
**The Christian
and politics**

**Suicide: What
you should know**

**The Flood: Just a
local catastrophe?**

God so loves the city!

VOLUME 9: No. 1



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College and University Dialogue,TM

an international journal of faith, thought, and action, is published three times a year in four parallel editions (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) by the Committee on Adventist Ministry to College and



University Students (AMiCUS) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; U.S.A.

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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: U.S.\$11 per year (three issues). See coupon on page 24 for details.

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Once more this issue of *Dialogue* demonstrates the astonishing variety that enlivens Adventist life. And where better can it be shared than with young people, who by study and thoughtful experience are loading their lives with skills and insights sure to transform them into more effective witnesses in the future!

For some Christians the outlook is far too reductionistic. Broad truth becomes constricted into narrow confines where in the midst of turbulence and limitation truth gets sequestered into a few interest points and some boring facts. In the absence of depth, trivia crowd in to fill our days with busywork that exhausts our energy even as it robs us of satisfaction. In contrast, deeply centered in Christ, the Christian life becomes an empowerment that penetrates every corner of existence—to unfold before us our rightful place in God’s sweeping cosmic panorama.

In one sense the Christian is a living enigma, with one foot in each of two worlds. Jesus spoke rightfully of us as being in the world but not of the world. For many of us this looks like a tough assignment, for we find ourselves pulled in two directions. Where do we really belong? As a matter of fact, our heritage is in two places, this world where we are at work for Him, and a new world to come.

Although there are those with an otherworldly bent who would urge us to abandon everything around us, this planet is our legitimate home. In every sense we have the right to participate in it, for it was designed for us by the Creator. No sooner had He completed its creation than He placed us here with explicit instructions to make it our home. Even as we live in this home, we are expected to be conscious that what is really happening is that He invites us to share His magnificent universe, because we are part of His family. Despite its present damaged condition, our world abounds with intensely interesting things we can explore. Around every corner is something new, something fresh, something challenging, each opening a new window on both now and eternity.

And what does this have to do with the contents of this issue of *Dialogue*? To borrow Paul’s phrase, much in every way. Each article spreads before us penetrating insight into yet another segment of our world. And our world is God’s world. If we let fresh ideas flow, stimulating in us new insights, and fitting it all together in His one grand plan, life becomes so very rich, an ever-expanding matrix of fresh ideas, an opportunity to share our marvelous Lord with people caught up in the shallow life’s tattletale cycle of petty things. This journal is now in your hands: enjoy it.

George W. Reid
Dialogue Editorial Board

Encouragement to remain faithful

I await with great expectation the arrival of each issue of *Dialogue*. The more I read the journal, the more I enjoy it. Thanks to “Interchange” I am in correspondence with a dozen Adventist students from other countries who, through their letters, encourage me to remain faithful to my convictions while studying at the public university. The cynicism and addictions that are common there move me deeply and have led me to distribute several attractive Adventist publications on campus. Some of my fellow students laugh at the high ideals they present; others read them thoughtfully. I pray that 2 Peter 3:18 will be a reality in my life and in the life of all readers of *Dialogue*.

ELENA CARINA BURGER
 Escobar, Buenos Aires
 ARGENTINA

Free catalogue

I am a physical therapy student attending one of the local public universities in Cebu City. *Dialogue* is very interesting and educational and it continues to enrich me both mentally and spiritually. In the article “Making the most of your college and university experience” (6:3) there is an offer of a free catalogue of 250 essays that show how to approach many academic and professional fields from a biblical, Christian perspective. Is that offer still valid?

JEROME G. CANAMA
 Cebu City, PHILIPPINES

The editors respond:

Yes, Jerome, the offer of a free catalogue from the Institute for Christian Teaching is still standing. In fact, the list of essays published in the Christ in the Classroom collection continues to grow. As you write to us, make sure that you include with your request your full postal address.

Our international network

My sister Roxana and I are deeply grateful to the editors of *Dialogue* because through it we and others have been blessed. Since the journal reaches us with considerable delay, we requested and received from the managing editor copies of several recent listings of "Interchange." Now we are exchanging letters with readers from Egypt, France, Kenya, Philippines and other countries. One of our correspondents is an Adventist student in China who is delighted to be in contact with fellow believers like us. This experience has encouraged me to be more open in sharing my Christian faith with others. For those who wish to be included in our international correspondence network, here is our address: Apartado Postal 352; C.P. 2002 Valencia, Edo. Carabobo; Venezuela.

CAROL R. GRILLET
Valencia, Carabobo
VENEZUELA

A matter of attitude?

As a school psychologist and counselor, I read with interest Mary Wong's article "Attitudes can make or break" (*Dialogue* 8:3). Feelings of depression or bitterness are rarely a choice. These attitudes are often an automatic emotional response to unendurable losses—losses that deplete a person's ability to cope. In such cases the internal chemistry of the brain changes so drastically that it takes more than will power to overcome these "attitudes." Those who have experienced depression or emotional illness can tell you that the last thing they want is to experience those feelings ever again.

There is some choice in what we choose to focus on and on how we respond to it (attitudes). However, there are limits to emotional endurance. Stress resistance depends on the availability of both internal and external resources.

When internal resources are exhausted, external resources of healing become more important.

When someone is physically ill, we encourage them to receive treatment. We do not condemn them for being vulnerable and becoming ill. In the same manner, emotional illness requires treatment and understanding, not condemnation for being vulnerable and having limited resistance.

Keep publishing continuing challenges to our understanding.

SELMA A. CHAI MASTRAPA,
Ph.D.
Beltsville, Maryland, U.S.A.

Help to organize a student association

I am studying literature and communication in Santa Cruz, Bolivia—one of several hundred Adventist students attending public universities in this city. We recently saw the first copies of *Dialogue* and learned of the Committee on Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS). Would you kindly tell us how we can organize a student association here? We welcome contacts with other Adventist students who have experience in this type of activity. My address: Casilla 610; Santa Cruz; Bolivia.

GERSON RIVERO
Santa Cruz, BOLIVIA

The editors respond:

Here are some suggestions on how to start a student association: (1) Begin compiling a list of Adventist students in your city, with their name, address, telephone number, and the university they attend. (2) Find out if there are Adventist university teachers, professionals and pastors interested in supporting such an association. (3) Seek the counsel of the Education or Youth Department director of your conference or union. He will help you to obtain copies of Dialogue for free distribution. (4) Convene an informal meeting to discuss the possibility of starting an association. If

the answer is affirmative, appoint a group to outline the objectives of the association, draft a constitution and statutes, and propose an organizational structure. (5) Find out if it is necessary and/or convenient to register the association with the university authorities. Some countries require it. (6) Pray that God may help your group find a balance between nurture and outreach activities that will support the mission of the church and be a blessing to all involved. We are sending you several documents that will help you in the process of getting organized. You will also receive a packet with copies of Dialogue to distribute among your fellow students. We are glad that you and your friends discovered us!

Likes cartoons

Dialogue is performing a valuable service for Adventist students and teachers in public university campuses. Since I have gone through that experience, I know how isolated from the church one can feel. In addition, as the director of Children's Ministries at the General Conference, I use materials from the journal in my workshops in many countries. The cartoons, converted into transparencies for overhead projection, make strong points without offending anyone. The audiences learn more from the humor than they would if I just verbalized the same concepts.

VIRGINIA L. SMITH, Ph.D.
Silver Spring, Maryland
U.S.A.

Write to us!

We welcome your letters, with reactions and questions, but limit your comments to 200 words. Address them to *Dialogue Letters*: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. You can also send them via fax: (301) 622-9627, or E-mail (via CompuServe): 74617,464. If selected for this section, your letter may be edited for clarity or space.

From the birth of the Christian church, these questions have been raised again and again: What is the role of the Christian in politics? Can either a church member or the church herself be involved in politics? How should they relate to the state and to the political authorities who are in charge?

Some Seventh-day Adventists think that the church has no political role to play, and the individual Christian, at most, a minuscule part. This view is predicated on the concept that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Other Adventists insist that both individuals and the church have uncontested socio-political responsibilities to improve living conditions. Some Christians go several steps further and claim that Christianity's main task is to work toward creating a Christian political order that will result in establishing the kingdom of God on earth. In between, there runs a whole gamut of views.

Christ's example

Jesus rarely referred to the type of political society to which His disciples should aspire. He did not claim to be a socio-political reformer or crusader. He did not enunciate any political platform. The temptations in the wilderness clearly had a political dimension and He resisted them. Even though He had more than one opportunity to take over society's rule by a sort of *coup d'état* (e.g., the feeding of the multitude and the triumphant entry into Jerusalem), He did not choose that option.

At the same time, the teachings of Jesus are bound to have a significant socio-political fallout when lived by the Christian community. He offered good news for the poor, liberty for the oppressed, and "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10, TEV). Therefore, contemporary Adventists, following the example of Christians throughout the centuries, must acknowledge a social responsibility resting on their shoulders. Adventist pioneers preached not only the gospel of personal salvation, but were also concerned about alcoholics, the slaves, oppressed women, and the educational needs of children and youth.

Biblical basis of socio-political responsibility

Christian socio-political responsibility is based on two biblical foundations.

First, the doctrine of Creation. God created *ex nihilo* a universe and established us as the ruling stewards of this world. Stewardship entails both responsibility and accountability for the domain over which one has jurisdiction.

Second, the doctrine of humanity. Human beings are created in the image of God. The parameters of human responsibility for service lie within this biblical concept of human nature. The

The Christian and politics

A case for judicious involvement in socio-political issues without compromising Christian priorities

Christian view is that men and women are not flotsam on the sea of life, but persons with a responsible role to play and a radiant future. This human potential gives purpose, direction, and optimism to Christians serving others in a communal setting.

Thus Christianity is not a religion of isolated individualism or insulated introversion; it is a religion of community. Christian gifts and virtues have social implications. Commitment to Jesus Christ means commitment to all God's children and commitment begets responsibility for the welfare of others.

The dilemma of dual citizenship

Sincere Christians face the dilemma of dual citizenship. On the one hand they belong to God's kingdom, and on the other, to their country of citizenship. They are part of the "new humanity" and they live in the midst of the "old humanity." Is there here an inherent conflict? Must Seventh-day Adventists choose one

by
Bert B.
Beach

citizenship and renounce the other? There is little doubt that on occasion there may be a conflict when the demands or duties of one citizenship collide with those of the other. In such cases the Scripture is clear: 'We must obey God rather than any human authority'" (Acts 5:29, NRSV).

However, God's kingdom is not isolated outside of the present world; it "is among you" (Luke 17:21, NRSV). In other words, the kingdom of God is a sphere, a commitment, an attitude, and a way of life and thinking that permeates our total existence and gives special meaning to national citizenship. It is God's sovereignty invading human living.

Do-nothingism is political action

The political ordering of society is God's providential provision for fallen humankind. God does not ask the "good people" of society to stay out of the political governance process and leave socio-political and economic control in the hands of "evil doers." Christians are to be the salt and light of the societal world, and therefore cannot simply opt out of the political process. Actually, such an abdication is in itself a political action which opens the way for political control by those supporting less than Christian values. "Do-nothingism" is a sure prescription for sin becoming the master. Adventists have both the right and duty to use earthly citizenship to keep the church free to fulfill her divine mandate and help as individuals to meet crying social needs.

Duties of political citizenship

Seventh-day Adventists face at least four duties of political citizenship.

First, the duty of prayer for those in government authority. We need to pray for divine help in solving some of the socio-political problems that negatively affect human life and the proclamation of the gospel. The prayers and supplications of the faithful rise much higher

than statements and policy actions filling mountains of recyclable paper.

Second, the duty to vote and petition government authorities. Adventists should vote, even when at times the choice may be between a lesser of two or more evils. In this connection, registration to vote is a necessary first step.

Third, the duty of education and being informed. Adventists, no less than other citizens, need to be involved in ongoing self-education regarding issues that affect life both now and in the future. Political ignorance does not increase spiritual bliss.

Fourth, the duty to run for and hold public office. Adventists have this constitutional right. There are also appointments to government offices that do not involve campaigning. Ellen White states that there is nothing wrong in the aspiration to "sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation."¹ However, she does counsel denominationally employed ministers and teachers to abstain from partisan political activities.² The reason she gives is quite clear: party politics risks to be divisive. A pastor could easily split the congregation along party lines and greatly weaken his or her ability to serve as pastor of the whole flock.

Danger of politicization

Having underlined the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, it becomes necessary to warn against the danger of politicization of both individuals and the church. Adventists, like other Christians, can be deceived by Caesar. Success in politics frequently involves compromise, exalting self, hiding weaknesses, and playing partisan roles. At times, it becomes necessary to accept an expedient course that may not square with one's best moral convictions. Politics is a hard task master and can become all-absorbing. Christian politicians walk a difficult tightrope. They must avoid becoming tainted by the ironical and all-consuming quality of political activism that can downgrade their efforts to a level where it seems there is no God involved in human affairs.

There is an increasing danger of politicization of churches. This has led not only to church involvement in

political activity, but also to the interpretation of the Christian faith and gospel in terms of political values. Interest in many churches seems to have shifted from individual morality to social morality. The result has been that in certain segments of church society, secular ideas have been permitted to mold Christian values so that there is precious little difference between the secular and the sacred. It is sad to see that often Christian attitudes are the same as those of society in general.

Circumspect church involvement

What we have just said points to the need for judicious political involvement. A world-wide church with thousands of institutions, 10 million adult members and many more followers, cannot avoid contact with the state and involvement in politics—the art of governing. Not only people, but also church organizations, have rights and responsibilities. The church has the right to intervene regarding legislation or regulatory actions that affect—either positively or negatively—the church's mission.

The church must never (and *never* is a strong word!) identify herself with a particular political party or political system. Such identification may bring about a quick alpha of temporary privilege, but it will inevitably sweep the church down the slippery political slope toward the omega of evangelistic and prophetic paralysis.

In short, "the church must be the church," not another sociological agency. Her most promising approach to changing society is to change individuals, people. In so doing, Seventh-day Adventists fulfill on a binary tract, God's mission in the world: evangelism and service. 

Bert B. Beach (Ph.D., University of Paris, Sorbonne) is the director of inter-church relations at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.

Notes and references

1. Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ. Assn., 1936), p. 36.
2. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1915), pp. 391-395.

Lately, Cindy has been acting strange. A second-year medical student from Japan, she is hard-working and highly motivated. Sometimes it's not clear whether she is training to be a doctor for herself or for her parents. Her parents have everything mapped out for her life, including her future husband. They have high expectations for her. She dare not disappoint them. Last quarter she scored average in her classes, but this quarter trouble looms ahead. In fact, last week she flunked an important chemistry test. And then came the blow: a letter from her fiancé that he has found someone else; he couldn't wait for her to finish medicine.

Cindy seems to have lost interest in everything. Her behavior is erratic. She hardly sleeps. She hardly eats. Once a happy, bouncy person, suddenly she has turned inward. She avoids friends. She says it would be better if she weren't around. But she won't talk about what's hurting her. Last night she gave me her favorite dress, saying she won't be needing it any more.

Cindy is in trouble. She is giving out warning signals, signals that could well lead to the infamous escape route that some people in trouble resort to—suicide.

A global tragedy

Suicide is one of the great tragedies of life. From the biblical examples of Saul and Judas to the latest cases in today's newspaper, "suicide touches every socio-economic strata, every age group, all educational levels, every profession, all religions and both genders."¹

Suicide is a global, growing problem. In the United States, among 15 to 24 year olds, suicide registered an increase of 202 percent between 1950 and 1990. In Japan and Denmark, one out of three males and one out of four females in the age group of 25 to 34 commit suicide. Quebec province in Canada has had an increase of 800 percent in suicide in the 15 to 24 age group from 1961 to 1981. Finland has the highest suicide rate in Europe.

