
Truth is a Person

**Isaac Newton:
scientist and
theologian**

**Postmodernism and
New Age: the subtle
connections**

**Archaeology and the
Bible**

VOLUME 9: No. 3



PUBLISHED IN
English ✓
French
Portuguese
Spanish

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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.\$12 per year (three issues). See coupon on page 8 for details.

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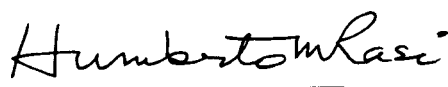
As this issue of *Dialogue* was being prepared, two famous women died within a week: Princess Diana in Paris and Mother Teresa in Calcutta. Their lives were a study in contrasts. One was steeped in British nobility, glamorous, attractive, and young. The other was born in a poor Albanian family, simple in dress, and had a face etched by time. Diana was divorced, raising two sons on her own, moved in sophisticated circles, and died prematurely as a result of a tragic car accident. Mother Teresa had chosen celibacy, worked among the destitute of Calcutta, and died peacefully in her old age. One did not speak about her faith, while the other was overtly religious.

Both, however, shared an essential quality—compassion. Through different experiences, Mother Teresa and Princess Diana had learned that life on this earth is hard and, at times, very painful and sad, regardless of one's financial status. As sensitive human beings, they felt called to move beyond just the observation of others' suffering—indeed from genuine pity to active compassion. One established a home for the sick and the dying of one of the largest and neediest cities of the world, and her example has been multiplied in many countries, helping countless thousands. The other intentionally visited and supported orphanages and hospitals and championed the movement for abolishing land mines that maim and kill thousands of innocents.

Mother Teresa once said, "To be a saint is to do God's will with a smile." All of us can learn a valuable lesson from the lives of these two famous women. Their actions challenge us as Christians to see others through the eyes of Christ and do something for the lonely, sad, sick, hungry, and the dying of this world. It may be a prayer or a word of encouragement, a gift or a meal, or simply a loving touch. They also remind us of the precious fragility of our lives and of the value of each moment. In different ways, they bring to our memory the thoughtful prayer of Moses: "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12, NIV).

With great satisfaction, our editorial team brings to you this new issue of *Dialogue*, which rounds out our ninth volume—26 issues published in four parallel language editions and read all over the world! It has been prepared so that you, our dear readers, will enjoy a rich variety of substantial essays, letters to the editor, interesting interviews, action reports, book reviews, church statements, and personal stories that will challenge, enrich, and inspire you. You will notice that these have been written by Adventist authors from many countries, reflecting our motto: "An international journal of faith, thought, and action." Check out the "Interchange" section and begin corresponding with some of our readers who live in exotic locations—from Brunei and Libya to Mauritius and the Solomon Islands.

We are beginning to plan for the three issues of our 10th volume. So, be ready for some surprises!



Humberto M. Rasi, *Editor-in-chief*

Encouragement from Switzerland

Congratulations on the continued excellence of *Dialogue*. We especially appreciate your addressing contemporary issues from a Christian and, more specifically, Seventh-day Adventist perspective. This journal will no doubt enrich every thoughtful Adventist young adult. Some of its articles are very useful for evangelism among friends and acquaintances.

We welcome contacts from other Adventist young adults. Our e-mail address: belloy@vtx.ch. We also wish to invite *Dialogue* readers to visit our web page: <http://dmtwww.epfl.ch/~ebelloy/>.

ERIC AND DEBORA BELLOY
Switzerland

Adventists and fiction

In "Adventists and fiction: Another look" (*Dialogue* 8:3), the author's arguments justifying the teaching of literary fiction in Adventist schools and the reading of fiction by Adventists are rather weak. To be specific:

1. The article offers no clear distinction between literary allegory and fiction; however, the former is used to justify the latter as acceptable reading for Adventists. To place *Pilgrim's Progress* on par with all works of fiction is absurd.

2. In two Bible parables, the author sees a divine *imprimatur* for literary fiction: the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and the parable of the trees (Judges 9:8-15). Jesus simply used a contemporary folk story to teach a lesson. Judges includes a historic incident, in which an allegoric parable is told. How can one build a principle based on two minuscule biblical narratives?

3. The author suggests that Ellen White condemned popular novels of her day as unsuitable for Adventists, and argues that if she were writing today, she would shift her condemnation even more toward popular entertainment as is offered through movies and television. I agree, but to conclude from this that

fiction is acceptable reading now is beyond my understanding of Ellen White.

ARIEL SERGIO GÓMEZ
Martínez, Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA

The author responds:

Mr. Gómez finds my arguments advocating intelligent reading of fiction to be “rather weak.” Let the reader examine Mr. Gómez’s points and the relevant portions of my article and decide. I have carefully read his letter, reread my article, and feel satisfied to let it stand without further defense.

In the limited space offered to letter writers, I propose this challenge to Mr. Gómez and any other readers of the “anti-fiction” camp. Present a credible argument against fiction writing/reading per se, a point I discuss under “Common sense” in my article. Do not argue that this or that book is pernicious. Instead, argue that as a genre fiction has something inherently evil about it. If you cannot make this argument credibly, then I think you have conceded the point and we are on to discussing the relative merits of individual books—one of my favorite pastimes!

SCOTT MONCRIEFF
Berrien Springs, Michigan
U.S.A.

God and the city

Does God love the city (*Dialogue* 9:1)? Or does He merely put up with this inevitable worldly organization? Genesis presents the theme of the city in negative terms. Cain built the first city after he turned his back on God and headed east (Genesis 4:16-17). After the Flood the first city built was Babel, again after the builders headed east (11:2). When Lot chose Sodom he also headed east (13:11). He started from Abram’s altar between Bethel and Ai. As in the Tabernacle, Bethel (House of God) was west of the altar. Ai (Ruins) was to the east. Lot chose to go east, and soon

Sodom was in ruins.

The city could well represent human self-reliance as opposed to reliance on God. However, today we have a problem. Communication has created a global village. We have multiplied and filled the earth, and even in remote places we cannot escape the global village. Though we have multiple languages, we also have instant translation. Throughout the world our universities share information and our corporations spread technology. It seems that it is indeed time for God again to disrupt this great city which we have built. So be it.

JIM MILLER
Madison, Wisconsin
U.S.A.

Greetings from Brazil

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Adventist University Students in Bahia, Brazil, established five years ago. Our group—known as AUABA, in Portuguese—includes 287 students. We also maintain in our mailing list 146 Adventist professionals and 125 senior high school students. AUABA has its own constitution and is officially recognized by the education council of the city and the state.

We appreciate *Dialogue* for the quality of its articles, the relevance of the topics addressed, and the encouragement it brings by reminding us that God never forgets His children. How can we receive enough copies not only for the members of AUABA, but also for outreach among our fellow students at the Federal University of Bahia who also like the journal?

Are there other printed materials that we can use for evangelism on the campus?

May I also suggest that you list in *Dialogue* upcoming congresses of university students sponsored by AMiCUS; some of us may be able to attend. Have you ever thought of organizing a World Congress of Adventist University Students?

We welcome communications and

exchanges with other student associations. Our address: Rua Arquimedes Goncalves 28, Jardim Baiano; Salvador, Bahia; 40050-300 Brazil.

ALEXANDRE SANTOS DE OLIVEIRA
President, AUABA
Bahia, BRAZIL

The editors respond:

Thank you, Alexandre, for your informative letter! We are mailing you several copies of Dialogue to help you expand your campus outreach project. To increase your regular order of the journal, please contact the directors of the Education and Youth Ministries Departments of your Union. You may also write to our regional representatives for your area, listed on page 2. One inexpensive publication used for evangelism by some Adventist university students is the pamphlet, “Would You Like to Know God Personally?” which can be obtained from the Campus Crusade for Christ. We will consider seriously your two suggestions. There is an increasing number of national and regional congresses being held for Adventist students, which we will try to list as we become aware of them. It would certainly be great to organize a World Congress of Adventist University Students!

Timely advise

All the issues covered in *Dialogue* are relevant, informative, thought-provoking, and spiritually uplifting. John

Continued on page 26

Write to us!

We welcome your comments, reactions and questions, but limit your letters to 200 words. Write to *Dialogue Letters*: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A. You can also fax: (301) 622-9627, or E-mail: 74617.464@compuserve.com). Letters selected for publication may be edited for clarity or space.

the universe does not function in a mechanical way, controlled by impersonal laws. Yes, there are laws that govern all phenomena, seen and unseen. But those laws are the expression of the will and power of the Person who is the truth, who holds the universe together. “Thou art the Lord, thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and thou preservest all of them” (Nehemiah 9:6). The verb translated “to preserve” could be also rendered, “to keep alive.” Life is preserved by life; intelligent life is preserved by the power and the very source of intelligent life. Ultimate reality cares for that which exists; only persons care.

Truth as a Person reveals the nature of ultimate reality: God is the truth. This truth humbled Himself in a mysterious way and entered our world in the form of a human being (see Philippians 2:5-11). Ultimate reality is no longer exclusively transcendental because He was and is now among us. John says that we saw Him “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Truth thus expresses Himself in humility. He assumes the form of the needy and the unsophisticated, and embarrasses our pride and self-sufficiency.

Truth in Christ and through Christ is measureless. The student of Scripture looks, as it were, into a fountain that deepens and broadens as he gazes into its depths. . . . The truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced, but never explained. Its height and breadth and depth pass our knowledge. We may task our imagination to the utmost, and then we shall see only dimly the outlines of a love that is unexplainable, that is as high as heaven, but that stooped to the earth to stamp the image of God on all mankind.—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 128-129.

The nature of truth was revealed not only in the incarnation, but at the cross as well. The Truth died in order to preserve alive the phenomena, the created world. He who holds the universe together died, and yet the universe did not collapse and die with Him! Once more the unexpected happened, and it was revealed that the truth can sacrifice Himself for the creature and continue at the same time to hold the universe together.

Truth as a Person further reveals the sublime reality that at the very core of the divine Being we can only find love, selfless love (see 1 John 4:8). On the cross the lie was unmasked: the image created by Satan about God and His love was clearly shown to be false. Truth conquered Satan’s lie.

3. Truth is to be appropriated

When Jesus said, “I am the truth,” He expected a response. Since Jesus is the truth, we are to relate to Him not in terms of a detached scientific objectivity but in terms of an “I-Thou” relationship. We understand people by being involved in their lives, by participating with them in the experience of being alive; through *koinonía*. We can have fellowship with the Truth because it is a person. In Him is located the origin, goal, and nature of our existence and of the whole world. It is in Him that a proper worldview is to be found, because He is the one who gives cohesiveness and meaning to the universe.

What is needed is willingness to surrender our *autárkeia* to Him. This in essence is freedom: “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32). We are slaves to sin that manifests itself in our claim to self-sufficiency. The lie consists in the belief that we can find our own way in the universe, that we can discover permanent meaning for our lives through scientific, technological or philosophical inquiries. Submission to the truth frees us from the narrowness of self-sufficiency and integrates us into fellowship with Him who said, “I am the truth.”

Truth is apprehended not only through a personal encounter with the Lord, but also through His Word. Truth can be conceptualized, codified, embodied in words. God uses human language, in spite of its limitations, as a valid vehicle for the communication of truth. This takes place under the revelation and inspiration of God. Therefore Paul says, “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Truth determines not only our understanding of reality and our comprehension of the world around us, but also the way we live. Any compartmentalization of truth in terms of ethics and religion, science and faith, is a rejection of the fact that truth is a Person and that it is He who integrates all knowledge into a single meaningful totality. We are to live according to the truth (see 1 John 1:6). We need to display truth both in speech and conduct.

Conclusion

The history of human thought indicates that we are by nature searchers. We probe the vastness of the universe, the depth of the oceans. We also seek to penetrate the microcosm. We explore all the realms of knowledge.

