by printing carefully selected quotes and ignoring any other evidence.

In its May-June 2007 issue, *Proclamation!* included an article by Ramone Romero, a former Adventist student missionary to Japan. In a piece titled “Giving Up the Family Altar,” Romero asserts that Adventism is hopelessly unchristian.

Romero’s quarrel is with progressive Adventists, who know the true history of the church and who can no longer agree with the theology of the pioneers and some of the visions of Ellen White,

but who justify staying in the church by inventing their own private definitions of Adventism.

Romero argues that this is analogous to the practice of keeping altars to foreign gods—in this case, the Japanese Buddhist practice of having the eldest sibling keep the family “butsudan” in some corner of the house, which implies a worship of one’s ancestors long after becoming a Christian. Even though one no longer actually worships at this family altar and may consider it a harmless relic, Romero implies that it gives access to demonic forces that may literally attack occupants of the house.

Romero believes the gospel can be reduced to “Christ saved us,” so anything extra only competes with the gospel. Like Buddhist converts, says Romero, progressives think they can rationalize keeping the Adventist version of the butsudans in the house. But the real reason behind such rationalizations is that the family altar has demonic power over them.

Romero justifies comparing Adventism to a Buddhist ancestral altar by contrasting the gospel with the early beliefs of Adventism. The central truth of the gospel (justification by faith), says Romero, was missing for the first 40 years of Adventism, during which the major Adventist distinctives were formulated; anti-gospel beliefs were confirmed by Ellen White, who said she received instruction from “angel guides;” Ellen White and early Adventist teachings condemned those who clung to the [Protestant] gospel instead of the new Adventist teachings. Such a history, Romero asserts, can only lead one to conclude that the Adventist movement was led by a spirit other than the Holy Spirit.

All efforts to reform the church by reading Ellen White’s writings with “one eye closed” are doomed to failure, he says, because the fruits of historic Adventism (fear of the end times, insecurity of one’s salvation, cognitive dissonance, etc.) will continue to pop up as long as the root of historic Adventism is left intact. The only solution, he argues, is “throwing out the altar [whether it is the butsudans or Adventist heritage] ... [and] truly starting over.”

Adventists willing to take that risk, he says, will experience the “I once was lost, but now am found” transformation.

While many of Romero’s charges against the Adventist pioneers appear to be historically accurate, Romero’s claim that the central truth of the gospel (justification by faith) was missing from Adventism for the first 40 years is almost certainly unsupported.

It is doubtful that any of the pioneers denied that the thief on the cross was instantly justified by faith for *past* sins. The pioneers wrote extensively about issues where they were in conflict with each other and with the rest of the Christian world. But it is an error in logic to conclude from the absence of writing about a non-controversial belief—in this case, justification by faith—that the non-controversial belief itself was absent.

What *was* controversial was whether that instantaneous “justification by faith” the thief obtained from Jesus would have covered all the *future* thieving he might have committed had he been rescued at the last minute and lived to a ripe old age.

Adventist pioneers resisted the proposition that amounts to “once saved, always saved”—a highly problematic teaching that was nevertheless accepted by nearly all Protestant reformers—and one

Questions on Doctrine Conference: Many Right Ways to Think

By Ervin Taylor

Is there more than one right way to think?

That question, posed by Adventist theologian Jon Paulien was among the noteworthy comments made at the Questions on Doctrine Conference, held Oct. 24-27 in the chapel of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary on the campus of Andrews University

While early Adventist pioneers would have answered a resounding no to such a question, said Paulien, "Scripture answers this question with a qualified yes."

Intended by its organizers—Michael Campbell, Jerry Moon and Julius Nam, young scholars specializing in Adventist history, and sponsored by Loma Linda University, Andrews University, and Oakwood College—to be "an engaging, reflective, scholarly dialogue about Adventist history and theology," the conferences marked the 50th Anniversary of the publication in 1957 of *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, a work generally referred to as just Questions on Doctrine.

"Fifty years ago," said Adventist theologian George Knight, in the opening session, "what is undoubtedly the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history was released to an eagerly awaiting audience...[The book] brought about prolonged alienation and separation within the denomination to the Adventist factions that grew up around it."

Twenty-one formal papers were presented at the conference. The papers of Drs. Knight and Julius Nam, Roy Adams, David Larson, Paul McGraw, Jon Paulien, Arthur Patrick, Richard Rice, and Ciro Sepulveda, as well as comments made by Donald Dayton, a non-Adventist scholar, were particularly helpful. Attendees ranged from liberal to conservative Adventists, and a highlight for many was the image of George Knight, Angel Rodriguez, and Colin Standish serving communion together.

Current world church president, Dr. Jan Paulsen, and other administrators had expressed concern about the wisdom of holding the conference. The original production of *Questions on Doctrine* had ignited a firestorm of controversy. After attending the conference, native Australian Bronwen Larson wrote to Paulsen, expressing her appreciation for the conference and saying she saw "healing taking place." Paulsen replied: "I was very pleased to receive your positive report. I have had similar comments from others and, on the whole, the conference seems to have been a wholesome, and possibly healing, experience. For that I am very thankful and glad."

It's interesting to contrast this conference with previous discussions held by the Adventist Church at Glacier View in 1980 to consider the issues raised by Dr. Desmond Ford on the sanctuary doctrine and



COMING TOGETHER: Knight, Rodriguez, and Standish serving communion. The photographer, Bronwen Larson, said the photo is blurry because it was "taken through tears."

the Faith and Science Conference held in Denver in 2004 to consider the Church's response to the challenge of modern science in the area of creationism.

The Glacier View and Denver conferences were organized and, in the view of many, manipulated by church administrators to come to preordained outcomes. Both are widely viewed as disasters and retrogressive.

The Questions conference was organized by the church's scholars and will surely go down as making a positive contribution to the future life of the church.

The papers presented at the conference—and video recordings of the session—will be available in January at qod.andrews.edu.

way they expressed opposition was in the Doctrine of Investigative Judgment. While it may arguably have been a rationalization of their Great Disappointment, the underlying reasoning can be explained in terms of concerns about the free will of humans being in tension with the sovereignty of God.

If the above is true, then the central truth of the gospel (justification by faith) was not missing for the first 40 years of Adventism, during which the major Adventist distinctives were formulated, but simply taken for granted.