A 1977 study revealed that as many as 50 to 60 may attempt suicide for each completed suicide. Among students "an equal percentage of males and females experienced suicidal thoughts and, on the average, did so at the same levels of intensity."²

Why suicide?

Why do people commit suicide? Does the problem lie with the suicidal person, the society, or a combination of the individual and the environment? So far as the individual is concerned, the problem often is his or her striving to reach a high goal and the failure to achieve that goal. "At the core of every suicidal individual's personality is a demanding perfectionistic streak consumed with criticizing, cutting

Suicide: What you should know

down, nit-picking, and downright tyrannizing every major, minor, and even minuscule behavior. The perfectionist leaves no stone unturned in order to yield an unfavorable report card of one's self."³

Depression is another common cause of suicide. Very little work has been done on anger and its relationship to suicide, but it seems to be a significant factor. "The suicidal person saves up angry feelings in the same manner that other individuals collect trading stamps. Because they never fight with others (or at least wait until the last few days before the attempt), they generally end up fighting themselves."⁴

Family background plays a vital role in overcoming or succumbing to suicidal tendencies. Among college students who thought of, attempted, or completed suicide, "a common characteristic is a disruptive (families that have experienced divorce, separation, death of a parent, or remarriage, or a single parent) and chaotic family environment."⁵

Pressure to perform well in studies and failure in romance also play a role in suicidal behavior among students. "More than 90% of the students who attempted

by
Judy
Cushman

Ten Myths

1. Young people who talk about suicide will not go ahead with it.
2. Suicide happens without warning.
3. Improvement after a suicide attempt signifies that the suicide risk is over.
4. Once a person is suicidal, he or she is suicidal forever.
5. The suicidal person wants to die.
6. Everyone who commits suicide is depressed.
7. Asking someone about suicide will cause them to attempt suicide.
8. Suicidal persons rarely seek help.
9. All who commit suicide leave a suicide note.
10. Causes and motives for suicide are easily established.

—David Lester and Tulin Icli, "Beliefs About Suicide in American and Turkish Students," *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 130:6, p. 826.

Warning Signs

1. Giving away prized possessions.
2. Abuse of drugs and/or alcohol.
3. Remaining depressed over a period of time.
4. Acting-out behaviors such as violent arguments.
5. Suddenly changing eating or sleeping patterns.
6. Indicating no hope for the future.
7. Taking unusual risks.
8. Making indirect comments about not being around in the future or about people being better off without them.
9. Talking about death much of the time.

Lawrence and Ureda, pp. 165, 166.

suicide had experienced a failure in work or school. The next most common problem was difficulty in a romantic relationship."⁶

Lack of social support is another explanation for high incidence of suicides among college students. Social support, in the form of family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and church members, "promotes mental health and buffers psychological stress."⁷

Suicide and culture

Studies show that attitudes toward suicide vary from culture to culture. Although both Australian and Singaporean students feel that suicide is not an acceptable behavior, Australians are more willing to accept suicide and Singaporeans turn to it as a problem-solver.⁸

When asked whether they would feel ashamed if a family member committed suicide, 21 percent of New Zealand students and 53 percent of U.S. students responded "yes." While both groups felt that almost everyone has thought about suicide at one time or another, New Zealand students tended to "experience suicide ideation [the obsession of thoughts on one theme] to a lesser extent than United States college students."⁹

In Japan, suicide is historically accepted as an act of honor and appears to be a more culturally visible and acceptable phenomenon than in the United States.¹⁰ In India, while suicide attempts have increased, the suicide rate itself has remained constant during the past century. One of the common causes of suicide in India is failure in examinations.¹¹

Arab and Latin American countries have a relatively low rate of suicide, possibly due to a strong religious faith and close family ties.

Studies have shown that religion has a direct impact on whether a person is tempted to commit suicide. Faith in anything, especially in God, gives people that extra strength to cope with stress. At the same time "being too immersed in the religious life (such as in the case of cults) makes one subject to overregulation and thus more prone to commit fatalistic suicide."¹² This has a significant implication for Adventist culture. While our strong faith in religion may protect us from pressures of stress, the tendency toward legalism and perfectionism may open the possibility of breaking down under pressure. The key is balance, as Ellen White often advises in her writings. While

Christ can, and should, be involved in every area of our lives, loyalty to Christ and religious activities are not always the same.

Prevention of suicide

When college and university students were asked if they wanted to provide preventive help to their suicidal peers, they always said "yes," but they didn't know how. Because 20 to 60 percent of college students have suicidal tendencies, the college or university administration should get more involved in addressing the problem. Courses or seminars on death and suicide prevention, more student-faculty social involvement, more encouragement for and recommendation of counseling, and better communication between students, faculty, and staff would help.

If you think a friend or acquaintance is considering suicide, here are some immediate steps you can take to help:¹³

- Ask the person if he or she is suicidal.
- Get the person to talk about his or her plans.
- Try to eliminate the means for carrying out such a suicide plan.
- Encourage the person to get in touch with a suicide prevention center or a crisis hotline. Provide phone numbers.
- Get the person to make a verbal agreement or a written contract with you stating that he or she will not attempt suicide without calling you.
- If possible, remove the problem that is causing the person to feel suicidal.
- Stay with the person who is suicidal or arrange with someone to stay until the crisis is over.
- Encourage the person to get professional counseling; offer to accompany him or her.

Adventists and suicide

What should be the attitude of Seventh-day Adventists regarding suicide? The Scriptures record two instances of suicide, both involving men in leadership. First, the story of King Saul. Saul had been slowly turning away from God. In 1 Samuel 31, he is watching with horror as Israel is losing a vital battle and three of his sons lay dead. Then he is wounded and knows there is no way of escape. He asks his armor bearer to kill him, but the man refuses. Saul chooses to fall on his own

sword, rather than be captured by the enemy. Apparently suicide was more honorable than captivity. Ellen G. White comments: "Thus the first king of Israel perished, with the guilt of self-murder upon his soul. His life had been a failure, and he went down in dishonor and despair, because he had set up his own perverse will against the will of God."¹⁴

The second person mentioned in the Bible as killing himself is Judas. Jesus warned Judas that he was headed for trouble (Matthew 26:23-25), but Judas believed he was doing the right thing by betraying Jesus. Not until he saw his plan totally falling apart (Matthew 27:3-5) did he realize life was too embarrassing to live. Ellen White says Judas "felt that he could not live to see Jesus crucified, and in despair went out and hanged himself."¹⁵ Jesus knew what Judas was planning, yet he "spoke no word of condemnation. He looked pityingly upon Judas and said, For this hour came I into the world."¹⁶ If Jesus, knowing human hearts, can continue to work with people without condemnation, can we be any different?

Ellen White mentions that Pilate too committed suicide. "Rather than risk losing his position, he [Pilate] delivered Jesus up to be crucified. But in spite of his precautions, the very thing he dreaded later came upon him. His honors were stripped from him, he was cast down from his high office, and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, not long after the crucifixion he ended his own life."¹⁷

From these biblical cases, we can discern that the real issue is the pattern of one's life. All people are given the opportunity to know God. Then they must decide what they will do with that knowledge. Those that reject Him and His values often feel life is not worth living and want to end their lives. However, not all suicide involves the rejection of God. There are other factors over which one loses control: stress, loneliness, betrayal, shame, depression, mental illness, terminal diseases.

While we may not fully understand the causes and motivations behind suicide, as Adventists, we can affirm three important principles. First, life is precious and is a gift of God, to be lived by His grace through faith. No problem is too big to be brought to God in prayer. Second, when we find a person with thoughts of self-destruction, we have a duty to minister to that person. Third, judgment is not ours. While we are to extend ministry of love and tenderness to

those involved, we are not to pass judgment that one has committed the ultimate sin. 

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Facts to Know

1. Most people who commit suicide give verbal or behavioral clues.
2. They feel an ambivalence about life and death. They do not so much want to die but rather do not want to go on living in the present situation.
3. Most people who are suicidal are only so for a brief period.
4. Suicide cuts across all social classes.
5. People who are suicidal may be very unhappy, but not necessarily mentally ill.
6. Three to five times as many women attempt suicide, but men are three to five times more likely to succeed.
7. While suicidal tendencies are not genetically traced, suicide does appear in some families more than others.
8. Although depression is generally associated with suicide, there are many other emotions that can be linked to suicide, such as revenge and anger.
9. Suicide and alcohol use are strongly linked.
10. Asking someone to discuss his or her thoughts about suicide is evidence of concern and may be the very thing that can prevent the suicide.
11. Suicide rates increase with age and are very high for the elderly.
12. Women are more likely to use guns to kill themselves than they are to use drugs.

—Margaret T. Lawrence and John R. Ureda, "Student Recognition of the Response to Suicidal Peers," *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 20 (Summer 1990), p. 166.

An examination of archaeological evidence, linguistics, and literary traditions shows that a local Mesopotamian river valley flood cannot adequately explain the biblical flood.

Creationists and evolutionists disagree about the Flood. Creationists argue that the Bible is a divinely inspired document and its record of the Flood describes an actual historical event, a

The Flood: Just a local catastrophe?

by
William
H. Shea

universal deluge. Evolutionists have responded to the biblical narrative in various ways. Some have dismissed it as unhistorical and unworthy of serious examination. Others, however, have provided an explanation that does not accord with the creationist view. They suggest that there was a historical event that provided the basis for the story, but the story has been blown up out of all proportion from the original event. They think there was a serious local flood in either the Tigris or Euphrates River (or both), and that this flood was built up to such an extent that by the time the story reached the biblical writer or writers, it had been exaggerated into a universal deluge.

The local flood theory

This theory began with an archaeologist. Sir Leonard Woolley was excavating at Ur in southern Iraq in the late 1920s when in one particularly deep trench his workmen came to a sterile deposit of clay without any further signs of civilization. He had his workmen continue to dig through this level. When they got deeper,

they came to another layer of occupation. Standing in the trench with one of his workmen and his wife, he asked the question, "You know what that is, don't you?" The workman looked puzzled but his wife promptly responded, "That's Noah's Flood!" And so was born the theory of the local flood in Mesopotamia as an explanation for the biblical flood.

After World War II, Sir Max Mallowan, while digging at Nimrud (Calah), proposed a revision in Woolley's theory. He wanted to assign the biblical flood to a different level of flood deposit in Mesopotamian sites. While Woolley's flood was dated to approximately 3500 B.C. in conventional archaeological dating, Professor Mallowan proposed a date of 2900 B.C. to the stratum that gave rise to the Mesopotamian and then biblical flood stories.

Our purpose here is not to evaluate or endorse these archaeological dates, but to use them as a basis for comparison. The local flood theory raises many problems, which may be examined from three different perspectives: archaeology, linguistics, and literary traditions. Such an examination will determine whether the biblical flood story ultimately goes back to the story of a local river flood in Mesopotamia or to the Bible as a historical record of a universal deluge.

Test of archaeology

When it comes to archaeology, there is considerable difficulty in trying to find the right stratum in various cities to connect with the biblical flood. That is because there are different flood levels at different Mesopotamian cities, and other cities with no flood levels at all. Thus the picture of the local floods in Mesopotamia is like a patchwork quilt in which many of the patches differ.

Consider the deposits from the earlier period that Woolley favored as providing an explanation for the Flood. These have been found at only two sites: Ur and Nineveh. The differences between these two sites should be noted. Nineveh is on the Tigris in northern Iraq. Ur is located on a canal off of the Euphrates River in southern Iraq. Thus, these two cities are at opposite ends of the country and are located on different rivers. None of the other sites, between them that have been excavated have produced the same "flood" layer.

Woolley's evidence shows that the flood did not even cover all of the city of Ur. The local inhabitants may have considered the flood serious, but it was hardly the type that could have been built up into universal proportions.

Well, what about the flood level from a later period, about 2900 B.C.? Here at least we have four cities involved: Kish, Shuruppak, Uruk (biblical Erech), and Lagash. Kish is the northernmost of these four cities and located near Babylon. Shuruppak was located on a canal in the center of southern Mesopotamia. It is famous in literary tradition as the city from which Atrahasis, the flood hero, sailed. Uruk is located on the same canal as Shuruppak but is quite a bit farther south. Lagash is located on a canal farther to the east in southern Mesopotamia. The sterile soil layer at Lagash, however, probably did not come from a local river or canal flood but was rather from the foundation of one of the temples of Lagash, according to Andre Parrot, who excavated Telloh in 1930-1931.

The excavations at Kish led to four different levels of clay, not one. They extended over a period of about four centuries, according to the excavators. The earliest was dated to about 3300 B.C., the latest to about 2900 B.C. The last or uppermost level was about one foot thick. The question then is, which one of these four local flood levels should be chosen as the basis for building a flood legend for the biblical text? None of them seems to be that significant, and the multiple layers dampen enthusiasm for identifying any of them with the biblical story.

The other two sites might seem to be a little more legitimate candidates. Shuruppak, the modern Tell Fara, was excavated by Eric Schmidt. In his 1930-1931 excavations, Schmidt found a deposit of alluvium two feet thick that dated to the early third millennium B.C. Uruk was located on the same canal but quite a distance farther south. Julius Jordan in his 1929 excavations found there a sterile stratum five feet thick.

Thus, of the four sites involved in this time period, one had multiple levels of local flood deposits; one had no flood deposit at all; and two had one level of deposit. That about matches with the two sites of the early period, which had deposits too. So they play off evenly against each other, the early and the later

floods. Floods have continued until modern times. There was a large flood of central Iraq in 1948.

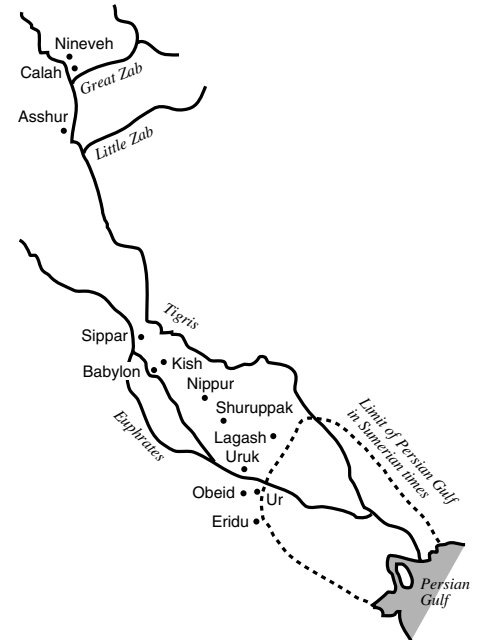
It is interesting to note that most of these sites were excavated at about the same time, from 1929 to 1932. Thus the local flood story seems an idea that was in vogue around 1930, triggered by Woolley's suggestion.

When the pattern is considered as a whole, however, there is very little archaeological proof for such a theory. The flood deposits by the rivers were hit and miss, sometimes affecting one city and not another one nearby. Of the six sites studied from this point of view, only one of them was located on a major river, Nineveh on the Tigris. The rest were located on canal branches off the rivers, not the rivers themselves. Thus, one should probably call this theory the local Mesopotamian canal theory of the Flood.

The test of linguistics

People who lived in this area during these river floods were well acquainted with them and they described them in various ways. They had another word, however, for the Great Deluge. That word was *abubu* in Akkadian. This word was used for the Great Deluge through which the Flood hero brought his family by means of the ark. The term was never used for local river floods. It was used in one other way, however, to describe the onslaught of the Assyrian army under certain kings. In these cases, the Assyrian army overwhelmed their enemies like the *abubu*. This comparison is far more valid when it is compared with the Great Deluge of Mesopotamian tradition, rather than with a local river valley flood. That is how strong the Assyrian kings wanted to say that they were.