However, our search for ultimate truth is over. Yes, we are still challenged to seek a deeper understanding of truth, to explore its rich and complex forms; but the search for its very essence is over. It is over because He came to us and He said, “I am the Truth.” His claim sets limits to our self-sufficiency, for truth is transcendental, revelational, and personal. And we can grasp that truth through personal fellowship with Him, and by obediently following Him. 🙏

Born in Puerto Rico, Angel Manuel Rodríguez (Th.D., Andrews University) is associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A.

**All Scripture passages in this article are quoted from the Revised Standard Version.*

He was an unusual person—absent-minded and generous, sensitive to criticism and modest. He faced a series of psychological crises. He had trouble maintaining good social relations. Yet, he was one of history's rare giants—a brilliant physicist, a superb astronomer and mathematician, and a natural philosopher.

When Isaac Newton, that rare English genius and gentleman, died in 1727 at the age of 85, he left an indelible mark in every endeavor he set his mind upon. We know his laws of motion and theories of gravitation. We know him for his contribution to the understanding of the universe. But rarely do we know his contributions to Christian theology. After extensive study of his writings, I have concluded that Newton was not only a great scientist, but also a great theologian—a true Adventist and a creationist.¹

My journey to the understanding of Newton as a theologian began some 45 years ago when I became a Seventh-day Adventist after attending an evangelistic series on the fascinating Bible prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. I was then studying at the Polytechnic School of the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, pursuing a degree in engineering.

The university environment was by no means nurturing to my faith. I was bombarded from every direction. Materialism, humanistic preoccupations, and a narrow scientific worldview converged to question my new-found faith. I needed something to defend what I believed to be true, and I wanted my defense to be sound and logical.

In my search for suitable literature, I came across a 1950 Portuguese version of Newton's *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse*—not in the university library or in a bookstore, but on a roadside sale of old books. I was delighted to find that the same Isaac Newton whom we, as engineering students, had known in optics, mechanics, calculus, and gravitation, had dedicated a significant amount of time and effort to biblical chronology and to the interpretation of prophecy! Indeed the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* lists Newton's *The Chronology of Ancient Kings Amended* and *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* among his five most important works, the others being *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia*

Isaac Newton: scientist and theologian

In him the profession of science and the practice of faith had a perfect blend and balance.

Mathematica, Opticks, and Arithmetica Universalis.

My discovery and study of Newton as a Christian scholar led me to understand him as a creationist, an Adventist, and an interpreter of prophecies.

by
Ruy Carlos
de Camargo
Vieira

Newton, the creationist

Robert Boyle, a pioneer in experiments on the properties of gases, and a strong promoter of Christianity, who advocated the scientific study of nature as a religious duty, died in 1691. His will provided for an annual lecture series intended to defend Christianity against unbelief. Richard Bentley, a clergyman and distinguished classical scholar, delivered the first series of lectures in 1692.

In preparation for his lecture, Bentley sought Newton's help, who was already famous for his *Principia* (1687). Bentley hoped to demonstrate that,

according to physical laws that rule the natural world, it should have been impossible for heavenly bodies to appear without the intervention of a divine agent.

From then on, Bentley and Newton exchanged an “almost-theological” correspondence. In his first letter to Bentley, Newton declared: “When I wrote my tract on our system, I had my eyes turned to principles that could act considering mankind’s belief in a Divinity, and nothing is more grateful for me than to see it useful for this goal.”²

Newton wrote again: “The movements the planets have today could not be originated from an isolated natural cause, but they have been imposed by an intelligent agent.”³

Other writings further establish Newton’s strong belief in a Creator, whom he often referred as the “Pantokrator,” the Almighty, “with authority upon all existing things, upon the form of the natural world and the course of human history.”

Newton was clear in stating his convictions: “We must believe that there is only one God or supreme monarch Whom we may fear and keep His laws and give Him honour and glory. We must believe that He is the father from Whom all things come forth, and that loves His people as their father. We must believe that He is the ‘Pantokrator,’ Lord of everything, with irresistible and unlimited power and domain, from which we have no hope to escape if we rebel and follow

other gods, or if we transgress the laws of His sovereignty, and from which we can hope great recompenses if we make His will. We must believe that He is the God of the Jews, Who created the heavens and the earth and all that in them exists, as expressed in the Ten Commandments, so that we may thank Him for our being and for all the blessings of this life, and refrain to use His name in vain or to adore images or other gods.”⁴

Newton, the Adventist

Newton was also concerned with the restoration of the Christian Church to its apostolic purity. His study of prophecy led him to conclude that ultimately the church, in spite of its current shortcomings, would triumph. William Whiston, who succeeded Newton as professor of mathematics at Cambridge and wrote *The Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies*, declared after Newton’s death that “he and Samuel Clarke had given up fighting for the Church’s restoration toward the standards of the primitive apostolic times because Newton’s interpretation of the prophecies had led them to expect a long era of corruption before it could be effective.”⁵

Newton believed in a faithful remnant that should witness up to the end of times. One of his biographers writes: “By true church, to which the prophecies pointed, Newton did not intend to comprehend all self-declared Christians, but a remnant, a few people dispersed,

chosen by God, people that being not moved by any interest, instruction or the power of human authorities, are able to dedicate themselves sincerely and diligently to the search of truth.” “Newton was far from identifying whatever was around him as a true apostolic Christianity. His internal chronology had put the day of the final trumpet two centuries forward.”⁶

In Daniel 2 Newton saw the development of the history of humankind up to the end of time, when Christ should establish His reign. He wrote: “And a stone cut out without hands, which fell upon the feet of the Image, and broke all the four Metals to pieces, and became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth; it further represents that a new kingdom should arise, after the four, and conquer all those nations, and grow very great, and last to the end of all ages.”⁷

Dealing with the subsequent visions of Daniel, Newton makes clear that after the fourth reign on the earth should come the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His eternal kingdom: “The prophecy of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven relates to the second coming of Christ.”⁸

Newton, the prophetic interpreter

Newton was not satisfied with the then-current interpretation of prophecy. He held that the interpreters had “no previous method... [They] distort parts of prophecy, putting them out of their natural order, at their own convenience.”⁹

In harmony with his approach to scientific issues, Newton established standards for prophetic interpretation, with a codification of the prophetic language intended to eliminate the possibility of distortion “at one’s convenience,” and adopted the criterion to let Scripture unveil and explain Scripture.

Thus, Newton’s interpretation differed from the majority of his contemporaries. He was not interested in applying prophecy to explain the political history of England, as some others did, but rather to focus toward the study of the beginnings of the great apostasy that occurred in the church, and toward the final restoration of the church to its purity.

This interest in the restoration of the church to its apostolic purity led Newton to a study of the second coming of Christ.

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Newton's self-assessment

In spite of his many achievements and international renown, Newton was modest. Shortly before his death he said, "I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

His concern for the future led him to the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. He, like the dispensationalists of today, assigned the last week to an undetermined future at which time the return of the Jews and the reconstruction of Jerusalem would begin, to be culminated with the glorious second coming of Christ.

This interpretation, of course, is contrary to Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. However, some of Newton's principles of interpretation are in consonance with Adventist ones. For example, consider Newton's interpretation of symbols:

"Tempestuous winds, or the motion of clouds (is put) for wars;... Rain, if not immoderate, and dew, and living water, (are put) for the graces and doctrines of the Spirit; and the defect of rain, for spiritual barrenness. In the earth, the dry land and congregated waters, as a sea, a river, a flood, are put for the people of several regions, nations, and dominions.... And several animals as a Lion, a Bear, a Leopard, a Goat, according to their qualities, are put for several king-

doms and bodies politic.... A Ruler is signified by his riding on a beast; a Warrior and Conqueror, by having a sword and bow; a potent man, by his gigantic stature; a Judge, by weights and measures;... honour and glory, by a splendid apparel; royal dignity, by purple or scarlet, or by a crown; righteousness, by white and clean robes; wickedness, by spotted and filthy garments."¹⁰

In the interpretation of time-related prophecies, Newton held that "Daniel's days are years."¹¹ He applied this principle to the 70 weeks¹² and to "three and half times" period of apostasy. Newton makes clear that the "prophetic day" is "one solar year" long, and that "time" in the prophecy is also equivalent to one solar year: "And times and laws were hence forward given into his hand, for a time, times and half a time, or three times and an half; that is, for 1260 solar years, reckoning a time for a Calendar year of 360 days, and a day for a solar year."¹³

Conclusion

Newton was extremely cautious in his religious beliefs. That may partly explain why he did not publish his theological works during his lifetime. Perhaps Newton, aware of the English religious environment, did not want to be accused of heresy, but instead pursued truth as he saw it in the Bible. Fortunately, his theological works were published posthumously.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we may not agree with all of Newton's interpretations of Bible prophecy. But we can

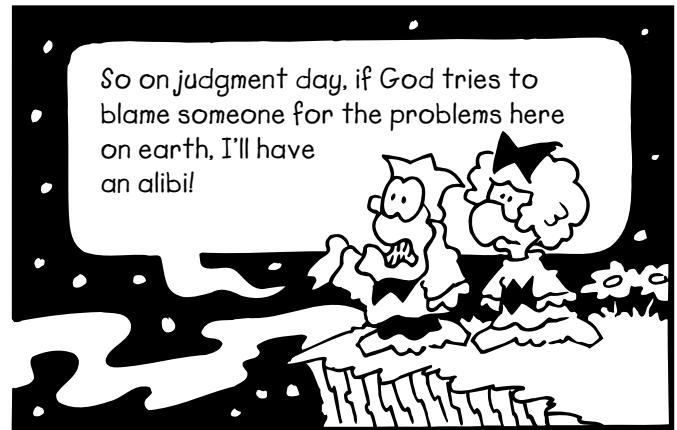
profit from his theological works and his careful methodology so that we can stand firm in faith, even while pursuing scientific studies. Here was a giant of science who was not ashamed of his faith and who devoted time to understand God's Word both as it predicts the movement of history and provides guidance to order one's personal life. 📖

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Pontius' Puddle



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Ruth is smart, beautiful, young, and compassionate. She has attended college, holds an attractive job, and for her age surprises others with her spirituality. Spirituality in a secularized age that is so deeply entrenched with the magic of technology?

Be not surprised. Ruth has found a new kind of “spirituality.” While she may use the technological advances as a matter of routine, she is not beholden to

And so is the devil.

* * *

Ruth is not alone. In the past few years, thousands like her, children of Postmodernism, have become followers of the New Age. They may have been raised Methodists, Catholics, or even Seventh-day Adventists. The fact is that the New Age has become a wide-spreading religious phenomenon, attracting thousands of weary and rootless followers of traditional Christianity.

This article will deal with four questions: What is postmodernism? What is New Age spirituality? Is there a relationship between the two? What cautions should we take against these subtle dangers?

What is postmodernism?

Postmodernism is not one worldview, but a combination of them.¹ Federic Jameson, professor at Cornell University, defines one sure sign of postmodern thought as “historical deafness.” The postmodern person refuses to think historically, and as a result is in a difficult position to even define what constitutes an “Age.”²

A key symptom of postmodern thought, then, is the denial of time as an explanatory dimension of events. In contrast, the Bible views historical events as linked teleologically, proceeding with meaning, purpose, and direction. The biblical view of time is governed by a philosophy of history whose over-arching theme is the cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan. This view of time has recognizable milestones: Creation, the Fall, the covenant, the Christ event, the work of redemption, the investigative trial, and the second coming of Christ with its assurance of an end and a new beginning. Postmodernist “historical deafness” denies the relevance of the biblical-historical line and the truthfulness of its major events. Thus, if history has no longer any value, neither do the facts that determine it.

Postmodern thought is preoccupied with the present, sensing no need for historical roots or for a beckoning destiny. This irrelevance of history and destiny produces a superficiality that permeates postmodern culture with its principal icons: a life torn between the compulsions of technology and the rhetoric of the marketplace; a new emotional soil dominated by the concerns of the present; and an irrationality originating in the

Postmodernism and New Age: the subtle connections

Against the alluring power of the New Age, safety lies only in grounding ourselves firmly in God and His Word. There is no substitute.

by
Fernando
Aranda
Fraga

science or its magic. From that magic she has jumped to a mystery—the mystery of mysticism, of the fascinating world of Eastern religions where the “I” can achieve its maximum potential without the help of reason or the God of the Bible.

