

C O L L E G E A N D U N I V E R S I T Y

DIALOGUE

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**Though the
heavens fall**

**Two cultures,
one marriage**

Castastrophism? Yes!

**The Adventist Church
and a billion dollars**

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Number

2

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Regional Representatives

Africa-Indian Ocean Division: Japheth L. Agboka. Address: 22 Boite Postale 1764, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

Eastern Africa Division: Hudson E. Kibuuka. Address: H.G. 100, Highlands, Harare, Zimbabwe.

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North American Division: Richard Osborn, José Rojas, and Richard Stenbakken. Address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, U.S.A.

Northern Asia-Pacific Division: David S.F. Wong. Address: Sam Hee Plaza (5th floor), 66 Chuyop-Dong, Ilsan-Gu, Koyang City, Kyonggi-Do, 411-370, Republic of Korea.

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Trans-European Division: Ole Kendel and Orville Woolford. Address: 119 St. Peter's Street, St. Albans, Herts., AL1 3EY England.

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God calls us to be partakers of His grace in giving the gospel to the whole world.

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Editorial Correspondence:
12501 Old Columbia Pike;
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600;
U.S.A.
Telephone: (301) 680-5060
Fax: (301) 622-9627
E-mail: 74617.464@compuserve.com or 104472.1154@compuserve.com

Dialogue has readers in 99 countries around the world.

Does anybody care?

Thus far in the academic year you have settled into your scheduled routine. However, you may have found yourself to be a stranger in several classes. Frequently you are alone in your philosophical and moral position. Then there have been times when you posited the essentials of the Christian faith and you were looked upon with scorn or pity. Frank discussions among your classmates assume that sexual promiscuity is the order of the day. If locker room talk and appearances mean anything, it is the accepted practice among many students. And doing one's own thing without any consideration for God's law seems really cool.

Amidst all this, you may feel like a stranger, out of step with most of those marching down the halls of learning. So far you have resisted. At times you were trampled upon or pushed against the wall, and in your quiet place you have heard yourself cry out, "Doesn't anyone care that I'm all alone?"

That's the reason for this network journal, *Dialogue*, the official campus ministries publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for its members in higher education. God's church does care! Through its articles and testimonies *Dialogue* informs you that you are not alone in your challenges, feelings, and frustrations. Thousands of Adventist students like you struggle courageously to live and share their faith in public colleges and universities. Thousands more of Adventist professionals can tell you that the secular campus experience has deepened their convictions and prepared them to be better ambassadors for Christ.

Involve yourself in an organized Advent Christian Fellowship or AMiCUS chapter on your campus. If there isn't one, you and your friends can do it. (For ideas, contact one of our regional representatives listed on page 2.) Such an organization will help you to see your fellow students as people with feelings and needs requiring the love of God. Belonging to such a group will be a tremendous help in resisting the persistent pressure to conform to this world's view and be pressed into its mold. If those options are not available to you, locate other Christians or Christian student organizations on campus with whom you can share, pray, and study God's Word. Some of the articles of this journal, duplicated and distributed, can serve as the starting point for a discussion or a shared meditation.

Yes, you will have your highs and lows, mid-semester "blues," doubts, and discouragements. But to experience all of this with other Bible-believing Christians helps to filter out the insidious, contrary voices clamoring for your soul.

O yes, Someone cares. Remember? "I'll never leave you nor forsake you'...'Lo, I am with you always'...'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there'...'Bear one another's burdens...Your word is a lamp to my feet. And a light to my path...Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden...Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." God cares for you! And because He cares, you truly care for others.



Richard Barron, Associate Editor

Note: This editorial is Elder Richard Barron's farewell to *Dialogue* readers. We pray that God will continue to bless him as he becomes a full-time church pastor and ministerial secretary for the Bermuda Conference.

Dialogue 10:2 1998

A wonderful issue

I just received *Dialogue* 10:1 and found it a wonderful issue. Dr. de Groot's piece on the Big Bang is magnificent. I have made copies of Ed Christian's "Viewpoint" for my biology class, where we have recently finished discussing evolution and ways in which Christians may relate to it.

Earl Aagaard

Pacific Union College
Angwin, California, U.S.A.

Part of a grand movement

Congratulations on producing a journal with content of sustained quality. It is one of the best journals I know, and it appeals to both university students and professionals. As an electrical engineer now pursuing a degree in architecture, I especially enjoy articles and reports on the advance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in unentered areas of the world. They encourage me to share my faith where I am, as part of a grand global movement guided by God.