Biblical Hebrew does something similar. It has a special word for the Noahic Flood, and that word is *mabbul*. This word is used in only two places, in Genesis 6-9 and Psalm 29. Psalm 29 says that "The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood" (v. 10, NKJV). This means Noah's flood, not just any river valley flood. This is a psalm about the storm of God's power. Baal is not the storm god. Yahweh is, and He controls the elements of nature to suit His purposes. This was true even during the greatest eruption of nature that this world has seen in the



Map of Mesopotamia, showing places connected with major flooding.

past, the Noahic Deluge. Just as the kings of Assyria compared the forces of their army to the greatest power ever seen in nature, so Yahweh compared His power over nature to the greatest demonstration of His power ever seen on earth.

There may be a relation between these two words, if the one in East Semitic added the consonants when it came over into West Semitic, or vice versa if the term travelled in the opposite direction. This yields the composite term of *(m)abubu(l)*. The etymological original of the word is obscure in both languages, but what it was applied to is eminently clear: It was meant only for the Great Deluge in both languages, and was not used for any local river valley flooding.

The test of literary traditions

These Flood stories have two main elements. One deals with the extent of the Flood in terms of description, the other deals with its results. In both cases, in both cultures, and in both languages, the difference between the Great Flood and local floods was well known and recognized. The first aspect of this is the subject of inclusive terminology as found in the biblical Flood story. The question here is, How inclusive was that lan-

guage? Gerhard Hasel has covered this subject in his article “The Biblical View of the Extent of the Flood” (see “Bibliography”). As Hasel points out, the phrase “the face of all the earth” is used 46 times in Genesis 6-9. The phrase “all flesh” is used 13 times. The phrase

Floods on Mars?

How could Mars have a flood? Yet how else would you explain the presence of interconnected valley systems, giant scour marks, eroded crater walls and huge channels? It appears that a giant catastrophic flood once occurred on the “red planet,” with giant rivers more than 60 miles (100 km) across, perhaps as deep as 1500 feet (500 meters), with water moving at the speed of up to 120 miles (200 km) per hour.¹ Mars may have had an ocean that contained more water than the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas combined. It has been estimated that the floods may have filled the Martian ocean in a few weeks.

Where did that water come from and where is it now? The water appears to have gushed with great force from large cracks in the surface of Mars, like the “fountains of the deep.” Why it suddenly gushed out and where it went are unanswered questions. But the evidence of flooding is there. One can get an impression of what it must have been like by visiting the Channeled Scabland of eastern Washington, which was also formed by catastrophic flooding over a volcanic landscape.² Perhaps one of the Martian space probes being sent in the next few years will reveal some of the mysteries of the Martian floods.

1. V. R. Baker, “The Spokane Flood Controversy and the Martian Outflow Channels,” *Science* 202 (1979), pp. 1249-1256.
2. V. R. Baker *et al.*, “Ancient Oceans, Ice Sheets and the Hydrological Cycle on Mars,” *Nature* 352 (1991), pp. 589-594.

“every living thing” is used three times. And Genesis 7:19 uses “under the whole heaven.” These phrases refer to the extent of the Flood. It is true that in Hebrew the word *all* does not always mean 100 percent, but here in Genesis 6-9 where it is backed up by the multiplicity of such phrases, it certainly should mean that.

The Gilgamesh version of the flood story says the same thing, “all of mankind had returned to clay” (XI:133). Utnapishtim, the Flood hero, opened the hatch of his ark and looked for dry land. It is also interesting to note that it was not the rise of the rivers from the melting snows in Anatolia that caused the Flood. According to Utnapishtim, it was the coming of the storm that caused the flood: a storm that came out of the clouds accompanied by lightning in the sky. When he got ready to test the possibilities of leaving the ark, he sent forth birds too, like Noah. The first two birds, a dove and a swallow, came back to the ark because, “no resting place for it was visible” (XI:148, 151). There is no question here about the vast, earth-encompassing extent of the Flood.

The part about the actual storm of the Flood is missing from the tablet of the Sumerian Eridu Genesis and the Atra-hasis epic. But their surviving portions tell us about the aftermath in the pantheon. An extraordinarily strong argument broke out among the gods. Most of them were sorry that they had

brought the Flood and destroyed humankind. Enlil, however, the prime minister god who was the chief one to order the Flood, had the opposite reaction. He found out that some people had escaped the flood and survived. He was enraged. The purpose of the Flood was to wipe out all of humankind, and the fact that a few had escaped was utterly contrary to his purposes. Hence his rage. He had been tricked by Enki (Ea), the god of wisdom, who had told the Flood hero to build a boat and take his family and animals aboard the boat to escape the Flood.

Some of the dialogue over this dichotomy can be picked up in the Atra-hasis epic. The birth goddess who had given shape to humankind regretted the decision to bring the Flood: “In the assembly of the gods, How did I, with them, command total destruction?” She laments that Anu, the chief god, agreed with this decision, “He who did not consider but brought about a flood and consigned the peoples to destruction?” Again she asks where the gods have gone: “They, who did not consider but brought about a flood and consigned the peoples to destruction? You have decided upon total destruction” (*Atra-hasis*, pp. 95, 97, 99). The anger of Enlil is revealed when he questions, “Where did life escape? How did man survive in the destruction?” (*Ibid.*, p. 101). Enki has to confess that he was “responsible for saving life.” The same idea is conveyed



The worldwide distribution of Flood stories; each dot represents a local version. Adapted from *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1979), p. 374.

by the information that Enki gave the Flood hero Ziusudra in the Sumerian story. In warning him to prepare for the coming of the Flood said, “the decision, that mankind is to be destroyed, has been made; a verdict, a command by the [divine] assembly, cannot be revoked” (*Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 [1981]: 523).

From all of this, it is clear that it was the intent of Enlil to destroy all of humankind with the Flood. The gods in the assembly voted to go along with him in this, but regretted doing so later. But when some of humankind did escape, Enlil’s purpose was thwarted and he was enraged because he had set out to destroy every living human being, and it was only because Enki tricked him that some people escaped.

The biblical flood story comes close to that but makes a moral distinction that the Mesopotamian version does not. God was disgusted with the wickedness of humankind, but decided to rescue the few righteous in the world through the use of Noah’s ark (Genesis 6:4-8). One cannot do this on either the biblical or the Babylonian scale with only a local river valley flood. A universal deluge that virtually wipes out humankind is required. 🐉

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Geologic Evidence of the Genesis Flood

An event such as the flood narrated in Genesis would be expected to leave significant evidence in earth’s rock layers. When these layers are examined, a number of important findings suggest a Flood interpretation. During a worldwide flood, one would expect both rapid and widespread catastrophic activity, and evidence for this can be seen. However, we need to keep in mind that in dealing with a past event such as the Flood, we are dealing with interpretations instead of direct observation.

Here are some features of the rocks that point to a worldwide flood.

1. Marine sediments on the continents. Around the world, about half of the sediments on our present continents come from the sea. How did so much marine material come to be on the continents? We would expect it to stay in the ocean. The widespread distribution of oceans on the continents is certainly a different situation from the present—and one that is consistent with a worldwide flood.

2. Abundant underwater activity on the continents. Evidence of this is seen in large ancient underwater “submarine fans” and other underwater deposits such as turbidites found on the continents. Turbidites are masses of rocks, silt, sand, and clay particles laid down in layers underwater. Studies of turbidites have shown that huge deposits several meters thick and covering as much as 100,000 square kilometers can be laid down in the oceans in a matter of hours following earthquakes. Thousands of sediment layers on the continents, once thought to have been deposited over long ages in shallow water, are now seen as rapid turbidite deposits, as expected during the Genesis flood.

3. Widely distributed, unique sediments. Many geologically unique terrestrial sediment layers cover such vast areas that it is difficult to believe that they were deposited slowly under non-catastrophic conditions. For ex-

ample, in the western United States, the Shinarump conglomerate, which is around 30 meters thick, covers almost 250,000 square kilometers. The 100 meter-thick Morrison Formation, which contains many dinosaur remains, extends over 1,000,000 square kilometers and the petrified-wood-bearing Chinle group covers 800,000 square kilometers.

4. Lack of erosion at the gaps in the sedimentary layers. Frequently there are gaps in the sequence of the sedimentary layers of earth. We can identify these gaps by comparison with other series of layers and fossils found elsewhere. Often a widespread geological layer, dated to a particular time by the standard geologic time scale, will lie just beneath one assumed to be many millions of years younger. The layers representing the long time assumed between the layers are missing in these particular localities. Yet at these gaps the lower layers show little evidence of the erosion that would surely have taken place if they had been around for many millions of years. In fact, according to present average rates of erosion, the layers involved—and much more—should be eroded away in this length of time. The virtual lack of erosion at most of these gaps suggests rapid deposition, as would be expected of the Flood, when there was little time for erosion.

5. Incomplete ecological systems. In several fossil-bearing layers, such as the Coconino Sandstone of the Grand Canyon region and the Morrison Formation of the western United States, we find good fossil evidence for animals, but little or no evidence of plants. The animals would require plants for food. Yet only a few plants have been found in the Morrison, which harbors many dinosaur remains, and no plants have been found in the Coconino, with its hundreds of animal trackways. How could the animals survive for millions of years as suggested for the deposition of these formations without adequate nutrition?

The sorting activity and rapid action expected by the waters of the Flood appear to be a more plausible explanation.

—Ariel A. Roth, Ph.D.
Geoscience Research Institute

The Bible begins with a garden and ends with a city. Its pages are full of God's love and concern for people everywhere.

Look at God's concern for Sodom, a city seeped in wickedness. Abraham bargains with God over the fate of Sodom and its inhabitants. God reveals that He is no less concerned about their

Son—and yet God's love for it was so great that the headquarters of the new earth is named the New Jerusalem.

The entire Old Testament was written in urban settings of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Sumeria, Nineveh, Sidon, Tyre, and Babylon. The New Testament is no different. Jesus ministered in urban Galilee, in Decapolis, Tyre, Sidon, Phoenicia, Jericho, and Jerusalem. Pauline missions covered the great cities of the Roman empire: Antioch, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Colossae, Rome, and many more. John's Revelation describes the great controversy between God and Satan in very urban terms, a conflict between cities.

Such was God's love and concern for the masses of people languishing in cities during biblical times. His concern is no less to the millions of people dwelling in our great metropolises today.

God so loves the city!

The urban challenge to Christian message and mission

by
Bruce
Campbell
Moyer

fate. He would save the city if there were 10 righteous people in it. The collective lifestyle of that city had the inevitability of judgment hanging over it. And God sent angels to warn that city of what could happen if it did not repent.

God sent Jonah to warn Nineveh. In spite of the wavering and timidity of the evangelist, the city repented, accepted God's proclamation, and averted judgment.

God sent young men into the schools and government offices of Babylon to master their style, but not their lifestyle. He sent visions to emperor after emperor, revealing for generations to come the ebb and flow of history, culminating in the triumph of God's kingdom and sovereignty over every human attempt to build great cities and greater kingdoms.

God led David to choose Jerusalem, a Canaanite city with a history of disrepute, as the capital of Israel. He wanted Jerusalem to be a model city, where righteousness would dwell, justice would prevail, and where witness to the rest of the world would be the abiding focus. Jerusalem betrayed its mandate, turned out the prophets, crucified the

The pull of the cities

Although cities have had their attraction and adventure ever since Cain built the first one (Genesis 4:17), only recently have they become great centers of population. Even as late as 200 years ago, 97 percent of the world's population was rural. At the turn of the century, in spite of the growing industrial revolution, the urban population was only 15 percent. But today as we approach the 21st century, roughly half the population of the world lives in cities—in concrete jungles, in urban anonymity, in a desperate struggle to work, eat, and sleep, with very little of social and spiritual interactions.

The world today is largely urban: 3,450 cities with over 100,000 population, 330 cities of more than a million inhabitants, 45 metropolises of four million plus, and 12 supergiants of more than 10 million. Further, urban growth is skyrocketing, at twice the rate of rural growth, owing to migration and high birthrates. A city the size of Seattle is born, each year, within Mexico City.

Of these cities, at least 235 have no knowledge of Christ. We cannot ignore them as though our Christian journey is some superhighway bypassing the crowded population centers. They are primary targets for Christian mission.

They are primary targets because the cities influence the rest of the country. They control the media, influence the

government, run great educational centers, and operate a network of industry, commerce, and transportation. Indeed, rural life has become captive to urban influence.

With such growing metropolitan trends, the commission of Jesus to go, baptize, and teach (Matthew 28:19) comes with a commanding, new urgency. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has begun to take this global mission seriously.

It is happening already

Dateline Seoul. Kirk and Sherry teach English as a second language in a school in Korea. It is a full-time job. But after school they share God's good news with their students and answer questions that their classroom stories and lifestyle raise. They are making a dent in a city of 16 million and a country that is 66 percent Buddhist.

Dateline Calcutta. Sandy was in her early twenties and bored. She wanted to be a Christian and she wanted adventure. She wanted them together. There had to be more to "church" than sitting in a pew and listening to a monologue each week. Where was God working and might have an opening for her? Mother Teresa came to mind immediately.

Mother Teresa challenged the world by her commitment to the poor and dying in Calcutta. Hopelessly overcrowded and growing daily, with one of the highest population densities in the world, and where the street is home for thousands, the city offers a thousand ways to minister. "Find something small to do," Mother Teresa says, "and do it with love."

And that was what Sandy chose to do. She has found the will and the spirit of love to bring a little cheer to the poor and suffering of Calcutta. Something small, yes, but something that carries the good news of God.

Dateline Geneva: They are almost all young and far from home. These are Adventist young people whose work or marriage has brought them to this city of John Calvin, and they are witnessing with joy and creativity. This is the English Seventh-day Adventist church in Geneva. An energetic group of young people, they come together each Sabbath for worship, study and fellowship, to strengthen one another in their individual and collective witness to Jesus. The service is not

traditional, but it is familiar. The leadership style is egalitarian and clearly marked with servanthood.

Theirs is a voice of joyful commitment and Christian concern in a city known for its commercialism and international bureaucracy. These young people don't *have* to be here on Sabbath; they *want* to be here.

Help wanted

For every such heartwarming story, there are hundreds that tear the core of our hearts. Consider three such urban plights.

Poverty. The urban poor in developing countries live in absolutely chaotic conditions. An entire family is crowded in a room about the size of a double bed. They live in utter squalor, without toilet or bathing facilities, breathing not air but pollution. Drinking water is far from pure. The little vegetables they get are laced with industrial toxins.

What is the solution? Just wring our hands and condemn the perpetrators? Adopt babies on a mass scale? Or is the answer a personal involvement, a face-to-face mission that would alleviate human suffering and make a difference in the lives of the people in the immediate neighborhood? How about running an orphanage, building a school, holding adult literacy classes, cleaning the environment, providing clean drinking water, and teaching and building facilities for better hygiene and sanitation? Being an intentional Christian involves these and more in order to transform the situation by demonstrating what the kingdom of God is all about.

Political refugees. On a quiet Sabbath afternoon in Frankfurt, I was taking a walk. Over the brow of a small hill I heard strange, wild music. Not rock or even new age, but wild with a sense of joy mixed with homesickness. In the glade before me I saw about 70 men, dressed in baggy pants, musicians playing large drums, flutes, and stringed instruments while the group linked arms over shoulders and danced out their national identity.

I slowly approached the group and found one who could speak English. Soon I learned that they were Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq. They were hoping to find a new life in a new and strange land.