Ruth has made a quantum leap. As a child of Postmodernism, she denies history, time, the God of the universe, and the ultimate meaning of the Cross. But she is not bad morally or ethically. She has now embraced the values of a New Age. The leap is subtle, inviting, and often seems satisfying. She is happy.

rejection of modernity and its blind faith in science. The result is what J. F. Lyotard³ calls a negation of the “narrative teachers”—rational programs “that sung the hopes and faith in the liberation of humanity.”⁴

Thus, while Postmodernism may have suffered a radical loss in what it has rejected, it has set up for itself impressive socio-cultural projects, supported by strong political-religious girders. These global projects, under the euphemism of a “New World Order,” are strongly ideological (how ironical that Postmodernism can choose an ideology, even as it denies the ideology of history) and give economics a central role.

Of course, the postmodernist ideology of economics cannot stand on its own. It must put on the garment of democracy in political matters and pluralism in religious matters. The stage is thus set for fusing into one hegemonic movement those ideas whose religious and cultural meeting place is none other than the New Age.

Postmodernism, in order to be credible, must assume anthropological and social constituents. The first takes advantage of the hedonistic tendency of a post-industrial, technological society and offers to meet the constant search for pleasure by putting an end to the “ethics of duty.”⁵ The second is accomplished by an “institutional unhooking at all levels: political-ideological, religious, familial, etc.”⁶ Postmodernism is thus characterized by a fragmented view of reality, an operational orientation, anthropocentrism, and relativism.

In its zeal to attack secularism and the cold rationalism that brought on modernity, Postmodernity highlights the role of emotions, feelings, and the imagination. The social and cultural effects of modernity are clearly in evidence: a dying natural environment, alienated humans, an increase in crime and poverty, a lack of individual and national identity. But in the face of these, what has Postmodernity to offer? A counter-cultural movement with its immediate and non-deferred gratification, an irrationality manifested in new forms of knowledge, sexual freedom, and social anarchy.⁷

Meanwhile, science also changes its paradigm and abandons the rational-empirical model that aspired to universal-ity and absolute objectivity of knowledge.

As a result, it acquires a probabilistic character, depends more than ever on the eye of the observant, and is no longer firm and secure in the continuum of the past and the present. Such a stance leads scientists to find themselves to be no different from the person on the street as they face the mystery of reality. The impact of such a position can easily be detected in pseudoscientific concepts such as alternative medicine and astrology, for example, which are shared by Eastern mysticism.

Thus in postmodern counter-culture, the New Age movement finds a favorable soil to take root and grow.

What is New Age?

Among the early embracers of the New Age are stellar figures from varied disciplines, such as Abraham Maslow, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, Carl Rogers, Aldous Huxley, Paul Tillich, and Shirley MacLaine, among others. One author, Marilyn Ferguson, a true architect of the New Age,⁸ announced in her book *The Conspiracy of Aquarius* the abandonment of the previous “Age of Pisces” and the entry into an astronomical age governed by a different and universal conscience.

The New Age assimilates the Eastern worldview into its own socio-cultural context. At a time in history marked by spiritual anxieties,⁹ New Age offers religious mystique in a charming garb: horoscopes, meditations, crystals, and Eastern mysticism.¹⁰ At its core, New Age has a religiosity that mixes suggestions, magic, reverence for nature, and a search for the new and anomalous, offering an “authentic” spiritual experience.

But what are some of the primary characteristics of this New Age phenomenon? First, it is extremely diverse. It includes aspects as wide ranging as spiritualism, theosophy, occultism, astrology, transcendentalism, and mental healing.

Second, it includes trends in contemporary sociological movements, such as the anarchism and hedonism of the 1960s, an embrace of Zen philosophy, naturalist romanticism, oriental mysticism, and an experimental lifestyle of drugs and sex, all leading up to a utopic experience.¹¹

Third, the New Age has reversed the rebellious and polemic trend of the

1960s to present itself as a meaningful and integrated experience that affirms the potential of the individual, allows a bourgeois lifestyle, and provides a religious guise for such activities.

Fourth, the New Age is religious in its pretensions. But the religion exists in a relativistic environment in which nobody presumes to have all the truth. It is the religion of good wishing and love, which exerts few demands and offers only rewards. It has no room for the Cross, for divine grace, or for human accountability, such as biblical Christianity calls for.¹²

Fifth, the New Age, in line with the anti-historical stance of Postmodernism, is a destructure of reality. It achieves this by means of its two concepts: karma and reincarnation. At the basis of karma lies “the immovable conviction that there is no unmerited happiness and no unmerited misery, that each man shapes his own fortune down to the smallest details.”¹³ Whatever happens occurs because of karma; it is the governing force of life. Reincarnation, another New Age tenet, denies the reality of death and affirms the immortality of the soul. Human life never dies but moves from existence to existence, in different forms and levels of consciousness, until it reaches the ultimate stage of being equal with God. Good works is the key to upward progression in reincarnation.

Postmodernism and New Age

Having looked at some of the basic claims of Postmodernity and the New Age, and having noted how the former provided the soil in which the latter could take root, now we are ready to see some links between the two. And there are several.

First, although each are anchored in its own worldview, they share an anti-rationalism that denies the relevance of teleological history and affirms the supremacy of the present.¹⁴ This “methodical irrationality” is, perhaps, the basis for other elements constituting the paradigms of Postmodernity and the New Age.

Second, both share a certain pseudo-religious appeal. The truth, ever so light, of the New Age is a perfect ally of postmodern ethics, which are ever so weak. This new spirituality of our times offers to its adherents the security of religion and the freedom of

Postmodernity. The potent combination of the two rejects all past legacies and all normative value systems. Without any pretension of permanency, they loose themselves in all cultures, sowing distrust toward anything that is basic and fundamental in human life. This distrust is perceived politically and socially as a strong predominance of dissent that replaces the previous “modern” consensus. A society governed by dissent is quickly made chaotic and insecure. If anything goes, what then is fair? What is ethical? What is normative?

Third, there is the nexus of humanism and religion. The New Age and Postmodernism offer a humanistic vision of truth and life that takes into account all religious and cultural thinking in order to achieve a universal harmony. While it has no use for the Christian command to view life from the perspective of a universal controversy and seek the higher ground of a redemptive lifestyle, the New Age does not hesitate to quote the Bible, use biblical illustrations, and in some contexts seems almost Christian. It also does not hesitate to tap concepts from other religions that help in its search for universal appeal and its religious offer of “inner peace.”

Fourth, New Age, functioning in a world of Postmodernity, ceaselessly works toward a consensus whose base is distinctly permissive and whose contents definitely point toward the deification of humanity, the sanctity of nature, and the eternal survival of the soul. Thus it can be characterized as an utopia of the present—an aspiration that modern humanity has not achieved, but would like to. This glorification of the human, so central to the New Age, completes the circle initiated by naturalism and secularism, whose roots go back to the Renaissance and the post-medieval world.

Fifth, both Postmodernity and the New Age wander between the agnostic heritage of the atheist and the neopantheistic preoccupation of the Eastern mystic. It is agnostic because it possesses a religious glaze of tolerance that is founded in indifference toward true Christian experience; it is pantheistic because it finds the sacred in a deification of humanity and nature. Both postures are intermingled, and in that mystic mixture the New Age adherents seem to find their fulfillment.

The values of Postmodernity are anchored in an absolute immanence. This postmodern version of agnosticism attempts to replace that failure of knowledge of the divine with a search of what is holy in itself: “You will be as God,” said the serpent in the Garden of Eden, and Postmodernity and the New Age seem to say, “You are the god.”

New Age sympathizers will argue that theirs is a return to a true spirituality, which surpasses all the known forms of religiosity and brings the human back to God and nature. Let’s not be fooled. The New Age offers no such thing; it is simple Neopantheism, leading the human to self-glorification.

Christians, beware!

After seeing the arguments, the attractions, and the assertions of Postmodernity and the New Age, as Christians what should we do? *Beware* is a good point to start. The dangers are as real and as alluring as in the Garden of Eden, and there are at least four significant points to remember:

1. All is valid in the New Age. What matters most is the maximum realization of human potential and the human’s intimate union with the wholeness of nature.

2. The New Age rejects all that is basic to true Christianity. It ignores the reality of the human predicament: the problem of sin. And as such, it has no use for the great Christian truths as the need for human reconciliation with God, the absolute necessity of the incarnation, and the Cross.

3. The New Age is a pseudo-religion. While rejecting the fundamental truths of God’s Word, it attempts to establish a new universal religiousness in which men and women can achieve their full potential without God. The key is human power and potential within. Away with any notion that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)! Down with the truth that all need the power and grace of God to be freed from sin!

4. The alluring power of the New Age and similar forms of counterfeit spirituality will increase in the future, and the only safety lies in grounding ourselves firmly in God and His Word. There is no substitute. Shallow Christians are easy prey for the New Age.

As Christians, we do have a respon-

sibility to ourselves, to God’s good earth, and to our neighbors. But that stewardship is not a monopoly of the New Age. Even as we assume that stewardship and meet its demands, we must never let it come in the way of our most fundamental responsibility and privilege—that constant communion and loving relationship with the Creator God who is personal and holy, and who motivates us to serve others prompted by His love. He lives, and because He lives, so shall we. 🙏

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The Black Obelisk (1845), the Moabite Stone (1868), and the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) are big names in the history of biblical archaeology. But has that history come to an end? Not by any means.

In the past few decades, a number of seals, seal impressions, rings, bone boxes, and other ancient artifacts have surfaced—some of them in museums, some from private collectors, and others from recent excavations. These archaeological nuggets have shed more light on various individuals and events mentioned hitherto only in the biblical text. This article will review some of these recent findings.

The Ring of Hanan¹

Owned by a Paris collector, this valuable ring has been known to the scholarly world since 1984. The seal's origin is unknown, but the shape of the letters indicate that it was used during the seventh century B.C. The seal is inscribed in three lines, each line separated by two parallel straight lines. The band is almost 1/10 of an inch in diameter, suggesting that it was designed for a man's finger. The inscription reads: "Belonging to Hanan, son of Hilqiyahu, the priest."

This Hilqiyahu is better known to us as Hilkiyah, the high priest during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah in the last part of the seventh century B.C. The ending *yahu* is a theophoric (divine) element often found in ancient Hebrew names in Judah; the names in the Northern Kingdom carried *yah* as an ending. It seems that this Hilqiyahu was the same high priest who discovered the scroll of Torah in the temple that triggered religious reform in Judah (see 2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34).

1 Chronicles 6:13 and 9:11 indicate that Azariah, not Hanan, succeeded Hilkiyah. The explanation could be that Azariah succeeded his father as high priest, while his younger brother Hanan functioned as a priest, just as the inscription on the seal suggests.

Azariah's name, however, appears on another bulla (seal impression) found in 1978 during Yigal Shiloh's excavation of old Jerusalem.² The inscription consists of two lines of writing separated by two parallel lines. It reads "Belonging to Azaryahu, son of Hilkiyahu." The impression does not mention the title of the owner.

Baruch's seal impression

In 1975, 250 bullae appeared in Jerusalem in the shop of an Arab antiquities dealer. Most of them were bought by several collectors, and almost 50 of them are now in the Israel Museum, while others are available to scholars for study. All these seal impressions are dated to the end of

Archaeology and the Bible

Recent discoveries shed additional light on the historical reliability of the biblical text

by
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seventh or the beginning of the sixth century B.C., just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Among these impressions, three belong to individuals mentioned in Jeremiah (Baruch, the scribe; Yerahme'el, the son of the king; Elishama, servant of the king). All three individuals seem to be contemporary, living in Judah just before the exile. During that turbulent time Judah was ruled by king Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 36).