Community and Belonging

Others say that being Adventist goes beyond a who-believes-what.

Dr. Rick Rice, professor of theology and religion at Loma Linda University and author of *Believing, Behaving, and Belonging* (2002), says a church cannot be reduced to merely a set of doctrines to be believed, or behavioral standards to be followed. It is a community to which one "belongs" in the richest sense of that word, and of those three dimensions, he argues, it is "belonging" that is paramount. Likewise, enlightened children can still embrace and cherish their "hopelessly" old-fashioned parents as family.

Christoffel agrees that being part of a faith community is more than ascribing to a set of beliefs. *Adventist Today* asked Christoffel how many, or which of the 28 fundamental beliefs were required

to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

"You don't have to believe in any of them!" says Christoffel. The preamble itself, he explains, says that Adventists have only the Bible as their creed and that the 28 fundamental beliefs represent only the present thinking of the church, which could change at a future General Conference session.

The desire to know for sure that one belongs to the "right" community of faith is at least as old as the rite of circumcision. But as the emphasis on outward circumcision shifted to an inward "circumcision of the heart," the line of demarcation between outsiders and insiders became increasingly harder to draw.

The tension between evangelical Christianity and Adventism appears to be a continuation of that longstanding debate on a more abstract plane. Each attempt to devise or discern a new criterion is beset with difficulties because of the vast implications it has for God's character—and the lack of agreement on how to interpret the Bible itself.

In the meantime, the ranks of evangelical Christians appear to be every bit as theologically diverse as Adventists themselves. Perhaps diversity on this matter need not be interpreted pejoratively. Who knows but that this diversity of belief among Christians is just what a sovereign God intended.

—WITH REPORTING BY MELANIE EDDLEMON

Breaking THE Silence

For Bernie and Christina Anderson, speaking out about pornography is a joint effort.

Andy Nash interviews Bernie and Christina Anderson

*Adventist Pastor Bernie Anderson's recently released book, *Breaking the Silence* (Review & Herald 2007), tells the very personal story of Bernie's longtime battle with pornography. Bernie's wife, Christina also wrote a chapter from a spouse's perspective. In addition to pastoring the Wasatch Hill Adventist church in Salt Lake City, Utah, Bernie has spoken about pornography via several media outlets, including Newsweek magazine and Focus on the Family.*

Bernie, Christina, you probably never dreamed you'd be public faces for a personal issue like pornography.

BERNIE: No, not really. In fact, I really held this in as a deep, dark secret that I never intended for anyone to find out about. I hoped that God would take care of the problem in such a way that no one else would have to know—including my wife, Christina.

CHRISTINA: This is something that I would have never imagined speaking about—and there are many days when I wish we had kept our issues just between us. It is difficult to open yourself up and to share a private matter with complete strangers. But I remind myself how hopeless and alone I felt when I first found out about Bernie's addiction. If in sharing our story we can help someone feel like there is hope, then it's worth the personal discomfort.

BERNIE: I think we both realize that the issue is affecting many couples, and as painful as it is to talk about, we've found that sharing our story openly provides a way for them to approach the issue. I think just hearing that your marriage can recover from pornography provides a great deal of hope for a couple in crisis.



ance—Together

What are some of the reactions you've gotten from your family and friends—and from others who have heard your story?

BERNIE: This is an area where I was a little nervous but still sensed that God was leading me to share the story. I know people who have said: "Hey, I'm proud of you for speaking out about this." Then I know others who wish that I had kept it quiet. One lady wrote to me and said: "Didn't you know *Newsweek* goes all around the world?" I have lost some friends over this—friends who thought it was an embarrassment to the church. It's awkward sometimes to see a friend I haven't seen in a while, and I'm wondering if they've heard about my story and what their reaction is—if I'm a friend or not anymore. Most people have been very encouraging, though.

Bernie, what percentage of men—and perhaps Christian men—struggle with pornography?

BERNIE: I've heard different numbers, and they all seem to indicate that a large number of Christian men are struggling in this area. Some estimates are as high as 50 percent of Christian men and 20 percent of Christian women are actually addicted to pornography. It's tough to say because I think that people struggle at different levels. Some men can't go a day without looking at porn, and others occasionally find themselves caught up during times of stress and discomfort. Like the popular book says, lust and sexual temptation are "every man's battle."

Clearly since the number of men and women struggling seems to be on the rise, the church has to respond with significant and intentional strategies to help. I think it begins with safe environments where members can feel comfortable talking about it and seeking help.

Christina, let's consider the perspective of a wife for a minute. Do women understand why so many men struggle with this sin? What have you learned about it?

CHRISTINA: I think men have a greater draw to pornography because they are more easily stimulated by what they see. I believe that men seeking something to fill a pain or void in their lives are more vulnerable to the draw of porn. For me, I have had a very difficult time understanding that draw. I think it is hard for most women to understand what can be satisfying about viewing other naked people.

I had to come to the place where I decided that I may not understand why Bernie was drawn to pornography, but I could try to understand the underlying motive that caused him to seek something that could fill a void in his life.

Bernie, in your view, what are the reasons so many men view pornography? Is it pure lust? Is it usually tied to frustration or disappointment in a marriage? Or is it just another type of escape, much like drinking or gambling?

BERNIE: I really think much of it stems from a desire to escape and to get away and live in a fantasy world for a bit. Certainly a strained marriage can contribute to a vulnerability to pornography, because if emotional and physical intimacy are lacking in a

marriage, men tend to go looking for it elsewhere. Intimacy, I think, is a key issue. Pornography is just a false intimacy that men turn to in order to fill the void of something authentic and real. There's no doubt that lust plays into it. I don't think anyone doubts that we guys are visually stimulated, and it's natural for us to desire sexual intimacy. But just because it's natural doesn't mean that we get to fulfill this desire in illicit ways.

I would say too that there are obviously men whose lives are driven by lust and self-gratification. Romans 1 describes men and women following the sinful desires of their hearts into all kinds of sexual impurity and sin. I can see where this can easily happen today for a man or woman, considering how bombarded we are with explicit sexual material.

What do you think it means to have "victory" over a sin like pornography. Does it mean that you no longer have the temptation? Or does it mean that you no longer give in to the temptation?