Who will go and dance with these people? Who will link arms over shoulders and attempt the intricate footwork that may be the first steps into friendship and understanding? Who will become a "non-resident" missionary to the Iraqi Kurds by moving to Frankfurt, if necessary, learning their language and customs, and entering their world, share Jesus as a real, powerful, and loving Friend? Or must they continue to dance in despair?

Children of gloom. She was 16 years old and had been working in the city for a year. Her 14-year-old sister worked beside her. As we talked over tea she asked me, "If I get AIDS, how long will I live?"

Their parents had sold them into prostitution. Now they were working in a cheap, roadside brothel. The owner was friendly enough (she poured more tea) but the work was degrading and frightening. The chances for infection were enormous.

I reflected on her living conditions, looked into her face, and told her, "possibly two years." Her expression of fear and hopelessness haunted me for days. There is hope, however. The madam told me that if they could pay off the debt in any other way, that would be fine. But who will set up a small business, or provide loans for sewing machines or other labor incentives that will provide enough to lift them from their pit of despair? Hope must take practical form to be real.

What shall we do?

Many such stories of urban poverty, hunger, homelessness, childhood plights, political atrocities, racial and tribal horrors around the world can be narrated. No shortage in that area at all. But the real issue is, "What shall we do?" Is there something you, as an Adventist student or a professional, can do to continue the journey of mercy that Jesus began long ago? Here are some ways:

1. Get involved in small-group ministries. Start with three or four persons with something in common. Pledge to serve Jesus and hold one another accountable. Take on a joint task

Dialogue for you, free!

If you are a Seventh-day Adventist student attending a non-Adventist college or university, the Church has a plan that will allow you to receive *Dialogue* free while you remain a student. (Those who are no longer students can subscribe to *Dialogue*, using the coupon on page 24.) Contact the director of the Education Department or the Youth Department in your Union and request that you be placed in their distribution network for the journal. Include your full name, address, college or university you are attending, the degree you are pursuing, and the name of the local church of which you are a member. You may also write to our regional representatives at the address provided on page 2, with a copy of your letter sent to the Union directors listed above. In North America, you can phone us toll free at 1-800-226-5478, fax us at (301) 622-9627, or send an E-mail message via CompuServe: 74617,464 or 104472,1154. If these contacts fail to produce results, write to us at our editorial address.

of service and support one another with prayer and encouragement. Become involved in your own community.

2. Start storefront ministries. With the help of a few, start your own services in an urban storefront. Clean it up, borrow some chairs and songbooks, use portable instruments, visit the neighborhood, and start a worship service that meets the spiritual needs of local people.

3. Organize a people-group ministry. Find out what "people groups" around you do not have a church. A people group is any group that identifies themselves as "us" by language, life-style, occupation, disability, etc. One pastor I know resigned his pastorate to work the racetracks. Most of the workers there rarely get more than a mile from the track and have no church or spiritual outlet. You may have to learn a new language and eat some new foods.

4. Organize a van ministry. Van ministry is ideal for urban work, as it provides flexibility. It could be used to provide food for the hungry, visitation for the lonely, healing for the sick, and ministry for the spiritually needy.

5. Begin a tutoring ministry. Children often need help in their school work. Nothing is more helpful to them and nothing keeps them away from mischief as organized tutorials. Adult literacy or teaching the national language to recent immigrants is another part of this work that will bring dignity to many in the community.

6. Open a drug rehabilitation work. Tough work, but needed. Be prepared for lots of apparent failure that is really just very slow progress. Rent facilities if you need to. Make it a spiritual ministry, not just another psychological prop.

7. Start a street kid ministry. Our cities are flooded with street kids, wandering without aim and getting into trouble. Find out where they are, make friends, offer some tutoring, or organize some games. Introduce drug-prevention programs. One university music student

in Bucharest organizes street kids into a chorale and has them doing public concerts.

8. Initiate AIDS awareness. Make young people aware of the risk of AIDS. Organize support groups and offer healing ministries to those who have the disease and to their families.

9. Join the Adventist Community Service Centers. These centers are not the hangout of the "older sisters" in the church but must be turned into centers of hope, joy, and service, involving the whole church, particularly its young.

10. Support the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. Volunteer for a few months, intern for a couple of years, become a regional director or project manager. Find a whole new career in the development field, transforming the world one person at a time, one village at a time. If ADRA is filled, there are lots of other PVOs (Private Volunteer Organizations) doing similar things who need your help in changing the world.

11. Tentmaking ministry. Take the gospel where no Christian has ever gone before. Take your "secular" training and find a job in an unreached or "creative access" country where you can live and work as an intentional Christian, making friends, sharing the good news about Jesus, making disciples, and planting churches. Your church has a program designed to facilitate and train you for this. Contact Global Partnerships at Andrews University.

The church is important. The congregation is a great place for worship and celebration, for nurture and support. But the most important thing that Christians do is outside the four walls of the church. Take your relationship with Jesus out into the world that desperately needs to meet Him, understand Him, be loved and saved by Him. ☞

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Dialogue answers your questions

Where on earth is the Third World?

I am curious about the origin of the phrase “Third World.” It is quite common in the mass media, and Seventh-day Adventists use it as well. What does it really mean?

The expression “Third World” (*Tiers Monde*) was coined by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952 to refer to the young nations of Asia and Africa that were moving toward independence from the European colonial powers in the aftermath of the Second World War. Sauvy saw in their aspirations similarities with the “third estate” of pre-Revolutionary France, which in the national assembly represented the common people in contradistinction to the other two minority but privileged groups—the clergy and the nobility.

After these young African and Asian nations began their independent lives, some of them tried to assume a neutral political stance vis-à-vis the “first world” of industrialized countries that followed a market economy and the “second world” of Communist nations with their government-controlled economies. Thus the meaning of “third world” began to shift from politics to economics. These were the newly independent countries that were struggling to feed, house, clothe, and educate their people while exporting primary products and battling with poverty, climate, and war as well as the lingering effects of colonialism.

As researchers and journalists popularized the label in the 1960s and 1970s, a further shift took place. “Third world” came to mean any non-white country whose social and economic instability placed them in the lowest category among other nations. Thus Latin America was added to the group of countries embraced by the term. Behind the dichotomy of the rich first world versus the poor third world, it was possible to detect feelings of national and ethnic superiority.

However, the uneven rates of industrialization among the “third-world” nations and the increasing prosperity brought to some of them by the petroleum-exporting business in the 1980s made the term almost meaningless. Are both Singapore and the Philippines “third-world” countries? What about South Africa and Mozambique, Haiti and Venezuela?

With the collapse and fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the movement toward democratic governments and market-driven economies in most Communist nations, the concept of “second world” has lost most of its political and economic meaning. In fact, currently there are as many regional and class differences within nations as there are between so-called “first” and “third” nations. Furthermore, illiteracy, high infant mortality rates, homelessness, decaying cities, and large national debts are no longer exclusive characteristics of “third-world” countries.

By now many well-informed persons have abandoned the use of this phrase due to its lack of precision. Christians, particularly, should reject expressions that categorize peoples and nations in purely materialistic terms or that foster feelings of condescension on the basis of the color of our skin. Such labels make us insensitive to the value and uniqueness of each individual in God’s sight. There is only one world and only one human family living in it. 🌍

Humberto M. Rasi, Ph.D., is editor-in-chief of Dialogue.

Open Forum

Is there a question you’d like to have answered by an Adventist specialist? Phrase it clearly in less than 75 words. Include your name and postal address, indicating your hobbies or interests. Mail your question to *Dialogue* - Open Forum; 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A. If your question is selected for publication, along with an answer, you will receive a complimentary book with our thanks.

Ethel Nelson

Dialogue with an Adventist pathologist and writer



Ethel Nelson's living room is surrounded with bookshelves containing everything from *Time* to *National Geographic* to *Adventist Review* and books on Chinese characters, gardening, and religion. Balanced and well-read, Dr. Nelson has experienced much in her life from atheism and evolutionism to pathology and mission service.

Although officially retired, Dr. Nelson keeps busy lecturing on Chinese characters and health issues. When she's not traveling, she enjoys relaxing at her home in Dunlap, Tennessee, with her husband of 50 years, Roger.

Born in California, Dr. Nelson grew up in San Diego and attended San Diego State University. She was an atheist and a firm believer in evolution. After two years at the university, she discovered her atheistic beliefs were not satisfying after all, and soon began to search for other alternatives. At the urging of an Adventist physician, she switched to Pacific Union College. There she was baptized. Later she enrolled at Loma Linda University to study medicine. In her senior year, she met and later married Roger. Together they have served 21 years as medical missionaries in Thailand. They have three children—a daughter and two sons, and six grandchildren.

Dr. Nelson, in addition to her medical publications, has also put together *The Century 21 Cookbook*, also titled as *375 Meatless Recipes*, which has sold more than 150,000 copies around the world. She also wrote *Eight Secrets of Health* to promote a healthier lifestyle among Asians. Her interest in Chinese has led her to explore their most ancient characters. Her latest work, *Genesis and the Mystery Confucius Couldn't Solve* (Concordia, 1994), discusses the Chinese "genesis" including Creation, the entrance of sin, and the sacrificial system, all found in their ancient pictographic characters.

■ *Dr. Nelson, shall we begin with a little about your atheistic background?*

My parents seldom went to church, and religion had little role in our family. As a child, I did go to Sunday school, but as a teenager I lost interest in that. I went to public school where evolution was taught and where Christian values were at a minimum. With that background, I really had no concept of God. It was easy to become an atheist, and so I was until the second year of my college studies. Evolution was my accepted belief about origins. But then providentially I met a Christian doctor. That meeting turned my life around. He invited me to attend some evangelistic meetings. These meetings began with a study of Creation and evolution, and for the first time I was challenged to think again, and look at Creation as a viable alternative for

origins. These meetings also introduced me to Bible prophecy. My mindset was beginning to change.

■ *Where did that change lead you?*

The doctor who invited me to attend the evangelistic meetings also encouraged me to attend Loma Linda University to study medicine, but first to go to an Adventist college. He suggested Pacific Union College. There I had to take three Bible courses to finish qualifications for medical school. I was already doubling up on other classes, taking a very heavy load of 20 hours. I had never taken a Bible class and wasn't used to memorizing Bible verses, but for every class I had to memorize two to three verses. The Lord really blessed me and after just a few days, I could quickly memorize them all. And I remember those verses even today—good fundamental Adventist verses. While attending Pacific Union College I was baptized.

■ *How did your family and friends react to your conversion?*

I sort of dreaded letting my folks know I had decided to be baptized. I didn't know what their reaction would be. I knew they didn't want me to be a Seventh-day Adventist. But they accepted it. It didn't make any difference to my friends. I let them know what I believed, and they were still my friends.

■ *How did your husband and you decide to become missionaries?*

We first had a call to go to Thailand, but we hadn't finished our residencies so we said, "Maybe next year." At the end of the year, we were invited to Penang Hospital in Malaysia. So I wrote and told our friend in Bangkok that we were going to Penang. She wired back and said, "Wait on Penang call...Bangkok call coming." Soon, the formal invitation came and we went to Bangkok. They desperately needed help. Thailand was

our home for the next 17 years. There our three children were born. They loved the country and its people. But we had to come back to the U.S. so our children could attend college. After 10 years, we went back to another four-year term.

■ *What was your work in Bangkok?*

Forty years ago medicine was not as specialized as now, but then we were on the cutting edge. We needed trained medical technicians, so I started a medical laboratory program—the first in Thailand. It was an era when local training was just not available. Thai doctors were going abroad. The hospital, Bangkok Adventist Hospital, was recognized locally as the best in Thailand at that time. There I gave the lab lectures and initially practiced general medicine, obstetrics, and gynecology.

Varied opportunities came my way. Once an epidemic of dengue hemorrhagic fever hit the children in Bangkok. That gave me an opportunity to do hematology studies and research, and led to the publication of seven research papers on the subject in American medical journals. I had done many bone marrow samples on children and adults and found that the virus absolutely wipes out the bone marrow for a day or two. If you examine it during that time, the marrow looks like aplastic anemia; there's nothing there. Dengue is also called "break-bone fever," with the the worst kind of flu symptoms because of the aching in your bones—doubtless due to the packing of cells in the recovering marrow. There's also bleeding because of the platelets being wiped out. It was really fatal in children, especially during that first epidemic but that's hardly the case today.

■ *Any particular reason why you chose to specialize in pathology?*

By default, perhaps. While in medical school I really loved pathology. It's like detective work. I was always interested in research, but never dreamed I would go into that. I planned on obstetrics and gynecology. At that time, World War II had just ended and doctors who served the armed forces were coming home, and they had priority in residency programs. So my application for residency in obstetrics was refused. I figured pathology was an excellent background for any other field in

medicine; so I thought I'd take a year of pathology and apply it toward my residency in obstetrics. After a year, I thought I had a good chance, but still wasn't accepted, so I took another year of pathology. The next year I was asked if I wanted a residency in obstetrics and I said, "No, I think I'll be a pathologist." I really believe the Lord directed me because there was a great need in Bangkok for pathologists.

■ *What does pathology involve?*

When I was in medical school, pathology was divided into two parts: clinical laboratory diagnosis and anatomical pathology. There are more areas now. Back then we didn't have fancy machines to do all the work. It was more chemistry, bacteriology, parasitology, and more microscope-oriented. Anatomical pathology is divided into autopsy and surgery. Every tissue removed must go through pathology. In the lab/clinical area I enjoyed hematology, the study of blood diseases, the most. I also had more patient contact in that area.

■ *Moving to another area, how did you become interested in researching the Chinese characters?*

About 25 years ago I came across a book entitled *Genesis and the Chinese* by Pastor Kang. The title brought an instant response within me: There can be no connection! Out of curiosity, I opened and read the book. I discovered that the Chinese characters are pictograms that tell the story of Creation. I began using these to give Bible studies to students in Bangkok. When we came back to the United States, I put it away for three or four years. Then I wrote to Pastor Kang in Singapore, and asked him, "Would you be interested in updating your book and working on another one?" He was very excited, and we worked one year by correspondence. Then I went to visit him in Singapore. The result was *Discovery of Genesis* (Concordia, 1979).

■ *What did you discover?*

We researched ancient Chinese characters and discovered many more in addition to the ones Kang had originally found. I found more ancient character forms from the Shang dynasty, dating to 1700 B.C. For example, the character of Shang Di: Many recitations have come down through the centuries relating how

Shang Di was creator god who spoke things into existence. The ancient Chinese characters show the Creation story with Adam, Eve, the Garden of Eden, and the two trees. One character, for example, has a sheep, representing the lamb of God, drawn over the symbol for "me" or "I." A hand in the "me" symbol is holding a weapon. This character means righteousness. It's written differently now, but the meanings are still the same.

With the passage of time, the Chinese forgot these roots and began ancestor worship. Buddhism was introduced from India, and an indigenous religion, Taoism, developed. Many people don't realize it, but Confucius was a believer in Shang Di. His followers, however, began to worship him instead. They've forgotten their original beliefs, and they haven't had it pointed out to them, either. The Chinese consider Christianity a foreigners' religion, but within their characters is the story of who God is. These Chinese characters can be used as a bridge to understand the Bible and Christianity.

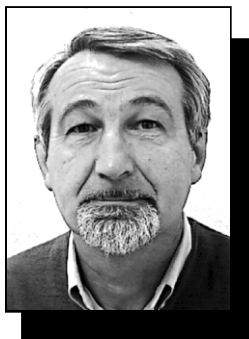
I recently learned that a Chinese man in Colorado Springs was going to Taiwan with a group of professional people for disaster relief training, and he thought of *Discovery of Genesis* as a way to introduce Christianity to Taiwan. As a result, 25 of the 153 Chinese professionals, including medical doctors and engineers, gave their lives to Jesus. They recognized that Christianity had been there all along. Evangelists in Japan and Korea are also interested in this. They can now relate Christianity to the Chinese characters which they also use and show their people that Christianity is not a foreign religion. 📖

Interview by Christina Hogan

Christina Hogan is a senior English and journalism major at Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee. She is also the co-editor of the student newspaper, Southern Accent. Dr. Nelson's address: HCR 65 Box 580; Dunlap, TN 37327; U.S.A.