Lidio Alberto Ramón Díaz

Villahermosa, Tabasco
MEXICO

Appreciated in France

There are numerous French readers of *Dialogue* who praise your journal—and I am one of them. We are delighted with the rich variety of articles included in each issue. The nuances of thought expressed time and again in *Dialogue* truly constitute a dialogue—not a monologue—fostering the freedom proclaimed and encouraged by the Apostle Paul. We wish to convey to you, without further delay, testimony of the great satisfaction of your French readers.

**Henri Dufrenelle,
Count of Bousies**

Jonchery-sur-Vesle, FRANCE

Just what we needed

I am a native of Portugal studying at a university far away from my home-

Letters

land. My sister, who lives in Portugal, sent me two copies of *Dialogue* and I became so captivated by its content that I immediately decided to subscribe to it. This journal is exactly what Adventist university students needed. Kindly use my husband's credit card number to start our subscription. I don't want to miss a single issue!

Maria Augusta Landin
Landin@online.no
Sundbyfoss, NORWAY

What shall I do now?

As an Adventist university student, I wrote to you a few weeks ago expressing the difficulty that my colleagues and I have in receiving *Dialogue* regularly. You sent me a copy of the latest issue, which we appreciated, and following your instructions wrote to our Union AMiCUS representative. However, there was no response. What shall I do now to get the next issues of *Dialogue*?

Nimrod S. Mangilog
Banga, Aklan, PHILIPPINES

The editors respond:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a plan, endorsed by its world leaders, that entitles full-time Adventist students attending non-Adventist colleges and universities to receive Dialogue free. This plan involves a financial commitment on the part of the General Conference, each world Division, Union, and at times the local conference or mission. It is possible that the Union representative to whom you wrote did not receive your letter or that he has no more copies of the journal to distribute in your area. We know that there are thousands of Adventist university students in your country.

We are forwarding to you another copy of Dialogue with our compliments. In order to receive future issues you have two options. You could write to Dialogue's representative for your Division (his name and address appear on page 2 of the journal) or you and your friends could pool resources and jointly purchase a subscription to Dialogue, using the coupon included in each issue. This will

allow your group to receive the journal regularly via airmail.

More on fiction

I wish to react to the letter that Ariel Sergio Gómez wrote (*Dialogue* 9:3) criticizing the article by Scott Moncrieff on "Adventists and fiction: Another look" (8:3). All of us have much to learn from "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10), and it would require more space than there is available here to show the weakness of Gómez's arguments. Literary fiction is one of the ways in which human creativity and imagination manifest themselves. Writers, obviously, can use these gifts of the Creator for good or evil. The same applies to readers. But to consider literary fiction inherently evil would be, ultimately, an attempt to impose limits on God, who created human beings in His image. That's a risk we dare not take.

Marcos Rubén Paseggi
Univ. Adventista del Plata
Libertador San Martín
ARGENTINA

An extraordinary find

During a recent visit to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mosul, I was introduced to *Dialogue* for the first time and read it from cover to cover. What an extraordinary find! As a 30-year-old single Christian, I would like to establish correspondence with fellow believers in other parts of the world. Please write in either English or Arabic to my address: P.O. Box 10072; Bilat al-Shohada A.D.; Mosul; Iraq.

Bashar Shamoun
Mosul, IRAQ

Still searching

I am a 22-year-old law student. Although I'm not a Seventh-day Adventist, I enjoy each issue of *Dialogue* that an Adventist friend lends me. I admire your commitment to Jesus Christ and the life that Adventists live. Through *Dialogue* I've also learned that there are

Adventists all over the world! At present I'm not a member of any church, but speak to God wherever I find myself. I know, however, that many of my deep questions would be answered if I joined a particular church or religion. In the meantime, I continue to search for truth and certainty. I would be interested in exchanging ideas in Spanish with *Dialogue* readers. My address: Calle Neptuno #19, Urbanización Galaxia, Las Caobas, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

María Ureña
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The future of cloning

I recently received a copy of *Dialogue* as a gift and discovered that the church publishes a journal especially for us, Adventist university students. And it is free! I was particularly impressed by the essay on genetic engineering (9:2) and wondered how far these experiments will take us. May I suggest that you publish an article on "human cloning"? This is a topic that is hotly debated here. How should we relate to this possibility, as Bible-believing Christians?

Cherian K. Varghese
Kottarakara, Kerala, INDIA

The editors respond:

Thank you, Cherian, for your good suggestion. We have already requested an Adventist scientist and a bioethicist to co-author such an article. Stay in touch with Dialogue!