BERNIE: I think the temptation will always be there. I would characterize "victory" as no longer seeking out pornography to fill the need for intimacy or to medicate during times of stress. In other words, you seek out legitimate ways of dealing with anger, distress, discomfort, etc. Things like talking to your spouse or a friend instead of scurrying for pornography or masturbation. For me, it also means that you realize the true ugliness of the sin and how it both dishonors God and spouse and family.



An Excerpt From *Breaking the Silence*

... Something enormous happened to me on that day—I tasted freedom. For the first time as an adult, I knew that I would no longer be saddled with this sin. Those chains that had held me in bondage for so long were now beginning to break. I wasn't completely changed at once. It would be a couple more days before my family returned home, and I did look at porn again. But I knew that God was shattering porn's hold on me, and things were going to be different. For our family's sake, they needed to be.

Christina would later tell me that before going on her trip, she'd had enough. She had planned to separate from me if I hadn't shown some real progress by the time she returned. For her own sanity, she felt like she needed to get away and let me deal with the issue alone. By God's grace, when she returned home she found a different person . . .

I don't want to characterize it in such a way that it sounds like you have to white-knuckle things your entire life. I personally now live with a great deal of peace and happiness. But we do have to live with an understanding of our vulnerability to pornography, knowing that the world around us isn't going to change anytime soon. So we can't be naïve and think that we can get by without some accountability and carefully monitoring what we watch, how we spend our free time, and how we are connecting to those around us.

A person trying to overcome pornography might wonder if it's really necessary to tell the spouse. Is it necessary, or does that just cause additional pain?

BERNIE: I really believe that you have to tell your spouse. It certainly causes pain, but in the long run, I believe a couple is better off. The goal of the marriage relationship is to arrive at a high level of intimacy, and a major part of achieving that intimacy is to share the deepest part of our lives with our spouse—both the good and the bad. It isn't easy, and since it seems to be the men who struggle the most, they will need to be humble enough to deal with the anger, hurt, and pain that their wives are feeling.

When I was dealing with this, I heard a counselor talk about how most men must put on the “hockey gear” to absorb the hits they'll have to take from their spouses. If a man is keeping something like this from his spouse, I don't think the couple will ever have the peace that they really desire. I think there will always be a level of anxiety because they know in their own souls that things aren't totally right and that they haven't been completely open with their lives.

CHRISTINA: I think that the step is necessary, but the person doing the disclosing should know his or her spouse well enough to sense how to approach the topic and how much to disclose. I don't think it is always necessary to tell every little detail that goes along with the addiction of pornography. For myself, I chose to ask the questions I needed answers to when I needed the answers. Even then I had too many images in my head that I had to try to erase.

I also feel that it is extremely important that the discloser comes with the right spirit. Even if the person involved in pornography did not cross a line physically with another person, the spouse may feel that adultery was committed in the heart and mind. That is a very difficult thing to wrap your mind around for both spouses. I cannot imagine how hard it

must be to come to your spouse and admit you have fallen in this way, but I do know the great restoration that God can bring about in a marriage when you are honest with Him and with each other.

Bernie, your book includes an endorsement from Tony Dungy, the Christian coach of the Indianapolis Colts. How did that come about?

BERNIE: I became acquainted with Coach Dungy before he was a Super Bowl-winning coach. Through my relationship with his former pastor, I invited Coach Dungy to speak at my church for a special weekend. He agreed to come, and I had an opportunity to spend some time with him. We've stayed in touch through phone calls and emails, and when I finished my manuscript I immediately thought of him because I respect so much his integrity and Christian witness. I sent him the manuscript, and eventually we arrived at the endorsement that is on the cover of my book.

What additional advice or resources do you have for people trying to escape from the clutches of pornography in their life?

BERNIE: I can't stress enough how important it is to seek help. I don't think you will ever make any significant progress in breaking free without outside help. The first step may be just to talk to a pastor or seek out a local 12-step group that deals with sexual addiction. Really, the power of pornography is often found in the secrecy. Once the secret is out, pornography's power diminishes. Relapse is always a concern, and some even say that relapse is just a part of recovery. But fear of relapse shouldn't keep anyone from getting help.

As far as resources, I've found pureintimacy.org (Focus on the Family), pureonline.com, and newlife.com (Every Man's Battle) extremely helpful. Also the Celebrate Recovery program developed by Saddleback Community Church is very good.

DEBATE

CAN YOU BE AN ADVENTIST AND AN EVOLUTIONIST?

NO BY CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN

For me, the issue isn't can one be an Adventist and an evolutionist. One can be an Adventist and believe in and do a lot of wrong things (after all, look at how many voted for George W. Bush—*twice!*—and for Hitler). What baffles me is, Why would anyone, believing in evolution, want to be part of an organization whose very name itself contains the idea of a literal six-day creation (*Seventh-day*, implying what?).

But there's a deeper issue. How do folks who claim to believe in evolution regard the cross? For whom did Christ die? Highly advanced Neanderthals? In any one of its numerous incantations (constantly forced to change by the mounting evidence of just how fanciful the theory is), evolution demands a vicious cycle of death, death, and more death. Death is part and parcel of the system that God, in His infinite love, used to create humans—or at least that's what Adventist evolutionists must believe. Which is problematic because Romans 5:12 states that “wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Now what came first—humans or death? According to Paul, a human—a fully developed human who had the ability to make moral choices (because otherwise there couldn't be sin)—appeared first, and then there was death. Yet in any evolutionary schema, death, death, and even more death were the very means by which humans were created. Death had to predate us in order for us to even be here. Somehow, then, the Adventist evolutionist must interpret the words that “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7) to mean something like God “used millions of years of violent and vicious death and struggle in order to create a fully developed and moral human.”

In this context, then, will Ervin please explain the cross and what happened there; Jesus must have accomplished something for us, didn't He? I always thought that the cross was the means of solving the problem of death, which is “the last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Enemy? How could the means by which God used to create us be the enemy? What am I missing here?

If someone takes the name Seventh-day Adventist, they should at least believe in what the name they profess implies.

Clifford Goldstein is the editor of the Adult Bible Study Guide for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Debate Continues...

Go to atoday.com to read two more installments from Goldstein and Taylor.

YES BY ERVIN TAYLOR

There are many members of the Adventist Church who have concluded that the contemporary neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory constitutes a highly successful scientific model that explains how life forms on earth developed over time. If we agree that this is a factually correct statement, then clearly one can be an Adventist and an evolutionist.