Raymond Romand

Dialogue with an Adventist neurobiologist in France



Born in an Adventist farmer's family, Raymond Romand grew up amidst the beauties of nature. His home in a small remote farm in the Jura Mountains on the French-Swiss border gave him the opportunity to smell the earth, see the glory of wild flowers, gaze into the beautiful wooded mountains, grow the family's own food, and at night watch the magnificent lanterns flickering in the French sky. He loved being the child of nature, and he expected his destiny would be just that: gardens, forests, and farms.

As Raymond grew, the contentment with the small plot turned to a challenge to discover the mysteries behind nature's order and beauty. He wanted to study. With the help of a supportive father, he joined fourth grade, at the age of 18, in an Adventist school. Optimist that he is, he did not feel worried or shy that his classmates were much younger. In fact he saw in his age an advantage. His maturity and eagerness to master whatever came his way helped him soon finish secondary school, and he entered the University of Montpellier in France. That act propelled him toward a scientific career that included study and research at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Romand has two doctoral degrees. While his primary interest is neurobiology (the study of the brain), he continues to maintain a close touch with tropical ecology and speciation of tropical fish. He has published extensively and currently teaches at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. He was also a consultant to the World Health Organization.

Dr. Romand is married to Marie Rose, who holds a Ph.D. in physiology, and the couple have two children: Cyril, 18, and Ariane, 16.

■ *Dr. Romand, as a boy you thought the farm and the garden were your destiny. Now you are a world-renowned neurobiologist. That is quite a jump, isn't it?*

Yes, one might say so. For me it is not just a jump; it is a long journey. As a boy I was so fascinated with growing flowers and working the fields that I did not even bother going to school. But this very love of nature drove me in my teen years to wonder at the marvel of God's creation. Then it was only a matter of time to go to school and then university to study the order and wonder found in creation—from plants to the human brain.

■ *How and when did you decide to become a scientist?*

I did not wake up one fine morning and said to myself, "Well, I am going to be an ecologist or a neurobiologist." Life

doesn't work that way. Before I began formal secondary schooling, I moved from my farm to an Adventist hospital, La Lignière, in Switzerland. I spent three years there as a gardener apprentice. Then I moved to the Institut Adventist du Salève where the academic environment and what I saw happening to young people quickly challenged me to go beyond the garden. Soon I completed secondary school, and when the opportunity opened for university studies, I immediately grabbed it. As one who entered formal studies rather late in life, I was attracted by so many disciplines: ecology, biology, physiology, neuroscience, history, and so on. But my curiosity led me to concentrate on physiology and neuroscience.

■ *Was the Adventist environment helpful in leading you to these decisions in your intellectual and professional life?*

My mother's spirituality as an Adventist influenced me a lot in my

childhood. From her and my father I learned the value of work, the meaning of faith, and the need to press on. My experience as a gardener first at the Adventist hospital at La Lignière and later at the Adventist Institute provided opportunities to meet different people—simple, professional, deeply spiritual, and at times struggling people—and from this environment I learned how much faith and work or lack of them can affect life. I might say that it is the intellectually and spiritually stimulating atmosphere of the Adventist environment that propelled me up the education ladder. I wanted to do something with my life, and I owe that decision to a great extent to Adventism.

■ *You were a student in public universities for almost 10 years. What was the challenge you faced most?*

As with most such cases, Sabbath examinations were a real problem. At the end of my first year at the University of

Montpellier came the test. Along with 400 students I had to sit for two weeks of examinations, with one lasting three days and ending on Sabbath. I contacted my professor for a change. “How can we change the examination schedule for the sake of one student?” he said, and went on: “Out of the question! Why not ask for an indulgence from your church authorities?” Then I discussed the problem with the local church pastor, who in turn contacted the person in charge of religious freedom in the Franco-Belgian Adventist Union in Paris. After some discussions with the French ministry of education, there came a miracle. The university received an official notice to reschedule the examinations so that no part fell on Saturday! When we stand for a principle, God always takes care of our needs. And even if that does not happen immediately, that’s no excuse to give up or compromise our principles.

■ *How did you choose your specialty in the field of science?*

I never dreamed of becoming a scientist. I just chose what was a reasonable challenge. I felt that challenge lay in biology. I wanted to investigate the real world, not an artificial one, such as electronics. I have nothing against electronics. I use electronic instruments and gadgets every day. I am fully aware that electronics has affected our lives in so many ways. But to me, real life was challenging and exciting. It opens up great possibilities of learning how life functions. The study of life, its wonders and its mysteries, is exciting to me and to my faith in the God who created life. It has provided many areas to explore, discover, and investigate. After completing a master’s degree in physiology in 1968, I moved to complete a master’s degree in biology in 1971, and then a doctoral degree in physiology in 1971, and six years later I finished a doctoral program in neurophysiology. There I arrived at the possibility of exploring this great wonder we all have—the brain. It was a step by step process—a journey of exploration. And I never cease to marvel at what our brain is all about. I am still studying and researching the magnificently complex way in which the brain functions.

■ *You have two doctorate degrees, spent two years at Harvard University,*

published many articles in such renowned journals as Science, gave lectures in Europe and America, and received recognition as an expert in neurobiology. How do you see yourself as a scientist and a Bible-believing Christian?

Being a scientist and being a Christian need not come in conflict. It’s true that some scientific claims may seem to challenge one’s faith. But one need not abandon one’s faith. For example, take the issue of origins. Although my scientific investigation on the nervous system is not directly related to the question of origins, I am aware that the theory of evolution does not provide all the answers. It is a theory and, as I explore that, I must keep in mind that it is a theory. It is true that there is no possible synthesis between evolution and Creation, the two conceptions on the origin of life and the meaning of universe. After almost 30 years of research on the brain and the genetics of tropical fish, I am more and more convinced that the evolution theory does not correspond to what I observe. This does not mean there is a strict *fixisme* (fixity) in the plant and animal kingdoms. I think that evolution as is taught in textbooks and elsewhere is a convenient theory accepted by most scientists without questioning it.

However, it is very difficult to give scientific counter-arguments to the theory of evolution because there are thousands of researchers explaining all their findings through the evolution theory. Unfortunately, there are too few people who dare to challenge scientifically this theory. Meanwhile, some well-meaning Christians advance loose arguments for Creation and against evolution that discredit their claims in the scientific community.

As for me, my research shows both wonder and mystery. These elements lead me to affirm my faith in a personal Creator God.

■ *You have been involved in the activities of the local congregation as Sabbath school director and elder. Do you have any comments about church life?*

Perhaps one of the crucial problems I detect in our church is that it has become too much of an establishment.

Institutionalized church is not the same as confessing and believing church. The life of the local congregation is dependent on the commitment of its members to the study and practice of God’s Word. For example, look at our Sabbath schools whose primary function ought to be the study of the Bible. Out of that study the message and the mission emerge to challenge the life of the church. Do our Sabbath schools still retain that primary focus? Many church members do not even come to Sabbath school anymore. How many church goers are studying their Bible lessons? I think we as church members have a responsibility to rekindle our commitment to God’s saving message and mission as revealed in the Bible. There lies our current challenge.

■ *What are your plans for the future?*

Scientific research at a high level is time consuming. It requires sacrifice of so many other things one would like to do. Moreover, with some recognition one is asked to do so many things that have nothing to do with scientific research. So as I approach in a few years a turning point in my life, one big question looms ahead: Do I have to keep investing my energy in science for the rest of my life, or should I become more involved in church activity? God will show the way.

■ *Finally, Dr. Romand, what advice would you like to give to Adventist students in public universities?*

Perhaps four thoughts. Affirm your faith continually. Evaluate realistically your possibilities. Look for challenges both in your studies and in your professional life. Keep growing both intellectually and spiritually. 🙏

Interview by John Graz

John Graz (Ph. D., University of Paris-Sorbonne) serves as director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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The Great Controversy theme, with its ultimate triumph of God, offers us a universal perspective on life.

When Copernicus published in 1543 *De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium* (On the Revolutions of Heavenly Spheres), little did he realize that the world would not be the same again. The scientist showed that the earth was not the stationary center of the universe; rather it, along with other planets,

between is the earth. To move any of these from their respective positions would, many believed, destroy the essence of the Christian worldview, which had the earth at the center of the universe.

Even though Copernicus dedicated his work to “the Most Holy Lord Pope Paul III,” the church by 1616 banned all books, including Copernicus’, that advocated a revolving earth. In 1633 the church forbade any Catholic to believe or teach that the earth moved. Not until 1822 did Rome permit the printing of books that taught that the earth moved around the sun!

The Protestants weren’t much better. Luther called Copernicus “an upstart astrologer,” for after all, Luther said, the Bible clearly taught that “Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, not the earth.” Melancthon, quoting Ecclesiastes, thundered that the “earth abideth forever” and the “sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose,” and attacked Copernicus. Calvin, quoting Psalm 93:1 (“the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved”) asked, “Who will place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?”

Today, no one, Catholic or Protestant, believes that the earth is stationary, or that it is the center of the universe. However, I sometimes think that we tend to do our theology in a way that seems still to keep the earth at the center of the universe, if not physically, yet theologically and spiritually.

Doing theology with the right focus

Seventh-day Adventists have something unique to offer the Christian world: our biblical worldview, our understanding of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. What the Great Controversy theme shows is that the issues regarding sin, rebellion, and God’s law go beyond the earth, humanity, and even our redemption. Instead, the theme includes the entire universe, a perspective that must be kept in mind in order to get a fuller understanding of the great truths held by us as a church.

For instance, 2,000 years ago Christ shouted from the cross, “It is finished!” Jesus beat the devil at Calvary. He paid the price for our redemption. Why, then,

The center makes the difference

by
Robert S.
Folkenberg

revolved around the sun. The views of this faithful Polish Catholic shook the foundation of centuries-old scientific and religious dogma.

Even before Copernicus, there had been those who postulated that the earth did indeed move around the sun, but astronomy, influenced by Aristotle and Ptolemy, worked on the basic assumption that the earth stood still, and the changes in the positions of the stars and planets in the heavens came solely as a result of their motion, not the earth’s. Influenced by this Greek view, Christian theology soon adopted it as its own.

For an example, witness Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. The writer places the earth as the center of the universe and hell at the center of the earth. Dante lets his imagination journey into the depths of hell and then ascend up through various spheres of heaven until he finally contemplates God’s throne in the highest sphere. The medieval church basically took this view of the universe and made it part of the Christian dogma.

According to medieval theology, heaven is above, hell is below, and in

are we still here after Jesus won the decisive battle at the cross?

If all that mattered was our salvation, if the only issue involved in this whole wretched experience of sin was getting us freed from sin, then this long expanse of time, almost 2,000 years after the cross, doesn't really make sense. Why drag this miserable experiment with sin on and on, when Christ accomplished our redemption at the cross?

Listen to Ellen White talking about the death of Jesus: "Satan was not then destroyed. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the Great Controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness."¹

Can you not see that our salvation, though crucial to the whole Great Controversy theme, isn't the only factor involved? The question of good and evil, in the context of the universe, must be fully resolved, or as Ellen White said, "fully revealed," not just to us, but to the angels.

Issues regarding God's character, the justness of His government, the fairness of His laws, are crucial, universal questions that extend beyond us. Though the battle itself, for the most part now, is being waged here on earth, the repercussions extend through the cosmos. This cosmic perspective is too important to be minimized, and it is that universal sweep that should dominate our mind, rather than a perspective that centers everything on our salvation alone.

Job: a case in point

Look at the book of Job. It begins with an idyllic, serene situation on earth, while there's a conflict between Christ and Satan in heaven. That's where the book of Job locates the conflict; not on earth.

Eventually that conflict moves to the earth. The Book of Job, I believe, is a microcosm of the whole Great Controversy scenario, that shows that sin is a universal issue with repercussions far beyond the reaches of our tiny planet.

Think about it. Where did sin begin? On the earth? Of course not. Look beyond the earth, and you will see that sin began in heaven, with the rebellion of Satan and the angels against God's government. Though being battled out here after the war in heaven and the casting out of Satan and his angels, the problem isn't limited to the earth.

This cosmic perspective can help us make more understandable truths like Christ's high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and the judgment.

The sanctuary is one way in which God helps answer those questions. Just as the earthly sanctuary helps reveal the plan of salvation to us, the heavenly sanctuary helps reveal the plan of salvation to the on looking universe. That's what the judgment scene of Daniel 7 seems to point to. Countless hosts of heaven watch the judgment take place. That alone should show us that the issues involved in the plan of salvation go way beyond us.

God our center

Copernicus said that the earth is not the center of the universe. He challenged humanity to look above and see the

majesty of a cosmic system in which our revolving earth is only a small part.

Shifting the paradigm, the challenge of Adventism today is to show to the world that, however important we may be, the great issues of the universe are centered around the great controversy between God and Satan, between good and evil.

Soon, sooner than we think, the words of the prophet will come to pass: "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him whom created all, flow life and light and gladness, through the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."²

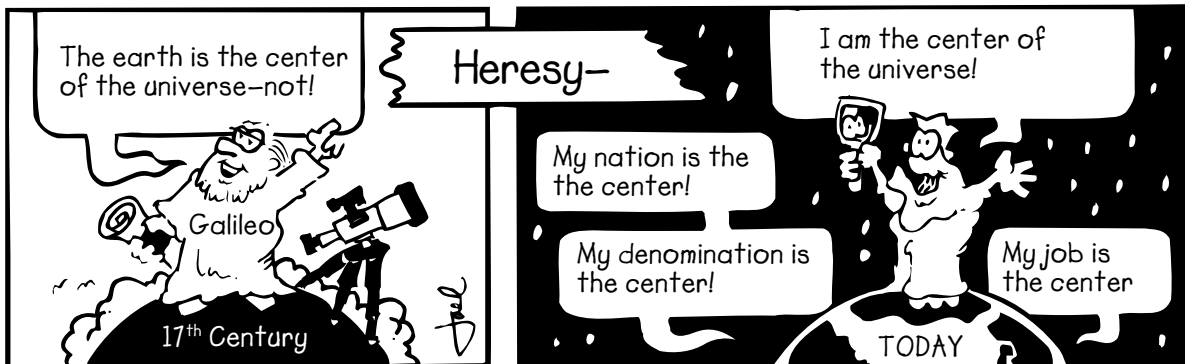
The question now is: Shall we look beyond self and make God the center of our thought, life, and hope? 🌍

Robert S. Folkenberg is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, with headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

Notes and references

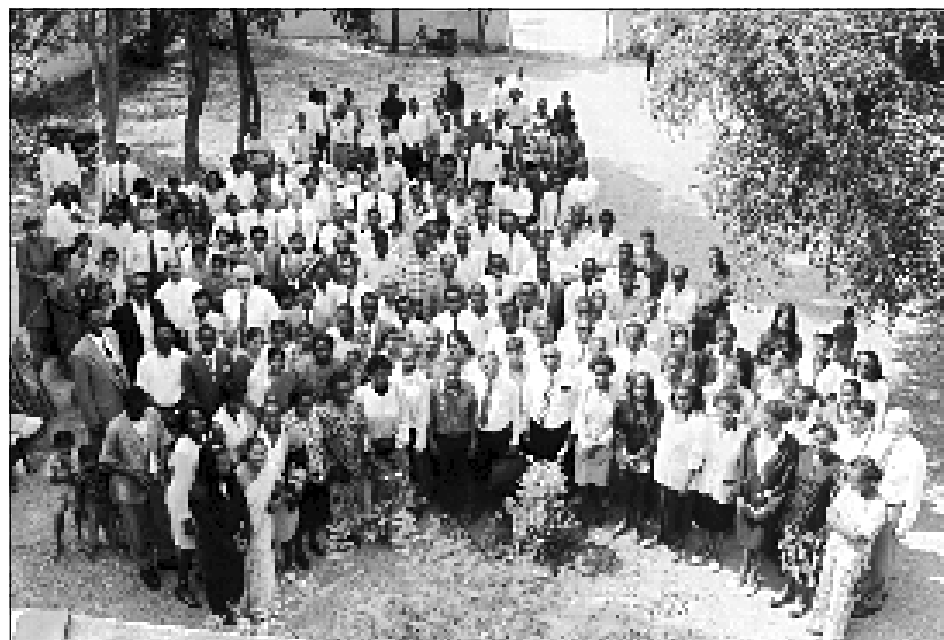
1. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1940), p. 761.
2. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1911), p. 678.