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 use fax: (301) 622-9627, or E-mail: 74617.464@compuserve.com Letters selected for publication may be edited for clarity or space.

Though the heavens fall

by Greg A. King

Standing tall in a world of secularism, relativism, and moral inconsistency.

Two years ago during a trip to Israel I visited *Yad Vashem*, the Holocaust museum. If you have been either to *Yad Vashem* or the similar museum in Washington, D.C., you know what a memorable—haunting may be more precise—experience it is. I took a walk through the poignant and unforgettable Hall of Children, where a voice intones name after name of the youngsters whose lives were cut short during this madness. I saw the starkness of the engraved stones commemorating all the Jews who were gassed in Dachau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Auschwitz, and the other houses of horror that Hitler and his henchmen constructed.

If there was one positive note during my otherwise sad, reflective tour, it was my walk down the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles. This walkway is surrounded by trees planted in honor of non-Jews who worked to rescue Jews from the jaws of death, sometimes at the cost of their own lives. Person after person is memorialized by a tree and a plaque. One person is John Weidner, the Seventh-day Adventist pastor who almost lost his own life as the head of the Dutch-Paris underground and whose sister did die in Nazi hands.¹

Would I take the risk?

As I reflect on *Yad Vashem*, I wonder: Do I have the moral courage of a John Weidner? Other situations besides the Holocaust also prompt this type of question. Would I wade into an angry mob and rescue someone of another ethnic group as was done in the Los Angeles riots a few years ago? Would I forget about my own safety to rescue person after person, even while I slipped to my

death beneath the icy waters of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. as a brave individual did after that doomed Air Florida flight a few years back? Would I refuse to run in my best event in the Olympics if it were scheduled on my day of worship, apparently forfeiting my best opportunity for a gold medal, as did Eric Liddell in *Chariots of Fire*? In sum, are my actions based on principle rather than expediency? Am I willing to, in the words of Ellen White, “stand for the right though the heavens fall”²?

Notwithstanding our profound desire to display moral courage, to make decisions based on principle, it is not always easy to live this way in modern society. In fact, it is about as difficult as the arduous task of climbing Mt. Everest. It is usually easier to sit down when the going gets rough than to stand for the right though the heavens fall. Why? There are various reasons, but one is surely the temptation posed by the mindset and the values of post-modernism. That mindset involves the way of thinking and valuing regularly promoted by the media and thought and entertainment leaders, a mindset that is inimical to spiritual commitment and moral development. A number of trends in contemporary society seek to entice Christians away from how we should think and live. These trends present us with some of our greatest challenges in scaling our Everest and standing for the right.

The trend of secularism

Just what are these trends? We must identify them accurately, just as doctors must diagnose their patients correctly to

provide the proper treatment. The first trend is secularism. In some respects, secularism is the popular religion of our age. The Russian Nobel laureate Solzhenitsyn put it this way, "If I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait of the twentieth century, here too I would be unable to find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat once again: 'Men have forgotten God.'"

As Phillip Johnson and others have capably documented, philosophical naturalism, with its concomitant materialist ideology, dominates the leading institutions of modern society.³ This philosophy precludes the supernatural and therefore denies the reality of a transcendent creator God. Naturalism is a fundamentalist religion in its own right, for it is a closed system, and its adherents have a tendency to denigrate and demean anyone who questions the established orthodoxy.

The crown jewel plundered by those committed to this religion of secularism is the educational system. It happened so gradually that one has to look at the vestiges of the past to be reminded of what once was. For example, it is hard to fathom that at the center of the campus of Duke University, famous today for its basketball championships, there is a plaque that reads, "The Aims of Duke University are to assert a faith in the eternal union of knowledge and religion set forth in the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, the son of God." That was what Duke stood for at one time. Now, any assertion that Duke is a Christian university would be met with either a firestorm of protest—or howls of laughter. Duke thus joins Harvard, Yale, and many other prestigious educational institutions that have traveled down this one-way street—one way because no universities are going in the other direction from unbelief to faith. Schools have taken the primrose path downhill, journeying, as the title of church historian George Marsden's recent book puts it: *From Protestant Estab-*

*lishment to Established Nonbelief.*⁴

Let us not delude ourselves that Christians, Adventists included, are unaffected by the religion of secularism. Because the secularistic viewpoint permeates contemporary society, and especially academia, we sometimes find ourselves struggling over whether to believe in a personal God, the validity of prayer, or the reality of the Bible as God's revelation to humanity.

