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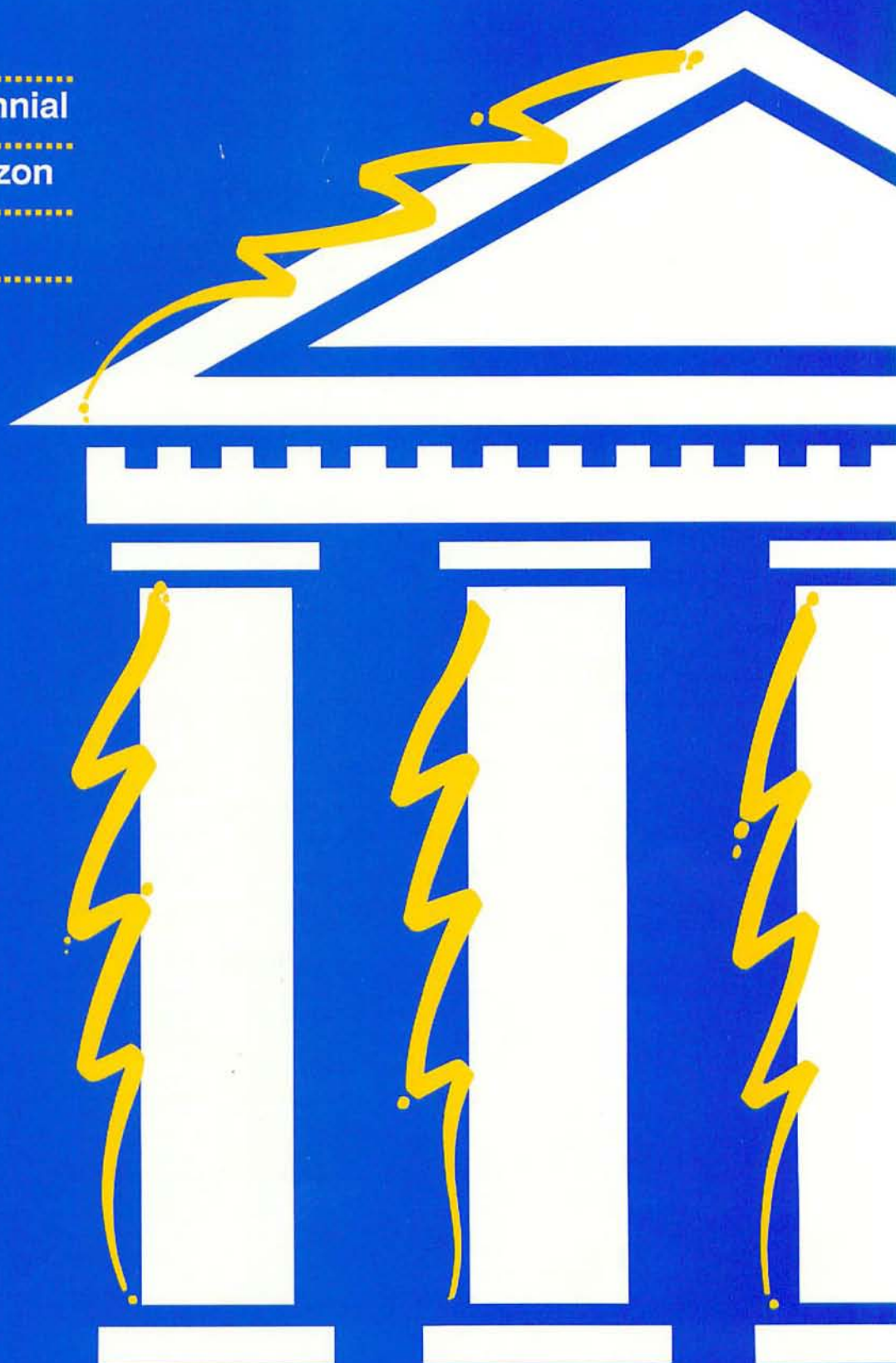
DIALOGUE

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Van Gogh in His Centennial

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Challenges on the Horizon

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A Random Universe?

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Winds of Freedom in
Eastern Europe



Published in
* ENGLISH
FRENCH
PORTUGUESE
SPANISH



Vol. 2 - No. 3

DIALOGUE

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY DIALOGUE is published three times a year in four parallel editions (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) under the sponsorship of the Committee on Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Vol. 2, No. 3.

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

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

Subscriptions: US\$10 per year (three issues). Please turn to page 35 for details.

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Editorial

With this, our fifth issue, *Dialogue* completes its second year of publication. Our journal is appreciated by thousands of university students and professionals who read it in English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish. Some of you use the articles as starters for group discussions in meetings. Others of you duplicate articles and give them to friends or teachers. For many readers, *Dialogue* is a way of keeping in touch with other thoughtful Adventists who face similar challenges and enjoy a Christian approach to current issues.

It's easy to see that our world and our church are changing, many times in unexpected ways. Four articles in this issue focus on these transformations. "Challenges on the Horizon" (page 8) looks at significant trends within Seventh-day Adventism as our church enters the new decade. "A Random Universe?" (page 10) examines the tension between order and chance from biblical and scientific perspectives. "Winds of Freedom" (page 13) reports on how the exciting developments in Eastern Europe are impacting our church. Finally, "Who Will Care for the Children?" (page 31) calls our attention to the alarming circumstances in which millions of them live, suggesting practical ways of alleviating their plight.

Our masthead reflects changes closer to home. The AMiCUS Committee, our sponsor, has several new members. You will also notice changes among our regional and local representatives. We are interested in receiving names of Adventist teachers or students who would like to represent us in other college and university campuses. Although this position is *ad*

honorem, representatives receive a free copy of each *Dialogue* issue and have the chance to make specific suggestions on its content.

In this issue, every reader has an opportunity to provide his or her views regarding the journal and also to help us widen our circle of friends. Please take a few minutes to fill out the Readers' Survey form inserted between pages 18 and 19, then mail it to the regional representative for your area. Your evaluation and comments will give us valuable input in charting the future direction of *Dialogue*. Tell us how we can better address your spiritual and intellectual needs.

A few of our characteristics, however, will not change. It is our intention to continue publishing *Dialogue* as an international journal of faith, thought, and action. The authors, artists and individuals profiled in this issue represent eleven countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, England, Holland, Kenya, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Sweden, Uruguay, and U.S.A. We also intend to keep publishing stimulating articles that will help you to know, live, and share your Christian faith.

Finally, if you wish to establish correspondence with Adventist students or professionals in other parts of the world, turn to "Interchange" on our Bulletin Board (page 35) where you will find our first listing of names and addresses. If you also want to have your name included, read the instructions and join the expanding global correspondence network. Enjoy your reading and keep in touch!

The Editors

LETTERS

Dialogue with Our Readers

Disagreeing on Abortion

We, at Adventists for Life (AFL), reject the Proposed Statement of Consensus on Abortion as recommended by the Christian View of Human Life Committee and published in *Dialogue* 1-1990. Its content reveals lack of trust in God's Word and lack of faith in His power. Nowhere in this document is there an indication that abortion is wrong and, for the Christian, a sin because it involves the taking of human life. The sixth commandment of God's law—"Thou shalt not kill"—is a biblical absolute. Our church should not bend its principles or compromise its standards to accommodate modern morals. On the contrary, we should present Christ's answers to a fallen world. In addition, I doubt that this statement truly represents a consensus among the rank and file of Adventist women. A copy of our critical comments on the proposed statement will be mailed to those who request it from AFL: 700 West 4th Street; Keene, TX 76059; U.S.A.

Teresa Beem, Adventists for Life
Keene, Texas, U.S.A.

Global Mission in Spain

I'm a 23-year-old university student and also the lay activities leader in the Alicante church in Spain. I want to congratulate you for publishing *Dialogue*—it's the best Seventh-day Adventist journal that I've ever read!

A group of seven or eight young adult members of our congregation have started an outreach program in our city because we really enjoy witnessing for Christ. Encouraged by the concept of "global strategy" mentioned in your journal, we have contacted not only university students, but also several people groups including Jews, Gypsies, and South American immigrants in our city. Under God's blessing, we have also been able to make friends with young men from Arab countries and from Senegal. We have shared our Christian faith with them, reading portions of the Bible and praying together.

We are ready to contribute our time, efforts, and abilities to the Global Strategy program in this area. We want to work and become a part of God's overall plan. We are quite conscious, however, of our limitations and are currently studying the Koran and also trying to improve our French. Because of the large group of Arab immigrants here in Alicante, we can use Spanish or Arabic outreach material especially geared to Moslem readers, as well as ideas on how to effectively reach the Moslem mind. Our address: C. Diagonal, No. 11, 2o. A; 3009 Alicante; Spain. Thanks for your help and support.

Pablo Antonio Fontanales
Alicante, SPAIN

Proud of this Journal

As an Adventist educator, I am proud of the quality of thought and expression revealed in the content of *Dialogue*. It matches the standard of many other scholarly journals I read. I am pleased to know that there is, along with *The Journal of Adventist Education*, a publication of this calibre with which the international community of Adventist teachers and students in higher education can identify. I recommend that copies of *Dialogue* also be made available to public libraries around the world.

Iris Henry, Academic Dean
West Indies College, Mandeville, JAMAICA

Chinese Students Seek Correspondents

A friend sent us two different copies of *Dialogue* and we have really enjoyed their content. I especially appreciated the global strategy report published in its second issue, and the article on China, by Annemarie Hamlin, in the next issue—it was well said.

My husband is teaching English at a college here in Northeast China and I am caring for our two-year-old daughter, plus entertaining many visitors that come our way. Thankfully, a degree of

religious freedom is allowed here, a few churches are being built, and some people are becoming Christians. But when one considers that more than one billion people live here, a Christian teacher in every school would be none too many!

I noticed that at the end of the "Adventist Perestroika" article, readers were encouraged to correspond with Russian young people. We have one hundred and more students who are studying English at our college who would love to correspond with someone from another part of the world. For that reason I'd like to extend an invitation to anyone who is interested in corresponding in English or Chinese to send their name and address, or even a letter to their potential correspondent, to me at my address: Yanbian Teachers' College, Yanji City, Jilin Province, 133000, Peoples' Republic of China. Keep up the good work!

Rachel Luchak
Yanji City, Jilin Province, CHINA

Changes and Opportunities

I am a student from Zimbabwe, attending the University for Architecture and Building in Weimar, East Germany. There are about 2,500 students enrolled in this university, but only two Adventists. This is not unusual due to the socio-political situation in this country. Fortunately, all this is in the process of dramatic change. Until recently, however, German young people were expected to be members of the Communist Youth Organization and to do military service in order to have access to institutions of higher learning. As a result, most Adventist youth could only study at the *Fachschule* (equivalent to college) or to do apprenticeships. We have no problems with the Sabbath, because classes are held during regular weekdays.

I was very pleased to receive the first issues of *Dialogue* and to learn of an international organization of Adventist university students. Our youth group in the local Adventist church is quite active and we have plans to make an impact in this university town, particularly now that we can express openly our Christian convictions.

Our union youth department organizes student meetings twice a year when we spend a weekend together with young people from all over the country. I find these meetings very important and useful. Thank you for your interest in and support of Adventist college and university students.

Alvin Masarira
Weimar, GERMANY

Bridges of Salvation

I first learned about *Dialogue* when someone gave me a copy of its second issue. This journal certainly addresses the needs and concerns of Adventist university students and professionals. I believe we can fulfill a role similar to that of Nicodemus or Paul, serving as bridges of salvation between society at large and our church, thus cooperating with God's work. Four years ago we organized the Metropolitan Association of Adventist Professionals in Lima. In addition to cultural and charity activities, our association sponsors the operation of a new Adventist church located near the government palace. It is our dream that some day soon Adventist professionals may hold a world congress to get personally acquainted with each other and to exchange ideas on how to connect our Christian faith with our careers.

Ermelo E. Meza Sánchez, J.D.
Lima, PERU

Letters

Dialogue welcomes letters from its readers. Please limit your comments to 200 words and address them to: *Dialogue* Letters, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. If selected for this section, your letter may be edited for purposes of clarity or space.

"I Am but a Stranger Here"

Vincent van Gogh in His Centennial

Pieter Sol

The yellow, late July light shone into the small studio of the red-headed artist. He was not seated at his easel this morning, where he usually labored furiously to capture cornfields, peasant cottages, and villages in whorls of vibrant color. Instead, the young artist lay in bed. Incurably ill and plagued by mental instability, loneliness, and a sense of failure, he had shot himself with an old pistol in a wheat field near Auvers-sur-Oise, France. One of his few friends, neurologist Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, cared for him for two days as death came slowly. Rushing in from Paris, the artist's brother Theo arrived in time to hear him say, "I want to go home."

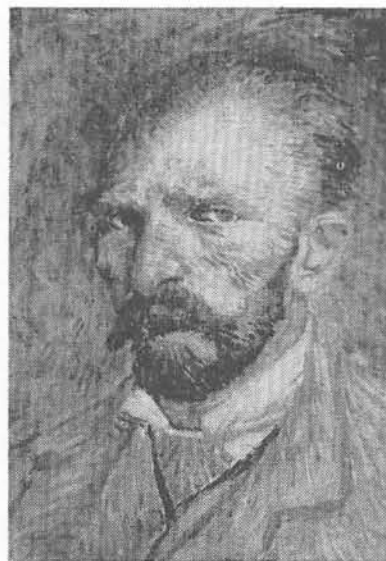
July 29, 1890, saw the death of 37-year-old Vincent van Gogh, today considered the greatest Dutch artist since Rembrandt. Centennial celebrations in the Netherlands and around the globe commemorated this man who, during his lifetime, sold only one painting, at a discount. Supported and encouraged unwaveringly by his younger brother, though admired by few artists of his day, van Gogh was poor, unrecognized, and unloved. And yet, one hundred years after his passing, three of his paintings rank among the 10 most highly priced works on the auction block.

This is the story of the Father of Expressionism. In his art and letters we meet Vincent and gain some insight into his beliefs, intentions, convictions, shortcomings, and incredible talent. Modern fascination with van Gogh has only partially been explained in the numerous studies devoted to his work. To us he remains both accessible and puzzling.

Early Years

Vincent Willem van Gogh began his life on March 30, 1853, the first of six children born to a Dutch Reformed pastor and his wife. As a child, Vincent loved to wander through the countryside near Zundert, his hometown village in the province of Brabant in the southern Netherlands. His father taught him the catechism and his church's dogmatic Protestant beliefs. Vincent's mother took charge of his general education.