Pontius' Puddle



African students in India meet in fellowship

All India African Adventist Student Association (AIAASA), organized in 1992, had its fourth camp meeting in June 1996 in the city of Udaipur. The meeting brought 517 African Adventist students from all over India. Ray Ricketts and Caesar Wamalika of the East African Union in Kenya were the main speakers. Their message centered on nurturing the students in Adventism and in African culture so that when they return home,



Delegates from several centers of the African Adventist Student Association met in Aurangabad, India, in November 1996.

they would prove to be a blessing to the church in Africa.

The association has 43 chapters all over India. In many places they are the only Adventist presence. Where such is the case they have organized themselves as worshiping communities. This is especially so in North Indian cities such

as Udaipur, Rohtak, Meerut, Yamuna Nagar, and Aligarh. In other cities like Darwad, Jabalpur, Indore, Bhopal, and Aurangabad, they constitute more than 90 percent of Adventist worshipers. In addition to fellowship and worship, the African student community is also seriously engaged in witnessing, resulting in several baptisms of other non-Adventist African and Indian students.

The church in India is quite supportive of the African student community. Pastor W. G. Jenson, president of Spicer Memorial College, was the first to provide support for African student fellowships. The current division youth director, Edwin Charles, also supports zonal and country-wide student meetings.

At present, two zones—north and south—are caring for the spiritual, cultural, and social needs of African students. Each zone conducts its own camp meeting, while chapters within zones meet occasionally. In addition to nurture and witness, the chapters seek out for new Adventist African students arriving and provide a spiritual home away from home. 📞

—Nemwel N. Bosire, *outgoing president, AIAASA, Jabalpur, India.*

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Nigeria Student Association holds convention

Seven hundred students from 59 colleges and universities in Nigeria met for a three-day convention in April 1996 to affirm their love and commitment to Christ and seek a deeper and lasting relationship with the Saviour.

Held under the theme, "In Times Like These," the convention was the 12th biennial session of the Nigeria Association of Adventist Students. One of the central objectives of the association is to fellowship, develop friendships with one another, and seek spiritual strength to enable them to go back to their campuses as strong witnesses. The association and its gathering help our students to withstand the political, economic, social and spiritual confusion that is prevalent in society and focus the increasing number of Adventist students on Jesus' soon return.

The convention convened in close cooperation with the church. J. L. Agboka, the Africa-Indian Ocean Division Director for Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, played a key role in explaining the Adventist ministry to students in non-Adventist campuses. Other church leaders who participated in the convention include Pastor S. N. Chioma, Nigeria Union Mission Education Director, Dr. G. E. Saunders, and Elder O. Odeyemi of Adventist Health Services and ADRA respectively. Professor J. Nengel of the University of Jos introduced the theme "In Times Like These," while Pastor E. O. Okonkwo conducted a series of revival meetings.

The Association of Adventist Students in Nigeria is organized in eight zones in line with the local field territories. Each zone gave a colorful presentation including drama, recitations, musical renditions, and reports.

Guidelines for Contributors

College and University Dialogue, published three times a year in four language editions, is addressed to Seventh-day Adventists involved in postsecondary education either as students or teachers, and also to Adventist professionals and campus chaplains around the world.

The editors are interested in well-written articles, interviews, and reports consistent with *Dialogue's* objectives: (1) To nurture an intelligent, living faith; (2) to deepen commitment to Christ, the Bible, and Adventist global mission; (3) to articulate a biblical approach to contemporary issues; and (4) to offer ideas and models of Christian service and outreach.

Dialogue usually assigns articles, interviews, and reports for publication. Prospective authors are urged (a) to examine previous issues of our journal, (b) to carefully consider these guidelines, and (c) to submit an abstract and personal background before developing a proposed article.

- **Essays:** Well-researched and stimulating feature articles that focus, from a biblical perspective, on a contemporary topic in the arts, the humanities, religion, or the sciences.
- **Profiles:** Biographical sketches of Adventist men and women who are outstanding in their careers or professions, and who are also active Christians. Recommendations are welcome.
- **Logos:** A fresh look at a Bible passage or theme that offers insights and encouragement for the life of faith in today's world.
- **Campus Life:** Practical ideas for the college or university student, chaplain or teacher who seeks to integrate faith, education, social life, and outreach in an academic setting.
- **Action Report:** News of activities by Adventist students, chaplains, and teachers, on a regional basis.
- **Books:** Reviews of significant books by or about Seventh-day Adventists, published in either English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish. Recommendations are welcome.
- **For Your Information:** Reports on events, activities or statements relevant to Adventist students and professionals.
- **First Person:** Individual stories of experiences by Adventist students or professionals that will inspire and encourage their peers.

Address your correspondence to: *Dialogue* Editors; 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; U.S.A. Telephone: (301) 680-5060. Fax: (301) 622-9627. E-mail via CompuServe: 74617,464 or 104472,1154.

Statistics presented indicate that in the past two years, the association helped baptize 70 students from secular campuses. In the same period fellowships of Adventist students were established on 18 more campuses, thus bringing the total institutions in which we have active operation to 59 out of the 93 secular higher educational campuses in Nigeria. Membership of the association stands at 1,069.

The convention concluded on Sabbath with a challenge to greater witness and a credible lifestyle, given by Pastor J. A. Ola, president of Nigeria Union Mission. The Sabbath also saw the introduction of a new idea: volunteerism. For the first time students

were asked to serve the church as volunteers. Fifteen students immediately enrolled in various health and developmental projects throughout the country.

We welcome contacts and exchanges with other Adventist student associations. Write to N. John Enang: P.O. Box 207; Ikeja, Lagos State; Nigeria. Fax: 234 (1) 964884. 📠

—N. John Enang, *Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Director, Nigeria Union Mission.*

When I left my hometown Madurai, India, for Portland, Oregon 21 years ago, little did I realize that I was taking a journey that would change my life forever. I was going to complete a Ph.D. in physics and make some business contacts that could help me later in life. Those plans were important to me, and kept churning in my mind. But the One I did not know yet had other plans for my life. He was determined to net me in for His purposes.

I was born a Hindu in a lower-middle-class family. At six I lost a good portion of my right leg in an accident and became disabled for the rest of my

My search for truth

*It began with a quest and ended
with a joyful experience.*

by K.
Shanmuganathan

life. But I was so well accepted and loved by everybody around me that I rarely worried about my handicap. And yet I could see the hard realities of life. My childhood was different from that of other children. Many things they could do, I couldn't. Often I asked, "Why me?"

But my handicap had its own advantage: I could spend a lot of time reading and reflecting. In my early years I enjoyed reading stories about Hindu gods. By the time I was 12, I chose to be a devotee of Lord Muruga, one of the plethora of Hindu deities. Later, as I got involved in the study of science, I saw no need for any god. I turned to great scientists and philosophers. I was particularly fascinated by Bertrand Russell and his atheistic stance.

I took a U turn

However, as I studied more of science and nature, my perceptions took a U turn. I saw that the apparently lucid arguments of Russell had their subtle flaws. I also saw that the laws governing nature are too beautiful and organized to be accidental or purposeless. I had already experienced the love of people, but now as I crossed the frontiers of teenage skepticism, I felt that the whole nature seemed to be filled with love, if one could take the time to notice it.

And so, in my mid-twenties I concluded that the existence of a good and loving Designer is imperative to make sense of the things around. If there is a Designer who designed everything, certainly there must be a purpose for His design. In particular, there must be a purpose for His creating me. I wanted to discover that purpose. Many evenings I sat alone, beseeching the Designer to reveal Himself if He really existed. I was on a spiritual quest.

Then came my journey to the United States. Life as a graduate student was good, but the spiritual questions came popping up. Does God exist? If He exists, what does He want me to do? What is the meaning of my life?

I began to agonize. I avoided friends and socials. I kept at my study, but spent the rest of my time in reading anything that even slightly promised to give me some answers. One day it occurred to me that I should read the Bible. Immediately, I bought a Bible and a Koran. I started reading both in all earnestness. The day was August 6, 1977, a Saturday. My Koran reading did not go very far. But it was a different matter with my Bible reading.

I turned to the Bible

I expected that the Bible would be a book of mythological stories. Indeed, it started nearly like a mythology, but soon read like history and like a book of law, love, and life. And here was God, intimately and intensely involving Himself with every aspect of human life from the apparently trivial to the most serious. In about two months I had read through the whole Bible. It was an unforgettable experience in itself. The book was strangely remarkable. It

seemed to answer many of my questions about life, though I still didn't quite understand it all. But the book also raised many other questions.

When I read through the four Gospels, the character of Jesus made the deepest impression on me. Indeed, He was the most genuine person that a human being could be. I was sure that a character of His kind could not have been created by human imagination. This fact had important implications. Jesus ought to be true, and therefore, the Bible ought to be true also!

Soon I had time only for two things. My graduate studies and my Bible studies. Before long I was studying Bible prophecies. As I did this, I realized that there were many interpretations, most of them only half-consistent. But I noticed that there was one particular school of interpretation that was far more consistent and logical than any other. And then I discovered that this belonged to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Soon I started attending various churches and Christian fellowship meetings in my locality. I interacted with a cross-section of Christians of various denominations. I took Bible courses in the community colleges, read expository books on the Bible, called on ministers to discuss the questions I had about biblical themes. Through all of this, a flood of light came my way.

I also became intrigued about the existence of so many denominations, all claiming to be based on the Bible. When I carefully looked into the differences between the denominations, I realized that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was far more biblical than all others. The doctrine of salvation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church was clear and consistent. This was the only doctrine which satisfied my intellectual, emotional and moral sensibilities. The truth of God and of His salvation then stood before me in all its beauty. It was so incredible that I asked: "Is this really the truth? Should I accept it? Should I commit myself to it? What if it turned out to be a cleverly constructed falsehood?"

The answer echoed to me from within. "Suppose in science that a new theory is proposed, which is good in general, but by no means perfect, what

will you do? Won't you accept the theory for what it is until and unless you find a better theory to replace it? Do the same thing here. Here is a new TRUTH. Accept this now and live by it until you could find something better. If this is not the truth, what else could be?"

I was baptized

And so I accepted the Lord and committed myself to Him. Which church would I join? The Seventh-day Adventist Church, of course! I called Elder Eugene Amey, the Seventh-day Adventist pastor in Hillsboro, Oregon. I asked to be baptized. Elder Amey was happy, but suggested that I take Bible studies with him before baptism. This was somewhat disappointing. I was eager to be baptized the next day, but I agreed to his suggestion. Then came another 10 months of exciting Bible study. The unfolding love of God made me weep and cry. Elder Amey introduced to me the writings of Ellen G. White. First I had an aversion for her writings. She seemed to be too assuming and too assertive. But as I matured in my understanding of God's love, her writings began making more and more sense to me and influenced me the most. I realized that the same Spirit that was working in her was also guiding me into the truth.

I was baptized on Sabbath, August 11, 1979. God finally netted me in. In February, 1980, I completed my Ph.D., returned to India, and resumed my career as a lecturer in physics at the American College, Madurai, India.

I found the true science

As I continued my search for the truth I perceived that the sum total of what the Seventh-day Adventist Church holds is nothing short of a science—consistent, systematic, and organized. Ellen White calls it the science of salvation. There are four good reasons why it is a science.

1. There is theoretical logic. In scientific theories, there must be a structure of logic. In the story of the great controversy between God and Satan there is a structure of logic. It is the logic of love. Pure and perfect love operates according to a logic of its own. The problem with most people is that

they have a poor grasp of this logic, and then presume there is no logic. But the logic is very much there, and it is the most beautiful logic, if only one can grasp it.

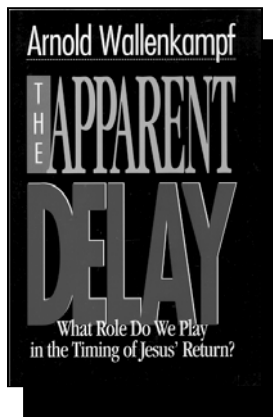
2. There are experimental evidences. Scientific theories are to be tested for their truth in laboratories. The story of the Great Controversy is tested for its truth in human history. That is, the earth is the laboratory. Human history is the great experiment being carried out to decide what is good and what is evil. Many people are deceived from perceiving it that way. But this is the greatest experiment ever.

3. There are predictions. If the predictions turn out to be correct, then the theory is supposed to be valid. In the present case, we have prophecies that are the same as predictions. Many prophecies have turned out to be correct. This speaks for the soundness of what the Seventh-day Adventist Church holds. The greatest of the prediction is: Jesus will come again. I expect this to be verified in human history soon.

4. There is good interaction with other fields of science. A good scientific theory in one area will often throw considerable light on other areas. The Great Controversy theme and the Seventh-day Adventist worldview explain life in its varied complexities.

Finally, as a Seventh-day Adventist, I have access to all revealed truth. I reach for it and hold on to it. Thus, my journey for truth ended with an audience with the most wonderful Person—Jesus, God made flesh. 🙏

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The Apparent Delay: What Role Do We Play in the Timing of Jesus' Return? by Arnold Wallenkampf (*Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1994; 126 pp.; paperback*).

REVIEWED BY LORON WADE.

Arnold Wallenkampf, much-admired Adventist theologian, has taken up the question that has been troubling Seventh-day Adventists for the past 150 years: Why hasn't Jesus

come?

We have long been told that we are at least partly responsible for the delay. If we had been faithful in perfecting Christ-like characters and in preaching the message, Jesus would have already come. Dr. Wallenkampf comfortingly tells us that the delay in the Second Coming is only "apparent." There is no real delay because our sovereign God has Himself set the time when He will return, and there is nothing we can do to either hasten or delay it.

The author offers a solution that is reassuring, but we need to ask if it is truly biblical. Does Scripture present us with an either/or proposition, forcing us to choose between divine sovereignty and the principle of human freedom and responsibility? Or rather, does it indicate that God, without surrendering any of His sovereignty, has left us with a moral choice for which we must be fully responsible?

The apostle Paul apparently saw no conflict. He vigorously defended the idea of divine sovereignty (see Romans 9:1-21) while insisting with equal vehemence on human responsibility (see Romans 1:18-20). Likewise, Ellen White also did not see a contradiction: She wrote that "like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay." And yet she stated categorically that "by giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return."

Adventist Professionals' Network (APN)

Are you a Seventh-day Adventist with a graduate academic or professional degree? Do you wish to network and interact with Adventist colleagues in your field, discipline, or profession around the world?