The trend of moral relativism

Another trend that permeates contemporary society is moral relativism, or what Robert Simon calls "absolutophobia," that is, the fear, denial, or denigration of moral absolutes.⁵ Simon's article and a companion piece in the same recent issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, both published under the heading, "Suspending Moral Judgment: Students Who Refuse to Condemn the Unthinkable," underscore this unwillingness to make moral judgments that is prevalent in contemporary society. In the companion article, Kay Haugaard, who teaches at Pasadena City College, recounts a recent experience in her creative writing class.⁶ The students were required to read Shirley Jackson's short fictional story titled "The Lottery" that describes an annual ritual in an American country village. The ritual is a grisly one, for the lottery selects a candidate for the yearly human sacrifice. This macabre ritual is seen as ensuring a good harvest. Any villager who questions the ritual is quickly hushed. In the story, a woman named Tess Hutchinson is the hapless victim. When her husband draws the unlucky ticket from a black box, she is set upon and stoned to death by the people of her village, including her own four-year-old son.

According to Professor Haugaard, classes in previous years had always gained the insights and lessons the author intended in this fictional story. They had typically pointed out the dangers inherent in an unthinking ap-

proach to rituals and habits, without carefully examining their rationale. Also, students had regularly recognized the power of public pressure and the peril of succumbing to it. The story had never failed to speak to their sense of right and wrong.

But this time, the discussion about the story veered in a different direction. One student commented, "Well, I teach a course for our hospital personnel in multicultural understanding, and if it is a part of a person's culture, we are taught not to judge, if it has worked for them" and so forth. Another student suggested that perhaps human sacrifice was not to be condemned if it was a ritual that was part of a religion of long standing. Professor Haugaard wrote, "I was stunned: This was the woman who wrote so passionately of saving the whales, of concern for the rain forests, of her rescue and tender care of a stray dog."⁷

Haugaard concludes her article by saying, "I gave up. No one in the whole class of more than 20 ostensibly intelligent individuals would go out on a limb and take a stand against human sacrifice....I was shaken, and I thought that the author, whose story had shocked so many, would have been shaken as well. The class finally ended. It was a warm night when I walked to my car after class that evening, but I felt shivery, chilled to the bone."⁸

Chilled to the bone is right, since, according to survey results published in *The Day America Told the Truth*, for \$10 million, 23 percent of respondents said they would be willing to be a prostitute for a week, 16 percent said they would leave their spouses, and 7 percent said they would kill a stranger.⁹ Chilled to the bone is right when one-third of the respondents to the 1997 Barna Research Group survey said that viewing pornographic material is a matter of taste, not of morality. Sadly, 84 percent of the respondents in the same survey claimed to embrace the Christian faith.¹⁰

Of course, there is an obvious link between the challenge of moral relativism and the previous one of secularism. The religion of secularism with its denial of a transcendent God has eliminated the basis for ethics, leaving humans, as my friend William Johnsson argued in a recent *Adventist Review* editorial, "Awash in a Sea of Relativism."¹¹ Yes, secularism has cut society loose from its moorings and left us drifting at sea with no moral compass. Dostoevsky got it right when he said, "If we don't believe in God, anything is permissible."

The trend of inconsistent living

Yet a third trend is the prevalence of bifurcated or inconsistent living. Many people live dichotomous lives, sometimes flaunt the profound contradictions between their beliefs, even publicly held ones, and their behavior, between doctrines and deeds. Examples abound. A common and easy target is the TV preachers who claim to be followers of the simple Jesus while they line their pockets and feather their nests with contributions that their tears have wheedled out of their viewers. There is the columnist who strongly urged gun control in his widely distributed column, only to be caught with an unregistered handgun when he took target practice at some intruders. I think of an acquaintance, who has often spoken out against illegal immigration, though he himself engaged in a sham marriage to help a woman become a citizen because it earned him a tidy sum of money.

These trends have infiltrated and infected the Christian church. As J. I. Packer once stated, "People say they believe in God, but they have no idea who it is they believe in, or what difference believing in him may make."¹²

We must recognize that we are not immune to these trends. We have breathed too deeply—and some of us have nearly succumbed to—the toxic vapors of secularism, relativism, and in-

consistent living. As the child in the home of the smoker is adversely affected simply by the surrounding atmosphere, so all of us to a lesser or greater degree are influenced by the intellectual milieu that pervades the late-20th century. Only by the grace of God, only by being clothed in His armor (see Ephesians 6:11-17) can we resist these trends. And unless we do resist, it will be impossible for us to fulfill our divine calling to stand for the right though the heavens fall.