Enrolled in boarding school at 11, and secondary school at 14, the freckle-faced boy missed his freedom to roam the fields. He was ill-fitted for schoolwork. Recognizing this at last, Vincent's parents sent



Self-portrait, 1888.

him, at age 16 to The Hague to work in an international art dealer's shop where his uncle was a partner. During the next eight years Vincent worked in the of-

fices of Goupil & Co. in Paris, The Hague, and London.

Although Vincent enjoyed the contact with works of great painters, he did not like art dealership. Not finding satisfaction in his work, Vincent became reclusive and soon developed a reputation as an eccentric. He was dismissed from Goupil. Trying a new direction, the young man landed a job as Methodist preceptor in Ramsgate, and later in Isleworth, England. His voluminous and intimate correspondence with his younger brother, Theo, provides us a unique window into the artist's soul. On November 15, 1876, Vincent wrote of a sermon he had delivered the previous Sunday: "Standing in the pulpit I had the wonderful thought that, in the future I would become a preacher of the Gospel. I know that I am able to evangelize only when I have the Gospel in my heart . . ." The theme of Vincent's sermon that Sunday was drawn from Psalm 119:19, "I am but a stranger here on the earth." This theme was perhaps the most accurate reflection of the artist's personal situation, ever disappointed in love and hungry for friends, and foreshadows the solitary life that Van Gogh led.

His stint as lay preacher and language teacher in England ended in 1877 and he travelled to Dordrecht in the Netherlands, where he worked for a bookseller. But his intense desire to serve humanity did not let him remain long. He attempted to resume his studies in order to become a missionary. Since theological training put too great a strain on him, and because his superiors considered Vincent too much of a risk to appoint him to mission, he took mat-

ters into his own hands. The following year found him in southern Belgium, independently ministering to the poor coal miners in the Borinage, where a missionary society had agreed to sponsor him (\$10 a month) during a trial period.

In his desire to follow the example of Jesus, Vincent distributed all of his food and clothes, sold his few possessions, and gave his money to the poor. He refused to bathe, considering it a luxury, and lived on bread crusts, because the missionary society had withdrawn its sponsorship. Vincent soon became ill and mentally



The Good Samaritan, 1890.

instable. At this point, his family urged him to give up his "mission impossible" and come home. This marked the end of the first major phase of his life.

Turning to Art

Deeply disappointed by organized religion, Vincent turned to his other love, art. In 1880, he began drawing seriously, declaring that he would minister to humanity through this medium. "The world only concerns me," he later wrote, "in that I have a certain obligation and duty, because I have walked this earth for 30 years and out of gratitude I want to leave a token of remembrance in

the form of drawings and paintings—not made to please a certain taste in art, but to express a genuine emotion."

The next five years Vincent spent in the Netherlands learning to master the foundations of his trade, expanding his knowledge of previous artists, and extending his technique by painting still lifes, landscapes, and figures related to the peasant life. While his professional life improved greatly, his ardent desire to marry and have a family was frustrated time and again. In the meantime, his younger brother Theo had been working for Vincent's former employers, the art dealers Goupil & Co. in Paris. Although not an artist himself, Theo had a deep appreciation for art. His clients were mainly members of the middle class who bought traditional academic art, but this did not prevent the young dealer from collecting the "avant-garde" art of Impressionists, Pointillists, and landscape painters of Barbizon.

The modern artists of the day—Monet, Seurat, Cezanne, Pissarro, Gauguin, Degas, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec and Bernard—often congregated at Theo's home to dine and drink. There they discussed politics, literature, the culture and art of the French colonies, Egypt, Tahiti, Japan, as well as the latest developments in their own art.

When Vincent visited his brother for a few months in February 1886, he was caught up in this enthusiastic wave of creativity. Meeting the artistic vanguard of the day, Vincent learned about life in Paris, the art salons, the academies of fine arts, and art dealers. He was inundated with the Impressionist and Pointillist light and color theories made possible by newly developed tube paints. These paints consisted of chemically developed pigments as bright as rainbow colors. Knowing that sunlight, when passing through a prism, divides into seven colors, the Impressionists conceived the idea that a mix of these colors would create every desired

color on the canvas. The dark pigments of the past were quickly abandoned in favor of these vivid colors.

The expressive power of complementary colors—blue against orange, red against green, and yellow



Digging Peasant, 1885.

low against violet—caused the impressionist's easels to erupt in glorious, shocking color. In order to keep the colors bright, the artists painted with small stripes or dots of pure color. The final mixing of the color was done by the eye of the beholder. Always eager to experiment, Vincent set aside his brown, ocher, brick red, green, and gray pigments and put vivid colors onto his palette, following the example of Pissarro and Seurat. This brilliant color scheme and the Parisian subjects converted Vincent into a somewhat clumsy, but enthusiastic Impressionist.

Constantly seeking to improve his painting, Vincent applied a variety of discoveries to his work. Photography, the ultimate consequence of the "central perspective system" described by Renaissance artists, became an auxiliary for composing horse races, city views, poses, and so on. Its use introduced new, loose, and casual compositions of subjects. Vincent's new friends, Gauguin and Bernard, taught him about the symbolic and

psychological value of color—yellow for light, warmth, and spirituality; blue for heaven, coolness, and abstract thinking.

Seeking a Style

Vincent became familiar with the Japanese woodcuts and their plain color patches, the Japanese artists Hiroshige, Yoshitoshi, Hokusai, and their Ukiyo-e tradition in which he discovered an "eastern" way of seeing. Inspired by their art, Vincent wrote his brother, "I envy the Japanese because of their exceptional clarity which all things have in their works." As so often with his discoveries, Vincent immediately introduced a number of "Japanese" features into his art. These Japanese examples probably influenced the painting of the beautiful apple trees and blossoms that he produced during this time. Another discovery that he incorporated was the suggestion of depth without linear perspective, a technique sometimes seen in primitive art. Vincent had found his unique voice in art, his personal style.



Madame Augustine Roulin, 1889.

In a period during which artists were forced by salons and convention to keep to the rules of perspective, anatomy, set color schemes, and to ethical, historical, religious, and mythical subjects,

Vincent and his companions brought reality as they perceived it to the canvas. "Do you know that it is very, very necessary for honest people to remain in art? Hardly anyone knows that the secret of beautiful work lies to a great extent in truth and sincere sentiment," he wrote.

Even though he had not completed secondary school, Vincent was nevertheless a cultured man interested in the deeper meaning of visible things. The great French naturalist novelists—Zola, Balzac, and Loti—who tried to explain the attitude of their characters in the context of social circumstances, genetic inheritance, psychological peculiarities and education, influenced Vincent, who discussed their novels with his brother. Dickens' descriptions of the social evils affected the artist, as did the French novelist Balzac. His interest in religion and literature together with his personal experiences made him an attentive observer and seeker of the deeper meaning of life and art. Vincent wanted art to be an exponent of the metaphysical as well as of the realities of life.

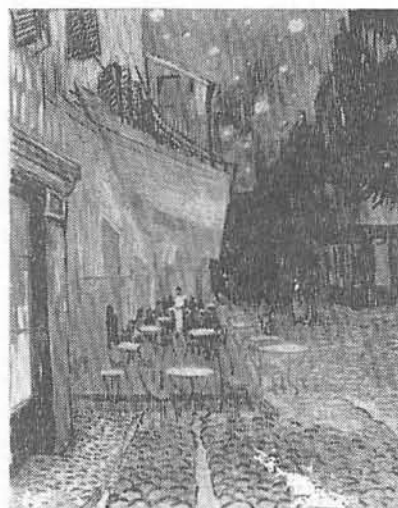
Spiritual Dimension

Was van Gogh a religious artist? Those who lightly skim over his formative years would perhaps answer "No." But the way he chose and treated his subjects is sufficient proof that he was a religious artist. Some of his paintings deal with biblical topics, such as "The Good Samaritan," "The Sower," and "The Raising of Lazarus." But it may be said that the artist wanted to highlight the religious alliance between God, humanity, and earth in a more general way. Living in a time where the social problems of factory workers and poverty-stricken workmen in a rapidly industrializing society demanded a solution, Vincent wanted to contribute to the happiness of people with his art.

Van Gogh refused to meet the art dealers' commercial demand

for traditional religious art, which he claimed was a sacrilege. Writing to Gauguin and Bernard in connection with this, he urged them to approach art intellectually and honestly, seeing God's creation and interpreting it personally with an open mind. Vincent himself painted flowers, landscapes, and portraits not to please art dealers, but to portray the mysteries of nature.

Examples of his interest in nature are the five paintings of star configurations he produced be-



Café-terrace at Night, 1889.

tween 1888 and 1890. One of these paintings was made after he read a scientific essay by Camille Flammarion in "Les Etoiles." Van Gogh wrote this enigmatic (and perhaps prophetic) comment, "For my own part, I declare I know nothing about it, but to look at the stars always makes me dream, as simply as I dream over the black dots of a map representing towns and villages. Why, I ask myself, should the shining dots of the sky not be as accessible as the black dots on the map of France? If we take the train to get to Tarascon or Rouen, we take death to reach a star. One thing undoubtedly true in this reasoning is this, that while we are alive, we cannot get to a star, any more than when we are dead we can take the train. So it seems to

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Challenges on the Horizon

Adventism in the Nineties

George W. Reid

Playing prophet is hazardous at best and disastrous at worst. However, recent events do allow us to project in part what lies ahead for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, presuming the past to be prologue to the future. In His wisdom the Lord may choose to lead our church swiftly by unanticipated paths to the rapid completion of His work, bypassing all projections. For example, few people foresaw the recent changes in Eastern Europe or the more recent Soviet move toward a free market economy and religious freedom. These events demonstrate dramatically how new factors can upset all previous forecasts.

On the basis of current trends, however, it is possible to draw the contours of seven major challenges we are likely to face in the coming decade. These forces affecting our church can be classified as theological or functional, although they influence each other. Since practice generally follows concept, we will look first at theological trends followed by those with more practical dimensions.

A New Encounter With Science

About four centuries ago human exploration of nature displaced revelation as the dominant method of interpreting our surroundings. Science's ability to satisfy curiosity and predict outcomes won the day. This forced believers either to rely on a faith commitment that contradicted mounting evidence or to try to integrate biblical teachings with scientific discoveries.

Science had a staggering impact on religion, causing a near collapse of faith in the 18th century. However, the 19th century saw a

revival of religious faith, one that embraced a literal interpretation of the biblical claims about origins and meaning. Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in 1859, provided a materialistic explanation for much of what religionists had attributed to God. Adventists, however, sought to integrate revealed truth with observed phenomena. In fact, our first pointed discussions centered around the creation/evolution issue. However, today's church struggles with the question in broader terms.

As participants in an increasingly technological world, Adventists are having to explain our commitment to creationism. We also must decide whether to cling to the relatively short chronology presented in the Bible. In some sectors of our church, controversy over the age of life on earth has been developing over the past decade or so. During this time the topic has remained relatively obscure. However, it appears likely to move to the forefront.

Admittedly, several scientific studies have challenged our church's belief in a short chronology for life on earth. Nuclear physics in particular presents problems in interpretation, as its measurements suggest very long time periods within the geological strata. In an attempt to harmonize the creationist worldview and the scientific model, various mediating positions are being discussed by members in the more rationalistically oriented parts of the world.

On the whole, however, the church will remain committed to creationism and a short chronology. Theological ties between Genesis 1 and 2 and the Sabbath, reiterated in the fourth commandment, will continue to have a strong impact. The Genesis ac-

count goes beyond abstract theology. It presents an accurate accounting of origins and subsequent human activity on earth in relation to the plan of salvation.

Spiritual Life Versus Secularization

In much of the world our church's most formidable challenge is not theological argument by the denomination's critics. It is the far more subtle tendency toward secularization.

Religious institutions have a history of surviving in a formal, fossilized form long after they have been drained of spiritual power. Members ushered to adulthood under the benevolent preceptorship of the church may or may not seek a new birth experience for themselves.

To those who reach that deep religious experience the church and its institutions buttress an already vital personal relationship, providing fellowship, support, religious and intellectual nurturing, and opportunity for service.

Although physical and psychological structure are to a degree inherited, the element of personal choice means that spirituality is not. Consequently, some are born into an Adventist environment, grow up under the influence of its institutions, but fail to develop a deep religious experience. They value the church largely from a utilitarian standpoint. Although they think of themselves as Adventist, their values emphasize practical considerations. Religious experience occupies a benign, inactive role in their lives. In essence they are guided by secular norms.

In parts of the world where growth is mostly internal, the church in the 1990s will struggle to

draw the line between walking in genuine faith and participating in an Adventist culture, between a living connection with Christ and assent to an upbringing.

Studies of missing members frequently neglect the fact that regardless of one's upbringing, a conscious personal submission to Christ is essential. Failure here is the most significant single contributor to loss of faith, although difficult to measure statistically. Most of us are scarcely conscious of how secularity encroaches on our faith or how to guard against it. To cope with these losses our church must focus its attention to questions of worldview, lines of demarcation between Christian and secular values, and how to incorporate these matters into Christian education, both formal and informal.

The Role of Revelation and Inspiration

Theologically, the character of revelation and inspiration is the most difficult question facing the church, for ours is a faith built on biblical authority. As this authority decreases, human judgment fills the gap. Absolute values are replaced by rational constructs based on experience.

From the beginning Adventists have believed that God is a reasonable Being and that His Word is to be understood in a rational manner. While acknowledging the subjective ministry of the Spirit, we have argued for the primacy of the written Word over inner enlightenment. For this reason the Adventist approach to God's communication takes the form of reason in search of God, not reason alone. Our focus on the prophetic sections of the Bible requires an analysis of symbolism and a comparison with history. Like other areas of modern life, the Bible has been subjected to analytic study by scholars committed to the scientific method. The Scriptures thus are seen as possessing unusual insights, but as

authoritative only to the believing community.

Under such reinterpretation the human component of the Scriptures overshadows the divine. The Bible becomes little more than good advice and cultural history, with little authority—a collection of case studies from which one abstracts principles.

This view of the Bible causes serious problems for an Adventist community that continues to accept biblical claims to inspiration while the scientific approach denies the reality of the transcendent.

To what degree will Adventists allow the social sciences to dictate their interpretation of God's Word? We have barely begun to think about this question, although its outcome certainly will influence the direction of the church.

Concerns about scriptural interpretation also apply to the Spirit of Prophecy writings. The 1980s were a stormy decade for Ellen White's influence. Misunderstandings about the methods she used to compose her works have undergone correction. That having been done to the satisfaction of most believers, the coming decade will likely be a time of rebuilding confidence.

Review of Basic Doctrines

Typically, religious communities reassess who they are and what they believe sometime during their second century. The pioneer leaders are gone, and new generations have taken over leadership. Old ideas are tested to examine the foundations of the faith.