However, it appears that what is more at issue to Adventist writers such as Mr. Goldstein is whether you can be a “true” Adventist and an evolutionist. What determines whether one is such an Adventist?

From previous statements, I would assume that, to Mr. Goldstein, a “true” Adventist is one who believes in the entire Adventist package of theological propositions. Up until 2005, there were 27 “Fundamental Beliefs.” Now there are 28. At the time that the name “Seventh-day Adventist” was adopted in 1863, an original core Adventist belief about the “Shut Door” had been dropped. Several Adventist historians have noted that many Adventist pioneers would have rejected one or more of the current Adventist 28 Fundamentals—particularly the one about the Trinity. Some may also not realize that it was not until 1980 that Adventists included any statement about Creation in their list of “Fundamental Beliefs.”

Mr. Goldstein might object that this appeal to an “evolutionary Adventist theology” is silly and beside the point. He might insist that an evolutionary model of how life developed on this planet rejects the understanding of Paul in Romans and elsewhere in the New Testament concerning the relationship between human sin and death and the meaning of the Crucifixion. Given the great variability in how Christian theologians over the last two millennia have attempted to comprehend these complex topics, what might first be examined is the Adventist explanation of all of this—Ellen White's Great Controversy theme.

The point of all of this is that the theological tenets of Adventism have been continually evolving and will continue to evolve. The preamble to the current “Fundamentals” states explicitly that all statements are subject to revision. The current set of Fundamental Beliefs represents the currently politically crafted consensus acceptable to a relatively small group of Adventist professional clergy. These statements should be respected for both what they are and what they are not. Given the history of our theological beliefs, a “real” Adventist—whether he believes in evolution or not—can perhaps be best defined as an individual who takes the reality of God's “Present Truth” seriously.

Ervin Taylor is professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of California, Riverside.

Mad About MUSIC What Else Is New?

A current clash over jazz bands is the latest in a long line of Adventist music controversies.

BY VANESSA SANDERS

Loma Linda Academy Principal Brent Baldwin feels caught in the middle of an age-old controversy.

“I’m in a sticky situation,” he said. “I have a very conservative base to work with and a very liberal base to work with.”

It’s nothing new. Baldwin is fielding opposing views regarding the Loma Linda Academy jazz band. Although Baldwin says only one person, retired Adventist educator Lyle Hamel, has complained to him directly about the band, several people have expressed their negative input indirectly.

Hamel and others blame the initiation of jazz bands at campuses like Loma Linda Academy on university jazz bands—specifically Southern Jazz Ensemble of Southern Adventist University—for recruiting academy students to play jazz.

“Why does Southern have such a program, and why are they permitted to bring reproach to all of us who have served this fine university?” said Hamel, who taught and directed music at Southern from 1959-1964.

Ken Parsons, director of Southern Jazz, doesn’t take responsibility for the recruitment of academy performers.

“To say that ‘SAU made us start this group’ is absurd,” Parsons said. “Every academy principal is the captain of his ship, and if he feels an ensemble such as this is contrary to the mission and standards of the school, he’s certainly within his rights and powers to prevent one. Whenever we perform for a school, I make sure the principal understands ahead of time the nature of our presentation. I’ve never had one refuse us.”

Baldwin didn’t refuse. He welcomed Southern Jazz with open arms, and so did his students.

“When they saw [Southern Jazz], the kids got really excited,” Baldwin said. “They were saying, ‘We want one, Mr. Baldwin!’”

Baldwin saw a need for a small band that would easily fit into smaller churches and would have more flexibility for community performances, so he gave his permission for such a band to form;

NOT AMUSED: CONTROVERSIAL ADVENTIST MUSIC OVER THE YEARS

The King’s Heralds, a group that formed around 1935, were criticized for their folk sound. The group still performs today.



In 1964 The Wedgwood Trio formed at Newbold College in England. After much success in the U.S. and nine albums, the Adventist Church banned their performances and album sales. Today the group reunites to perform (less member Don Vollmer).



1930s

1940s

1950s

1960s

however, he points out that calling the group a “jazz band” is a misnomer.

“When they go to churches and play, do you think they play jazz music? No,” Baldwin said.

The band plays worship music for church services and a mix of jazz music and big band for community performances.

“If it was strictly a jazz band,” Baldwin said, “I would have an issue because the older generation in the Adventist Church views jazz as negative.”

Bruce Ashton fits this category. A semi-retired associate professor of music at Southern, Ashton says, “Jazz was the 1920’s ‘F’ word. It was a street word for ‘dirty sex.’ There must have been something about the style of the music to make people think that way about it and call it that. Jazz is music with an attitude—with an ‘in your face’ style.”

But not everyone holds this view. Parsons says he established Southern Jazz at the request of Dr. Scott Ball, dean of the School of Music, and “with the blessing of the university administration.”

“The group has been very positively received, in general,” Parsons said. “I know there are those who do not enjoy jazz, and some that do not feel it appropriate music for a Christian group, but I have received very little negative input.”

A History of Division

What is considered appropriate music has always been an issue in the Adventist Church. Some call certain music styles rebellion against Christian living and don’t believe it brings anyone closer to God.

Others argue that performing such music is either neutral or a way of delivering the gospel message to those who don’t know Christ. Most Christian artists, such as the controversial Adventist jazz vocal group Take 6, claim this as the reason for their sound.

“We’ve accomplished what we set out to do, and that’s to reach

people in all walks of life,” Take 6 member Claude V. McKnight III told the *New York Times*. “It has never made sense to just sing in church or to people who supposedly already have the message. You take it out into the . . . streets to the people who really need it.”

The Heritage Singers’ founders Max and Lucy Mace have a similar purpose and consider the contemporary-sounding group a ministry. But many Adventists didn’t view the group in the same way, criticizing them in the early 1970s.

“As in anything new, some people were not willing to accept change at first,” Lucy Mace said. “Max had a dream to have a larger group with tight harmony and within the group have a quartet. We weren’t criticized so much for our music. It was more because we had a guitar and bass guitar on stage.”

Groups like The Heritage Singers and Take 6 are a present-day reflection of groups past like The Wedgwood Trio, later called The Wedgwood after group member Don Vollmer quit because of his spiritual conviction when the group changed from offering a simple folk-gospel style to a more edgy, complex sound in 1969.