Standing for the right

A moving story provides an example of two university students resisting these trends and standing for the right. Perhaps you have seen the video titled *The White Rose* or read one of the many books about it. The White Rose was the name chosen by the group of German students who, inspired by their commitment to Christ and galvanized by the moral courage of one of their professors, decided to protest against the evils of Nazism.¹³

Hans and Sophie Scholl, a brother and a sister who were perhaps the most famous of these students, had not been particularly committed Christians during their childhood. But as they went off to school and met people like Carl Muth, a devout Christian and editor of a Nazi-banned journal, they began looking at Christianity in a new light. They started to explore the Christian worldview and to read great Christian books. The Spirit of God brought conviction to their hearts and on December 7, 1941 Hans wrote to a friend, "I'm thinking of you on this second Sunday of Advent, which I'm experiencing as a whole-hearted Christian for the first time in my life."

For her part, Sophie recorded in her diary, "I pray for a compassionate heart, for how else could I love?" She wrestled with the difficult questions that we all face at times, asking, "How is it possible that God is sovereign, that Christ is

Lord, if there is so much injustice and pain?" But as time went on, the roots of both her and Hans' religious faith grew deeper and stronger, acquiring greater intensity and firmer definition. As their older sister later described it, "The Christian Gospel became the criterion of their thoughts and actions."

As Hans and Sophie continued their university studies, they began to feel that they were responsible for Germany. As Hans noted the evils pervading German society and the minimal resistance offered to it, he asked pointedly, "Where are the Christians?" More softly, Sophie wrote, "I want to share the suffering of these days. Sympathy becomes hollow if one feels no pain."

The turning point came one evening when Hans was the only student invited to a social gathering in the home of one of the professors of the University of Munich. The conversation turned to the subject of politics. Since the group did not know one another well, it was a dangerous subject. Everyone agreed that German culture was decaying. One person suggested that the only way to cope with the Nazis was just to hang on, to tend to one's cultural obligations and tasks as scholars, and to wait out the nightmare.

At that point Hans broke in with a caustic remark. "Why don't we rent ourselves an island in the Aegean and offer courses on worldviews?" The atmosphere must have turned glacial after such an impertinent comment. But philosophy professor Kurt Huber was galvanized by this impertinence. He exclaimed, "Something must be done, and it must be done now!" Professor Huber began to help the students of the White Rose, and over the next two years they produced and distributed a number of leaflets highlighting the evils of the Nazi party.

But the inevitable happened. On Thursday, February 18, 1943, when

Continued on page 23.

Two cultures: One marriage

by Reger C. Smith

What are the known factors that can lead to problematic or to successful cross-cultural marriages?

It happens all the time. A Caucasian woman marries a Korean man. A blond American student missionary to Japan falls in love with a girl there and brings her home to meet his parents. An Indian student in the United States ties the knot to an Ethiopian classmate.

Such cross-cultural marriages are increasing, even as barriers to such unions are decreasing in most areas of the world. But what happens in an intercultural marriage? What impact do cross-cultural environmental factors have on marriage? What about children? What effect do such marriages have on religious experience? What factors can contribute to the success of an interracial marriages?

Dynamics of interracial marriage

Genetically speaking, there are no physical impediments to interracial marriage. Therefore factors that help or hinder the success of mixed marriages as compared to within-group-marriages are not genetic, but are taught and learned by individuals living in a community. Groups and individuals “speak” through implied and usually unwritten statements that become cultural pressures—“shoulds” and “should nots”—that can affect the potential partners’ decisions before marriage and the quality of marriage afterwards.

When people arrive at a stage where they choose life partners, a number of other developmental tasks are also in process. Usually they are completing their education and preparing for a career. They are moving toward independence and adulthood, even though different cultures may attach varying

meanings to such terms. They are discovering their individual roles, in terms of both gender and individual responsibility—a process that can be complicated by crossing ethnic boundaries, since different cultures have different ways of defining such roles, particularly as they interface with gender.