Adventists believe that human understanding of truth is progressive. The lead paragraph introducing the church's official statement of fundamental declares:

These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements

may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

However, having said this, we still believe that new truth must not contradict previously established truth. New truth simply extends our understanding of areas not previously explored. Ultimately all truth is a unified whole because it has only one point of ultimate reference—God.

Working within this perspective, our church is currently reviewing its understanding of several major teachings. One deals with the Sabbath. The question of which day to keep is not at stake. However, the significance of the Sabbath is being redefined. The Sabbath has traditionally been presented as God's memorial to His creative act within history. Emphasis was placed on its commemorative value, reminding us of the origin of all things earthly and its expression of God's purpose in Creation. Creatorship has been its major emphasis, reinforced by our church's emphasis on the first angel's message of Revelation 14:7.

In the 1990s this theme will be tested, as the Sabbath is reexamined more in terms of God's redemptive act. Such an approach minimizes the Sabbath's historical origins while pointing up its utility in meeting human needs. At the same time our sense of its eschatological significance weakens.

Another basic teaching under discussion is the atonement. Is Jesus' atoning work primarily substitutionary? In this view the innocent dies in place of the guilty so that justice may be preserved while forgiveness is granted. Or is Christ better described as an emissary from heaven who came to taste the human experience and to teach us about the love of God? The biblical teachings on the atone-

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A Random Universe?

Order and Chance in Nature and Scripture

Kevin C. de Berg

O rder and chance are an inescapable fact of life on Planet Earth. As this is written, the news of freedom in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is being replaced with the threat of war in the Persian Gulf.

What causes these events? Is life guided by a divine hand or is it the result of random processes? Or do the two intermingle in some way? We may not be able to answer this question completely. However, we can look at the role of order and chance in Scripture and in the scientific study of nature from the 16th century to the present. This overview should provide some insights as we attempt to cope with an unpredictable world.

Recent developments in both science and religion have raised fundamental questions that can no longer be ignored. Torrance confirms this point:

In our day we have reached a turning point in the history of thought at which natural science and theological science are confronted each in its own way with the need to adopt a fundamental attitude to the universe as a whole.¹

It is becoming clear that science and religion act as partners in helping to solve the riddle of life.

Although there are many possible ways of defining order and chance² we will adopt the following general definitions:

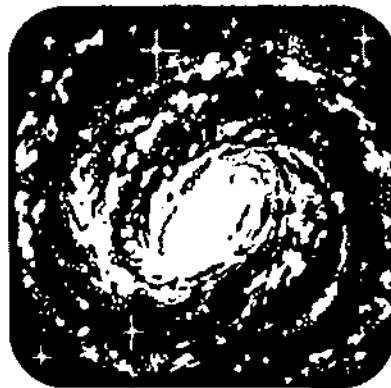
Order: a structure or event that is symmetrical, patterned, predictable, or expected—for example, the operation of a well-constructed clock.

Chance: an event which is unpredictable or unexpected, for example, the result of tossing a non-biased die.

Order and Chance in Nature

The Greeks believed that external order existed only in the heavens. The processes of earth were characterized by change and instability. Thus they believed that empirical investigation of earthly processes would be useless. However, in the 16th and 17th centuries Galileo and Newton demonstrated that many earthly and heavenly processes could be described by mathematical equations. For example, when a ball rolls down an inclined plane, one can use an equation to predict the location of the ball five seconds after or five seconds prior to the moment of observation. Toffler, reviewing the developments of science at this time, says: "It was a world in which chance played no part, in which all pieces came together like cogs in a cosmic machine."³

Because many of the early scientists were also devout Christians, the universe came to be regarded as a great clock ticking away with machine-like precision, having God as its rational master. This



model of nature was later shattered by discoveries about the properties of small objects like atoms and molecules.

Scientists in the 17th and 18th centuries first attempted to categorize the properties of a gas in terms of rigid, orderly molecular arrangements. When this was unsuccessful, they fashioned a model in which molecules moved with uniform velocity, as described by Newton's laws of motion. Although this approach achieved some success, it proved inadequate to describe all the properties of a gas.

Finally, in the 19th century Maxwell and Boltzmann⁴ used the laws of probability to develop a kinetic theory, which successfully described gas properties from the microscopic level. This theory showed that gas properties were best described in terms of molecules moving at varying velocities in rapid random (chance-like) motion. Although Newton's laws could accurately predict the position and velocity of a tennis ball rolling down an incline, they could not predict the position and velocity of a molecule in a gas. However, scientists could calculate the probability that the molecular velocity would fall within a certain range. Bronowski points out that "this is a revolutionary thought in modern science. It replaces the concept of the inevitable effect by that of the probable trend."⁵

As a result of this and other research, scientists began to view chance, rather than order, as fundamental to nature.

Recent developments in chaos theory regard nature as being neither ordered nor chaotic but a combination of the two.⁶ In

describing new developments in chaos theory, Ian Stewart speaks of "designer chaos" to illustrate how order and chance can coexist in natural systems.⁷ James Gleick's *Chaos*⁸ describes the theory in terms of a dripping tap. The dripping may be periodic for a time. However, as the flow rate increases, the system changes. Drops begin to fall in pairs (period-doubling) with two possible intervals between drops. As the flow increases, the flow seemingly becomes chaotic. But the chaotic data actually has a hidden structure, a pattern. As Gleick reports:

Here was one coin with two sides. Here was order, with randomness emerging, and then one step further away was randomness with its own underlying order.⁹

Thus, although scientists formerly regarded order and chance as incompatible, they now see that within nature there is an uncanny partnership between the two.

Order and Chance in Scripture

Although God uses the incomprehensibility of nature to direct Job's thoughts to a higher power,¹⁰ the Bible writers must have seen certain aspects of God's creation as patterned, predictable, or expected. Genesis 1 declares that there was "evening and morning." This obviously implies a regular cycle of night and day. When God outlined to Israel the consequences of obedience and disobedience in terms of blessing and curse, He was describing the cause-and-effect relationship characteristic of many ordered systems.

We find the element of chance in the biblical practice of the "casting of lots." In the Old Testament the Israelites cast lots in choosing goats for the Day of Atonement, allocating land, settling criminal cases, choosing forces for battle, appointing persons to high office, and allotting cities to the priests

and Levites.¹¹ In New Testament times the apostles cast lots to select Judas' replacement.¹² They felt confident that the Lord would show them which of these two men had been chosen to take over this apostolic ministry. Clearly, the



biblical writers believed God's providence was revealed in the "casting of lots." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* confirms this view, while offering a caution:

In the beginnings of religious life and occasionally since, God may have honored our developing faith by giving us remarkable answers by such means, but this does not imply that He wants us consistently to depend upon this method.¹³

Thus when Donald Mackay asks, "Is the antithesis between God and chance a genuinely biblical one?"¹⁴ we must answer, No. Scripture affirms that God's providence can be revealed through the processes of chance as well as by His ordered creation. Mackay goes on to say:

God is declared in the Bible to be creatively active and supreme in every twist and turn of this Great Drama, whether "chance" or "law-abiding" in the scientific sense, which he has thought into being by the word of His power. It is a theological blunder to speak of his "designer's

mind" as an alternative, rival explanation to what the scientist may technically classify as "operation of chance"; or to regard the success of such scientific explanation as discrediting the Bible.¹⁵

Just as science has revealed an uncanny relationship between order and chance, so Scripture affirms this relationship particularly in its apocalyptic portions. Commenting on Ezekiel's vision of a wheel within a wheel (chapter 1) *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* says:

What to the unskilled observer appears to be hopeless confusion, the outworking of chance, the result of human ambition and caprice, is here presented as a harmonious pattern wrought out and guided by an infinite hand toward predetermined ends.¹⁶

Thus both nature and Scripture see a partnership between order and chance. Human experience also testifies to this relationship.

Human Experience

How can one cope with a universe that is both rational and contingent, a universe that brings pain and happiness, order and chance, the expected and the unexpected? Lesslie Newbigin¹⁷ says that the incarnation of Christ and the way of the cross provide the clue to the dilemma. Newbigin suggests that a correct understanding of these precludes any shortcuts to meaning that ignore the radical contingency of things. It becomes clear that everything cannot be explained in organismic or mechanical terms, and that everything is not necessarily controlled in the interests of the good.

On the other hand, these concepts protect against irrationalism, which holds there is no meaning in the world and everything is an incomprehensible accident. Newbigin proposes that,

following the way of the cross in the light and power of the

resurrection enables one to acknowledge and face the reality of evil, of that which contradicts God's good purpose in the confidence that it does not have the last word.¹⁸

Faith in a God that will ultimately bring a positive outcome enables one to cope with a world imbued simultaneously with order and chance, a world that can appear both hostile and friendly.

Events that happen to us in this world tend to have either a coherent rational origin or an unexpected contingent origin. In both cases what happens may contribute to good or evil purposes.

Rational processes such as counseling or medical treatment may restore us from the effects of evil. On the other hand, God's contingency such as He exhibited at the cross, may restore us from the evil that has beset us.

The issue of free-will and determinism often surfaces in a discussion of order and chance. Jewish thought, according to Sandmel,¹⁹ held both in tension without carrying either to an extreme. However, scientists such as Farmer find in chaos theory an operational way to reconcile free-will with determinism. In their view, "the system is deterministic, but you can't say what it's going to do next."²⁰

Conclusion

This brief article has attempted to look at reality as it is perceived through the lens of science and the witness of Scripture, with reference to the concepts of order and chance. These concepts offer an organizing principle for achieving a dialogue between science and religion, nature and Scripture. Faith in Christ and His sacrifice provides the means of coping with the expected and the unexpected at the world level and in our personal lives.

Since the time of Newton our understanding of nature has changed dramatically. The farther we peel back the layers of nature the more profound our study be-

comes. This is not a cause for despair, however, as C. S. Lewis concluded long ago:

Reality, in fact, is usually something you could not have guessed. That is one of the reasons I believe Christianity. It is a religion you could not have guessed. If it offered us



just the kind of universe we had always expected, I should feel we were making it up. But in fact, it is not the sort of thing anyone would have made up.²¹

It may be that the distinction between order and chance will become fuzzier as science continues to penetrate the cosmos. However, we must remember the distinction between our perceptions of reality and reality itself. Scripture affirms that God's abiding providence links order and chance. Consequently, faith in the Jesus of the cross guarantees that evil does not have the final say.

NOTES

1. T. F. Torrance in A. R. Peacocke (ed.), *The Sciences and Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Stockfield: Oriol Press, 1981), p. 81.

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10. Job 36-38.

11. Leviticus 16:5-10; Nehemiah 10:34; Joshua 7:14,18; 1 Samuel 14:41,42; Judges 20:8-10; 1 Samuel 10:19-21; 1 Chronicles 6:54-65.

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Winds of Freedom in Eastern Europe

Dramatic Changes and New Opportunities for Our Church

Victor Cooper

The 55th session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists held July 5-14, 1990, in Indianapolis, Indiana, was a unique world congress. There were representatives from more countries than at any other international religious meeting. East European nations sent more delegates than to any previous session. Thirty-five people came from the Soviet Union. The 11th division of our world church—the USSR—was voted into existence. A three-person Soviet television crew spent a week at the Hoosier Dome preparing a 60-minute program about Adventists to air in Russia.

Delegates from several Eastern European countries told me of changes and opportunities resulting from *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Here is a summary of our dialogue.

Czechoslovakia

Do we have any Adventist schools in Czechoslovakia?

Miroslav Kysilko (President, Bohemian Conference, Prague): Not at the present time. However, we plan to buy for our seminary a school building that was formerly used by Communist youth.

Can Adventists broadcast on radio or television?

Kysilko: We produce radio and TV broadcasting—half an hour every day to the people of Czechoslovakia. In these programs we offer Bible correspondence courses to listeners. A blind man who heard the first broadcast wrote to us and recently became an Adventist.

In Kromeriz, a town in the old Czech province of Moravia, there is a conservatory of music. Under the previous regime youth could study only Communist materials there, but now they can receive Adventist literature. Twelve Communist youth have been baptized from this school, of whom four are now preachers. We have conducted Bible seminars in several places and have 350 people preparing for baptism.

Everything is changing. The old laws are banished. The new laws

are being prepared. It's a time of great freedom—particularly for careful, thoughtful citizens.

Yugoslavia

What changes have taken place recently in Yugoslavia?

Jovan Lorencin (President, Yugoslavian Union Conference, which has an Adventist membership of more than 10,000): Though Yugoslavia was previously an open country, where both foreigners and citizens could travel freely, still it was a one-party nation. Now it is becoming a multiparty state.

Yugoslavia was closed economically, but now the doors are opening for private enterprise, which is making a big difference. Things are really changing as laws are enacted to accommodate the new situation.

These are positive developments for Seventh-day Adventists. Before, keeping the Sabbath was a big problem. In business, you had

to beg people at different levels for Sabbath privileges. Now, in the free enterprise system you only have to see the boss! So it's actually much better for us.

Recently, an Adventist choir and orchestra from the Ukraine, in the Soviet Union, came to Yugoslavia. Despite some difficulties, they gave public concerts in 11 places and were magnificently received. We couldn't even dream of it before. But now it's a reality.

Tell us about Adventist education in Yugoslavia.

Lorencin: Our seminary, located on a beautiful site near Zagreb, has been officially recognized. It is there that our future ministers receive their training. On the same campus we operate a fairly large boarding academy, but our students must pass special examinations at nearby public high schools. We are now discussing with education authorities the requirements for accreditation. We believe our requests will be granted.

Poland

When I visited Poland a few years ago, you were the principal of our seminary near Warsaw.

Wladyslaw Kosowski: Yes, I was. Now I am ministerial associa-

tion secretary of the Polish Union Conference.

Were you formerly a Roman Catholic?

Kosowski: Yes. I was born in the same place as the Pope. We both went to the same school, although he is older than I.

In Poland, the population of 38 million is about 98 percent Roman Catholic. Are Seventh-day Adventists free to share their faith?

Kosowski: Yes, we have 4,700 members in 120 churches. Our publications and musical activities are well-known. At the same time, we are observing a major revival in the Polish Catholic Church. Many who claimed to be Communists before are now declaring themselves to be Catholics. We are happy to see people turning to God, but are concerned that this powerful institution may begin exerting pressure against believers from other faiths.

Are we allowed to operate Adventist schools?

Kosowski: Yes, although we have just one school, the Polish Spiritual Seminary, where we prepare our pastors and Bible instructors. If we were interested in opening other schools, we could do so freely.

Do you want to do that?