“To me, the new music compromised and betrayed its message. I had no doubt that many people would enjoy it, but I seriously wondered about its power to uplift and convert,” Vollmer told Marilyn Thomsen in her book *Wedgwood: Their Music, Their Journey*.

Besides The Wedgwood’s inner-group struggles, the Adventist Church rejected the group’s music about 1973, closing doors to performances and putting an end to their career despite their large and mostly young fan base. Their last album, *Dove*, was recalled a month after its release when Adventist stores banned its sale.

“A longtime friend told us that years later he found *Dove* in the bargain bin at an Adventist Book Center,” group member Bob Summerour told Thomsen.

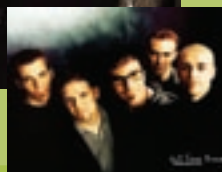
Of course, today the Wedgwood music that was once banned is often considered harmless and innocent. That is, unless you’re in

Started in 1971 out of Portland, Oregon, **The Heritage Singers** offended some ears with their contemporary sound. Yet the group’s founder and members consider their music a ministry.

Take 6, with their jazz, soul and R&B sounds, have been criticized by conservative Adventists. The group has won three Grammy awards and four Gospel Music Dove awards.



Formed at Andrews University in the mid-90s, **Big Face Grace** has been featured on MTV’s *Road Rules* and ABC’s *Making the Band* and played their Christian rock in stadiums for thousands. Four of the members are active pastors involved in college and youth ministries.



1970s 1980s

agreement with Louis Torres, vice president of Mission College of Evangelism.

The lead bass player for Bill Haley and the Comets in 1967-68, the young Torres was convicted the music he was playing was not pleasing to God.

“So I dropped [the Comets] in spite of the fact that my pastor tried to encourage me to just change the words,” Torres said.

He holds the same conviction today.

“What Bill Haley and the Comets began has contributed to regressing back to the primitive jungle beats utilized to incite war, sex, or ecstasy,” he said. “It is sad the church forgets that God does not change just because the world changes.”

Behind School and Conference Doors

As new pop-culture sounds rise under a Christian label, and as old, classical jazz surfaces within the Adventist school system, about the only thing that doesn't change is the disagreement. Music, not just love, has always been a battlefield.

Even the music at the 2000 General Conference in Toronto was controversial; people who liked or disliked the use of drums, rhythms, and eclectic sounds were split seemingly down the middle. While some deemed the music cultural, others thought it an apostasy. Some walked out when certain music was played, according to Ruth Ann Wade, associate professor of music at Montemorelos University.

Some thought Adventist theologian Samuele Bacchiocchi was cleansing the sanctuary from rock music at the 2000 Toronto Session when, in the exhibit hall, he jumped onto the podium and ripped the microphone from a performing group, Valor.

“He grabbed one of their mikes and began a tirade against ‘this rock music.’ The ABC manager had to come out and retrieve the microphone,” attendee John McLarty said.

Although this may have been interpreted by some as

Bacchiocchi's scorn of rock music, Bacchiocchi said it had nothing to do with the style of music being played.

“The issue was not the kind of music that they were playing, but the fact that the band set up their platform and played full blast next to our booths where we were trying to communicate with our customers,” Bacchiocchi said. “Three different booth owners asked them to turn down the volume, but nothing happened. Since they were stubborn . . . I walked onto the platform and told them to go elsewhere to play their music.”

Five years after that conference, new guidelines toward a Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music were written and released by the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee. Compared with preceding music guidelines released in 1972, the 2005 guidelines on music are less specific, more generalized, and suggest recognizing music from other cultures.

One thing the 1972 guidelines include that the 2005 guidelines leave out is: “Certain musical forms, such as jazz, rock, and their related hybrid forms, are considered by the Church as incompatible with these principles.”

Instead, the latter guidelines say that “secular music is music composed for settings other than the worship service or private devotion. It speaks to the common issues of life and basic human emotions. It comes out of our very being, expressing the human spirit's reaction to life, love, and the world in which the Lord has placed us. It can be morally uplifting or degrading. Although it does not directly praise and adore God . . . it could have a legitimate place in the life of the Christian.”

What each individual considers “legitimate” secular music and how they define it, and which kinds of music should be allowed within Adventist schools and churches, is an issue that, no matter how fine-tuned our guidelines are, will always march to the beat of its own drummer.

1990s

Featured by *People* magazine ▶ as one of their “50 Most Beautiful People in the World,” **Patty Cabrera** burst into the music scene in 1991 and has three albums to her credit. She once performed her Latin pop at the Billy Graham Latin International Crusade.



2000s

Faith First started at Pacific Union College in 1994 and continue to minister to an international audience with an upbeat contemporary sound. They released their fourth album ▶ in 2005.

Southern Jazz, under the direction of Ken Parsons, has been blamed for influencing the formation of Adventist academy jazz groups. ▶



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How Offended Would You Have Been?

Go to www.atoday.com to hear sample clips from these groups—and vote how offended you are.



Ford, Toyota, and Church

By Alden Thompson

Among the stacks scattered about my desk is a lone *Newsweek* that shouts at me every time I walk by. I left it open to an article I don't want to forget: "Excuse Me, Mr. Ford: How to tell the man whose name is on the building that you're overhauling the family firm he once ran."¹

One stark fact and a revealing quote stood out for me. The fact: Last year Ford lost \$12.7 billion, while Toyota earned a profit of \$13.7 billion.

I sense an application to the church lurking near, though normally I'm allergic to that American disease that imports business fads into the church. No doubt we can learn something from "management by objective," "niche marketing," or "product lust"; but the church is Christ's body, easily wounded when treated like a business.

Still, the Bible is full of examples of spiritual leaders in touch with the world around them. Jesus rooted his stories in agriculture and commerce; Paul jostled with philosophers, used illustrations from sports; Moses knew his Egyptian stuff; Daniel was top of his class at Babylon U.

And from my early years, Ellen White's exhilarating description of the reformer John Wycliffe has inspired to me to keep my faith in touch with the larger world. Noted for both "fervent piety" and "sound scholarship," Wycliffe's "thirst" for knowledge drove him to explore "every branch of learning." Ellen White used the word "thorough" to describe his knowledge of the speculative philosophy "of his time." When did you last hear a church person get excited about that?

So, the kingdom of God is like Ford and Toyota.