Each marriage partner brings to marital union a list (unwritten, of course) of what to do or not do, what to say or not say, in a marriage. These individual lists learned in different cultural or racial environments can differ so much that misunderstandings and conflicts become unavoidable. When racial or cultural differences are added to familial, regional, and class differences, the potential for problems increases. Minor cultural differences can cause major misunderstandings. Here are a few common examples:

- *Disclosure.* Culture often dictates what kind of, and how much, personal information should be disclosed between partners and to those outside of marriage.
- *Display of affection.* How much affection, and what forms of affection are permissible between marriage partners in private or in public? What display of affection is appropriate between a marital partner and a friend outside of the marriage?
- *Gender roles.* How rigid is the division between “masculine” and “feminine” activities within and outside of the home?
- *Leisure activities.* How do partners share leisure time? How much leisure should be enjoyed apart from the spouse?

- *Ethnocentrism.* This refers to the tendency to look at everything from one's own point of view, which of course is conditioned by one's cultural background. For example, when an American speaks of the "normal" height of a person, it could mean about 5 feet 10 inches. But for a Japanese, "normal" may mean something else. Normal number of meals a day may refer to three in one culture, two in another. Dependency of a wife may be a virtue in one culture, while frowned upon in another.

Other potentially problematic differences include relationships with parents and in-laws, decision-making between partners, and the rearing and discipline of children.

These and other similar issues should be discussed thoroughly *before* marriage. Such discussions would bring out in the open the couple's feelings and expectations, which can then be dealt with freely.

Environmental impact on marriage

Societies differ in their acceptance of mixed marriages. Cultural differences are becoming more political in many parts of the world. Although legal barriers to racial intermarriage may not exist, prejudice and discrimination continue. Such discrimination may include housing, job opportunities, work environment, jokes, staring, and crude or offensive remarks.

In a society like the United States, the greater the perceived differences between the dominant racial group and any of the other racial groups, the greater the prejudice and discrimination that group has experienced, the more negatively will the dominant society view intermarriage with members of that group.¹

People who choose marital partners while away from relatives, familiar surroundings and social networks, may

lack a balanced perspective in objectively evaluating physical and emotional characteristics of a cross-cultural friend and her or his compatibility in a potential union. Their emotional needs may be affected by loneliness. Their judgement may be limited by a lack of "normals" to use as frames of reference. Under these circumstances, it can be helpful to bring a potential spouse home for a prolonged visit so that he or she can observe and interact with a different home setting. "To marry an individual from another culture is to marry that culture as well. Lack of communicated interest or a partner's assumption that a spouse is unattached to his/her culture gives rise to the gravest kind of problems."²

This cross-cultural perspective gets complicated with the concept of acculturation—a process in which those new to a culture adopt the attitudes, values, and behaviors of the host culture. Acculturation can modify the form or intensity of the newcomer's home culture, leading couples during courtship to easily blind themselves to cultural differences and possible problems. Those couples would tend to minimize the impact of the cultural differences since courtship tends to "accentuate the positive."

Next to knowing the culture of the individual is knowing the structure of the individual's family. The family interprets and transmits culture, and, for this reason, it can significantly influence and even determine family roles and responsibilities in marriage.

Many interracial marriage partners may be able to handle most problems that arise in marriage, but their children may have difficulties. Mixed-race children are often perceived as belonging to a "minority" race—the racial group represented in the marriage that has less power and status. In the United States, the offspring of a black-white marriage are usually considered black.³ In fact, any racial mixture that includes even a fraction of black blood is considered

black. Therefore, mixed-race children in the United States are generally treated as if they had been born to black-black unions.

Children added to any family bring changes. Although people want and love children, they usually report less satisfaction in the marital relationship during the most demanding years of child-rearing. Parents from widely divergent cultural backgrounds may almost seem to be talking two different languages in communicating about child-rearing.

The identity development and sense of security of children from interracial marriages are supported by the parents' positive regard for *both* races, by their open discussion of both heritages, and by providing positive role models, access to cultural events, etc.

Intermarriage and religion

Two biblical passages should be noted. First: "Be ye not unequally yoked" (2 Corinthians 6:14, KJV).^{*} The context of the passage clearly forbids any alliance that might compromise the gospel. Although the verse primarily refers to mixing incompatible religious systems, it can be taken to mean marriages that unite those who serve God with those who do not.

Second: God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). What this passage emphasizes is the equality of all people. God does not recognize any division between people, be it racial, ethnic, linguistic, tribal, or national barriers. The power of the gospel must be allowed to eradicate these barriers and create a common community. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3:28). God is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). This means that God does not distinguish between or accord status to persons on the basis of outward appear-

ance; He makes no distinctions on the basis of social rank, knowledge, wealth, nationality, or race. Does this mean all those with the same belief system are free to intermarry?