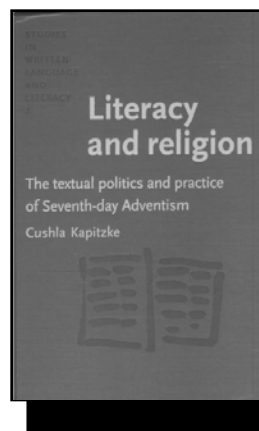
We can help you to do so. Just send us your name and address, and we will mail you the application form. Encourage your friends to apply too.

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In another part of his argument, Wallenkampf tells us that there is no real delay because God dwells in a state of timelessness. Those who hold this idea need to ask whether it is rooted in biblical theology or in Greek philosophy. Have they considered that without time, neither space nor matter can exist? Plato understood this and built his idealism on the notion that ideas—the only reality—do not exist in time or space. The soul, he said, is briefly trapped in matter (the body) and condemned to march for a while through time and space before being mercifully released by death to return to its timeless, spaceless, pre-existent state. Since Seventh-day Adventists reject Plato's anthropology, they should also reject a theology that is based on his ideas. Oscar Cullman has pointed out the concrete nature of Biblical theology as opposed to the nebulous cogitations of the Greek philosophers.

Wallenkampf is dealing with a difficult subject, one that will doubtless attract even more attention as the end of the century approaches. We can wholeheartedly agree with his defense of the sovereignty of God without letting this detract from our emphasis on our own responsibility to "not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God."

Loron Wade (Ph.D., Andrews University) teaches theology at the University of Montemorelos, Mexico.



Literacy and Religion: The Textual Politics and Practice of Seventh-day Adventism, by Cushla Kapitzke (*Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publ. Co., 1996; 343 pp.; hardbound*).

REVIEWED BY SYLVIA RASI GREGORUTTI.

Cushla Kapitzke's study of literacy and religion takes off from the perspective of a Seventh-day Adventist community in Riverside, Australia. In explaining "how human beings construct and govern themselves and others through the production, administration, and dissemination of religious truth encoded in text" (p. xv), the author, an Adventist since 1985, plays the role of participant as well as observer.

Kapitzke's analysis employs Michael Foucault's poststructuralist framework that suggests that "there is no essential or 'natural' way of doing reading and writing, but that literacy's many meanings and forms are products of culture, history, and discourse" (p. xxi). However, Foucault's framework lands the author in a quandary. She herself admits that her Adventist belief and the Foucauldian approach constitute

“seemingly contradictory and oppositional dominant discourses” (p. xxi). For example, Foucault believes solely in the existence of humanly constructed “truths,” while Kapitzke concedes the existence of “Truth” *per se*.

Chapters 2 through 4 outline text-related religious history, the church’s historical and institutional background, church programs, and Ellen G. White’s writings. Chapter 5 deals with member socialization through literature, programs, and practices of the Sabbath, a day where “most of the activity was text-centered or text-related” (p. 173). The author describes the Sabbath School *Quarterly* as the “primary medium of indoctrination, and the source of much of the institution’s power to control the lives of members” (p. 151). Such a conclusion places the author in a Pandora’s box: For while it is true that the quarterly is a unifying and intellectually stimulating agent, such a role can hardly be called “indoctrination.” Indeed, the author’s observation that much debate, discussion, free expression of differences mark the Sabbath school class negates any idea of indoctrination.

Of interest in the chapter on home literacy are criticisms of children’s books (e.g., gender-stereotyping, lack of multiculturalism), and observations on the rejection of fiction and the anthropomorphic technique.

In Chapter 7, Kapitzke states that children’s communicative options at the local church school were “limited and limiting” and that “the better part of pedagogy disallowed involved thinking and critical literacy” (p. 255). According to the author, this contradicted the church’s objective of developing the students’ critical thinking. The final chapter deals with the youth leaving the church, and proposes an adult-youth dialogue that could provide an “opportunity to juxtapose and criticize competing texts and discourses” (p. 271).

The author concludes that Adventists should “forsake the traditional and naive view of reading and writing, and to understand them for what they are: helpful, but fallible and criticisable tools in the nurturance of spirituality and subjectivity” (p. 280). Most Riverside Adventists, however, did not seem to hold such a view, and would probably agree that reading and writing are merely tools used to achieve a goal.

Of value are criticisms of cradle roll lessons, children’s classroom and written Sabbath School-related activities, and reading materials. Unfortunately, the author’s participant-observer role results in a vacillating perspective. Further, while the study purportedly dealt with both reading and writing, emphasis was clearly on the former.

Despite such limitations, this scholarly study will be of interest to those involved in literacy research, particularly as it relates to religion, and to those producing and using Adventist children’s literature.

Sylvia Rasi Gregorutti is completing a Ph.D. in linguistics at Georgetown University and teaches at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California, U.S.A. Her e-mail address: SRASI@PUC.EDU



Ten Who Left, by Fred Cornforth and Tim Lale (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1995; 128 pp.; paperback).

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL BERNOI.

You probably know someone who has left the church, someone right beside you, someone working in Seventh-day Adventist institutions.

Here are some startling factors. There are about one to two million former Seventh-day Adventists in North America. “The majority of those born into a Seventh-day Adventist family in North America in the post-World War II era have dropped out of the church” (p. 7). North America’s current membership is more than 800,000 but only about half “of that number attend church at least once a month” (p. 119).

Why have they left the church? Why don’t they worship any longer? What is their story? Fred Cornforth and Tim Lale seek to awaken our consciences, raise our awareness, and provoke our minds with 10 “exit interviews.”

Those interviewed offer candid and pointed remarks about how they see the church, and what they experienced. They tell “warts and all,” and why they feel they can no longer be a part of us.

If you are expecting a balanced view from the former members and those they left behind, you will be disappointed. The stories presented offer the one side often not heard. Take time to listen. *Warning*: You will be shocked, angry, sad, confused, or left asking a hollow “Why?”

Listen to Kyle. He left the church in 1992. In his opening statement he says, “[In academy] a lot of the policies are very contradictory. Hair, jewelry—they miss the point” (p. 65). Jackie says, “I think such rigid beliefs on dancing and jewelry are garbage” (p. 41).

Do you want to talk about Jackie’s story? Study questions at the end of each chapter provoke and challenge. Are you wondering how to begin reaching out with the loving heart of God, and how to start building authentic relationships with those who once walked with us? Then you will value and appreciate the excellent suggestions toward the book’s end and in the concluding chapter.

Ahead of us a door is beginning to open: the door to the 21st century. Behind us the back door is still swinging. If we let it close completely before beginning the process of reconciliation with our “family” members, we will have missed an opportunity.

Michael Bernoi is currently planting a culturally relevant “cell” church while working on his M.Div. degree at Andrews University. His CompuServe address: 105044,1607

A walk around the world

by
Reg
Burgess

The use of alcohol has not changed much through the years. Experts report that the use of illicit drugs has dropped, but alcohol is still the number-one drug of choice. It is most important to understand that alcohol is a drug.

Then there is the problem of smoking. A United States government report says some three million American teenagers smoke, and a third of them will eventually die from a smoking-related illness. According to a report in the *American Journal of Public Health*, "Cigarettes are an addiction that teenagers will not easily escape."

Five steps in substance use

What are the stages of use of these harmful substances? Researchers have identified five segmented steps in the progression of substance use and abuse. Initial use is most likely to be with beer or wine, followed by cigarettes or hard liquor, then marijuana, followed by problem drinking and lastly, illicit drugs.

These stages progress from initiation to experimentation, from casual to regular use.

Young people learn drinking patterns from parents; their first experience is usually at home or in the presence of relatives. They see drinking as an adult behavior, and are at risk for progressing to substance abuse unless they realize the risk factors. General factors that increase the probability that a young person will use harmful substances include: being home alone after school; having friends who approve of alcohol or other drug use; having friends who use alcohol; and peer pressure to use drugs.

After a decade of gradual decline in the overall use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by adolescents, researchers are reporting signs that this trend is reversing, with all the negative consequences. The World Health Organization Programme on Substance Abuse, directed by Hans Emblad, has concluded that, "in the fight against the adverse effects of alcohol, it is insufficient and unwise merely to promote the concept of moderate drinking for health reasons."

According to a survey by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, the number of American teenagers using illicit drugs increased in 1995. "We have sounded alarm bells about rising levels of substance abuse by the youth," said Donna E. Shalala, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. "Today, I want to ring the alarm bell faster and louder, and send a message that the children are at risk." Do you hear the alarm bell? Is there something you can do? Yes, there is.

The walk

During 1997 and up to 2000 A.D., you are invited to participate in a sponsored walk that will enable you to share your commitment to a drug-free lifestyle with your friends.

The International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency has developed an exciting program that will help us once again to become aware of the many dangers associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful drugs, while showing our communities that we strongly support a drug-free lifestyle. The program is called "Walk Around the World—2000." It consists of a formal march or parade on a selected route by a group of young people who wish to make a public statement regarding their commitment to health. It is expected that by 2000 the total distance covered by various groups in many countries will be equivalent to a single walk around the world.

Adventist colleges, universities, academies, and elementary schools are accepting the invitation to join in this international walk. Special incentives are built into the project to encourage this.

Sponsors for the walk donate a certain amount of money for each mile or kilometer a young volunteer walks for a healthy lifestyle. The sponsors can be friends, family, or members of the community. By supporting this program, we can begin a movement that will gain momentum over the next few years and culminate in a grand walk in the year 2000. As we unite in this walk, others will see the drug-free lifestyle as the best solution to many problems today.

Fifty percent of all money raised stays in the educational institution or student club that raised it. The other 50 percent goes to places where economies make it difficult to support such a program.

For more information on how to organize a "Walk Around the World—2000," contact the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. 📧

Reg Burgess is the coordinator of the "Walk Around the World—2000."

Expand Your Friendship Network

Adventist college/university students and professionals from 40 countries interested in exchanging correspondence with colleagues in other parts of the world:

Lindi Allen: married; completed a degree in Behavioral Science with emphasis in Family Studies; hobbies: reading, sewing, camping, horseback riding, and being with new husband; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 197; Collegedale, TN 37315-0197; U.S.A.

James Anane-Domeh: 34; male; studying theology; hobbies: Christian music and books, and evangelism; correspondence in English. Address: Valley View College; P.O. Box 9358; Airport-Accra; GHANA.

Massiela Aranda Z.: 25; female; single; studying systems engineering; hobbies: reading, walking, jogging, and music; correspondence in English or Spanish. Address: Universidad Peruana Unión; Casilla 3564; Lima 100; PERU.

Nixon Balaiah: male; studying English and journalism; hobbies: writing, reading magazines, making friends, and discussing issues; correspondence in English. Address: Spicer Memorial College, Aundh Road; Pune 411007; INDIA.

Shirlyn Beetham: 28; female; married; studying social sciences and planning to be a British Sign Language Interpreter; hobbies: traveling and learning about other cultures; correspondence in English. Address: 21 Woodlands Road; Epsom, Surrey; KT18 7HW ENGLAND.

Cherilyn C. Berocil: 24; female; single; studying education; hobbies: singing, swimming, boating, preaching, and nature; correspondence in English. Address: Navarro Subd., Ibingay St.; Masbate, Masbate; PHILIPPINES.

Khun Khrue Bhinn: 31; male; married; working as mathematics and English teacher at an international school; hobbies: classical music, literature, mental games, choral conducting, and volleyball; correspondence in English. Address: Rm. 409, A.P. House; 175, 184 Soi Jitvaree; Sukhumvit 71, Klongton; 10110 Bangkok; THAILAND.

Carla Boer: 22; female; single; completed a degree in economics; hobbies: traveling, walking, nature, reading, and collecting shells; correspondence in English or Portuguese. Address: Av. Itaboraí, 1168;

Bosque da Saúde; 04135-001 São Paulo, S.P.; BRAZIL.

Marta Bofelho: 30; female; single; teaches physical education; hobbies: traveling, making friends, aerobics; correspondence in Portuguese or Spanish. Address: Universidad Adventista de Chile; Casilla 7-D; Chillán; CHILE.

Tsholofelo Fanny Bogopa: 22; female; single; studying education; hobbies: baking and reading magazines; correspondence in English. Address: Bethel College of Seventh-day Adventists; Private Bag X 9042; East London; 5200 SOUTH AFRICA.

Raquel Rosangela Caetano: 26; female; single; studying art; hobbies: traveling, reading, listening to good music, making new friends, and photography; correspondence in Portuguese. Address: Rua Joaquim Gomes Pereira 63; Bairro Aarão Reis; 31810-970 Belo Horizonte; BRAZIL.

Madalena Lopes S. Cardoso: 26; female; married; studying education; hobby: collecting stamps; correspondence in Portuguese, Spanish or English. Address: Rua João Carlos Pereira Leite 552; B. Araes; 78005-200 Cuiabá, MT; BRAZIL.

Julio Castañeda: 27; male; single; teaches biology and physics; hobbies: photography, cycling, swimming, excursions, and camping; correspondence in Spanish, English or Portuguese. Address: Jirón Melchor Cumpa 998; San Germán, San Martín de Porres; Lima; PERU.

Aaron Castillo Rodríguez: 18; male; single; studying theology; hobbies: soccer, singing, and sacred music; correspondence in English, Portuguese or Spanish. Address: Casilla 7-D; Chillán; CHILE.

Mufundirwa Charles: 28; male; single; holds a degree in education; hobbies: reading, making new friends, religious music, traveling, and church activities; correspondence in English. Address: Mukwasi SDA Secondary School; Box 20; Dorowa; ZIMBABWE.

Virginia Donald Chin: 19; female; single; hobbies: playing hockey, reading, outdoor activities, and traveling; correspondence in English or Malay. Address: c/o Suntara, Casualty Section; Q.E.H. 88586; Kota Kinabalu, Sabah; EAST MALAYSIA.

Fernanda Covolan: 20; female; single; studying law; hobbies: reading, music, poetry, camping, and tourism; correspondence in Portuguese. Address: R. Emerson José Moreira, 2016; Pque. Taquaral; Campinas, São Paulo; 13087-040 BRAZIL.

Júdice Cubenda: 20; female; single; holds a certificate in health; hobbies: singing, sports, cooking, learning about other cultures, flowers, poetry, and pathfinders; correspondence in Portuguese. Address: Rua Rei Kaiyavala 99, BG; Cx. Postal 10742; Luanda; ANGOLA.

Akoumany Gregory Davis: 21; male; single; teaches religion and English; hobbies: listening to music and sermons on tape, and singing; correspondence in English. Address: Adventist Seminary of West Africa; P.M.B. 2124-A; Ikeja, Lagos; NIGERIA.

Marevel Debulgado: 21; female; single; completed a degree in English; hobbies: making new friends, sharing her faith, reading, gospel music, singing, playing the organ; correspondence in English or Filipino. Address: Vagallon Street; San Enrique, Negros Occidental; 6104 PHILIPPINES.

Gerson Domínguez: 22; male; single; studying computer science; hobbies: reading the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy books, collecting fossils, camping, and traveling; correspondence in English or Spanish. Address: P.O. Box 1121; Barceloneta, Puerto Rico 00617; U.S.A.

Rebecca Elena Durán: 19; female; single; studying respiratory therapy; hobbies: playing the piano, listening to music, reading, walking, and spending time with friends; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Universidad Adventista de las Antillas; Box 118; Mayagüez, Puerto Rico 00681; U.S.A.

Claudia Leticia Escamilla Pérez: 27; female; single; completed a degree in psychology and a master's in public health; hobbies: reading, religious music, new friendships, serving others, health, and traveling; correspondence in English or Spanish. Address: Apartado 311-A; Centro Cívico, Cd. Satélite; C.P. 53101, Edo. Mexico; MEXICO.