First, let's note that Bill Ford, head of the family business for five years, knew something had to change. So he fired himself as CEO and brought in Alan Mulally, the executive who had transformed Boeing after 9/11. Mulally wanted Ford to stay on as board chair; Ford agreed, but insisted that Mulally would be making the key decisions. "Awkward" was *Newsweek's* word: asking a man to fix the mistakes of his predecessor—while still working for him.

Mulally saw what was "blindingly obvious" to any outsider: Ford had spent billions developing a host of models while Toyota sold the same Corolla around the world. And now the revealing quote: When Mulally asked why the company hadn't adapted to a changing world, Ford said, "Well, Alan, it was just too hard' to change the culture."

Application? Adventists are supposed to be growing and adapting: "That which God gives His servants to speak today," exclaimed Ellen White in 1888, "would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God's message for this time."² Yet even Ellen White's emphatic words don't make change easy.

Adventist Today recently published an entire issue on our decline. Will it be too hard to change the culture? I hope not. I have strong convictions about both problem and solution: believers must learn to be more open to hard questions, and skeptics must learn more about awe and worship. Most of us aren't good at both; we need each other.

My problem is that I'm 64 now and beginning to see things like an old person. Recently, a favorite Ellen White quote urging individual Bible study appeared in a new light for me: "We must not trust to others to search the Scriptures for us," she wrote, "for some of our leading brethren have frequently taken their position on the wrong side." But then the hard part: "If God would send a message to these older brethren and wait for them to open the way for its advancement, it would never reach the people."³ Older brethren? That's me. But I'm not giving up; after all, Bill Ford, age 50, asked Alan Mulally, age 62, to help rescue Ford.

It's hard to change any culture, even harder when it touches religion. But if we are open to the Spirit, the Lord can make it happen. Then even Toyota will look thin by comparison.

¹*Newsweek*, 17 Sept. 2007.

²MS 8a 1888, Ellen White to Adventist ministers on 21 Oct. 1888. A. V. Olsen, *Thirteen Crisis Years* (1981) 282.

³*Gospel Workers*, 303 (cf. RH, 26 July 1892).

Jesus rooted his stories in agriculture and commerce; Paul jostled with philosophers, used illustrations from sports; Moses knew his Egyptian stuff; Daniel was top of his class at Babylon U.

THE DAY SADDAM CAME TO SABBATH SCHOOL



Our topic that day was vengeance.

BY CHRIS BLAKE

CHANGE OF SCENERY: Tom Weber with his immediate family—and his Sabbath school family. Ruth stands behind Tom. Chris Blake stands on the far right.

“WE SHOULD NOT HAVE KILLED SADDAM!” Ruth was adamant as she spoke from the back row. “It sends the wrong message,” she continued. “What we did yesterday only perpetuates the violence.”

Out of the corner of my eye I watched Tom Weber, sitting on the front row. Tom Weber, who that morning was attending the first Sabbath School of his life. Tom Weber, a Yezidi Kurd from Iraq, who had been tortured for nearly six years—*four hours a day*—by Saddam’s henchmen. Tom Weber, who had escaped to Syria, lived in a refugee camp for 15 years, emigrated with his wife and eight of his children to the United States, and then become a citizen, taking the name of an American friend and benefactor. Tom Weber, whom I had met and invited to our class at the College View Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and whose eyes widened with Ruth’s passionate comments.

What should I say? I wondered.

Occasionally, reality makes an appearance in church. On our last week of the quarter studying Romans, chapter 12 (“The Life”), our text was verses 19-21

(RSV): “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ No, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.’”

That morning Lincoln’s *Journal Star* had featured a front-page photo of Saddam Hussein standing unbowed in a white shirt. A five-inch-tall headline trumpeted one word: **HANGED**. I had anticipated some discussion of this event, perhaps a passing mention—not the first comment after the scriptural text was read. However, Ruth had dragged the day’s reality into the room, and all eyes turned toward me awaiting my response.

Dealing with suppositions is so much easier. Discussing how we should treat an imaginary enemy, a faceless foe, a proposed antagonist is cleaner, less complicated. Also, I didn’t want to ignite a hot debate on capital punishment. I just wanted to teach the lesson. *Can’t we keep this real-life stuff out of our lesson study?*

Out of Iraq

Our Sabbath School has worked for years with the F.I.R.S.T. Project (For Immigrants and Refugees Surviving Torture). Each Christmas the class purchases (some have the spiritual gift of shopping) and delivers presents to about 20 needy children and their families.

When I delivered presents to Tom’s family, I met him and Khazna, his wife, and five of his children, ages 7 to 15, who still live at home. Noura is the oldest daughter, then daughter Amal, son Header (pronounced “Hider”), daughter Rihab, and son Ali. Though Tom speaks broken English and often asks his children to translate, I discover he understands more than he lets on when I catch him laughing at my jokes. The area around his brown eyes is rutted with laugh lines. He is 52.

Each time I visit Tom’s rented duplex, I remove my shoes, and he leads me upstairs. In the living room, sometimes a feast awaits: savory rice wrapped in grape leaves; couscous; a cool dish of tomatoes, yogurt, and cucumbers; chicken; and delicious, round Iraqi bread as big as a large pizza. Afterward, we drink what the canister calls “finest Ceylon tea.” With typical Middle Eastern hospitality, Tom delights in loading guests’ plates with heaping portions and spurning their “full” objections.

He has worked as a cook, and before his torture he was able to work construction and play volleyball. Now he endures back problems and heart problems, among others. He takes eight different medicines daily.

One day I ask, “How big was your prison cell?” Stepping toward the middle of the room, I extend my hands to frame an area six feet by eight feet—the tiniest cell I’ve seen. “About . . . this?”

Exasperated, Tom exhales loudly and furrows his gray-flecked eyebrows. His

expression says, *Are you kidding me?* He points dramatically toward my feet until I look down. I'm standing on a small throw rug, three by four feet. He traces the outline with his index finger.

He says, "This my cell." I blink twice, unbelieving.

"How high," I gesture *up*, "was your ceiling?"

Tom slowly gets down on his knees, crouches even lower, and places his hand two inches above his head.

"This tall," he says.