Moses provides a good example. The leader of Israel married outside of his race—a Midianite. But Zipporah was a sincere member of the Israelite belief system, and her father was a respected, God-fearing priest. However, Moses' sister Miriam was unhappy about his marrying "out of his race." Jealousy caused Miriam and Aaron to focus on Moses' marriage and to gossip about his Ethiopian wife. The Lord dramatically demonstrated His displeasure with Miriam's attitude, and she was struck with leprosy (see Numbers 12).

The biblical position about marrying outside of one's faith is clear: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15, 17).

This is a clear prohibition against marrying outside one's faith. It is a warning against any association that would place Christian believers in compromising situations. Surely, such a prohibition includes the marital relationship as well.

Successful interracial marriages

Research has shown that successful interracial marriages have several factors in common. Partners in such marriages tend to marry when they are a little older than same-race partners.⁴ They have probably had longer courtships than same-race couples. They have demonstrated a capacity for independence—in thinking, decision-making, and living. They tend to be middle-class with better-than-average education. They have

been exposed to cross-cultural experiences. After marriage, they usually live in cosmopolitan areas.

A final word

Having said all this about interracial or intercultural marriages, one final issue needs to be raised. The more factors the two partners have in common, the more likely their marriage will succeed. If you are contemplating on such a marriage, ask yourself some questions: Do we have the same faith? When Friday evening comes, where will we be—both welcoming the Sabbath or one of us watching TV? Faith, in view of what we have seen above in the biblical data, is non-negotiable. How about our social status? What about age? Do we have a culture that is close enough to permit a better understanding of each other? What about value systems and lifestyle practices? What are the goals we cherish for our children? The list can go on and on. But remember: the more common factors you two have, the more likely your marriage will succeed. Marriage is

neither a rush nor a compromise; it is a reasoned decision, based on love and an eternal commitment.

Reger C. Smith (Ph.D., Michigan State University) teaches in the Social Work Department at Andrews University. He is the author of Two Cultures: One Marriage (Andrews University Press, 1996), from which this article is adapted. Dr. Smith's address: Andrews University; Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104; U.S.A. E-mail:smith@andrews.edu

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Catastrophism? Yes!

by Ariel A. Roth

A review of how science has gone back and forth on the role of catastrophism in the study of earth's history.

Early on the morning of November 14, 1963, the crew members on the fishing vessel *Isleifur II* noticed a strange sulphur-like smell in the air, but dismissed it as unimportant. About an hour later, the boat, navigating near the coast of Iceland, started to roll in an unusual pattern. In the dim light of dawn, the crew observed dark smoke rising in the south. Thinking that a ship might be on fire, they checked for any S.O.S. radio messages, but none had been heard. Looking through his binoculars, the captain noted black columns erupting out of the sea about a kilometer away. The crew immediately suspected a volcano; after all, they should know as they were from Iceland where volcanic activity is almost a way of life. The fishermen were right over the volcanically active mid-Atlantic ridge. There the floor of the ocean is about 100 meters below sea level, so the activity of a submarine volcano could be easily noticed at the ocean surface.

The disturbance continued all day, with stones, flashes of light, and a column of steam, ash, and smoke, rising 3 kilometers into the air. In five days, where before there had been only open ocean, an island 600 meters long had formed (Figure 1). The island, later named Surtsey after the mythological giant *Surtur*, eventually reached a diameter of nearly 2 kilometers. Amazingly, when scientists visited the island, it looked as though it had been there for a long time. In about five months, a mature-looking beach and cliff had formed (Figure 2). One of the investigators commented: "What elsewhere may take thousands of years . . . may take a few weeks or even a few days here. On Surt-

sey only a few months sufficed for a landscape to be created which was so varied and mature that it was almost beyond belief."¹

Normally, on our relatively placid earth, changes don't happen very rapidly, but occasionally events like the formation of Surtsey remind us that rapid catastrophic changes do occur.

Catastrophism and uniformitarianism

Catastrophism and uniformitarianism have played a major role in the interpretation of the history of earth. The first assumes rapid, unusual, major geological events, while the second asserts with the contrary concept of small, slow, and prolonged changes. The long ages required for slow uniformitarian changes demand that the biblical account of a recent Creation be discarded when explaining the formation of huge geological layers and the fossils that appear on the surface of the earth. Uniformitarianism fits better with a prolonged evolutionary history and long geological ages, while catastrophism fits better with the biblical concept of a recent Creation and a subsequent worldwide Flood. The biblical Flood, which could deposit the geological layers rapidly, represents a prime example of catastrophism.