The Bible tells us that God instructed Jeremiah to write a scroll prophesying against the king. Jeremiah's scribe Baruch wrote down everything that Jeremiah dictated to him. After reading the scroll in the temple, Baruch was instructed to read it again before high officials of the king's court. These officials (Elishama was one of them) were sympathetic to some degree to the message, but feared for Baruch. They advised him to go into hiding (Jeremiah 36:19). When the scroll was read before the king, he ordered its destruction and Yerahme'el, with other two officials, was ordered to arrest Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah.

The impression that bears Elishama's name is made of two lines of writing separated by two parallel straight lines. The first reads "Belonging to Elishama"; the second gives his title, "servant of the king." Yerahme'el's impression is made of two lines also, giving the name and the title of the owner: "Belonging to Yerahme'el, son of the king." Baruch's seal impression is made of three parts, divided by two parallel and straight lines, reading, "Belonging to Berekhyahu, son of Neriyahu, the scribe."

Another bulla with Baruch's name surfaced in 1995. It is the same as the one described above except for one significant difference: this had a fingerprint that may be Baruch's.³

A third seal impression that bears out the Baruch connection was found among the many discovered in the 1978 excavation of Jerusalem by Yigal Shiloh. This one, dated to the end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century B.C., reads "Belonging to Gemaryahu, son of Shaphan." The Bible says that when Baruch went to the temple to read the scroll, he read it in the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan (Jeremiah 36:10).

Seal of Abdi⁴

Purchased in 1993 by a London private collector, the seal of Abdi is among the very rare ones. Its inscription reads, "Belonging to Abdi servant of Hoshea." The seal is dated to the eighth century B.C. The name Abdi is the same as Obadiah. The Bible refers to three Obadiah: the prime minister of Ahab (1 Kings 18:3); a prophet; and an official of Hoshea. It is unlikely that this seal would belong to either of the first two individuals, because the seal associates the name with Hoshea, the king under whom the owner of the seal served as an official. Hoshea was the last king in Israel (2 Kings 17:1-6). He reigned from 731-722 B.C., when the Assyrians destroyed his kingdom.

Tel Dan inscription

Beginning in 1966, Avraham Biran excavated the archaeological site of Tel Dan for many seasons and the most important discovery came in 1993, when his team cleared debris from the city gate area.⁵ Part of the wall, destroyed by the Assyrian Tiglath-pileser III in 733/732

B.C., contained a fragment of an inscribed monument.

Unfortunately, the fragment has an incomplete message. It has 14 incomplete lines written in paleo-Hebrew, the script used before the exile (586 B.C.). The words are separated with dots and the inscription reads as follows:

- (2) ...my father went up
- (3) ...and my father died, he went to...
- (4) real formerly in my father's land...
- (5) I (fought against Israel?) and Hadad went in front of me...
- (6) ...my king. And I slew of (them) X footmen, Y cha-
- (7) riots and two thousand horsemen...
- (8) the king of Israel. And slew (...the kin)
- (9) g of the House of David. And I put...
- (10) their land...
- (11) other... (ru)
- (12) led over is(rael...)
- (13) siege upon...

The author of this inscription claims that Hadad went in front of him, supposedly in the battle. Hadad is the Aramean storm god, and it is probable that the owner of this stela is an Aramean. That he is not the king is obvious from line six where he refers to "my king." He is either a military commander or a vassal king, a devotee of Hadad, and subordinate to the king of Damascus. However, the most important lines are eight and nine, where Israel and "the House of David" are mentioned. This is the first reference to the phrase "House of David" outside the Bible.

Based on the shape of the letters, Biran suggested that the inscription comes from the first half of the ninth century B.C. In addition, pottery found beneath the fragment also indicates that it was placed not later than the middle of the ninth century, suggesting that the stela was erected few decades earlier.

Because the inscription is fragmented, we do not know the names of the king of Israel or Judah. This is further complicated by the fact that the name of the Aramean king did not survive either. Therefore it is difficult to reconstruct the exact history of events with certainty and find a solid biblical connection. However, it is possible that Dan suffered turbulent years between c.

885 B.C., when it was captured by Ben-hadad I (1 Kings 15:20) and c. 855 B.C., when Ahab received it back from Ben-hadad II (1 Kings 20:34).

Shortly after Ben-hadad captured Dan, it is possible that Israel regained control over Dan. During the early days of Ahab, Dan was occupied again by Arameans (probably by the owner of the stela), and later Ahab received it back from Ben-hadad II. At this time Ahab may have destroyed the monument and used some of the pieces as building material. This, however, is merely hypothetical reconstruction, and additional fragments of the same stela will be needed to construct a better picture of historical events related to ancient Dan.

Silver scroll

Between 1975 and 1980, Gabriel Barkay⁶ discovered a number of tombs in Jerusalem. Most of them, however, had been robbed long ago except one, No. 25. The tomb was dated to the end of the seventh or the beginning of the sixth century B.C., just before the exile. The tomb contained skeletal remains of 95 people, 263 complete pottery vessels, 101 pieces of jewelry (95 silver, 6 gold), many carved objects of bone and ivory, and 41 bronze and iron arrowheads. In addition, there were two small silver scrolls, tightly rolled up. One of them was about one inch long and less than one-half inch thick, while the other was one-half inch long and one-fifth of an inch thick. It was assumed that these scrolls were used as amulets and that they contained some kind of inscription.

When the scrolls were unrolled and cleaned, the inscription contained portions of Numbers 6:24-26: "May Yahweh bless you, and keep you; may Yahweh let his face shine upon you,... and give you peace." This inscription is one of the earliest and best preserved that contains the name of Yahweh.

Herod's inscription

In 1996 Ehud Netzer discovered in Masada a piece of broken pottery with an inscription called an ostrakon. This piece had Herod's name on it and was part of an amphora used for transportation (probably wine), dated to c. 19 B.C.

The inscription is in Latin and reads, "Herod the Great King of the Jews (or Judea)," the first such that mentions the full title of King Herod.



Seal impression, found in Tell el-Umeiri in 1984, mentions King Ba'alīs. (Drawing by Peter Erhard.)

Boat of Galilee

Because of a severe drought during 1985 and 1986, the level of the Sea of Galilee was significantly lower than usual. Shelley Wachsmann, an expert in underwater antiquities, organized a salvage excavation⁷ of what seemed like an outline of a boat. After several days of battle against the raising waters of the sea, the boat was fully excavated and successfully removed for conservation.

During the excavation, the archaeologists found several objects (pottery vessels, arrowheads, coins) in and around the boat. An examination of the artifacts suggests an approximate date for the boat; it might have been in use between the late first century B.C. and the second half of the first century A.D. In addition to artifact dating, the excavators sent samples of wood to a laboratory for Carbon 14 dating. These tests suggested a similar age.

According to the historian Josephus, this part of Palestine went through severe turbulence and destruction during the first Jewish revolt (67-70 A.D.). During the first year of the revolt, the Jews prepared a fleet made of fishing boats at Migdal. After Tiberias fell to Vespasian, the Romans built a fortified camp between Tiberias and Migdal. During the night, the Jews launched a surprise attack, then escaped to the Sea of Galilee. The next day the Roman fleet attacked the Jews on the sea, pushing them toward the shores, where they were slaughtered. Many Jewish boats were sunk. The number of the dead was estimated at 6,700.

The vessel was 26.5 feet long, 7.5 feet wide, and 4.5 feet high. Archaeologists suggest that it was made to carry up to 15 people. A boat like this could easily have accommodated Jesus and His disciples in their many voyages across the Sea of Galilee.

Caiaphas' name on a bone box

During November 1990, a burial cave was discovered in Peace Forest, south of Jerusalem. Excavators found⁸ several ossuaries or bone boxes, some turned upside down (the sign that the cave was forcefully penetrated); however, some still in place where they were originally placed. The excavation yielded bones from six different individuals: two infants (2-5 years of age), a teenage boy (15 years), an adult woman, and an old man (about 60 years). During the time of Jesus, Jews had a custom of using these ossuaries as secondary burial containers for the remains of their dead. A body would be placed in a cave to decompose, and then bones would be put into a box called an ossuary.

Two of the ossuaries had lids. These lids were made of limestone and were of greater significance than the others since, they had the name of Caiaphas inscribed on the narrow side of each box. One of these boxes was beautifully carved, indicating that it belonged to someone important and wealthy. The inscription reads: "Joseph, son of Caiaphas." This does not necessarily indicate that Caiaphas was Joseph's immediate parent. Caiaphas may refer to a family name, that served as designation for the family of Joseph.

The bones of the elderly man were probably those of the man called Joseph. Unfortunately, the Bible does not indicate the real name of the high priest at the time of Jesus' trial. It gives us only the Greek version of Caiaphas. However, Josephus mentions the full name: Joseph Caiaphas, who served as high priest in Jerusalem from 18-36 A.D.

Andrews University involvement

Andrews University has been doing excavations in Palestine since the late 1960s when Tell Hesban was excavated under the directorship of the late Siegfried Horn. After the excavation was completed in the late 1970s, the Andrews

University team started another operation under the MPP (Madaba Plains Project) name. The major target was Tell el-Umeiri, a site located south of Amman, capital of Jordan. During the first season of excavations in 1984 they found an interesting seal impression. It simply reads "Belonging to Milkom' or the servant of Ba'alyaša." In the Hebrew Bible the same name is spelled slightly differently (Ba'alīs). It is mentioned only once and represents the name of an Ammonite king (Jeremiah 40:14). Before this discovery, Ba'alyaša (Baalīs) was known only through the biblical text.

Tell el-Umeiri was one of the Reubenite towns. After several seasons, the excavators uncovered a fortification system made of double walls, rampart, and a dry moat at the base of the site. This fortification from the Early Iron I period (c. 1200 B.C.) is the best preserved in all of Palestine.

In addition to Tell el-Umeiri, the MPP team started excavating another important site, Tell Jalul, in 1992. This is one of the largest sites in Transjordan. After several seasons of excavations, the team unearthed a paved road leading to the city gates (9th/8th century B.C.), and a large pillared building (7th/6th century B.C.), believed to be a storage house. It is possible that this site was Sihon's Heshbon, destroyed by the Israelites during the time of the conquest.

Archaeological discoveries such as these, which have taken place in the last few years, continue to enrich our understanding of the Bible and strengthen our confidence in its content as a reliable historical document. 📖

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Continued on page 31



Ljiljana (Lilo) Ljubisic

Dialogue with an Adventist world-class athlete



She is young. She is beautiful. She is confident. And she is blind. But blindness from infancy has not kept Ljiljana (Lilo) Ljubisic from becoming a world-renowned athlete, winning several Olympic medals. She has competed in four Paralympic Games, including the 1996 Atlanta Olympics when she broke two world records for the totally blind—earning two bronze medals. Twelve years earlier in Los Angeles she won a silver medal in Team Handball for the blind. In 1988 at Seoul she grabbed a bronze in shot put. The 1992 Barcelona games brought her a gold medal in discus and a silver medal in shot put. In the 1994 Berlin World Championships she broke the world record in discus and won the gold. Today Lilo is one of the most successful Paralympic athletes in the world.

In addition to her athletic involvements, Lilo is a professional speaker for conventions, corporations, schools, and churches worldwide. Born in Yugoslavia and educated in Canada, she has traveled to all the five continents, carrying a message of hope and confidence. Lilo attributes her success to a strong God-given desire to overcome her circumstances and to give hope to millions of people of all ages. Married to Robert Andersen and living in British Columbia,

Canada, Lilo is a committed Seventh-day Adventist.

■ *As a professional athlete you have traveled broadly and associated with many other successful athletes. What is the biggest lesson you've learned from your high-profile life?*

I have learned to be humble and to be sensitive to God's will and His guidance in my life. Every day doors open and close, and each day is an exciting opportunity to learn how to give God the right-of-way.

■ *What has helped you most to be successful?*

My abiding faith in God is always first. But in addition, the following are perhaps the most important: First, challenge yourself to do the best you can with the talents with which you are blessed. If you give something 100 percent, then success will come your way. It is very important to set goals and dream big. Being able to visualize your dream brings you closer to your achievement—especially in my case since I'm

blind. Second, grasp the power and strength in teamwork. No one stands alone. Find people who will support your dream and will help you to make it a reality. Third, focus on what you *can* do and not on what you can't.