The prison was honeycombed with scores of these cramped spaces, designed so occupants could never fully stretch out. For nearly six years, the only stretching Tom experienced came while hanging from a ceiling fan as his torturers, sheerly for sport, pulled out his teeth one by one, fractured his arm, bruised and bloodied him with cables, and burned him with scalding water and glowing cigarettes. For nearly six years he did not see the sun.

Now, whenever I'm tempted for some reason or other to complain, I think, *Three by four feet with a four-foot ceiling? Tortured four hours a day? Never seeing daylight? I have nothing to whine about.*

The second time Tom attended Sabbath School he left immediately after class, returning after 10 minutes. His clothes exuded smoke. Tom smokes about half a pack of cigarettes a day. Once I asked him if he had ever tried to quit. He spoke Kurdish through Amal: "Yes, he quit for two weeks, but then the memories came back. So he didn't try to quit again." He smokes for his health, even if it kills him.

On April 24, 1976, Tom was taken to the torture prison in Baghdad. Saddam's son, Uday, had sent soldiers to extort a kilogram of gold from Tom, who refused to cooperate. On the night before he was to be hung, he and 16 other prisoners and a prison guard escaped. ("Guard," Tom says in his thick accent, "is in California.")

Sleeping and hiding during the day, he

traveled through the wintry nights until he reached his home in Sinjar. Wanted posters appeared, demanding he be killed on sight. When he reached Sinjar, he gathered Khazna and their one child and crossed the border into Syria. During the next 15 years in the refugee camp they had eight more children. Ali was born in the United States.

Ten years ago, one day after arriving in New York City from Syria, Tom and Khazna and their family moved to Memphis, Tennessee. ("Too *hot*," he tells me.) From there they moved to Seattle, Washington. ("Too *rainy*," he says.) They moved to Hawley, Minnesota, located east of Fargo, North Dakota. (He rolls his eyes. "Too *cold*.") They moved to Buffalo, New York. (He shakes his head. "Too many *problems*.") They moved to Lincoln, Nebraska. (He nods decisively. "*We like Lincoln*.") I tell Tom he is Goldilocks and the bears. Noura laughs. I think, *Someday, I'll explain that one to him.*

Tom and his family still face huge challenges, particularly finances. Owing to his physical ailments, Tom cannot work. After his son Adnan turned 18, Tom's monthly stipend dropped from \$648 to \$561, and the food stamps shrank from \$764 to \$566. At the same time, their rent increased \$93. The family looks to lease a community garden plot next March.

All of his children here are now U.S. citizens. (One daughter remains in Iraq.) American flags, a poster with the lyrics to "God Bless America," and a 3-D photo of the standing World Trade Towers grace the living room walls. They love their new country. Yet in an astounding irony, sometimes Tom and his family face persecution here because they are Iraqis—as though they were Saddam sympathizers. Last week during the night their van was keyed, a jagged line scratched around three sides.

In church Tom reads from an Arabic Bible. During an interview, after Amal translates his story for the class, I ask, "What

kept you alive during those six years?" I expect his answer to be "My family," or "I wouldn't let them get the best of me."

Instead he says simply: "God."

Overcoming Evil With Good

I was with Tom watching Iraqi TV via cable the night Saddam Hussein was executed. All he said was "Saddam gone. Saddam gone." Understandably he was glad that Saddam was no longer on the scene.

For our lesson on Romans 12 that Sabbath, we discussed the cyclical problems of vengeance, manifested most conspicuously in the Middle East today. And tomorrow. And next year. But the haunting question remains central to all our lives. *How do we treat our enemies?*

As the passage in Romans points out, we are called to overcome evil with good, to build a redemptive, healing present and future out of the sufferings of the past. It is a difficult but clear counter-cultural command. That principle formed the kernel of my response to the reality that entered through the opening comment by Ruth.

Ruth, who recently finished her physician assistant program at Union College and will return home to Trinidad, where she plans to start a clinic to support women and girls who have been victimized by sexual abuse. Ruth, who herself has been victimized, and who struggled for years with the horrible secret until she let it out, confronting a family that will now have little to do with her. Ruth, who has battled loneliness, depression, insomnia, financial hardship, and intense physical maladies while pursuing her studies. Ruth, who leaves 3 a.m. messages at my office to tell me she loves and is praying for my family.

Ruth, who after class chases Ali, Tom's squealing 7-year-old son, around the room until she catches him and hugs him tightly, both of them laughing, all under the smiling eyes of Tom Weber.

7 QUESTIONS for...Marvin Moore



Marvin Moore has been the editor of *Signs of the Times* magazine since 1994. He has written more than 30 books, including his latest, *Could It Really Happen? Revelation 13 in the Light of History and Currents Events*. At age

70, Moore actively conducts seminars on endtime events. He can be reached at mmoore777@cableone.net and www.hopeseminars.org.

Many people know you for your books on endtime events, including your discussion of Sunday laws. Do you get the sense that Adventist members these days are less confident about the historic Adventist endtime scenario?

I think some Adventists probably question our traditional interpretation. However, I don't run into that a lot, probably because churches that question our traditional interpretation of prophecy tend not to invite me to speak. I think those Adventists who affirm our traditional view would be those who also accept the prophetic ministry of Ellen White.

How confident are you, personally, that there will be a national Sunday law someday—and that Sabbathkeepers in this country will be persecuted on a wide scale?

I wrote *Could It Really Happen?* to demonstrate from Scripture the validity of our historic interpretation of Revelation 13. Once church-state separation is gone—as I think it will be someday—Sunday laws will be easy to enact and enforce. As for the serious persecution of Sabbathkeepers, I think that development will especially happen under the pressure of the final crisis, including warfare, probably terrorism, and major natural disasters. I think that's what it will take to push the

United States and other Western nations to enact religious laws with penalties for dissenters. I also think that these laws will be strongly encouraged by the demonic forces that God will permit to manifest themselves openly during the end time.

What, actually, would be the problem with a Sunday law? Historically a Sunday law meant that you couldn't work on Sunday—which wouldn't be a problem for Sabbathkeepers. The only issue of conscience for a Sabbathkeeper would be forced work on Sabbath, correct?

Ellen White herself said that when Sunday observance is merely an issue of not working on Sunday, we should cooperate with it. She advised using it as a day for missionary work (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 232). The issue of conscience for a Sabbathkeeper in the end time will be twofold: (1) whether or not to work on the Sabbath, and (2) whether or not to observe Sunday as a day of rest and worship.