Kosowski: Because Adventists are scattered all over Poland, we don't plan to establish other boarding schools in the near future. To take children from their parents and house them in dormitories is not good for them nor for their parents.

Have you been holding public evangelistic campaigns?

Kosowski: In January 1990 we began our nationwide evangelistic series, with six months of public meetings in 100 locations in Poland. We spoke on the same topics, three times each week. In many places we hired public halls and clubs in which to hold meetings. We encountered opposition from some bishops, but we did not allow these problems to stop us. The Lord is great, and we will

press forward.

Ray, I have known you a number of years, especially as the communication and religious liberty director for the Trans-European Division. How do you assess the current situation in your native Poland?

Rajmund Dabrowski: Today there are no restrictions in doing any sort of witnessing. Some members are asking that the church engage in, for example, health-food production and conduct temperance and health programs. The problem is where to find the people to run those programs. Our membership is small, and we can only do so much. The church will do well to recognize the independent initiatives of its laypeople, and let them move forward in these new ministries. And we must act now, before these golden days of freedom become a thing of the past.

What broadcasting opportunities do you have?

Dabrowski: We are regularly on national radio both on medium

wave and FM. Five or six times a year we have approximately one hour on the air. Now the Polish Radio has requested our church to produce programs on family, health and social issues that could be aired on other occasions. We have a well-equipped studio and capable young producers. The Polish law on freedom of conscience that was passed in May 1989 allows churches to own transmitters and radio stations, but that will have to come when the broadcasting system is deregulated. We are interested in building at least one FM radio station near Warsaw to cover a metropolitan area of 2-3 million people and possibly another in the south of Poland with a target audience of six to seven million.

Romania

Pastor Dumetru Poppa, you have been president of the Romanian Union Conference for many years. What position do you hold now?



From left: Karel Nowak (President, Czechoslovakian Union), Nelu Dumitrescu (President, Romanian Union) and Lothar Reiche (President, East German Union) hold symbols of old repressions and new freedom: barbed wire made into a crown, the Romanian flag with a hole in it, and pieces of the Berlin Wall.

Poppa: I am publications editor for our union.

How do you see recent events affecting the Adventist Church in Romania?

Poppa: First I must underline that as a church we have not been involved in political activities. The changes, however, have been very positive. We can now live and share our faith freely. It is not necessary to get a lot of approvals as before. As soon as this became possible, we began to publish on the state printing presses half a million pieces of literature. We also have a seminary in Bucharest, with 60 students. But we need teachers and better campus facilities.

Just one week after the revolution we decided to organize 280 new churches, because during the previous 40 years we could not obtain the necessary approval to do this. We also established a new conference. Now we have 824 organized churches in Romania where before we had 526. That means that we must build a lot of new church buildings. In fact, about 100 are under construction.

And are you free to engage in evangelism now?

Poppa: After the revolution took place, every pastor and church member was caught up in a wonderful evangelistic experience. We held public meetings in halls, opera houses, even in the open air. For instance, in the Bucharest Conference (the largest in the union, with about 20,000 members) a group of laymen organized two choirs, one of children and youth, another of adults. The laypeople went out with the children's choir traveling in a circle to about 20 villages during the week. They stopped in the middle of a village or in a local hall or Orthodox church and began to sing to the people who gathered there. After singing they would preach briefly and then they left. Later, the pastor took the large adult choir and some literature to the same places. They held evangelistic meetings where they

preached the gospel and spread literature. In four months our people prepared about 2,500 new members for baptism, with another two to three thousand in the baptismal classes.

Do you have any concerns about the future?

Poppa: The political situation is still not settled. Nobody knows what a new day may bring forth. We continue to pray for freedom and peace. Another concern relates to the Orthodox Church, which plays a dominant role in our country. Many of those who are becoming Adventists were members of this church, and understandably their leaders are not very happy. We have received a formal complaint, and foresee some problems in the future. But we have always had challenges. Perhaps this is the reason our church is so large and so strong.

What educational opportunities are available to our children?

Poppa: We have now the possibility of opening a secondary school and a school for training nurses. We hope to establish two or three schools for our youth in Bucharest and other parts of the country. This will depend on laws that we expect will soon be passed by the new government.

Are you able to use the mass media?

Poppa: It has been impossible until now, but since the revolution we have a slot every week on local radio in the four main cities of the country. We have also used the national TV network to present the Adventist Church and our message. It is our plan to establish our own TV and radio studios. We have already asked the authorities to either allow us to have our own TV station or to have time weekly on national TV. All this is possible

now.

I wish you had time to tell us stories of how God's Spirit is working in Romania.

Poppa: Yes, there are hundreds of stories. Let me mention just one. A young woman, secretary of the Young Communist League, was sent to visit our local church. She was to make friends, and penetrate our youth group in order to convince them that religion is the opiate of the people. She was then supposed to attract them away from the church and involve them in the Young Communist League of that town. When she came to our church she at once began to make friends among our young people. She tried for a year to accomplish her purpose, but eventually she came to see our doctrines reflected in the lives of our people. Finally she was baptized, and now she teaches the children in our Sabbath school.

The new winds of freedom are blowing all over Eastern Europe. And the changes continue. In what used to be East Germany, the government authorities have granted university status to our Friedensau Seminary—the first Adventist school to receive such official recognition in Europe. Plans are under way to establish a seminary and a publishing house in Hungary. In Bulgaria, where our church of 3,600 members was only tolerated until recently, we have been allowed to hold public meetings in some of the best halls in the country, with press coverage.

In God's providence, Adventists and other Christians have now been given extraordinary opportunities to live and share their faith in a climate of increasing freedom. We rejoice with our fellow believers, and with them we pray for vision, courage, and dedication while there is time.

Victor Cooper, the author of many articles and film scripts, is a free lance writer residing in Wokingham, Berkshire, England.

PROFILE

Rigmor Nyberg

Dialogue with the ADRA Director in Sweden



Rigmor Nyberg is the Director of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sweden. Compassion for the underprivileged has been a recurring theme in her life.

Rigmor's long career in business began when she interrupted her

university studies to become the manager of a Swedish building firm. Her first exposure to the needs of the underprivileged in Africa and her initiation into the business world came when she was appointed to be the first woman business manager of the Ethiopian Adventist College in 1967. By the time she had finished her first stint in Africa, she had also worked for an Ethiopian telecommunication firm.

Rigmor returned home to Sweden with a greater sense of direction in her life. She earned an M.A. in civics, history, and economics. By this time she was married and had a daughter. In 1972 Rigmor and her family moved to Andrews University where she graduated with an M.B.A. three years later.

Although Rigmor and her husband returned to Sweden for a year, her heart was still with the needy in Africa. In 1976 she began working for the

Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture as an administrator for SIDA, the Swedish International Development Agency. Later, as the chief auditor of SIDA dealt with high government officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was sometimes called to the Swedish parliament to give oral and written reports on development aid projects.

Rigmor's work began to take her away from home more than she wished. In order to spend more time with her daughter, she left SIDA and worked as business manager and teacher at Ekebyholmsskolan, the Seventh-day Adventist junior college in Sweden. In 1985, when her daughter was older, Rigmor accepted the Swedish Union's invitation to become the director of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) for that country.

Rigmor, tell us first about the work of ADRA with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

The Swedish government has agreed to channel one percent of the country's gross national product to the developing countries. They want to reach the people with the most needs. SIDA has found that the churches, working as they do with people at grassroots level, provide an ideal network for this purpose. The Adventist Church is just one of 27 church organizations that work with SIDA on relief projects.

So you are getting money from the Swedish government to finance the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Development and Relief Agency?

That's right. The work of the Adventist Church is ideally suited to SIDA's objectives. The purpose of the development aid is to give

people a better future. SIDA does not give its attention to higher education for people in the developing world. It wants to put money into primary schools to make sure that people can read and write. It is concerned with basic preventive medicine, providing clinics, making sure people have clean water, teaching them agricultural and scientific gardening—that sort of thing. Many of these projects are exactly what the Adventist Church is involved in.

You travel a lot, don't you? Where do you go and what do you do there?

I travel four or five times a year

in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Eighty percent of my trips take me to Africa. Basically, I talk to the people for whom the work is being done. I ask about their needs and evaluate what has been done.

What would you say are your major achievements?

It all depends on how you measure achievements. Some people are impressed by the fact that five years ago, the annual grant to ADRA from the Swedish government was about \$400,000. Today it is \$3 million. This covers the expenses of all the ADRA projects initiated by our office, both in Sweden and in the developing world. Our secretarial salaries, telephone expenses, and travel budgets are all financed by SIDA funds.

I'm delighted to see that the Adventist Church has been recognized and accepted as an aid or-

ganization. It is wonderful that the Adventist Global Mission is being extended with the help of SIDA funds. I feel too that there has been an awakening interest in ADRA among our church members and on the union board. The philosophy behind our mission work in general and ADRA in particular has been accepted.

Is there another aspect of your work that gives you more satisfaction?

Yes. What pleases me most is to learn that the people helped by our projects not only find a future for themselves but also learn about God. I was thrilled to learn that when some of our Adventist ladies in Kenya knew that a well had been drilled in one place, they went there and started Bible studies. After some time they could call a pastor, who baptized a group of men and women. These people had not just found water, they had found Living Water.

What are the greatest problems you face in your work?

Sometimes I don't feel I have any problems, but I do get frustrated when I sense that policies are being put before people. There are times when I feel that some of my colleagues care more about following the regulations so they can get promoted, than they do about working for people in need.

Critics say that instead of ADRA going abroad and helping people with school buildings, clinics, and agricultural projects we should use all our resources and money for evangelistic campaigns so we can baptize as many people as possible. How would you answer them?

One year ago we had a workshop in West Africa where we discussed the holistic approach for ADRA work. We never use resources for physical and/or material needs *instead* of spiritual needs. They must always go together. We try to follow Christ's example. He gave unconditionally, helping everyone who wanted help. He never asked if people

wanted to believe in Him. I feel very strongly that if people are hungry and naked and have nowhere to sleep, they are not open to our message. Once we have taken care of people's basic needs, they often want to know more about Christ.

What advice would you give young people who might wish to work for ADRA?

In Sweden there are many young people who would like to work for ADRA. They like the challenge and opportunity that travel presents. I suggest to them that they take a year off from their studies and go to work in the developing world. They need to experience the problems firsthand. I think it's important too that they get good training and become real professionals in their particular line of work.

Has it been an advantage or a disadvantage to be a woman in your professional life?

Both! I feel that many times we as women can see problems in a different way from men, somehow more holistically, and that affects the way we want to solve them. The difference in our approaches sometimes affects the relationships between me and my male colleagues.

On the other hand, I often feel that in developing countries, a woman who knows what she is talking about may be accepted more readily than a man. She poses less of a threat. In committees and groups in the West, however, women usually have to prove themselves before they can be accepted.

What advice would you give to a young woman who is thinking of working for the church?

We still have a bit to go. If a

woman feels called to work for the church, I would tell her to be as qualified as possible, to follow her calling, and to be patient. We have a big need for women leaders in our church, especially in our part of the world, where most of the members are women. It is so often easier for one woman to understand another.

I understand that you are divorced and have been a single parent for the past thirteen years. How has that affected your work?

Many times it has been difficult to balance my professional life with my private life. When my daughter started school, I was working at our junior college. I had to bring home work every night. And as soon as she went to bed I started my second day of work! Sometimes it has been a problem when I am sitting on committees and they go overtime. I have felt bad then, because I know my daughter is at home alone and I am late. I have tried as much as I can to give my daughter priority. For instance, I don't travel for more than two weeks at a time. And I am happy that we have the Sabbath.

To what do you attribute your success?

To the willingness of the church leaders to give women this kind of job, to an earnest interest in people and in my work, and to never being afraid of working long hours. I have also had a very supportive family. Both my parents and my sister and brothers, with their families, helped me when my daughter was younger. There have been ups and downs, but God has always been with me. I am very thankful for His love and for my work.

Helen Pearson

Helen Pearson is completing a Master of Philosophy degree in religious journalism at the City University in London. Helen and her husband, Michael, teach at Newbold College, in England, and have two children.

PROFILE

George Agoki

Dialogue with an Engineering Lecturer from Kenya



George Agoki is a senior lecturer in engineering at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, where he has been teaching since 1976. His areas of specialization are civil engineering,

town planning, and surveying; his major research interest involves transportation safety and traffic accident prevention.

Born in 1950 to a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and teacher, Agoki is one of nine children. He spent his childhood and youth on denominational school campuses in Uganda and Kenya; then proceeded to earn a Bachelor of Science in Engineering, a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning, and a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the University of Nairobi.

His wife, Elizabeth, is a nurse and midwife, specializing in intensive care. Currently, she is involved in research at the University of Nairobi, focusing

on sexually transmitted diseases. The Agokis have two daughters and two sons.

Dr. Agoki served for several years as associate director of communication for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya, concentrating on radio and television. He is currently a church elder and the faculty sponsor for the association of Adventist students at the University of Nairobi.

Dynamic, articulate, and outgoing, George Agoki belongs to a growing group of Kenyan Adventist professionals who are making a significant contribution to the development of their homeland and to the progress of their church.

Why did you choose engineering as a career?

I've been always interested in how things work, in how we are able to create, design, and manipulate things such as motors, machines, roads, and buildings. This interest was fostered by my Adventist teachers. As a youngster, I was fascinated by the way they used machinery and equipment on the farm and in the laboratory and workshop. They, in turn, encouraged us to take apart and to reassemble all kinds of motors and electrical equipment. In fact, most of what I've accomplished in my professional field I owe to Adventist education.

Are there other prominent Adventists in Kenya who have also been educated in our schools?

Certainly. Although our church does not offer the full high school program required for university admission, Adventist elementary and lower secondary schools have provided solid training. With that background, many of us have pursued advanced studies and now are involved in diverse profes-

sions. Let me mention just a few. Lazarus Amayo is the assistant minister for education in Kenya. Mary Angawa serves as senior magistrate in Nairobi. Elkana Bosire is a justice of the high court in Mombasa. Winston Osongo teaches engineering at the University of Nairobi. Maragia Omwega currently works with the Kenya Medical Research Institute. The director of the Kenyatta National Hospital is Dr. Naphtali Agata. All are products of Adventist education and all are involved in our church as lay leaders.

How is the Adventist Church perceived by the people of Kenya?

There is a general awareness that our church is growing. Our current membership stands at 300,000 in a country of 25 million—that is, one Adventist for every 85 inhabitants. Several of our activities and services are well-known. Many people are acquainted with our Five-day Plan to Stop Smoking, our Dorcas Society, the newly established University of Eastern Africa, and the Loma Linda University Heart Team. In-

creasingly, Seventh-day Adventists in Kenya are being seen as a special group of people who enhance the enjoyment and meaning of life.