■ *Many people would consider being blind a limitation to getting ahead in life. Would you agree?*

I find myself frustrated, not less fortunate. My biggest frustration, however, comes from the limitations other people place on me—their perceptions of what I can do and what I can't. People want to place me in specific careers that in their view would be appropriate for the blind, such as a receptionist or a teacher of the disabled, but definitely not to travel, to be a public speaker or an athlete.

I have to find ways of being creative to do the same activities that sighted people do. We all have challenges. Mine are just more evident, and I have to overcome them just like everybody else who is striving for success.

■ *What was the cause of your blindness?*

I was born with normal sight. But in my infancy a doctor misdiagnosed chicken pox as the flu and prescribed sulfa antibiotics. As a result I began suffering the effects of an allergic reaction to the medication that caused hair growth underneath my eyelids. The hair scratched my corneas every time I blinked. Tears were always running down my cheeks. This very painful, constant irritation hurt my eyes and prevented me from living a normal life. Between 1988 and 1990 I underwent five corneal transplants and nine operations. I lost and gained my sight five times during that period. Still, due to body rejections of the cornea, infections, and perforations of cornea tissues, I gradually became blind. It was the lowest point of my life.

■ *Is there a single individual to whom you are most grateful for the success in your life?*

Yes, my mother. While I was growing up in Yugoslavia, she taught me to pursue my dreams. She instilled in me



John Ap

Dialogue with an Adventist urban and tourism planner



John Ap, assistant professor in the department of hotel and tourism management at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, is an urban planner of parks and open spaces. A native of Sydney, he is a first-generation Australian-born Chinese and has received a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. He researches the impact of tourism from the residents' perspective, directs surveys to help theme park managers, conducts academic studies on service qualities for hotel management, travel motivation of vacationers, and barriers to vacationing.

Methodical and organized, Ap chose his profession in park-and-recreation planning because he deplored office routine and preferred a job with variety in the out-of-doors. However, although he ended up spending most of his time in his university office, he considers it worth the while, for he can pass his skills along to young people. He believes that God created us to enjoy life and that we should spice up life by doing new and different things from time to time. His concept spills over into his Christian living and Sabbath observance. In his work with his church's Pathfinder Club and Adventurer Group, he organizes camping on the outlying islands and nature study at the beach. His carefully planned projects are designed so the youth won't say, "Ah, there's nothing to do on Sabbath; it's boring!"

■ *Is Ap a common Chinese surname?*

No, but the name gives me uniqueness. Many Chinese have commented about it. The name should be spelled Yip or Ip, but it seems that when the Australian immigration authorities registered my father's name, they misspelled it. The name has stuck for two generations.

■ *How does being in the tourism business affect your vacation time?*

Of course it is holiday time for my family! But, knowing the work that's involved in creating the mood and atmosphere in a theme park, I can't help comparing sites and thinking to myself, "Ah, this is how they handle that, and that's how they handle this." I get perks that go along with the job. Whenever we go to a theme park or hotel, I write ahead first. When the managers find out that I research the business, they usually want to visit with me so I can talk with them

about their philosophy. They want to hear any suggestions I might have for them. Tourism is the fastest-growing business today, so, naturally, with so much competition, managers take their fun very seriously. They carefully calculate the fun-loving environment in theme parks and tourist sites. There's nothing Mickey Mouse about managing a theme park.

■ *Let's talk about your religious background.*

I was not brought up a Christian. When I was about eight, my parents took me to the local Anglican church. It was only later on, when we visited my great-aunt Hong in Tenterfield, New South Wales, Australia, that we came across Seventh-day Adventists. In Tenterfield there were two Chinese families. One was my great-aunt's family (the Honges) and the other was the Hon family. The Hons were Adventists, and through their friendship and influence my great-aunt

also joined the Adventists. She in turn took us to church whenever we visited her.

■ *How did your family become Adventists?*

After my mother took Bible studies and attended church, she decided to become an Adventist. My father worked six days a week in the restaurant business. On my father's day off, the pastor would come and give him Bible studies. Then my father had to make a decision. If he wanted to become an Adventist Christian, he'd have to give up his work. He chose to do so and set up a business making rice noodles.

■ *Tell me how you chose to make Sabbath important.*

As a child, I didn't like the idea of going to church on Sabbath, because it seemed to be a day of don'ts. We couldn't play soccer, or watch TV, or do anything else. But during my teen years, I read a number of significant books on

the Sabbath (Desmond Ford's *The Forgotten Day* and works by Samuele Bacchiocchi), which changed the direction of my life. I realized that Sabbath is not simply a day. It is a memorial of Creation, an opportunity for us to rest from our daily secular life and spend time with God and the family and to reflect upon spiritual things. When I understood and accepted that, I began keeping Sabbath and enjoying it.

■ *I understand your father's example also helped you in your decision.*

Yes, of course. One day I felt if keeping the Sabbath was good enough for my father, it must be good enough for me. He had had to make a big decision concerning Sabbath. Even within the noodle business, he faced difficulty because the shopkeepers and the restaurants wanted their noodles delivered fresh daily. Initially, they said, "Well, no, you have to deliver daily." But my father said, "I will give you noodles twice on Friday, in the morning and in the afternoon. But I'm sorry, I cannot deliver on Saturday." His example showed that if you remain firm about the Sabbath, people will respect your belief and God will bless.

■ *How do you handle the Sabbath problem in a school where teachers are required to work five and a half days a week?*

When I joined the university, I mentioned to the administration that I am a Seventh-day Adventist and that because I observe Sabbath as my day of worship, I'd like to be excused from attending official duties during Sabbath hours. The administration has always respected my request. I have to be careful, of course, putting in my hours. I work Sundays. When special official functions are held on Sabbath, I request specifically that I be excused. My colleagues appreciate that and cover for me. And I cover for them when they need to be off on a Sunday or on a weeknight.

■ *Outside your office, I notice you have a special bulletin board.*

Right. I put on this bulletin board a saying every week from *God's Little Instruction Book* or from *God's Little Instruction Book for Students*. This way, when students and colleagues come to my office, I can share something with them. Along with the particular saying,

there is always a Bible verse. I want my students and colleagues to know that I am a practicing Christian and am ready to answer their questions about life's dilemmas from God's perspective.

■ *How will the change in Hong Kong's status affect you?*

The fact that I've switched from being a contract teacher to a regular teacher at the university indicates that I have confidence in the future of Hong Kong. I'm one of the few people who've had the opportunity to read both the Joint Declaration, signed in 1984, which agreed that Hong Kong would be turned over, and the Basic Law, which will serve as the mini-constitution for Hong Kong. What surprised me when I read them is that the autonomy of Hong Kong is very much assured.

■ *How will religion fare now that the British have left?*

A critical turning point that related to the Chinese authorities' dealings with Hong Kong occurred last year. It concerned the Lutheran World Congress, which is held once every seven years in a different place around the world. In 1995, the Lutheran Church decided to hold the 1997 Congress in Hong Kong. A local official in the Xinhua News Agency (which served as the *de facto* Chinese embassy in Hong Kong) criticized the British for permitting the conference that was to begin within a week or two after the Hong Kong handover. The local official indicated to the Lutheran leaders that they wouldn't be able to hold their World Congress in Hong Kong. This led to a lot of concern in the local Christian community as to what type of religious liberty could be expected under the new government.

Subsequent to that incident, the authorities gave assurances that Christians would continue to enjoy the religious freedoms that they previously experienced. Later, Beijing made an announcement that any decisions concerning Hong Kong had to be cleared from Beijing. Since that time, I've observed that nothing controversial has come out from the local Chinese-based officials here.

■ *What challenges do you see for Christians in general, and for Adventists in particular, now that the handover has taken place?*

The good news is that the late Deng Xiaoping's concept of "one country, two systems" will apply. Therefore, we can expect that control over religion in China itself will continue, but this is Hong Kong. Even so, I think that, as Christians living in Hong Kong, we will have to be aware of our responsibilities. While we preach the gospel and go about sharing Christ, we must not jeopardize the so-called security of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. Our trust in God's guidance remains strong. 🙏

Interview by Stanley Maxwell

Stanley Maxwell, a Hong Kong resident, is the author of two books: The Man Who Couldn't Be Killed (1995) and The Man Who Lived Twice (1997). When he's not writing, he's teaching English or telling children's stories. Married to a Hong Konger, he is the proud father of his daughter, Roxanne.

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Three men meet Jesus. One meets Him walking towards Calvary's hill, another meets Him hanging on a cross, and the last one meets Him at the foot of the cross.

Three men meet Jesus. Three men from different backgrounds: an African farmer, a thief, and a Roman centurion.

Three men meet Jesus. Simon, the compelled one; the thief, the crucified one; and the Roman centurion, the calloused one.

Three men meet Jesus

by
Mark A.
Finley

Three men meet Jesus. Their circumstances are different from ours, but the lessons of their lives are fresh and new, and they sparkle like the morning dew. Their stories become our stories, and as we walk in their footsteps, we walk the pathway of Golgotha. We find that their lives are not so much different than ours after all—their hurts, their heartaches, and their longings are also ours. Their desires become our desires. They found Him then and there, and we can find Him here and now.

Although our lives are distant from that place, and although almost 2,000 years have elapsed, these stories of Scripture are forever new and fresh. They come with power and dynamism. They speak to our hearts.

Simon, the compelled one

"As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross" (Matthew 27:32). * Who was this Simon? Mark gives us a clue: "A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross" (Mark 15:21). Simon, then, was married and had two sons. Mark mentions their names because Alexander and Rufus must have been familiar to the Christian community at the time he was writing

the Gospel that bears his name. Ellen White provides an added insight: "Simon had heard of Jesus. His sons were believers in the Saviour, but he himself was not a disciple" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 742).

We can imagine that Alexander and Rufus, Jews in Jerusalem, had heard of Christ feeding the 5,000. They heard of Christ opening the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. They knew of Christ forgiving the woman caught in adultery. They listened to the stories of forgiveness. They were amazed at the demoniacs as they were transformed by Christ's power. They became followers of Jesus. They were there for the Sermon on the Mount. They were with Him in the crowded streets of Jerusalem. They begin writing to Dad. "Dad, I think we've found Him," Alexander writes. Rufus writes, "Dad, He's the Promised One, He is the One who heals the sick, raises the dead. He's the One who walks on water. Dad, this is the Messiah."

The letters reach Dad in Cyrene, a small town in Libya in northern Africa. And Simon is concerned about his boys. "Are my sons following some wild-eyed fanatic? Have they become part of some cult movement? Are my boys headed for death? They've left the faith of our fathers and Jewish orthodoxy. I better go to Jerusalem and straighten them out!" And so, with his thoughts confused, in curiosity and doubt, Simon comes to Jerusalem.

The streets of Jerusalem are filled with worshipers. It's the Passover season. All of Jerusalem is astir with the crucifixion of a Man who's been tried—a so-called Messiah who's condemned to death. In rounding a corner in a crowd-filled street of Jerusalem, Simon comes face to face with Christ, crushed under the oppressive weight of the cross. And Jesus's eyes and Simon's eyes meet, only for a moment. Simon's heart is drawn out in compassion, tenderness, and love. And a rude Roman soldier pointing to Simon says, "If you have such compassion on Him, pick up the cross. Take it upon your shoulder."

The Scripture says that Simon did not take the cross by choice. The burdensome, agonizing weight of the cross was forced upon Simon's shoulders. Bending over, he picked up the cross and stumbled under its weight as



they climbed the hill called Calvary. I suppose the splinters of the cross rubbed his shoulders raw. I see him there, his back stooped. I hear his panting. I see the beads of sweat stand out on his forehead. I listen to his grunts and his groans in agony. I watch as his knees buckle. I see him stumble. And I watch Jesus smile, and Simon is strengthened to carry the Saviour's cross. Simon met Jesus that day carrying the heaviest load of his life. But the burden became a blessing, a bridge to meet God.