Ledy Ferrín Galbañiz: 23; female; single; studying photography, video production, typing, and music; hobbies: singing, sports, traveling, reading, and walks in nature; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: La Merced # 28603 entre Sancristóbal y Monserrate; Pueblo Nuevo, Matanzas; 40-100 CUBA.

Rachel Fleming: 23; female; single; studying nursing; hobbies: reading, listening to music, nature, and spending time with friends; correspondence in English. Address: 97 Blackwood Street; Mitchelton, Queensland; 4053 AUSTRALIA.

Danny Formentera: 24; male; single; a teacher at an international school; hobbies: collecting stamps, bank notes and coins, swimming, and ice-skating; correspondence in English. Address: Rm 413, Is-Mai House; 102/6 Soi Panichanant; Sukhumvit 71 Road; Klongton, Klongtoey; 10110 Bangkok; THAILAND.

Franco Forte: 23; male; single; a literature evangelist who holds a degree in computer science; hobbies: reading, psychology, and nature; correspondence in Spanish. Address: La Calle 18-24, Vista Hermosa II; Zona 15; GUATEMALA.

Bailon Golutin: 21; male; single;

studying geology; hobbies: traveling, reading, music, computers, and making new friends; correspondence in English or Malay. Address: Asrama Siswa; University of Malaysia, Sabah; Km 19, Jalan Tuaran; Beg Berkunci 2073; 88999 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah; EAST MALAYSIA.

Ana B. Gómez: 30; female; single; a nutritionist; hobbies: traveling, reading, music, tennis, missionary work, and nature; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: Apdo. #4; Reforma, Chiapas; 29500 MEXICO.

Solfi Gómez: 27; female; single; studying art; hobbies: music, singing, tennis, swimming, reading, and camping; correspondence in English or Spanish. Address: Dr. Teófilo Hernández #12; La Romana; DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

Sarinah Harman: 24; female; single; holds a master's in human nutrition; hobbies: traveling, reading, and music; correspondence in English. Address: 49 Alexander Street; Abbotsford, Dunedin; NEW ZEALAND.

Jeffrey Harry: 21; male; single; studying theology; hobbies: playing the guitar, cooking, drawing, traveling, and gospel and contemporary music; correspondence in English. Address: Pacific Adventist College; P.M.B. Boroko; National Capital District; PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

Cicik Suciatty Haryono: 23; female; single; studying international relations; hobbies: youth programs, singing, playing the guitar and the piano, swimming, traveling, knitting, faith sharing and collecting perfume and dolls; correspondence in English. Address: Jl. Sukasari III No. 68-B; Bogor; 16142 West Java; INDONESIA.

Paul Hitamoore: 19; male; single; studying business administration; hobbies: reading, gospel music, and outdoor activities; correspondence in English. Address: Pacific Adventist College; Private Mail Bag, Boroko, National Capital District; PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

Abiola Jack: 22; female; single; works as a home economist and studies food and nutrition; hobbies: sewing, singing, Bible study, and drama; correspondence in English. Address: Lot 200, Section C, Nabaclis Village; East Coast Demerara, Georgetown; GUYANA.

Philius Jean-Bryere: 20; male; single; studying economic and social administration; hobbies: gospel music, sports, reading, traveling, drawing, and making new friends; correspondence in Spanish or French. Address: 01 Rue des Bougainvilliers; Cité Bonhomme; 97300 Cayenne; FRENCH GUYANA.

Onyancha O. Jerry: 23; male; single; studying mathematics and physics; hobbies: playing the piano, drawing and designing, listening to Christian music, and nature; correspondence in English. Address: Box

903; Nyamira, Nyanza; KENYA.

Marlon E. Jones: 25; male; single; holds a degree in biology; hobbies: cooking, reading, hiking, public speaking, camping, studying Bible prophecy and collecting book marks; correspondence in English. Address: 1264-8 Duck Jin Dong 1 Ga; Duck Jin Gu; Jconju 560 190; KOREA.

Arata Kondo: 27; male; single; holds a degree in biochemistry; hobbies: working with Adventist youth, listening to music, and reading; correspondence in English or Japanese. Address: Ebeye SDA School; P.O. Box 5070; Ebeye MH 96970; MARSHALL ISLANDS.

Kwadwo Kwarteng-Ampofo: 32; male; married; pastor of 20 churches; hobbies: football, visiting friends, and exchanging gifts; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box M1452; Kumasi; GHANA.

Danie L. Lapidez: 23; male; single; completed a degree of general radio communication operator; hobbies: traveling, exchanging letters and listening to love songs; correspondence in English. Address: BIK-35; Lot 26 NHA Buhangin; Davao City; 8000 PHILIPPINES.

Lito Ligsay: 24; male; single; holds a degree in accounting; hobbies: jungle adventures, night swimming, basketball, computers, and coin collecting; correspondence in English. Address: Thailand Publishing House; P.O. Box 14, Klongton; 10116 Bangkok; THAILAND.

Harold Llampén: 18; male; single; studying theology; hobbies: poetry, athletics, piano, and soccer; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Casilla 7-D; Chillán; CHILE.

Carola López: 33; female; single; holds a degree in music; hobbies: making new friends, reading, traveling, Christian music, and playing the piano; correspondence in Spanish. Address: 9B No. 50-100, Apto. 402 "G;" Camino Real, VII Etapa; Cali; COLOMBIA.

Tarcicio Luis Ludovico: 29; male; single; a medical doctor; hobbies: singing, traveling, and playing the guitar; correspondence in Portuguese. Address: Rua Castro Alves No. 60, 10° Andar; Aclimação, São Paulo; 01532-000 BRAZIL.

Alessandra Macedo: 20; female; single; studying literature; hobbies: making new friends, traveling, music, reading, and sports; correspondence in Portuguese or English. Address: Rua dos Gerânios 1338, Jardim Iguaçu; Maringá, PR; 87060-010 BRAZIL.

Silvester Mafiana: 36; male; single; sales consultant and businessman; hobbies: traveling, music, dancing, making new friends, exchanging gifts, and picnicking; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 75492; Victoria Island, Lagos; NIGERIA.

Fernando Alberto Martínez: 21; male; single; studying theology; hobbies:

making friends, camping, nature, plants, and collecting stamps; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Instituto Adventista Balcarce; C.C. 195; 7620 Balcarce; Buenos Aires; ARGENTINA.

Misael Martínez Moisés: male; married; an electrical technician; hobbies: photography, videos, magazines, postcards, and traveling; correspondence in English, German or Spanish. Address: Calle A entre 2 y 3, No. 34; Rua Cándido González; Camagüey 11; 71100 CUBA.

Tendai Mayani: 20; female; studying nursing; hobbies: knitting, volleyball, reading magazines, making new friends, traveling, and listening to gospel music; correspondence in English. Address: Kamuzu College of Nursing; Private Bag 9; Lilongwe; MALAWI.

Omboga John Jules Mogaka: 20; male; single; completed a degree in tourism; hobbies: international affairs, gymnastics, making friends, and traveling; correspondence in English or German. Address: P.O. Box 7485; Eldoret; KENYA.

Alain Montreuil: 31; male; single; a registered nurse; hobbies: traveling, classical music, and literature; correspondence in French. Address: 50 Rue St. Jacques #304; Longueuil, P.Q.; CANADA.

Joaquín Morón Ramos: male; married; holds a degree in education; hobbies: sociology, current events, and biblical prophecies; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Jr. Trujillo 397; Miramar Bajo, Chimbote; PERU.

Michael C. Morris: male; single; studying psychology and religion; hobbies: working with pathfinders, camping, reading, football, cricket, basketball, listening to choirs and country gospel; correspondence in English or Spanish. Address: c/o West Indies College; Mandeville, Manchester; JAMAICA.

aldo Muñoz Perrin: 22; male; single; studying theology; hobbies: reading, Christian music, collecting stamps, and poetry; correspondence in Spanish, Portuguese or English. Address: Baquedano 907; Chillán Viejo; CHILE.

Juliet Nannono: 22; female; single; a secretary; hobbies: cooking, art and design, touring, making new friends, and reading the Bible; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 273; Kampala; UGANDA.

Wilson W. Nguira: 25; male; single; a clinical officer; hobbies: soccer, music, videos, exchanging photos, traveling, and sports; correspondence in English, Chichewa or Tumbuka. Address: P.O. Box 45; Mulanje, MALAWI.

James Njine: 30; male; single; holds a degree in industrial technology; hobbies: camping, reading, and singing; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 503; Athi River; KENYA.

Bundi Evans Nyakundi: 27; male; married, with four daughters; a teacher;

English. Address: Calle Julio Sánchez No. 711; Parque Lfano, San Pedro; La Paz; BOLIVIA.

Edleuza de Aguiar Rodrigues: 26; female; single; completed a degree in education; hobbies: reading, traveling, nature walks, cooking, singing, preaching, listening to sacred and classical music; correspondence in English, Portuguese or Spanish. Address: Rua Marselha No. 32, Vila Olinda II; Embu, São Paulo; 06810-000 BRAZIL.

Minerva Rodríguez García: 28; female; single; completed a degree in music; hobbies: reading, bike riding, and exchanging letters; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Calle 10 # 11 entre Carretera Central y 3a.; Rpto. Ramón Quintana; Holguín; CUBA.

Atolagbe Rotimi: 19; female; single; studying business management; hobbies: football, table tennis, Bible and computer games, writing, literature, and philosophy; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 4315; Trans/Amadi; Post Office Port Harcourt, Rivers State; NIGERIA.

Nuin Neo Salleh: 19; male; single; a sales assistant in a book shop; hobbies: singing, playing the guitar, camping, drawing, and making new friends; correspondence in Malay or English. Address: Locked Bag 13, SM-141; 89007 Keningau, Sabah; MALAYSIA.

Glenn Ilustrisimo Saludar: 22; female; single; completed a degree in education; hobbies: singing, playing a musical instrument, swimming, and sports; correspondence in Cebuano, English or Filipino. Address: San Rafael; San Pascual, Masbate; PHILIPPINES.

Abu Sarota: 27; male; single; an elementary school teacher; hobbies: listening to Christian music, traveling, and adventures; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 32434; Dar-es-Salaam; TANZANIA.

Maria Azenith Seguia: 17; female; single; studying accounting; hobbies: music, sports, cooking, swimming, and reading; correspondence in English or Filipino. Address: Balay Kanlaon; UP in the Visayas; Miag-ao 5023, Iloilo; PHILIPPINES.

Maria de Fátima da Silva: 32; female; single; completing a degree in accounting; hobbies: reading, writing, nature walks, and camping; correspondence in Portuguese. Address: Av. Professor Flávio P. de Camargo; 1-160 Caetetuba; Atibaia, S.P.; 12940-000 BRAZIL.

Sara da Silva: 50; female; widow; a teacher and retired nurse; hobbies: reading, Christian music, knitting, crochet, sewing and cooking; correspondence in Portuguese or Spanish. Address: Rua Vieira Luzitano No. 103; Parque Santo Antonio, S.P.; 05834-100 BRAZIL.

Precious Nchachi Siwombo: 25; male; single; studying towards a certificate to teach primary school; hobbies: reading,

sports, music, outdoor activities, and making new friends; correspondence in English. Address: Vongo Primary School; Private Bag 03; Rumphii; MALAWI.

Sampaguita Somodio: 19; female; a student; hobbies: singing, playing the guitar, collecting stamps, and missionary work; correspondence in English. Address: Magkiangkang, Bayugan I; 8502 Agusan del Sur; PHILIPPINES.

Alejandro Soto Espinoza: 28; male; single; studying engineering; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Las Azucenas 5029; Los Códore, Talcahuano, 8a. Región; CHILE.

Munyarabsi Tafunga: 27; male; holds a degree in education; hobbies: photography, cycling, traveling, exchanging gifts and photographs, and reading; correspondence in English. Address: Box 85; Gutu; ZIMBABWE.

Oséias Pereira Alves Teodoro: 20; male; hobbies: Christian music and playing sports; correspondence in English or Portuguese. Address: Rua Lima Teixeira, travessa Dom Pedro II No. 10; Cosme de Fariás, Salvador, Bahia; 40250 253 BRAZIL.

Valentine O. Thompson: 29; male; single; hobbies: flying, drawing, painting, traveling, reading, and making new friends; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 1620; Ondo, Ondo; NIGERIA.

Maria Cecilia Toledanes: female; single; completed a degree in secretarial administration and currently studying law; hobbies: reading, music, skating, computers, photography, and exchanging postcards; correspondence in English. Address: Office of the Ombudsman, Mindanao; Bangby, Monteverde Sts.; Sta. Ana, Davao City; 8000 PHILIPPINES.

María Ureña: 20; female; single; studying law; hobbies: exchanging ideas and postcards, writing poems, reading, music, and theater; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Calle Neptuno #19; Urbanización Galaxia; Las Caobas, Santo Domingo; DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

Vicente Luis Velázquez Maravilla: 21; male; single; studying medicine; hobbies: making friends, camping, nature, plants, and collecting stamps; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Instituto Adventista Balcarce; CC 195; 7620 Balcarce, Buenos Aires; ARGENTINA.

Dike Victor: 18; male; single; studying computer science; hobbies: reading, making friends, traveling, sports, camping, and spreading the Gospel; correspondence in English. Address: Lane 8 Flat E, Aggrey Housing Estate; P.O. Box 9769; Port Harcourt; NIGERIA.

Viol Visto: 33; male; single; completed a degree in education; hobbies: cooking, camping, reading, and writing; correspondence in English. Address: 841 Mapa;

Mabini Sts.; Davao City; 8000 PHILIPPINES.

Cassian Vuluwa: 20; male; single; studying mechanical engineering; hobbies: swimming, science and arts, making new friends, and music; correspondence in English or Swahili. Address: Technical College Arusha; P.O. Box 296; Arusha; TANZANIA.

Selvie Wahongan: 25; female; single; studying towards a post-graduate degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages; hobbies: gospel music, piano, singing, and reading; correspondence in English. Address: International Students' Office; University of Canberra; P.O. Box 1, Belconnen, ACT 2616; AUSTRALIA.

J. Rickson Willié: male; single; studying pastoral ministries; hobbies: reading, singing, evangelism, writing, and making new friends; correspondence in English. Address: Ghana Christian College and Seminary; P.O. Box 5722; Accra North; GHANA.

Nana Yaw: 25; male; single; studying business administration; hobbies: playing on the computer, collecting stamps and currency, sports, listening to classical and religious music; correspondence in English. Address: 605 #435 Sargent Ave.; Winnipeg, Manitoba; R3B 1V1 CANADA.

David Omare Zakayo: 40; male; married, with four children; a nurse; hobbies: corresponding with medical professionals, exchanging gifts and letters, religious music, counseling, and conducting surveys; correspondence in English. Address: Adventist Medical Centre; P.O. Box 109; Nyamira; KENYA.

If you are an Adventist college/university student or professional and wish to be listed here, send us your name and postal address, indicating your age, sex, marital status, current field of studies or degree obtained, college/university you are attending or from which you graduated, hobbies or interests, and language(s) in which you would like to correspond. (We will also list your e-mail address if you provide it.) Address your letter to **Dialogue Interchange:** 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600- U.S.A. Please type or print clearly. We will list only those who provide all the information requested above. The journal cannot assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information submitted or for the content of the correspondence that may ensue.

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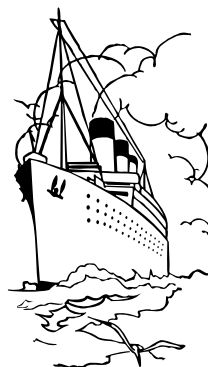
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