From your perspective, what are the major challenges that Adventists face in Kenya?

They are similar to those faced by Kenyans at large—education, health, and economic development. As a parent, I'm particularly concerned about the lack of adequate facilities to properly educate our youth in view of the negative influences that have an impact on them—broken homes, materialism, drugs. Our church is making a difference through our schools. In the area of health, our Kendu Hospital and several dispensaries provide help. But these institutions are few, not well-distributed in our territory and, due to limited resources, are not being expanded and upgraded. I would like to see our educational and health-related institutions serving a larger sector of our population, contributing to the development of our society through young men and women skilled for self-employment and

employment and conscious about their health.

How are you involved in the life of your congregation?

As a church elder, I assist the pastor in preaching, outreach, counseling, and helping solve some of the routine challenges faced by an Adventist congregation. I also serve as director of the Pathfinder Club.

Please, tell us about your professional life.

One of my sisters lost her right leg as a result of a car accident. This led me to study the causes of road accidents and the interaction of various factors involved in them. When an accident takes place, who is to blame—the engineer that designed the road, the maintenance crew, the vehicle, the driver, or what? For years I have been refining a theoretical framework that can be used to design safer road systems.

Do you find any connection between your Christian faith and your research?

Yes, at a basic conceptual level. As we investigate the behavior of individuals involved in road accidents, we seek to understand the psychological and psychopathological factors affecting system design and safety. In such a study I see many evidences of a wise God who created us with talents and with the power of choice. He is the designer and originator of the laws and interrelationships that I study. I'm also aware of our fallenness and our limitations. This dual perspective colors all my work and research. I realize that beyond the human and material factors relating to road design and safety there are overriding eternal issues at work. My belief in God and my understanding of the great controversy between good and evil provides me with a comprehensive framework in which I can carry out my studies.

Can you share your Christian convictions at work?

Yes. Engineering is a precise applied science. We make measurements and look for ac-

curacy. This relates to exactness and truth. But human beings cannot achieve exact accuracy and instead must rely on theories of probability. As I discuss these issues with my students and colleagues in any of the basic or applied sciences, we come naturally to matters of absolute truth, which can be grasped only from the perspective of a perfect God.

How do you see your role as sponsor of Adventist students attending the University of Nairobi.

Of the 7,000 students enrolled in the various colleges of our university, approximately 200 are Seventh-day Adventists. They represent about one-fourth of the number of Adventists who pursue advanced studies in public universities in Kenya. Our church has appointed a chaplain and an assistant to coordinate the church's ministry on their behalf in our country. In addition, there are hundreds of other Adventist students from Kenya who attend universities abroad, in India, Europe, and North America.

At the University of Nairobi, part of our challenge is to locate and attract to our fellowship all the new students who have an Adventist background. Many go through a crisis as they move away from their homes or from our boarding academies and find themselves with a lot of unstructured time in their hands. We know that it is to their advantage to remain in contact with their Adventist peers. Through the student association we seek to provide them encouragement, counseling, and spiritual support.

What counsel would you give to Adventists planning to attend public universities?

It would be ideal if all could take some type of preuniversity course, to review in depth the fundamental beliefs of our church. It is so important that they know what they believe and why, instead of accepting our doctrines blindly. They must see that these convictions are relevant to the academic setting they are about to enter.

Once they understand the rationale behind our beliefs and realize the benefits of applying them to daily living, they are ready to relate intelligently to life in a secular university community. Then, as they begin their studies, they should make a personal pledge to maintain a daily relationship with God, to nurture a living faith. These two key steps will help them to remain faithful and to grow in their Christian experience as they relate to new modes of thinking.

Do you have any other advice?

The pressures of the secular environment and the desire to experiment with new life-styles are forces that have an impact on Adventist university students. Since they are pretty much on their own, they must learn to make principled decisions affecting their time, their bodies, and their resources. They need to be aware of the disastrous results of certain types of behavior. They also need to keep clearly in view the goals that brought them to the university. If they learn to organize their time and to apply themselves, their chances of success are excellent. In addition, the Sabbath will provide them with a welcome break that relieves pressure and creates a context for spiritual growth and service to others.

In what ways can the church support our university students?

They need help in their social and intellectual life. Adventist families and the local congregation can sponsor recreational activities for Adventist students. They also need relevant reading material and assistance in obtaining qualified speakers for their rallies and retreats. The local congregation must find ways of involving them in the life of the church.

If we provide intelligent support to our university students, they will become successful Christian professionals who will serve as agents for positive change in society and as leaders in fulfilling the mission of our church.

Humberto M. Rasi

A Tale of Two Brothers

Mario Pereyra

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Then Jesus told them this parable: . . . "There was a man who had two sons. . . ." (Luke 15:2, 3, 11-32, NIV)

Two groups of people, with opposite perspectives, had crowded around Jesus—the notorious sinner seeking forgiveness and hope, and the self-righteous religious leaders looking for another opportunity to discredit Him. Through three memorable stories Jesus told on that occasion—those of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son—He illustrated God's plan for their rescue. As we come to the last parable, we cannot avoid identifying with one of the characters of this moving drama.

The two brothers who appear in this story not only symbolize the two groups that were intently listening to Jesus; they also illuminate our own predicament and individual response to God's overtures. The contrast is clear; the prodigal son—representing the repentant sinners—ends up enjoying the "welcome home" party thrown by the father, while the older son—the critical religious leaders—is conspicuously absent from the joyous feast.

However, Jesus concludes His story abruptly, just as the celebration is beginning. The dialogue between the father and his critical son freezes in time, and we are left wondering about its denouement. How long will the father continue pleading with the older son, arguing in favor of forgiveness? Will the older brother ultimately refuse his father's invitation? This story is the human drama reduced to its basic components—God's persist-

ing love pleading with humanity's self-sufficiency and rancor. The outcome, with its eschatological implications, hinges on the decision of the individual's will, on an invitation gracefully accepted.

The story also expresses the tension between communication and lack of communication. We hear the younger son asking his father for his share of the estate, wasting it in superficial social relationships, speaking to the pigs' owner, talking to himself, and then confessing his sins as finally, he returns home. We also hear the older brother asking one of the servants what is going on as he comes from the field, and then angrily arguing with his father, accusing him of blatant favoritism. We see the forces that favor communication, forgiveness, and harmony struggling to overcome the stubborn resistance of resentment and envy. How will the drama play out?

Jesus told this unforgettable story of complex human relationships to emphasize the role of divine grace, the possibility of forgiveness and restoration. It's a story of estrangement and homecoming, of sadness and joy, of formal obedience and sincere repentance. The language is simple and direct, the circumstances are familiar and true-to-life. But under the homespun story on the surface we find subtle social and spiritual nuances. And we see ourselves depicted in the parable.

Profile of the Pharisee

With deft strokes, the Master sketches the psychological profile of the older brother. What are the mental processes, what is the emotional make-up, the cherished

dreams and deepest anxieties of this apparently faithful and obedient son?

It is clear that he has considered leaving his father's home. Perhaps this thought has occurred more frequently since his younger brother's departure, in order to satisfy his repressed passions through partaking in the pleasures of the outside world. This type of emotional mimicry is common among siblings. The difference here is that the older brother never got up the courage to face his father, demand his inheritance, leave the security of home, and run the risks of adventure.

The older brother had easy access to his share of the estate. He could also have left, following the steps of his younger sibling. Why didn't he? Was it loyalty, obedience, or fear? His angry words prove that he was uncomfortable there: "All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders" (verse 29). Had he repressed the bitter feelings that imprisoned him in his own emotional jail? What mysterious chains bound him to the paternal home? Did they include cowardice? He had not remained there because he valued its blessings. More likely, he stayed because of inertia, inability to break the rules of tradition, or "fear of freedom" as Erich Fromm would call it.

Psychologists have described this phenomenon which freezes emotional development at the adolescent stage. It creates a fixation on the past and concurrent spiritual paralysis. The condition causes deep frustration. Individuals handle it in different ways. Some seek to drown it in drugs, alcohol, or continuous so-

cial activities and superficial relationships. Others choose the distraction of endless work. The younger brother chose the first forms of escape, while the older chose the latter. He had struggled to keep a lid on his secret desires, attempting through hard work to justify himself before his father and his own conscience.

Why do some people choose this approach? Perhaps because they convince themselves that they are living the right type of life, that they are acting properly and being righteous. Since this behavior requires considerable effort, they expect to receive recognition and praise for their exemplary conduct—a social medallion of merit. When they fail to receive such recognition, the whole facade crumbles. It is then that the forced propriety and the false religiosity give way to open resentment and bitterness. The selfish heart, struggling for its own salvation, now reveals its sheer nakedness.

Parents and Children

Alfred Adler, founder of the school of individual psychology, has skillfully analyzed the role of each child in the family structure, according to birth order. He observes that the eldest child usually enjoys the concentrated attention of the family. This privileged position comes to a painful end when another child is born. Now the parents' attention must be shared. The younger sibling thus emerges as a potential and, frequently, actual rival.

Adler notes that when this "dethronement" takes place after the older child is at least three years old, the child has already begun to establish his own life-style and can verbally express his feelings of loss and displeasure. When the sibling rival appears before that age, the process takes place at a deeper, prelinguistic level. Observing the social dynamics implied in the parable, we can speculate that the former was the case of the two brothers.

Throughout his life, the older child tends to maintain a fond memory of the past, for a time when he was the center of attention. The role of authority and the maintenance of rules has a special attraction to him. These early influences prompt many first children to lean toward conservative positions.

Adler remarks that all the children can be "dethroned" except the youngest. He or she will always be the last in the sequence, but usually the first in the affections of the family. This child benefits from the psychological and intellectual stimulation provided by the older brothers and sisters, and frequently overtakes them in development. (It is interesting to reflect on the psychological make-up of biblical characters such as Abel and David, who seem to fit this pattern.)

The youngest child is, after the oldest, the most likely to be spoiled. He always wants to be special and unique. At times he suffers from feelings of inferiority, because everyone else in the family is older, stronger, and more experienced.

Jesus' story includes a third character—the father. Throughout the drama he is the one who attempts to help his two sons grow emotionally and spiritually. He reasons with them, forgives them, and seeks to bring them to a harmonious relationship both with him and with each other. Intuitively sensing their struggles, the father seeks to rescue them from their dark emotional prisons and guide them toward a mature and fulfilled life.

An Open-Ended Story

The parable, as we know it, remains unfinished. Why? Is it because the older son must give the final answer? Or because the story also requires our response?

It is true that the Bible—and especially the Gospels—cannot be read as if it were any other book. Its inspired content has not been

given to us for mere information or entertainment. God speaks personally to each of us in His Word. His message requires an attentive and responsive heart. Jesus' telling of the story requires us to assume a role in it.

In depicting this human drama, Jesus reduced its characters to the barest minimum—a father and two sons. But after observing the size of most biblical families, it is possible to imagine the presence of two more children between the oldest and the youngest in this family.

One of them could be the son or daughter who leaves the paternal home, never to return. Unfortunately, some of God's children do plunge into the madness of the world and succumb to its fatal embrace. Another could be the ideal child, the one who always remains with the father, working happily at home, enjoying his companionship and eventually establishing his own home there. He is the one who rejects the empty temptations of the world, the one who suffers deeply when his brother leaves home, prays for his return, and joyfully helps prepare the welcoming party. Most of us, however, fit more naturally in the role of one of the two sons depicted in Jesus' memorable story. With which character do you identify?

Literary critics classify most dramatic creations as either comedies or tragedies. The former have a happy ending; the latter end in calamity. How would we categorize this human drama? Jesus' story does not fit neatly into any of these categories because its ending is still being written. You and I are the authors of the final lines. The decisions we make today in response to God's overtures will determine its ultimate conclusion.

Mario Pereyra, a lecturer and writer, practices psychology at the River Plate Adventist Sanitarium and Hospital in Entre Rios, Argentina.

Why You Should *not* Turn to Religion

Ron Pickell

Sitting in my office, I was engaged in a casual conversation with a friend when Chris entered, introduced himself, and asked very matter of factly if I thought he should turn to religion. I had never really been asked this question before, at least not exactly the way he had just put it. I really had to think about it, because I'm not sure that anyone should turn to religion *per se*, even though my hope is that all will come to receive Jesus as their Saviour.

Chris's question did have a context. He had grown up in a quasi-Christian home, with a mother who occasionally took him to a Methodist church, and a father who was very much a skeptic. Educationally, he had a strong science background. He had become a confirmed skeptic. Two years earlier he had been involved in a tragic motorcycle accident that extensively damaged his brain. Quickness of thought, speech, and body movement were the areas most affected. By now he had recovered about as fully as he could expect to neurologically and linguistically, and was back in school trying to finish his engineering degree. He had been a senior at the time of the crash, but his classwork was now moving at a much slower pace.

Chris had two reasons for seeking me out. The first one related to the accident. He had never really had any kind of strong faith in God before it occurred. From his perspective religion was a sociological phenomenon originating from humanity's need to explain its own existence. Religion held no real answers for the origin of life

or its future. He simply could not acknowledge any rational correlation between science and religion. But since the accident, his values and perspectives on life had been challenged. Considering the seriousness of his accident, Chris was debating in his own mind and with friends why he was alive. Since he *was* alive, why had the accident occurred at all? In other words, if there was a God who allowed him to live—indeed saved his life—then why had He not prevented the whole affair? In his discussions with a friend he was told that these were questions of a religious nature. The friend encouraged him to turn to religion for the answer. Thus Chris's straightforward question.

The second reason involved me as a chaplain. Chris had become a vegetarian because of the animal-rights issue. He had learned that many Seventh-day Adventists are vegetarians. Since this was an issue that was very close to his heart, he determined to talk to someone with similar convictions.

Should Chris turn to religion? Should anyone turn to religion? And what about all the millions of religious devotees who are already immersed in the religious scene? If religion is just the crutch that many interpret it to be, if it is little more than a sucker for those who need encouragement to be good, or a big stick for those who are prone to be bad, then we have to ask the question with which Chris confronted me: Why should anyone concern himself with religion?

Chris and I spent numerous sessions together since that first meeting in my office. Yet even as I write this article I recognize that I

have really not answered his question. We have looked at the proofs of God's existence. We have discussed the question of miracles, the correlation between faith and reason, and the problem of suffering. However, I have to admit that I really have not given him a good reason to "turn to religion."