Are you carrying some burden in your life? Are things at home or at work not going well? Do you have a burden rubbing your shoulders raw? Are you carrying the burden of a schedule that keeps you constantly tired? Are you carrying some health problem? Are your studies heavy, challenging your faith? Do you have difficulty observing Sabbath in the pursuit of your goals? Are you discouraged or lonely? Are you compelled to bear a cross? Bear it with dignity, like Simon did. Seize it as an opportunity, because in the crosses that life inflicts upon our shoulders, they become a blessing if Jesus is near us. Our scars become stars. Our trials become triumphs, because it is in the pain of life that we meet Him.

Although Simon carried his cross, there was One walking beside him. There was One smiling to cheer him on the way. When Simon laid the burden down at Calvary, Jesus bore the cross alone. So you can simply lay your burden down on the One who carried it then and the One who carries it now.

The thief, the crucified one

The thief meets Him. The cross of Jesus was placed between two thieves. The two thieves represent all humanity and all humanity is faced with the choice about this Christ. One thief says, "'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!'" (Luke 23:39). One thief thinks only of himself, only of the here and the now. The other thief thinks of eternity. As one thief is mocking Him, the other thief looks at Him and says, "'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'" (Luke 23:42).

Who was this thief? Obviously he wasn't a Roman. Had he been a Roman, he would not have been crucified. The thief must have been a Jew. In fact, Ellen

White, in *The Desire of Ages*, gives us some interesting insight on this thief. He was most likely a follower of Barabbas—a false messiah who attempted to overthrow the Roman government in Palestine. I imagine that the thief was brought up in a Jewish home that respected Friday evening and kept the Bible Sabbath. Probably as a youth he attended a rabbinical school. His diet was orthodox; no pork at all. He anticipated the coming of the Messiah. The major problem of the thief was spiritual carelessness. Brought up in a religious environment meant little or nothing to him. One compromise followed another. Carelessness led to compromise, to sin, to guilt, and to shame. As I see the thief hanging upon the cross, he represents spiritual indifference and carelessness.

I can identify with that thief. Charles Swindoll in his book, *Intimacy With God*, tells of an incident. He was to preach to a group of pastors, and a clergyman tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Chuck, after the meeting I need to talk to you." And so Swindoll met with this pastor personally and this is what the pastor said: "Nobody around me knows this, but I am operating on fumes. I am lonely, hollow, shallow, and enslaved to a schedule that never lets up."

Today's desperate need, both in the church and in the world at large, is not for a greater number of intelligent people or gifted people, but for spiritual people. Spiritual carelessness leads to subtle compromises of character, and eventually to shame and guilt. But take heart. In his spiritual carelessness, ashamed by his inner compromise, the thief found forgiveness and mercy, and assurance of eternal life in Christ. Likewise, throw yourself at the foot of the cross and see yourself anew and hear the gentleness of Jesus giving you forgiveness, new power, and new hope.

The Roman centurion, the calloused one

Standing beneath the foot of the cross, a Roman centurion found Jesus. Who was this Roman? I can imagine the official order that came to his post of duty that morning: "Execute this man in the usual manner. But make sure there are no riots in Jerusalem today. So

whether you need a hundred Roman soldiers or 200 or 500, they're at your disposal. Get rid of Him!" It was all in a day's work. And while the Son of God was dying for the world, a calloused centurion stood beneath the cross. Callousness in the midst of divine things is one of the greatest sins.

All of us run the risk that, in handling divine things, habit becomes so routine that we may lose our spiritual excitement and energy. It is possible to be callous, routine, and ordinary, standing at the foot of the cross; to be indifferent like the Roman centurion who coldly observed the Man on the cross. It's possible to sing Christian hymns with the lips in worship and let the mind wander, thinking about business or studies or the potluck dinner. It's possible to read the Bible sleepily before falling asleep. It's possible to be callous and indifferent and to allow the routine overshadow the sublime.

But as the Roman centurion hears the dialogue between Christ and the thief above the mocking shouts of Christ's enemies, as he listens to His agonizing prayer, and as he observes the thick darkness that unexpectedly covers Calvary, something mysterious and marvelous happens to him. Mark writes, "When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'" (Mark 15:39).

As I stand at the foot of the cross with Simon, Jesus strengthens me to carry my burden. As I see the thief dying there, my shame and guilt are gone. As I stand with the Roman centurion, I see Him anew. He breaks through the routine and touches my life, and again I find spiritual energy. Christianity is more than a routine. It's more than all in a day's work. It is knowing Jesus. It's having my heart broken with Him. It's being passionate about Him. 🙏

Mark A. Finley is a well-known Adventist evangelist and the director-speaker of It Is Written, an international television program. His address: P.O. Box 0; Thousand Oaks, California 91360; U.S.A. E-mail: 74617.2137@compuserve.com.

(All Bible quotations are taken from the New International Version.*



AMiCUS activities in Romblon, Philippines

Adventist university students in Romblon, Philippines, have organized an AMiCUS chapter, that includes Adventist students attending two local colleges. Our chapter elects its own officers and plans our yearly program. We are united in Christ and



Members of the AMiCUS chapter in Romblon, Philippines enjoy fellowship during an excursion.

involved in various nurture and outreach activities such as organizing spiritual retreats, presenting special programs in Adventist churches in the area, and conducting a “Clean and Green Operation” in our city, involving some of our non-Adventist friends. Through *Dia-*

logue we send warmest greetings to fellow Adventist students around the world and pray that our Almighty God will bless them abundantly in their studies and in their walk with Christ. 🙏

— Karen M. Fajilan, *Chapter Secretary*

Faithful witness rewarded

At the end of 1995 Susana Raquel Rostan received her teaching degree in language and literature at the National University in Misiones, Argentina. Soon after, the Argentine Academy of Letters selected her to receive a special award for having completed her program within the stipulated time frame and with the highest grade point average among her peers in all national universities in the country.

Behind this well deserved honor there is a story of perseverance and faithfulness. Several times during her studies Susana had to face the dilemma of Sabbath classes and examinations. Fortunately, on most occasions the teachers made allowances in recognition

of her high academic standing and clear convictions. A few times, however, suitable arrangements could not be made for her. On those occasions all her fellow students, who knew of her faith and beliefs, also chose to skip that Sabbath exam which forced the university authorities to reschedule the final examination.

In 1996, during a special ceremony held in Buenos Aires, the officers of the National Academy of Letters presented to Susana the award and diploma that honored her as the top 1995 graduate in language and literature studies in the nation.

After teaching for a year at a public secondary school, Susana Rostan has now become a teacher at the Adventist Academy in East Paraguay. Her plan is to pursue advanced studies in her field.

Bravo, Susana! 🙏

— Emilio E. Vogel, *Education Department director and AMiCUS advisor, Austral Union*



Susana Rostan, best in her field among graduates in Argentina.





Adventist students in Honduras distributing publications on the university campus.

University outreach in Honduras

The Association of Adventist University Students in Honduras was established to provide mutual encouragement and to share our Christian faith with our colleagues and teachers. We have chosen as our motto the beautiful promise God made to Joshua at a critical moment in his life: "Be bold and strong! Banish fear and doubt! For remember, the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9, LB).

We have distributed hundreds of pamphlets and magazines that approach the dilemmas of modern life from a biblical perspective. In addition, during

1996 we presented three concerts of Christian music in university auditoriums in Tegucigalpa, the national capital. Our goal is to make Christ and His saving message known in academic circles.

We welcome contacts and exchanges with other Adventist university students and fellowships. Write to one of the two coordinators of the association at: Apartado Postal 2117; Tegucigalpa; Honduras. Telephone: (504) 39-3584 or 30-6953. 📧

—Mauricio Rosales and Jelsson Noel Escobar, *Association Coordinators*

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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 8.) 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: 74617.464@compuserve.com or 104472.1154@compuserve.com. If these contacts fail to produce results, write to us at our editorial address.

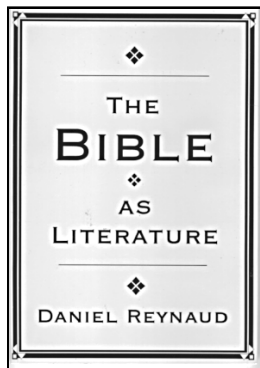
Maranatha Mission Trips

Are you interested in participating in a mission trip, along with North American Division Adventist young adults? Here are two options:

Venezuela: Building churches and schools in the Barquisimeto area. February 24 - March 20, 1998. For college-age students and young adults, ages 18 - 30+.

Irian Jaya: Building a jungle chapel. August 3 - 17, 1998. For college-age students and young adults, ages 18 - 30+. Steve Case, project coordinator.

For more information, including costs, contact Kyle Fiess through phone: (916) 920-1900; Fax: (916) 920-3299; or e-mail: kfiess@maranatha.org.



The Bible as Literature, by Daniel Reynaud (London: Minerva Press, 1996; 166 pp.; paperback).

REVIEWED BY ED CHRISTIAN.

Most “Bible as literature” textbooks are so doubt-filled and biased against the supernatural workings of God that whatever their level of scholarship, Bible-believing Christians cannot be comfortable with them.

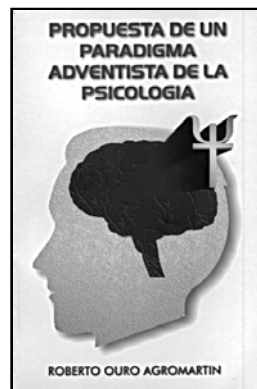
Daniel Reynaud’s *The Bible as Literature* takes a neutral approach. Atheists can read it without any qualm, and Christians can read it without being drawn into the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. Reynaud maintains a dispassionate, objective tone that might allay the suspicions of curriculum committees in state schools.

Reynaud teaches English at Avondale College, a Seventh-day Adventist institution in Australia. The book seems to be a collection of class handouts, without citations or index or bibliography. But why would an Adventist college teacher take such a “neutral” view of the Bible? Perhaps Reynaud has tailored his book to a secular audience.

The book has five sections. The first is an introduction to literary techniques, to the history, geography, and culture of Palestine, and to biblical translation over the centuries. It also deals with narrative in the Bible, poetry, the gospels, and rhetoric. The second and third sections are divided into chapters on how to approach the genre (such as “narrative”), and characteristics of the genre, with examples on how to analyze passages and “case studies” for study and group discussion. The final two sections are similar, but leave out the examples.

The Bible as Literature might suit teachers who want to begin with a brief introduction to the topic and then concentrate on the Bible itself. I myself would not assign the book for my classes. Students at secular universities, whatever their denominational background, rarely want a “neutral” knowledge of the Bible. They are hungry for the radical, uncompromising, life-changing force of the Word of God. Reynaud’s book is a brief introduction to tools and techniques, but the study of the Bible as “literature” should focus on themes, ideas, and message, all of which are valid aspects of literary analysis.

Ed Christian (Ph.D., University of Nebraska) is an English professor who teaches The Bible as Story, Old Testament Literature, New Testament Literature, and Apocalyptic Fiction at Kutztown University. His address: Department of English, Kutztown University; Kutztown, PA 19530; U.S.A. Publisher’s address: 195 Knightsbridge; London SW7 1RE; England.



Propuesta de un Paradigma Adventista de la Psicología by Roberto Ouro Agromartín (Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 1997; 213 pp.; paperback).

REVIEWED BY NANCY J. CARBONELL.

Propuesta de un Paradigma Adventista de la Psicología addresses the issue of how Seventh-day Adventists can approach modern psychological findings. Given the historical tension between religion

and science, the task is not easy.

Paradigms in psychology follow scientific patterns. Founded on an evolutionist worldview, such paradigms tend to ignore God as Creator of human life. This book approaches psychology from a Christian perspective, taking into account the wealth of biblical material and the insights from the writings of Ellen White. Ouro, with an M.A. in theology and a Ph.D. in psychology, is well qualified for the task. He breaks away from the established paradigms in psychology and proposes a new one, which he calls in Spanish PAP—“Paradigma Adventista de la Psicología.”