You've also written much about righteousness by faith, and you even took some heat for stating that "the condition of salvation is faith, not obedience." Has your personal view on salvation changed over the years?

I was fortunate to have parents who were grace-oriented in their discipline of my sister and me. I think this has made it easy for me to accept a gracious God who accepts my moral weaknesses and my humanness and who also encourages me to mature spiritually. I was also fortunate, as a freshman in college, to have a professor, M. D. Lewis at Southwestern Junior College, who had a very clear understanding of righteousness by faith.

Do you think Ellen White's view on salvation changed over the years?

Yes, in the sense that it improved. Alden Thompson has written extensively on that topic,

and I find his conclusions to be sound. I find it quite surprising that some Adventists think Ellen White was a legalist. I suspect that stems at least partly from the way she was presented to them and the way the standards of the church were forced on them as children. I derived some of my most foundational insights on righteousness by faith from her.

What's the biggest problem facing the Adventist Church?

The loss of a sense of personal responsibility for the mission of the church that Adventists had until the past generation or two. I'd say that a significant percentage of today's North American Adventists see the church as a place to worship on Sabbath morning and not much more.



We've obtained a recent photo of you looking trim and fit at age 70. Is it true that you're preparing a Marvin Moore Vegan Cookbook complete with workout video?

No.

What's In a Name?

With a new format for *Adventist Today*, we also considered a name change. A few of the ideas we (briefly) considered:

Adventist Universe
Seven-Up (a non-caffeinated mag)
Investigative Judgments

The Chronicles of Hiram Edson
Adventist Today (for insiders)
AdVENTist Today (for outsiders)
(Are These People Really) Adventist ... Today?
The Magazine Formerly Known As Adventist Today
Catholic Today (guaranteed to boost subscriptions)
Adventist Tonight (our Song of Solomon edition)



Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

Heard or read a memorable statement from an Adventist? Got one yourself? Email it to "Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes" at atoday@atoday.com.

When they see you treating your wife and children with love, you will introduce them to Adventism.

When they see you willing to help them in any way—including on the Sabbath—you will introduce them to Adventism.

When they see you laughing, caring, helping and a fun person to be with, you will introduce them to Adventism.

When they see you spending more time with your kids than your lawn; talking more about family than finances; you'll introduce them to Adventism.

I would wait for them to ask the questions, such as Why do you head off in the car with the family on Saturday mornings, etc?

—Adventist Mission Director **Gary Krause**, when asked how to introduce neighbors to Adventism

Well, I'd first bring back the intrepid New Zealander's motion from the floor of the Toronto G.C. session to add three words to the 'Remnant Church and Its Mission' fundamental: "... a part of the remnant church has been called out. . ." This would help to unravel decades of denominational exclusivity and arrogance.

Oh, and find some way to include Micah 6:8 in the "Christian Behavior" fundamental so that members would be less likely to be wading into caffeine, pork, and jewelry while skipping substantive Christian requirements.

I would encourage pastors to give more freedom to creative people in the public sector to lead out in ministries. I'd reward risk-taking leaders for their creativity, excellence, and fortitude—perhaps with cases of FriChik.

—**Chris Blake**, author of *Swimming Against the Current*, when asked what he would do as General Conference president

There is not much distinction between "commissioned" versus "ordained" ministers. It is a play on words in order to keep the worldwide church happy. The North American Division has made a "culture-sensitive" decision to accept women in the ministry, but that is not the case with the whole world. They seem to have found a temporary alternative in the change of wording.

—Pastor and Azusa Pacific University professor **Elizabeth Talbot**, when asked her opinion on "commissioned" versus "ordained" ministry

Adventist Man

Jewelry and *Carelessarcasticus*

Adventist Man, why did the father place jewelry on the prodigal son?

Indeed, the forgiving father of Luke 15 does say, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand . . ." Easy answers to this question abound.

First, the father asks the *servant* to do it, to avoid being a stumbling block to anyone who saw him affix the defiling metal himself. Few of us have servants to perform this function today.

Next, the "ring" here referred to is, of course (Adventist Man pauses here to indulge his most patronizing chuckle), symbolic of the familial relationship between father and son, much as fathers give their sons "friendship rings" today.

Some suggest that this ring also carried an inscription on the inside that read, "THIS IS MERELY SYMBOLIC AND IN NO WAY SHOULD BE VIEWED AS JEWELRY." (The inscription font was, naturally, quite small, but the prodigal son, we've determined from archaeological studies, had exceptionally wide fingers.) Thus, the gift was of practical use, like the rings of Saturn.

Finally, you will note that the Bible does *not* say, "... and pierce his earlobes, eyebrows, nose, lips, tongue, and navel . . ."—with the exception of some modern versions.

I have this friend who constantly makes fun of the Adventist church, yet she considers herself an Adventist. Her put-downs are getting me down. Adventist Man, what should I say to her?

Your friend's symptoms indicate a malady common to the species *carelessarcasticus*. Adventist Man has found traits of this species to include:

► Unwillingness to offer help (time, money, prayer) to any enterprise that could possibly be "inconvenient," such as youth work or evangelism, or to show up for anything that smells even faintly "churchy." Jesus gave His all, but for *carelessarcasticus* giving .001% is good enough.

► Belief that all religions are "valid paths" to God, including those religions that claim all other religions cannot possibly be valid paths to God.



► "Liberation" from restrictions such as drinking alcohol, drug use, or sexual promiscuity. Nothing screams "freedom" and "Christian" like a mentally impaired, chemically saturated believer with gonorrhea.

► Pride in being more "enlightened" than lesser-educated, naive traditionalists. *Carelessarcasticus* takes special pride in dismantling the "simplistic" beliefs of others using condescending tones, in particular pointing out the myriad horrors of the sin of pride.

Rigorously pointing out these flaws in your friend may help you achieve a warm, self-righteous glow, but it may not yield best results. Adventist Man recommends loving and helping your friend in redemptive ways. You might even concentrate on her best qualities, much as you hope she will begin doing.

Adventist Man believes church is like an artichoke. Many parts are prickly and inedible, but what matters is getting to the heart.

Do you have a tough question? Adventist Man has "the answer." As a former member of "the remnant of the remnant," Adventist Man was ranked 8,391 of the 144,000—and working his way up. Now he relies solely on grace and friendship with Jesus. You can email him at atoday@atoday.com



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