As I have already implied, I am not sure that recommending generic religion is the right approach. We must not think that any old religion will do; that it doesn't matter what a person believes as long as he or she is a believing person. This would be circular reasoning. We might as well believe in belief. To even admit that we believe implies a belief in something—an idea, a philosophy, an object, or a being. Of course religion has also been to blame for many wars and the cause of much suffering in our world. There is such a thing as bad religion.

But getting back to the real question, I wonder if human beings can even escape religion since so many questions of our existence are religious ones. The meaning of being human and our relationship to one another, to the other living creatures with which we share space on this planet, to the world in which we live and the entire cosmos—all these are addressed in religion. So much of our energy has been invested throughout the disciplines of science, the arts, philosophy, and technology to understand these basic questions. What is humanity? Where did it come from? What is its future? Yet religion is the only discipline that answers these questions with

meaning. Religion helps us determine our purpose. It reminds us that human beings were created for greatness.

Unfortunately, we can't choose the questions that confront us, but I think a better question to ask would be, "Why should I turn to the Bible?" I say this because the Bible gives us something to believe in. We are not asked to believe in belief. That is why I directed Chris to the Bible. The Bible tells us who we are—creatures made in the image of God with an eternal purpose. Creatures who also rebelled from God and are thus imprisoned in a state of insecurity, guilt, and shame. We are beings who try to fake it by self-mastery and over-achievement.

The Bible also reminds us of our destiny. It announces the end of our hopeless despair and the reality of a whole new existence in Jesus Christ. Here the Testaments are brought together as God's goal for humanity is made possible through His Son. Jesus Christ is the end of the old age of darkness, misery, and sin. He also marks the beginning of the new reality of life and wholeness with the dawn of the kingdom of God.

Human beings need religion because by nature we are religious creatures who ask religious questions and need religious answers. However, we need the Bible because we need desperately to hear and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here we learn not so much about what human beings should do as about what God has already done. The Bible records that before the world and humanity were ever formed, God had already planned for its salvation through His Son. In Christ God has predestined human beings to freedom, joy, and complete security.

The more we study the gospel of Jesus Christ the more we realize that God has answered our deepest questions before we ever voiced them. I have to admit that I have often felt intimidated by the many questions that I feel incom-

petent to answer. Yet, I have to say that working with people like Chris and with countless others has taught me that most of us question the existence of God and the need for religion from a much more practical level. Now when I hear individuals debate creation versus evolution I know that the real questions many are asking are very basic: "Is there a Creator God? Can He still make things new?" It doesn't matter too much if God can make a world if He can't make me into a new person. And again when students doubt the reality of Christ's physical resurrection from the dead, the real proof they want is more than historical, more than facts that can be gleaned from a book, whether the book is the Bible or Josephus. No, the real test of Christ's resurrection is met when we experience His resurrection in our own lives. To believe that He lives is as much an existential conviction as a historical one.

This then is why human beings need to turn not to religion in general but to Jesus Christ. The world needs to know that Jesus did something that has altered our history. He has changed our existence for today, not just for the future. He proclaimed that the kingdom of God had come. Jesus provides a way to transcend our present despair as lost creatures on this planet. He also has promised a future escape at His glorious return.

Christianity is not just pie in the sky by and by—it is a present reality. Heaven and hell are too far off in the future for most of us. In thinking this way we are in danger of misunderstanding the teachings of the New Testament—and the whole Bible, for that matter. Jesus taught that the world was already a place of torment and pain. His healing ministry and His death on the cross were a rescue operation from a hell that individuals were already experiencing. His salvation was a present blessing that broke into the here and now of this old world system

of death and despair. This is how Galatians 1:4 has to be understood, where the Apostle Paul reminds us that "Jesus gave himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil age."

This of course does not deny a future judgment or blessing that depends on our own decision for or against Jesus. There is still more to come. But the real good news in the message of Christ is the recognition that His salvation for us begins now. The powers of sin, condemnation, and death that have ruled in this world have already been defeated. Jesus' own resurrection is the assurance that the Prince of this world has been cast out.

The breaking in of God's kingdom by Jesus Christ, and all Christ accomplished through His suffering and death make a difference in the here and now, not just for the future. In Jesus Christ the future is the present, for the kingdom has already begun. This implies a difference in the way we live our lives, in the kind of careers we choose. It determines the kind of person we will marry and how we raise our children. It affects every aspect of our existence. It influences the way we spend our money, our time, and the kind of values we live by. As citizens of His kingdom we are members of a whole new economy. Our ethics will be the ethics of the kingdom as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount, and our highest ideal will be to love one another as He loved us.

I had a student tell me one time that he would probably not even concern himself with religion at all if he didn't have to face a coming judgment. Unfortunately, I don't think he is alone. Often I hear people express the same attitudes. But what is more depressing is to live our lives in fear of the future as though our belief in Jesus has no immediate bearing on our day-to-day existence. Salvation is more than an insurance policy for the

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I Am a Stranger . . .

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me that cholera, gravel [kidney stones], phthisis [tuberculosis], and cancer are the celestial means of locomotion, just as steamboats, omnibuses, and railways are the terrestrial means. To die quietly of old age would be to go there on foot."

Commenting on "Starry Night," a now world-famous painting, Vincent revealed his love of nature, his need for a spiritual experience, and his intense desire for friendship: "This does not stop me from a terrible yearning for—shall I say the word—religion. And then I go outside at night to paint the stars, and I always dream of such a painting with a group of lively figures, friends."

The Final Months

Tired after his lengthy stay in the city atmosphere of Paris, in early 1888 Vincent went to work in the countryside of Arles in southern France. Fascinated by the light of Provence and the landscape of olive trees and cypresses, in a period of 15 months he produced what are considered some of his best paintings and drawings—more than 300 of them! Unfortunately, this was the last moment of relative calm he enjoyed.

Vincent had rented a little yellow house, hoping that his artist friends would join him to form a community of post-Impressionists. He worked for days at a stretch, from 7 in the morning until 6 in the evening in the same spot, with short, infrequent breaks to get food. "The outcome is that I work fast," he writes Theo. "I have the clarity and the dazzle of one in love, I am overwhelmed by colors and this new experience is leading to ecstasy. I am not tired and would like to start a new painting tonight." Gauguin visited Vincent in October, and they painted together for a short time. However,



The Bedroom at Arles, 1888.

their temperaments were violently incompatible, and their friendship came to an end. Increasing attacks of mental instability, which ran in Vincent's family, threw him into despair. He painted furiously, attempting to maintain his sanity, but to no avail. On Christmas Eve, 1888, the artist cut off a section of his left ear and was interned in a hospital.

Released for a short time, he soon requested internship in an asylum at Saint-Rémy, where he painted canvases which were bolder than ever. But Vincent grew homesick, and despaired at his inability to succeed. "What am I in the eyes of most people?" he wrote. "A good-for-nothing, an eccentric and disagreeable man, somebody who has no position in society and never will have. Very well, even if that were true, I should want to show by my work what there is in the heart of such an eccentric man, of such a nobody."

Travelling north to see his brother, the artist sought refuge at Auvers-sur-Oise, the village where Dr. Gachet, friend to Cézanne and Pissarro, lived. This stay in the country brought a brief respite,

but quarrels with Gachet, feelings of isolation, and overdependence on his now-married brother ended the period of tranquility and productivity. Seeing no hope of overcoming his loneliness or of being cured, the 37-year-old Vincent van Gogh brought an end to his life.

For the Christian who appreciates the visual arts, van Gogh remains a painful puzzle—sensitive and uncouth, creative and self-destructive, affectionate yet violent. While organized religion apparently failed him, he continued to reach for the transcendent. He was deeply insecure, constantly seeking companionship and feeling frustrated in his search for intimacy. His rich epistolary gives us insights into the unique art produced by a tortured soul. In ten brief years of painting, he created a rich corpus of art that speaks to us with the voice of a "stranger on this earth" who wanted "to go home."

Pieter Sol serves as principal of the Seventh-day Adventist Junior College and Seminary in the Netherlands, where he teaches Art and Religion.

Challenges . . .

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ment allow theological development in several directions. Will the long standing substitutionary view survive the coming discussions? Given the biblical support and direct endorsement of Ellen White, it will certainly prevail.

Yet another theological discussion of this decade deals with prophetic interpretation. Will major time prophecies, formerly interpreted historically in terms of a day-for-a-year, be repeated in the future on a day-for-a-day basis? Theological controversies will also center around Christ. Did He assume the nature of unfallen Adam or fallen Adam? Related questions will probe the nature of sin and the possibility of total victory over sin in this world. Through all of these discussions the Holy Spirit will lead God's people to clearer understandings.

Having discussed several theologically oriented controversies, we move now on to those with a more practical slant.

Social Forces and Global Mission

Historically, the Adventist Church has maintained a fortress mentality. We have undertaken missionary forays into the surrounding world, followed by withdrawal to out-of-the-way places for spiritual shelter. Early schools and health-care institutions promoted the agrarian ideal.

Today's widespread urbanization means that many if not most Adventists live in urban or suburban locations. Furthermore, the growth in numbers encourages believers to become active in social structures such as government, education, and health care.

Governmental regulation of personal freedom has accelerated the process, as the prophetically foretold time approaches when autocratic power will dominate personal life, including religious practice.

How will the church of the 1990s cope with these changes? Will it keep alive its sense of mission, preparing a people for deliverance to a better land? Or will it emphasize present service? Will it put its energy into improving the current world, consigning the hope of Christ's return to the background? The choice between proclamation and service to society is important. Public relations favors the latter. Proclamation, on the other hand, is prophetic, disturbing, and generates opposition.

This will be a decade of vigorous outreach to previously unentered communities through the Global Mission program. Great masses of people, largely concentrated in Asia and the Near East, have had no Adventist witness. Traditional means of outreach in these areas have been largely unproductive, so new approaches will be essential. What concept of mission will prevail? Will we set as our goal active evangelization or will we settle for some form of passive witness, following the service motif, hoping that a more directly Christian outreach will follow?

The implementation of Global Mission will surely affect Adventist action on every continent and involve thousands of members. Its fundamental approach—whether social service or direct recruitment of new believers—will generate much discussion.

The Question of Structural Unity

Modernism's emphasis on individual rights encourages entrepreneurial independence. Current technology makes it possible for a single person or a small group to attract enough supporters to launch what has come to be called an "independent ministry." At least 75 such groups have sprung up in North America, and others are multiplying in other parts of the world.

Typically these groups describe themselves as Seventh-day Adven-

tists loyal to the faith, but fostering a work not being carried on by the organized church. Several advocate variants in belief, often elevating to high profile questions not regarded as central by the church as a whole. Others operate small institutions dedicated to special ministries; yet others are former ministers with a charismatic bent who have stepped aside to instruct in special methods of fund raising, evangelism, or other special skills.

Such independent ministries draw financial resources from within the denomination and represent parallel but organically separated movements. Some cooperate closely with the organized church and support its mission; others do not. Many distribute printed materials, whose cumulative volume almost certainly exceeds the output of the church itself. The burgeoning of these groups will certainly remain an important issue in this decade.

Increasingly, the question of unity versus uniformity in religious practice will challenge the church. Related issues include a trend toward congregationalism in some areas, the role of the laity in church policy making, as well as differing views on marriage and divorce, the role of women in the church, and other concerns. Will our church allow some regional diversity or will we seek to maintain uniformity in policy in practice around the world?

Achieving the ambitious goals of Global Mission will certainly require the unified concentration of efforts and resources of our entire church.

Toward a More International Church

Since Adventism is the most geographically widespread of all Protestant groups, it seems contradictory to speak of becoming more international. Rapid growth outside North America has

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ACTION REPORT

Inter-American Division

More than 6,000 Seventh-day Adventist young men and women pursue advanced studies in public universities located in some 30 countries throughout the Inter-American Division. A recent census shows their distribution as follows: Haitian Union, 125; West Indies Union, 200; Caribbean Union, 215; French Antilles-Guiana Union, 225; Colombian Union, 350; Venezuela-Antilles Union, 450; North Mexican Union, 650; Central American Union, 1,120; South Mexican Union, 1,210; and Antillian Union, 1,465.

The number of these students is increasing as overall church membership grows. They constitute a courageous Adventist army that keeps the torch of the Christian faith shining bright on scores of secular campuses, frequently in an atheistic, politicized, and hostile social context. Although they do not enjoy the benefits of Adventist higher education, they are thankful for having known Jesus Christ from their youth, and are committed to live and share the gospel among their fellow students and teachers. They seek to serve humanity as qualified professionals, to establish Christian homes, and to enter the kingdom of heaven as part of God's people.

During the past two years, the Inter-American Division has intensified its efforts to organize, inspire, and serve this valuable sec-

tor of our church family. Working in coordination with the youth and education leaders at the union and local levels, we have implemented a broad program that includes the following activities:

Organization of new associations of Adventist university students and consolidation of groups already established. Many of these groups have been founded in recent years, but some have been active for 25 years or more. Several of their former officers now occupy positions of responsibility in the church as lay leaders



Adventist university students in West Puerto Rico, 1989.

and denominational executives. Among the latter are Nemuel Artiles, administrator of the Bella Vista Hospital in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico; and Efren Pagan, president of the West Puerto Rico Conference. Both of these men held leadership positions in Adventist university student associations. Leonardo Suescun, president of the Adventist University in Medellin, Colombia, was one of the founders of the first association of Adventist university students in his homeland more than 20 years ago.

Systematic distribution of DIA-

LOGUE in English, French, or Spanish among the university students included in the census. This journal—which contains articles on academic topics, interviews, and ideas for campus outreach—is distributed gratis. Its cost is shared by the division, union, and local fields.

Seminars for campus chaplains, youth leaders, and pastors in university towns. The first two sessions were held earlier this year in the Dominican Republic and Barbados. Specialized instruction on campus ministry was provided

by personnel from the General Conference, the North American and Inter-American Divisions, and the local unions. Participants came from four Spanish- and English-speaking unions in our territory.

Celebration of the Year of the Adventist University Student in 1990. Following an action passed by the division committee, a series of activities aimed at strengthening this ministry and at high-

lighting its importance have been carried out in Inter-America. As part of the celebration, an artistic bronze pin has been produced exclusively for Adventist university students. Its design features a large "U"—which stands for "university"—inside which there is the outline of a young person holding high an "A"—which symbolizes his or her "Adventist" faith. The two letters are encircled by a laurel wreath, representing victory.*

Spiritual retreats for university students. The format of these meetings varies, but most are held

annually for several days. Some of the retreats are held on the campus of our own institutions of higher learning, such as in Colombia. Others utilize youth camp facilities. Lectures, discussions, study groups, testimonies, and recreational activities are included in the program, which is jointly planned by student and denominational leaders. The costs of the retreat and the transportation are at times shared by the students, the congregation that sponsors them, the local field, and the union.