The book has four sections: (1) a brief historical review of the philosophical and biological roots of psychology; (2) a brief review and critique of the main paradigms of modern psychology (dealing with the psychoanalytic, behavioral, and cognitive theories); (3) a study on how the Seventh-day Adventist scholar interprets biblical teachings about the origin and nature of humans; and (4) a detailed description of the proposed paradigm, leading to a biological, psychological, social, and spiritual model, which then ultimately leads to a new psychology, which he calls “Psicología Neocognitiva.”

The final section creatively pulls together biblical texts on human nature, the insights taken from the writings of Ellen White, and important findings within the last 100 years of research in psychology.

At times, the reader can get confused or lost when trying to follow the meaning of all the abbreviated ideas used to define different aspects of the new paradigm. Perhaps that is expected when exploring any new territory.

The author acknowledges that much work still remains to be done. He invites the reader to study the paradigm and refine it. To those interested in studying psychology from an Adventist perspective, the book is a good start.

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Publisher’s address: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 3103 Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina. Fax: 54-43-91-0300. E-mail: uap@uap.satlink.net.



¿Nueva Era o Nuevo Engaño? by Merling Alomía (Lima, Peru: Ediciones Theologica; 1996; 2nd. edition; 215 pp.; paperback).

REVIEWED BY MANUEL VASQUEZ.

Merling Alomía, an Adventist theologian and academic vice president at Peruvian Union University, has provided a much-needed service by publishing this study in Spanish on the inroads that the New

Age Movement has been making in our society. The success of the first edition, published in 1994, led to a second edition with updated data and information on New Age holistic medicine.

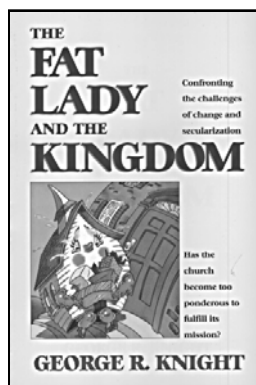
The book covers many aspects of contemporary society that have been affected by New Age thought such as education, ecology, and children's TV programs. It provides valuable information about the New Age roots in modern psychology—Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow, and others. The chapter on “New Age Eschatology” is informative and thought-provoking. Other valuable sections of the book are the glossary and the extensive bibliography.

The author could have given a sharper definition of what the New Age Movement is, since many elements in society may be classified as New Age when in reality they are not. In tracing the New Age roots, it should be noted that they are deeply embedded in the Eastern mystical religions with the tap root going back to the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3:5) and not just to the mystics of the 18th and 19th centuries. It should also be observed that in addition to the subtle connections between Roman Catholicism and the New Age Movement (p. 133), several Protestant denominations have been influenced by New Age thought through writers such as M. Scott Peck and Richard Foster. Teilhard de Chardin and Matthew Fox are indeed Catholic New Age writers, but cannot be considered spokesmen for the entire Roman Catholic Church. However, the nonbiblical belief in the immortality of the soul and continuing consciousness after death—which is shared by most Catholics and Protestants—makes them vulnerable to New Age ideas.

Overall, *¿Nueva Era o Nuevo Engaño?* is well-documented and contains very good primary sources both in English and Spanish. Readers interested in an overview of this broad movement will find this book informative and useful.

Manuel Vasquez, (D. Min., Andrews University) is a vice-president for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and the author of *The Danger Within* (Pacific Press, 1993) on the New Age.

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The Fat Lady and the Kingdom: Adventist Mission Confronts the Challenges of Institutionalism and Secularization, by George R. Knight (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1995; 175 pp., paperback).

REVIEWED BY HUMBERTO M. RASI

George R. Knight—professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,

Andrews University—has been publishing in recent years a steady stream of significant books dealing with educational philosophy, denominational history, and biblical theology and interpretation.

The Fat Lady and the Kingdom is a collection of 10 previously published articles as well as new essays through which the author reflects soberly on the status and future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church after 150 years of its founding.

Knight starts out with the provocative allegory that provides the book's title and illustrates its cover: “A woman standing before a door with arms full of precious packages. . . . If she reaches for the door handle, she will drop and ruin some of her packages, but if she continues to cling to her packages she will never pass through the doorway” (p. 15). In this scenario, the woman symbolizes the Seventh-day Adventist Church, overburdened with “packages” (its structures and institutions) that prevent her from entering the kingdom of heaven. So much of her identity is tied up with these institutions that she can not release them. Hence the author's stern warning, “Wake up, fat lady, before it's too late!” (p. 20).

Following David O. Moberg's model, Knight reviews the life cycle of American religious movements (incipient organization, formal organization, maximum efficiency, institutionalism, disintegration) and states that “much of Adventism” in North America, Western Europe, and Australia has entered the critical fourth stage, which is to be followed by the movement's demise (p. 17). In the author's view, the maladies affecting Seventh-day Adventism are many and serious—secularization, aging, affluence, bureaucratic and dysfunctional organization, over-institutionalism, and lack of vision for mission.

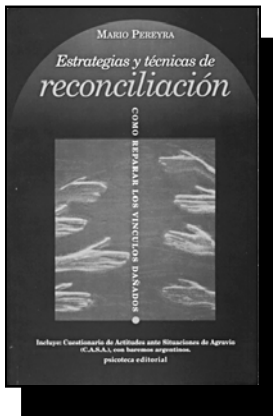
Ironically, Knight can communicate his critique by using some of the very institutions that he considers an obstacle to the fulfillment of the church's mission. He teaches at Adventism's oldest university and continues to communicate his views through denominational publishing houses and journals.

But the question arises: Why does not Moberg's model fit the Roman Catholic Church, whose resiliency derives precisely from its strong institutional structure? Perhaps Knight's criticism is applicable to a static segment of the Adventist Church in terms of members. Is the real obstacle in fulfilling the mission the institutions themselves or the people connected with

them? In areas of the world where Adventist membership is growing rapidly—Latin America, Africa, Asia-Pacific—the problem is just the opposite: not enough institutions, resources, and organizational structures to train qualified leaders, nurture new members in the faith, and provide continuity in mission.

In spite of its narrow focus, Knight's passionate book is a needed call for spiritual accountability, both personal and collective, and for sharper focus on our mission to a world that desperately needs to know Jesus.

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Estrategias y técnicas de reconciliación by Mario Pereyra (Buenos Aires: Psicoteca Editorial, 1996; 143 pages; paperback).

REVIEWED BY JULIAN MELGOSA.

Based on his previous publications in Spanish such as *Psicología del perdón* (Santiago de Chile: Publika Impresores, 1993), Mario Pereyra builds up a paradigm on the reconciliation process in clinical settings. The writing is simple and clear as it is profound. The author approaches the problem of reconciliation strategies by outlining four central stages: (1) *Discord*—internal or external events that bring about deterioration of interpersonal relationships. (2) *Insight*— psychological intervention or, at times, circumstances that wake up the person to realize the adverse condition of the relationship. (3) *Crossroads*—facing the dilemma between repentance/reconciliation and guilt/resentment. Finally, (4) *Reunion*—restoration of balanced relationship between the affected persons.

For each of the stages, Pereyra, as a Christian clinical psychologist and teacher, proposes a wide repertoire of psychological intervention techniques. Thus *Estrategias y técnicas de reconciliación* (Reconciliation Strategies and Techniques) moves from being just an academic product into a practical tool.

The book is extremely well organized and has a logical sequence that makes it easy to follow. It has a good theoretical foundation in the first two chapters, one chapter for each of the model phases, and a final chapter with a questionnaire on attitudes toward interpersonal offenses, developed by the author together with Moreno and Delfino. In addition, the book includes a copy of the questionnaire for readers to use in assessing their own attitudes. A summary table at the end of each chapter helps the reader to review and synthesize the contents. However, a content index would have been helpful.

Estrategias y técnicas de reconciliación is well documented (although with a dominance of Anglo-American sources). It describes in detail a good number of relevant clinical cases and first-hand illustrations. It is self-critical and insightful, and its general as well as technical use of language is quite adequate. But the most important contribution of this work to the psychology of relationships is the integration of religious experience and reconciliation/mediation therapeutics. The author—a professor at Universidad Adventista del Plata and a clinical psychologist at Sanatorio Adventista del Plata, Argentina—merges his model with the sequence found in the parable of the prodigal son in an excellent way. This parallelism makes the paradigm attractive, accessible, and meaningful to the Christian.

This work is a useful handbook for anyone interested in the repair of interpersonal relationships. And, because of the specific intervention procedures, it is particularly valuable to members (or students) of the helping professions.

Julian Melgosa (Ph.D., Andrews University) directs the graduate program in education at Newbold College, England, and is the author of several articles and books in his professional field.

Publisher's address: M.T. de Alvear 1236; 1058 Buenos Aires; Argentina.

Letters...

Continued from page 4

Graz's article, "Keeping the Sabbath on the secular campus" (*Dialogue* 9:2), appeared at a time when I was looking for direction on how to help Adventist students respond to this challenge. As I called the attention of several students

facing this issue to this valuable article, they were most appreciative.

WAME ROKODINONO
Students Chaplain
FIJI

Looking for connections

We have organized the Seventh-day Adventist Student Association (SDASA) at the University of California, Berkeley, and we would welcome contacts with similar student associations and fellow-

ships in other parts of the world. You can reach us through e-mail: will@serendipite.com. You may also visit our website: <http://www/ocf/berkeley/edu/~sdasa>.

WILL SUTTON
Berkeley, California
U.S.A.

Child Sexual Abuse: A Statement*

Among the physical and emotional scourges affecting contemporary society, none is perhaps more dreadful and frightening in its consequences than the sexual abuse of children. Aware of this reality—which occurs even in Christian homes, schools, and congregations—the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church issued in April 1997 a “Statement on Child Sexual Abuse.” The text of the statement is provided here for the benefit of our readers, with the prayer that it may assist in prevention and healing.

Child sexual abuse occurs when a person older or stronger than the child uses his or her power, authority, or position of trust to involve a child in sexual behavior or activity. Incest, a specific form of child sexual abuse, is defined as any sexual activity between a child and a parent, a sibling, an extended family member, or a step/surrogate parent.

Sexual abusers may be men or women and may be of any age, nationality, or socio-economic background. They are often men who are married with children, have respectable jobs, and may be regular churchgoers. It is common for offenders to strongly deny their abusive behavior, to refuse to see their actions as a problem, and to rationalize their behavior or place blame on something or someone else. While it is true that many abusers exhibit deeply rooted insecurities and low self-esteem, these problems should never be accepted as an excuse for sexually abusing a child. Most authorities agree that the real issue in child sexual abuse is more related to a desire for power and control than for sex.

When God created the human family, He began with a marriage between a man and a woman based on mutual love and trust. This relationship is still designed to provide the foundation for a stable, happy family in which

the dignity, worth, and integrity of each family member is protected and upheld. Every child, whether male or female, is to be affirmed as a gift from God. Parents are given the privilege and responsibility of providing nurture, protection, and physical care for the children entrusted to them by God. Children should be able to honor, respect, and trust their parents and other family members without the risk of abuse.

The Bible condemns child sexual abuse in the strongest possible terms. It sees any attempt to confuse, blur, or denigrate personal, generational, or gender boundaries through sexually abusive behavior as an act of betrayal and a gross violation of personhood. It openly condemns abuses of power, authority, and responsibility because these strike at the very heart of the victims’ deepest feelings about themselves, others, and God, and shatter their capacity to love and trust. Jesus used strong language to condemn the actions of anyone who, through word or deed, causes a child to stumble.

The Adventist Christian community is not immune from child sexual abuse. We believe that the tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist faith require us to be actively involved in its prevention. We are also committed to spiritually assisting abused and abusive individuals and their families in their healing and recovery process, and to holding church professionals and church lay leaders accountable for maintaining their personal behavior as is appropriate for persons in positions of spiritual leadership and trust.

As a Church we believe our faith calls us to:

1. Uphold the principles of Christ for family relationships in which the self-respect, dignity, and purity of children are recognized as divinely mandated rights.
2. Provide an atmosphere where children who have been abused can feel safe when reporting sexual abuse and can feel that someone will listen to them.
3. Become thoroughly informed about sexual abuse and its impact upon our own church community.

4. Help ministers and lay leaders to recognize the warning signs of child sexual abuse and know how to respond appropriately when abuse is suspected or a child reports being sexually abused.
5. Establish referral relationships with professional counselors and local sexual assault agencies who can, with their professional skills, assist abuse victims and their families.
6. Create guidelines/policies at the appropriate levels to assist church leaders in:
 - a. Endeavoring to treat with fairness persons accused of sexually abusing children,
 - b. Holding abusers accountable for their actions and administering appropriate discipline.
7. Support the education and enrichment of families and family members by:
 - a. Dispelling commonly held religious and cultural beliefs which may be used to justify or cover up child sexual abuse.
 - b. Building a healthy sense of personal worth in each child which enables him or her to respect self and others.
 - c. Fostering Christlike relationships between males and females in the home and in the church.
8. Provide caring support and a faith-based redemptive ministry within the church community for abuse survivors and abusers while enabling them to access the available network of professional resources in the community.
9. Encourage the training of more family professionals to facilitate the healing and recovery process of abuse victims and perpetrators. 🙏

(* This statement is informed by principles expressed in the following scriptural passages: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Leviticus 18:20; 2 Samuel 13:1-22; Matthew 18:6-9; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:5-8.

Expand Your Friendship Network

Adventist college/university students and professionals interested in exchanging correspondence with colleagues in other parts of the world.

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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.
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- **Action Report:** News of activities by Adventist students, chaplains, and teachers, on a regional basis.
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- **For Your Information:** Reports on events, activities or statements relevant to Adventist students and professionals.
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Archaeology

Continued from page 15

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When I began my studies in Physics at the Central University in Venezuela—the most prestigious in my homeland—I was apprehensive, as most Adventist students, that I would have to face the problem of exams scheduled on Sabbath. At the beginning of each semester I earnestly prayed that God would intervene so that, if it was His will, there would be no such an exam. But that day finally arrived.

Sabbath exams: problem or opportunity?

by
Rebeca
S. Diez

During the last semester of my second year, I enrolled in Mathematics III and Mechanics I. The first day of classes, the Mathematics professor announced that, in order to relieve the pressure associated with examinations, he was planning to schedule them on Saturdays. My mind began to race: “Should I ask for an exception at that moment or should I approach the teacher at the end of the class? What would I do if he rejects my request for a different schedule? Why was God allowing this to happen to me?”

I decided to approach him in private at the end of the class. I explained to him the reasons for my request and, to my great relief, he told me that he would help me by scheduling the exams on Wednesdays. I was so thankful!

In the Mechanics I class I had a chance to become friends with several fellow students and to share with them my Christian faith and hope. In addition, I became well acquainted with the teacher as we shared our common interest in vegetarianism and in the German language. During a recess period, while we were talking informally in the corridors, he asked me if I practiced meditation. I answered in the affirmative, saying that every day I spoke with God in prayer and reflected on His Word. As we came back to class, he spoke briefly about the benefits of meditation and added, “There are many who say that they believe in God, but do not follow His way. To truly follow God’s way requires total commitment.”

I wanted to speak more clearly with this teacher about my faith, because I sensed that he was a sincere seeker, but I did not find the opportunity to do it. Toward the end of the semester I read on the official bulletin board that the final exam for Mechanics I was going to be given on Saturday. Although apprehensive, I felt that God was giving me a chance to witness to this teacher.

At the end of one of our classes, I explained to the teacher that I could not sit for the exam on the scheduled date. He wanted to know if my request had to do only with that particular Saturday or with any other Saturday. Hearing my affirmative reply, he inquired if this applied also to Friday evenings. I sensed that he suspected that behind my requests there were religious convictions. The teacher said that he would see what he could do to help me. That night I prayed to God, “Lord, I am ready to witness for you to this teacher, but you need to give me the opportunity!” The following morning, after class, this teacher wanted to confirm if my decision to request for a different date for the final exam was definitive. I answered that it was, “even if my life was at stake!”

“Are you not overstating it?” asked the teacher, intrigued. This gave me a chance to quote his own words to the class, when he said that to truly follow God’s way required our total commitment. I explained that each Sabbath I had a personal appointment with God and that it was a priority in my life. Praying silently, I also gave him a brief outline of the biblical foundation for my convic-

tions and told him about the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of which I was a member.

The teacher then announced to the Mechanics I class that one of the students could not take the final exam on the scheduled date for reasons of conscience. He said that if all 33 students signed a formal request, he would take it to the Studies Coordination Office and see that the date was changed. That is precisely what happened. What a relief and what a joy!

Building on these conversations and friendly contacts the teacher had with other Adventist students, we invited him to attend a lecture on nutrition presented by an Adventist physician and sponsored by the Adventist Student Group at the Central University of Venezuela.* He was well impressed, and we continue to pray for him. But that was just the beginning...

As a result of these incidents, all my fellow students in the Mechanics I class learned about the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose members enjoy worshipping God on the seventh-day, and about the advantages of a healthy lifestyle, based on God's instructions. They spread the word throughout the School of Sciences and soon we began seeing the wonderful results of our witness and our prayers.

By God's grace, two of my fellow students in Mechanics II started studying the Bible with us and later joined the Adventist Church through baptism. One of them was Javier—now my fiancée—and the other John. Another student, Eduardo, is considering taking a similar step. Three other students, who were not taking the Mechanics I or II course were also baptized. Several members of the Adventist Student Group are now engaged in Bible studies with about twenty young men and women, most of them fellow university students. We trust in the promise of the Bible, "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again" (Ecclesiastes 11:1, NIV). And I am not the only Adventist in the School of Sciences—now we are a dynamic group!

Some readers may think, "She was simply lucky and now everything is easy for her and her fellow Adventists at the university." Don't believe for a moment that our testing is over. God knows why. This year, again, I have exams scheduled

on the Sabbath. Fortunately, John and I are students in the same class and together we approached the teacher. He said that he knew fellow professionals who are Adventists and that for them the Sabbath is a very special day, from sunset to sunset. In addition, he told us that last year another Adventist student in his course decided to withdraw from class because the exams were scheduled on Sabbath. We were so thankful for her faithfulness to her convictions! I can imagine the reaction of this teacher if he had seen inconsistency among Adventist students.

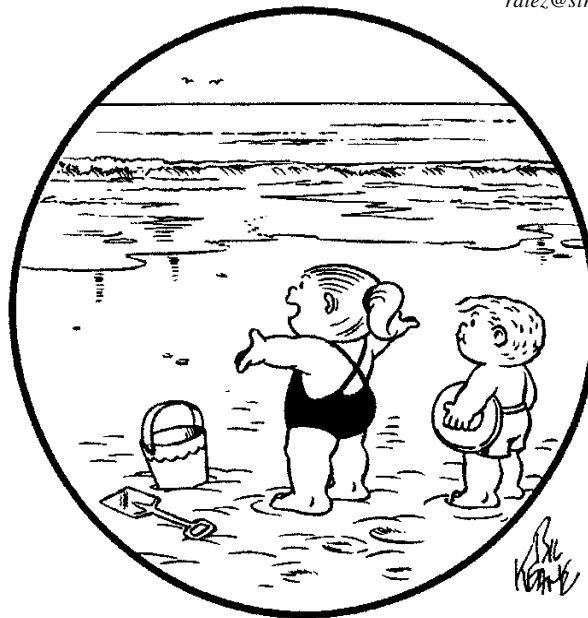
I also know an Adventist student who is pursuing a degree in Management at my university who had to enrol in the same course 7 successive times because the examinations were always scheduled on Sabbath and he always refused to take them on that special day. Since he could not have the date changed, from a human point of view he "wasted" two and half years. But God knows the ultimate results. Many teachers and students learned of my friend's loyalty to his faith. I believe that his witness can be used by the Holy Spirit to awake the conscience of others and lead them to God's truth. What is an apparent "waste" and defeat can become a victory and an eternal gain. "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy" (Psalm 126:6, NIV).

Out of my own experience, I wish to make a personal appeal to Adventist

university students everywhere. Don't pray that God will free you from facing classes or exams on Sabbath. Rather ask Him to give you wisdom and strength to face the challenge and become a faithful witness. What may appear to be a problem in your studies may be an opportunity that God presents to you to share your faith with your teachers and fellow students. Because "how shall they ask him [God] to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?" (Romans 10:14, LB).

The eternal destiny of many students and teachers on university campuses everywhere hangs on the balance. Your next exam scheduled for a Sabbath and your tactful loyalty may well be the factors that will give them a chance to know God, accept His saving grace, and join His family on earth. 🙏

(*) *The Adventist Student Group at the Central University of Venezuela (Grupo Estudiantil Adventista de la Universidad Central de Venezuela) involves Adventist students in mutual spiritual support and in evangelistic outreach. We welcome contacts with Adventist students from other campuses and other Adventist student associations. You can communicate with us in Spanish, English, German or Portuguese. Write to me or to Javier Escobar, one of the Group officers, at the following postal address: Apartado 47-797; Caracas, 1064-A; Venezuela. You can also use E-mail: jgarcia@strix.ucv.ciens.ve; jescobar@strix.ucv.ciens.ve; or rdiez@strix.ucv.ciens.ve.*



"Every day God lets some of the water out so there's more room to play on the beach."

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Attention, Adventist Musicians!

If you care about the music in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, you are invited to become a member of the International Adventist Musicians Association (IAMA). Established in 1982, it provides a forum in which Adventist musicians can share their professional interest and expertise with one another. In addition to publishing a journal in English—*Notes*—the association offers specialized subdivisions for artists, choir directors, composers, music teachers, and musicologists. For more information and an application, write to: International Adventist Musicians Association; P.O. Box 476; College Place, WA 99324; U.S.A. E-mail: Shulda@WWC.edu

Especially for Adventist Health Students and Professionals

An international group of Seventh-day Adventist specialists met in 1993 at the Church headquarters for a Study Conference of Adventist Theology, Philosophy, and Practice of Health and Healing. The 24 papers presented have been edited and published together under the title *Health 2000 and Beyond*. Readers interested in obtaining a copy of this 263-page compilation can write to: GC Health and Temperance Department; 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A. E-mail: 74617.1634@compuserve.com.

Religious Study Centers

Sponsored by Seventh-day Adventist Global Mission, there are now five study centers that focus their attention on four major world religions and the urban challenge.

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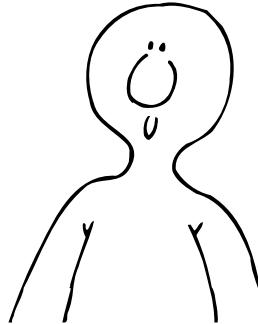
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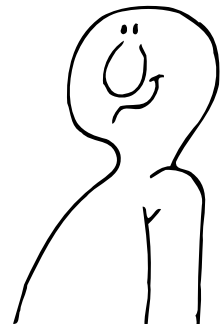
Super-natural

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Do you believe in angels? They supposedly come from heaven and visit the earth all the time.



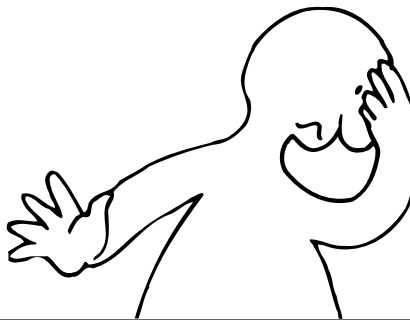
You've got to be pretty naïve to believe stuff like that. It's ridiculous!



Isn't this the age of rationality and science?



I don't even want to talk about dumb things like that. Let's change the subject.



What about UFOs and aliens? Now there's a subject that's fascinating!



“There is going to come a time when people won't listen to the truth, but will go around looking for teachers who will tell them just what they want to hear. They won't listen to what the Bible says but will blithely follow their own misguided ideas.”

— 2 Timothy 4:3, 4, *Living Bible*