University student conventions or encounters. These last one day. They are usually held on the Sabbath in one of the halls of a public university where the Adventist student association is registered. The program includes a student-led Sabbath school, worship with a special speaker, fellowship lunch, lecture on a relevant topic, discussions, and a social activity in the evening. Adventist professors and other church leaders are usually invited. A convention of this type took place on the campus of the University of West Indies in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, this year. At times, the program includes a baptismal ceremony—with a portable baptistry—for a fellow student who has been attracted to the Adventist message. Such was the case at the Inter-American University in San German, Puerto Rico.

Service and cultural activities on the public campus. Student associations have used their imagi-

nation and creativity in sponsoring a variety of programs for students and teachers. The activities have included musical concerts, stop-smoking clinics, vegetarian cooking classes, donation of a basic set of Adventist books to the university library, distribution of Adventist literature, Bible exhibitions,

sity students participated in this activity, which culminated with the baptism of 18,319 young men and women during the month of June. The experience was repeated early this year when thousands of youth leaders—including university students—held evangelistic series as part of Harvest 90. These resulted

in the baptism of 20,140 young people throughout the division.

Much more can be done for, with, and by our Adventist university students in this rapidly growing division. We are aware of the challenges our young people face, and we have observed the key role they can play in the life of the church. They deserve our prayers and support.

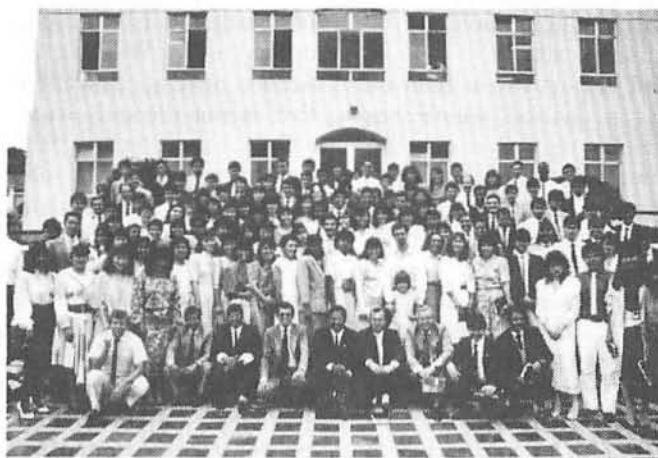
Wherever there is a group of Adventist university students, they must be encouraged to form an association under the sponsorship of experienced leaders. And as the Lord shows us the way, we will move forward with courage and faith toward the heavenly kingdom.

Alfredo García-Marenko

() Students who wish to obtain these attractive pins may request them by writing to DIALOGUE at the editorial address listed on page 2 of this issue. Enclose your name, postal address, and a check or money order for US \$2.00 (or its equivalent), which will cover its cost and mailing. Make the check payable to "General Conference-AMiCUS."*



Adventist university students in Barbados, 1990.

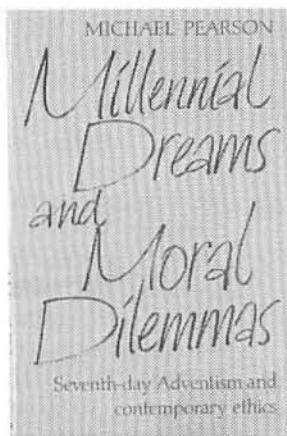


Delegates to the student convention in Colombia, 1989.

food and toy collection for poor children at Christmastime, film and discussion programs, etc.

Youth evangelism and outreach. In 1989 the Inter-American Division launched an international program under the name of "Maranatha 10,000," which consisted of 10,000 youth-led evangelistic campaigns. Many univer-

Significant Publications by or about Seventh-day Adventists



Millennial Dreams and Moral Dilemmas: Seventh-day Adventism and Contemporary Ethics, by Michael Pearson (Cambridge University Press, 1990; 330 pp., \$49.50 paperback).

Reviewed by Edwin I. Hernández.

This book is based on a doctoral dissertation prepared at Oxford University under the supervision of the renowned socio-

logist Bryan Wilson. As a social history, it seeks to trace the development in moral thought, policy, and behavior of Seventh-day Adventists living in the United States from the 1840s until 1983.

The work is divided into three parts. The first describes the research methodology. The second part reviews the major theological, historical, and sociological influences that have shaped Adventist moral thinking. Finally, it examines some moral dilemmas, particularly those issues related to gender and sex morality such as contraception, abortion, the role of women, divorce, and homosexuality.

The theoretical model used in part two is built on the sociological theory of Bryan Wilson, which sees religion as declining in significance within contemporary society. In terms of moral thinking, this means that social forces and pragmatic considerations will have considerable weight in the formulation of principles and in their application.

Pearson provides an insightful analysis of three major forces that have influenced Adventist moral thinking. The first is the theological framework expressed in two fundamental doctrinal positions: the church's belief in the imminence of the advent and the concept of the remnant church. These beliefs have created tensions which have, to some extent, jeopardized the task of articulating systematic and relevant moral discourse. Second, the overwhelming desire for unity has prevented the church from responding quickly to ethical issues. Finally, Pearson argues that the larger context of American society, particularly Victorian prohibitions and expressive individualism, has had the effect of petrifying and constricting the moral imagination by limiting wider applications of principles. As for example, the church has failed to move beyond the question of jewelry to the greater temptations of a consumerist society. Ellen White's

ministry has provided clear moral direction. However, it has tended to inhibit serious moral discourse among Adventists on some contemporary issues. Perhaps the most important influence on the church has been an American pragmatism, which has led to the accommodation of principles for the sake of institutional unity and progress. This has resulted, according to Pearson, in a lack of consistent moral applications.

The third part of the book uses the explanatory framework and detailed historical analysis to probe ethical issues in human sexuality. In dealing with family size and abortion, Pearson concludes that American Adventists, as pragmatists, have been less inclined to provide official pronouncements than to allow individual conscience to dictate behavior.

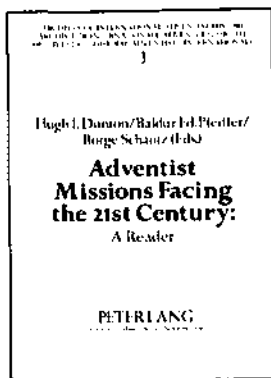
Of utmost importance is Pearson's analysis of the issue of woman's ordination. Strong resistance remains, despite there being in his view legitimate historical and theological precedent to accepting a greater role for women in the church.

Pearson's discussion of divorce and homosexuality is thorough and insightful. It shows how Adventists have insisted in maintaining the family as the normative social institution.

At times the book lacks continuity of thought, and it would have benefited from a stronger summary of its basic arguments. One could also argue that the uncritical use of Wilson's theory on the declining significance of religion, while consequential and provocative, is not the only framework available to analyze religious movements, particularly in light of the persistence and vitality of religion in modern society.

These issues do not detract from the important contribution of Pearson's work for those interested in the future viability and relevance of Adventism. We should be grateful to him for describing effectively the contributions, deficiencies, and inconsistencies of our moral thinking. Heeding his call to engage in creative and systematic moral discourse will help counter the accommodating influences of secular society. To do the contrary would mean to continue being reactive in our responses and irrelevant in our inconsistencies. This would jeopardize what we so desperately seek to protect—the preaching of the gospel in all its power.

Edwin I. Hernández (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame) is director of pastoral care and bioethics at Hialeah Hospital, Florida, U.S.A.



Adventist Missions Facing the 21st Century: A Reader, edited by Hugh I. Dunton, Baldu E. Pfeiffer and Borge Schantz. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990; xii + 233 pp.)

Reviewed by Kay Clayton.

These papers are required reading for any Adventist interested in learning, teaching, and

sharing in a cross-cultural setting. In 1989, 27 missionaries, scholars, and administrators met at Newbold College to study Adventist mission and its future. This book contains 17 papers presented at the symposium. All of the authors have worked in countries outside their homeland.

Included in this volume—the third in a series titled "Archives of International Adventist History"—are studies in theology, organization, strategy, mission history, as well as women and family. The variety of perspectives represented by the contributors and the space available here force us to deal only with the major themes of this collection. The statements and questions highlighted below were posed by the editors.

Degree of interest in missions. In certain sectors of our church there is concern for missions, but also "a feeling of powerlessness" in completing the biblical mandate. "Mission Spotlight" is seen in Sabbath schools, many articles on mission have appeared in Adventist publications, and the General Conference is emphasizing a "global strategy." However, there are also reports of lowered budgets generally, but especially for mission programs. The average Adventist member does not speak often of missions.

Volunteer service is increasing, but the number of regular/career missionaries has decreased 50 percent since 1975. The book discusses new ways to focus attention on mission: short-term services, student missionaries, opportunities for professionals in government or industries, "nonresidential" work (a fascinating plan to reach city/state/people groups), and urban mission (50 percent of the world population is expected to reside in cities by the year 2000).

Church leaders are urged to feature "from everywhere to everywhere" mission prominently at all levels of Sabbath school programming, and in primary through college curricula.

The church's image of itself and the evaluation of essential and nonessential doctrines present a special challenge, as efforts are made to contextualize and indigenize the gospel without compromising doctrinal

unity. With 88 percent of the church membership outside the North American Division, unity within diversity is an important goal to be attempted.

The use and abuse of finances has been a major concern in mission organizations. Initially, funds were poured into Western-type institutions. As the work became more indigenized, missions were expected to become self-sufficient. There are recommendations that more emphasis be placed on stewardship at all levels of the church, finding the right balance between funds spent in organizational operations at home and those devoted to outreach and mission.

Relations with other mission agencies. One author reports a degree of confusion with programs implemented by other churches. More often, however, the authors cite the need for cooperation, which could provide access to good computer programs and data banks to assist in evangelistic planning and outreach.

Is there salvation outside Christianity? This question is given a "qualified negative" for Seventh-day Adventists by one author. Practical examples provide insight into negative reactions to Christianity. Workers are urged to be willing to learn about other Christian and non-Christian faiths, so as to better understand and appreciate their belief systems. This will help them to effectively present an appealing and more complete picture of God.

What is the relationship of Christianity to culture, and the role of the modern missionary? "There is no communication without identification," says Gottfried Oosterwal, director of the Institute of World Mission. The institute and these authors place strong emphasis on appropriate training, including awareness, sensitivity, knowledge, and skills. Thorough health screening, including psychological testing, and pre-departure training are mandatory, and emphasis has shifted from being topic-oriented to experiential-oriented. On-site orientation and training are urged.

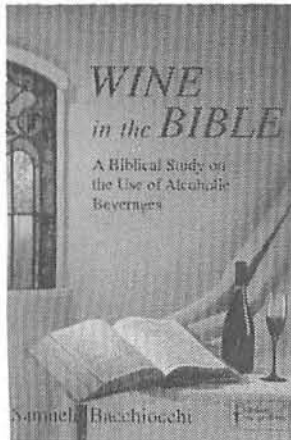
The "foreign missionary in charge" must give way to the missionary as model, consultant, mediator, and servant. Sensitization regarding the world's and the church's global interdependence should permeate all levels of our organization. This can help eliminate prejudice and discrimination. The book includes one provocative essay on the gospel and social action.

The strengths of these articles include emphasis on the "everywhere to everywhere" focus of this world church, the encouragement of interdependence, of learning from and about each other and the rest of our world, the need for sensitivity to non-Western perspectives, and a candidness in looking at ourselves—the problems and challenges, and the striving for balance. The volume provides a comprehensive bibliography, except for pieces on women and family in mission.

It would have been useful to include a discussion on how to recruit sensitive and creative cross-cultural missionaries. Also missing was a review of how "the

call from the field" relates to global strategy and *who* is making decisions on global strategy. This series of books should be widely promoted; it provides stimulating, necessary, quality material on missions.

Kay Clayton (M.A., University of Texas at Arlington) has served as missionary in the Philippines, taught cross-cultural communication and sociology, and presently works as a medical social worker in Fort Worth, Texas.



Wine in the Bible: A Biblical Study on the Use of Alcoholic Beverages, by Samuele Bacchiocchi (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Biblical Perspectives, 1989; 307 pp., \$12.95 paperback).

Reviewed by Roy Gane.

Dr. Bacchiocchi of Andrews University, best known for his

search on the doctrine of the Sabbath, challenges the commonly accepted view that a moderate use of alcoholic beverages is condoned by the Bible. The Old Testament, the sayings and example of Jesus, and the teachings and practice of the apostolic church all point clearly in the direction of total abstinence from intoxicants. Ellen White's position agrees with the biblical evidence.

It is often assumed that the Greek and Hebrew words translated "wine" necessarily denote an intoxicating beverage. Bacchiocchi demonstrates con-

vincingly that these words refer to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or unfermented. Where "wine" is viewed positively in the Bible, the context indicates that the beverage is unfermented. Fermented wine, on the other hand, is spoken of negatively.

Another misconception is that the ancients could not preserve unfermented grape juice. Ancient sources reveal not only success, but also considerable sophistication in the technology of juice preservation. Information regarding the processing of grape products is of significant value in the analysis of some stories and sayings of Jesus in which "wine" appears.

Bacchiocchi's textual interpretation is of unassailable integrity, demonstrating a solid grasp of word usage, grammar, language structure, context, limitations of evidence, and the role of secondary sources. Conclusions with regard to some passages, such as Deuteronomy 14:26, Luke 5:37-39 and Acts 2:13, are fresh and startling.

Not content with producing a theoretical discussion for a scholarly audience, the author states his case in plain language. He emphasizes the immediate moral and social relevance of his study to the modern attitudes about alcohol. Several items contribute to the popular readability of the book: A brief preview of the book's content, bold-type subject headings, fullness of expression (at times to the point of redundancy) and recapitulation of important ideas. The book should be read by everyone concerned about intoxicants and interested in the scriptural teaching on the subject.

Roy Gane (M.A., University of California, Berkeley) is finishing a Ph.D. in biblical Hebrew language and literature and teaching a course in biblical Hebrew texts at the University of California, Berkeley.

You Should Not Turn . . .

Continued from page 23

future with premiums we must pay now and a policy that can be redeemed only at death.

What I really want to say to Chris is that in looking into religion he is headed in the right direction, but his real discovery will not begin until he realizes that God has already turned to him in Jesus Christ. My desire for him and all of us is that we know that and experience it in the very depths of our being. I pray that we all see that in reality it is God who has been searching for us. In Jesus Christ God's search is over. We have been found by His beloved

Son. God's mission to this earth was successful. He accomplished what he set out to do. In Jesus Christ we are the recipients of God's grace now while we await all that will be ours in the future. What a wonderful way to live each day—and what a glorious hope for tomorrow!

Ron Pickell (M.Div., Andrews University) is Adventist chaplain on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and director of Terrace House—an Adventist student center.

New Handbook

Adventist Ministry on the Public University Campus is a new handbook for those interested in ministering to students attending secular institutions. Its three sections—Assessing the Need, Approaching the Task, and Using Available Resources—include more than 100 pages of practical ideas for a successful campus ministry.

Order your copy by writing to: AMiCUS, c/o GC Education Department, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Enclose a check for US\$6.00 together with your name and address.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Who Will Care for the Children?

Vicki Graham

Children—the helpless babies we feed, hold in our arms, cherish, and nurture through infancy and youth to independence and adulthood. Although most of us picture children in this way, many do not.

Every day, children are neglected, exploited, abandoned, abused, and killed. These problems are not isolated; they are realities in one form or another around the globe. Worldwide, 150 million children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition.¹ More than 100 million children work in hazardous and often fatal conditions.² The Defense for Children International-USA reports that in Thailand alone, there are 15,000-40,000 girls under the age of 15 who work as prostitutes.

Children are caught in violent street fights, in civil, racial, and international wars in which they are the most innocent victims. Two hundred thousand youngsters under the age of 15 serve as soldiers in the armies of various nations. They are detained without trial, tortured, assaulted, shot at, and killed.

More than 80 million homeless children live in the cities of the world, and in one country, these children are routinely killed by a vigilante group determined to "clean up" the streets.³

The Romanian orphans are another example of the mistreatment of children that has recently caught the world's attention. As many as 100,000 infants and children have been forced to live in unsanitary state-run orphanages where they receive little, if any affection. The disabled children among them have been sent to prison-like institutions. Up to a third of these children die each year.⁴

Child-service professionals everywhere report that abandonment is on the rise. In North America, stories about abandoned infants are no longer shocking news. For this very reason, these horrifying events experienced by the weakest among us cry out for action.

Children are human beings with inherent rights, yet these have largely gone unrecognized. Should the human rights of children be protected by law? Strangely, this issue has been the focus of much controversy. Defence for Children International, UNICEF, and other nongovernmental organizations have been working toward the composition, ratification, and implementation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, a law designed to protect the human rights of children under the age of 18. This important document specifically addresses issues of child education; health care; sexual, physical, and mental abuse; juvenile justice; and economic exploitation.

The law is based on three fundamental principles: (1) all children are entitled to the rights out-

lined in the document without regard to race, color, sex, language, political opinion or national, ethnic, or social origin; (2) all actions concerning a child must be in the child's best interests; and (3) where a child is capable of forming his or her own opinions, they must receive proper consideration. The Convention on the Rights of the Child describes the obligation of those states that ratify it and outlines implementation provisions. It also defines how compliance with this law will be monitored and the conditions under which it comes into force.

On November 20, 1989, the UN General Assembly approved the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The next step is for this document to be presented to each member country for ratification.

What can you do? If you recognize the seriousness of the situation facing millions of children today, if you have decided the only responsible choice as a conscientious Christian is to get involved, there is much to be done. You *can* make a difference. The activities in which you choose to participate will vary with the socio-political environment of your country. You will have to decide what is most appropriate for your situation. Here is a list of possibilities:

- * Be a responsible citizen. Keep informed about local, national, and international trends and events, especially regarding children's issues. Ask yourself, "How does my country's national and foreign policy affect children?"

- * Reflect prayerfully on how your advanced studies and eventual profession may have an impact on children's lives.

- * Talk with the parents and children of your community. Become sensitive to their problems



and assist in practical problem-solving when possible.

* Write letters to your local newspapers about the need to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

* Write to your legislators telling them what the Convention on the Rights of the Child can do for children, and urge them to support its ratification.

* Lead discussions on the rights of children in your church, in parent-teacher associations, and in service organizations.

* Recommend to educational authorities that this document and the plight of children be studied and discussed in school.

* Choose a local children's program, starting with your church, as your special responsibility and help those involved in making children's lives better.

* Support the best national and international children's organizations.

And remember the words written by Isaiah:

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry

and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter;

when you see the naked, to

clothe him,

and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn,

and your healing will quickly appear;

then your righteousness will go before you,

and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;

you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I."

(Isaiah 58:6-9, NIV.)

If you would like more information or a copy of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, write to Vicki Graham, ADRA International, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, USA. Fax: (301) 680-6380.

NOTES

1. *Time*, October 8, 1990.

2. Kay Castelle, *In the Child's Best Interest*.

3. *World Press Review*, October 1989.

4. *USA Today*, July 12, 1990.

Vicki Graham is assistant director of human resources development for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, with special responsibilities on issues relating to women and children.

Challenges . . .

Continued from page 25

produced major concentrations of members on every continent.

Due to its historic primacy and its economic and educational advantages, the North American church has supplied leadership and economic resources out of proportion to its members. However, equalization is in progress. Given current projections, membership at the close of the decade will be overwhelmingly non-North American. Economic balance will follow, but more slowly.

Worldwide availability of educational opportunities will accelerate the internationalization of denominational leadership. At stake will be the unity of the church. Given the naturally centrifugal character of large groups, the present degree of unity among Adventists is a marvel to observers.

We frequently hear calls for cultural diversity in the church. When attire, cuisine, and social niceties are at issue, the case is strong. But given the human tendency toward prejudice and division, it would benefit all believers to stress their similarities rather than their differences.

The challenge of the coming decade will be to reinforce mutual respect throughout the church. We must see one another first as brothers and sisters. Racial, ethnic, linguistic, or economic variations must not divide us. As Jesus said to His contentious disciples, "You have one teacher, and you all are brethren" (Matthew 23:8 RSV). Adventist men and women, of whatever national origin, must see themselves as part of the family of God—as pilgrims with a common mission and destiny.

George W. Reid (Th.D., Southwestern Baptist Seminary) has been the director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference since 1984. He previously served as associate editor of the Adventist Review and taught theology at Southwestern Adventist College in Keene, Texas.

Basic Human Rights of Children

Protected by the Convention of the Rights of the Child*

- Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation
- Protection from economic exploitation
- Protection from abduction, sale, and trafficking
- Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion
- Protection from cruel treatment, torture, and capital punishment
- Access to education
- Access to health care
- Protection from armed conflicts until over the age of 15
- Right to a name and nationality
- Right to live with their parents
- Protection during the adoption process

(*) A child is defined as a person under the age of 18.

FIRST PERSON

Coping with University Life

Kim Snider

Being a student at Michigan State University has not been easy. The whole process of getting into college, then coping with college life presented me with great challenges in my social, intellectual, and spiritual life. Each of these challenges has taught me precious lessons about my life and my relationship with the Lord.

My decision to attend Michigan State University (MSU) was not based on not wanting to enroll in an Adventist school. I believe an Adventist education is important, and I am thankful that my parents kept me in academy as long as possible. However, I was offered a scholarship—which paid for half of my schooling—contingent upon attending MSU. Academically, I found the program at James Madison College-MSU to be very attractive and selected to study International Relations.

My experiences here have been quite rewarding in terms of curriculum and extracurricular activities. I spent some time studying at Cambridge University (England) and at the Institute of European Studies (Belgium). I was selected by the students to be chief executive officer for the Student Programming Board. Through these opportunities I worked with a diverse group of students from all walks of life.

My greatest challenge was to find the balance I needed between my social, intellectual, and spiritual life. My relationship with the Lord is the focus of my life. I needed to place values on each aspect of my life and set aside a portion of my time for each activity. At first, I found it difficult to live the Christian life and to share it with others as I desired.

During my freshman and sophomore years, I was teased and

hurt greatly by my roommates and floor mates for not being interested in the party life of the floor. I did not participate in the nightly drinking parties or the bar runs, and I didn't have a few companions share my bed. I had no interest in those activities and was thus branded as a loner and isolated by my neighbors. For those reasons I spent most of my time in my room or at the library studying. My grades were fairly good, but I felt like a social outcast.

I sensed a great spiritual and social emptiness in my life. Because of my social falling-outs, and being away from home, I felt lonely and afraid. I needed the social and spiritual relationship with the church more than ever; however, I found it difficult to get over to the church. Many different circumstances somehow prevented me from attending church. Sleep was the primary reason. I never got to sleep before 1:00 on Friday night, thanks to the standard floor parties. It never helped and usually hurt to ask the students to quiet down. If I did attend church, I would miss my lunch meal because the cafeteria closed by the time I got back from church. After a few times of missing my lunch, I would try to leave church early.

Transportation was also a problem. I occasionally asked for rides, but felt guilty for asking all the time. Every time I attended church I seemed to be the only student; I could actually go to church and have no one say a word to me. I desperately wanted to meet some students who understood where I was coming from. I wanted to know if this was my problem or if Adventist students in general faced these problems.

When I did attend church I would come back from church all

dressed up (not in black), and the students in the hall would ask if I had to go to another funeral or who died. I wanted to bring clothes to church and then change afterward so that I would look "normal" when returning. I decided it was too much of a hassle. I have to admit, I was not able to faithfully attend church. I felt bad about it. However, I knew that my personal relationship with the Lord was most important, and I never stopped my personal worship practices.

My life really changed during my junior and senior years when I moved into the Adventist sorority. The university church in East Lansing purchased a house next to the church and set it up specifically for the housing of MSU women. I no longer had the peer pressures or the difficulties of attending church. Knowing that other students with similar goals and values would be living there was the greatest incentive for me to move into the house. I learned that I was not alone in my challenges of living a Christian life in a non-Christian environment. Of course I faced other challenges, but the problems of living in the dorm were no longer a worry. I am so thankful for having had the opportunity of living in the Adventist sorority. It was the answer to my prayers.

Intellectually, my studies were difficult, but with time and effort I was able to pull off fairly good grades. Along with my studies in international relations, I added a major in anthropology, a minor in French, and a specialization in international development.

For my additional major in anthropology, I was required to take a course in evolution, and it frightened me. This was the first

and only time I have experienced taking a course that entirely denied Creation. It was difficult to study and listen to the lectures. It was hard to believe that life appeared millions and billions of years ago.

Once I got up the courage to discuss my problem with the professor. He told me I could believe whatever I wanted as long as I put the right answers down on the tests. The course actually turned out to be a blessing. It strengthened my relationship with the Lord and helped me focus on His life. In the class and after class, I was able to share my views with many students who asked me questions.

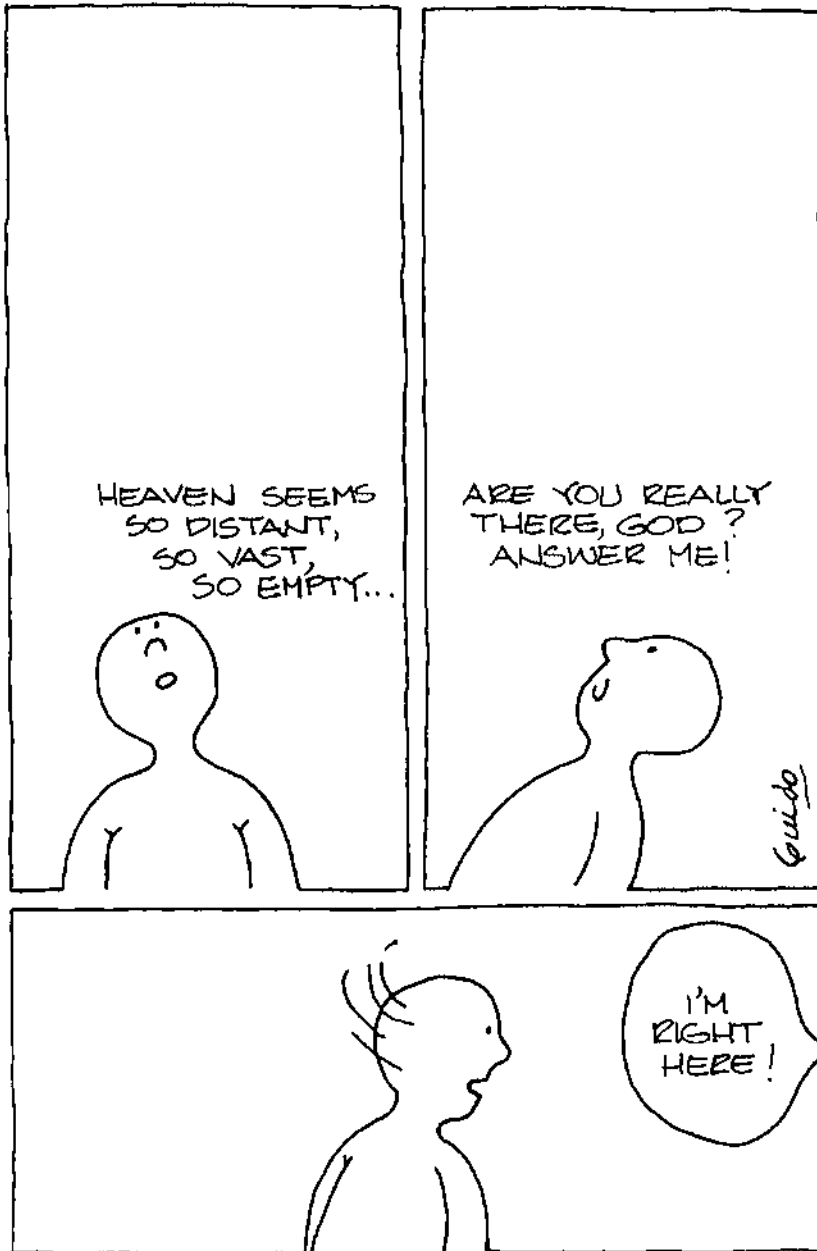
As a student attending a university that in many cases discourages Christian beliefs and values, it would have been easy for me to just quit MSU and/or the church. I felt hurt by my floormates and fellow students, and guilty for not attending church frequently. I was always worried about what the church family thought of me. In my senior year I came to believe that it does not matter what other people think. It is only what you think and how and what you do with your thoughts.

I believe that I was a missionary. I went into an unfamiliar environment, struggled with the challenges, and was able to share my faith with many. I believe it is OK for an Adventist to attend a public university or college. If you are prepared to face its challenges, the experience will strengthen your Christian life. I have been encouraged by the steps that leaders of my church have taken to support students like me. We are the future church builders.

Kimberly Ladd graduated from Michigan State University June 9, 1990. (She did not participate in the service because it was on the Sabbath.) She got married the following day to a fellow MSU Adventist student, Ross Snider. The Sniders will continue at MSU in graduate studies.

etcetera

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Collonges-sous-Salève, France



They shall call his name Emmanuel,
which means "God is with us."

Matthew 1: 23

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