Throughout most of human history, catastrophism was a well-accepted view,² occurring in ancient mythology and in Greek and Roman antiquity. Interest waned during medieval times, although the Arabs closely followed Aristotle, who believed in catastrophes. The Renaissance saw a renewed interest. The abundant marine fossils found in the

Alps were often explained as the result of the Flood. The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed attempts at harmonizing science with biblical Creation and Flood accounts. However, there were some notable detractors, such as René Descartes (1596-1650), who suggested the Earth formed by a cooling process. Orthodox ideas began to be modified, such as suggestions that the Deluge might have resulted from natural causes and that it might not have formed all of the sedimentary rock layers. Multiple catastrophes were proposed by Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) in France, and during this period a few other scholars advocated uniformitarianism.

At the same time, in England, there was strong support for the biblical Flood from such leading authorities as William Buckland, Adam Sedgwick, William Conybeare, and Roderick Murchison. In this milieu, a book appeared that would have more influence on geological thought than any other.

Principles of Geology first appeared in 1830.³ Written by Charles Lyell, it strongly changed the prevailing climate of geological thought from catastrophism to the strict slow changes of uniformitarianism. By the middle of the 19th century, uniformitarianism had become a dominant concept and catastrophism a dwindling view. Various schemes tried to reconcile the biblical account of a recent Creation with the long geological ages proposed by uniformitarianism.

The Bretz event

In 1923 the independent-minded geologist Harlen Bretz described one of the most unusual landscapes to be found on the surface of our planet. Covering some 40,000 square kilometers in the southeastern region of the State of Washington (U.S.A.), it is characterized by a vast network of huge dry channels, sometimes many kilometers wide, forming a maze of buttes and canyons cut into stark, hard volcanic rock. Unlike ordinary river valleys, which generally



Figure 1. The developing island of Surtsey, south of Iceland. At this stage, it is only four days old.



Figure 2. The new island of Surtsey. Note the beach, the cliff, and men for scale. The small white objects on the beach in the foreground are krill, planktonic crustaceans that constitute food for whales. The rock stacks in the distant horizon are not part of the island. Five months and two days earlier, this area was open ocean.

Both photos from *Surtsey*, by Sigurdur Thorarinsson. Copyright © 1964, 1966 by Almenna Bokafelagid. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Putnam Inc.

have a broad V shape in cross-section, these channels often display steep sides and flat floors. In addition, huge mounds of stream gravel have been found at various elevations. Evidence of hundreds of ancient waterfalls, some as

high as 100 meters, with large eroded plunge pools at their base, testify to something very unusual.

How did this odd landscape form? Bretz had an idea, but it was outrageous enough to spark a geological controver-

sy that lasted for 40 years. In his first publication on this topic, Bretz did not express his suspicion about a major catastrophic flood, but only indicated that prodigious amounts of water would be required.⁴ However, later in the same year, he published a second paper expressing his view that this landscape had been formed by a truly vast, but short-lived, catastrophic flood. This flood had scoured the area, eroded the channels, and deposited the immense gravel bars.⁵

At that time, geologists opposed any sort of explanation associated with catastrophes, and Bretz knew this. Uniformitarianism was the accepted view; although recognized as having an impact, volcanoes and earthquakes were considered unimportant. Catastrophism was anathema; it was in the same category in which Creation finds itself in many scientific circles now—totally unacceptable. The geologic community had to deal with this young upstart Bretz, who was completely out of line. His heretical ideas were uncomfortably close to the rejected idea of the biblical Flood.⁶ To adopt his theories, they thought would mean re-treating into “the Dark Ages.”⁷

As Bretz, who was professor of geology at the University of Chicago, continued his study and publication, some geologists decided to try to persuade their wayward colleague. In 1927, he was invited to present his views to the Geological Society of Washington, D.C. There was a special purpose behind this invitation: “a veritable phalanx of doubters had been assembled to debate the flood hypothesis.”⁸ After Bretz’s presentation, five members of the prestigious U.S. Geological Survey presented their objections and alternative explanations such as glaciation and other slow changes.⁹ Two of these geologists had not even visited the area! In answering them, a weary Bretz commented that “perhaps, however, my attitude of dogmatic finality is proving contagious.”¹⁰ One major problem for Bretz’s idea remained unan-

swered: Where did all the water come from so suddenly? Apparently no minds were changed at the meeting; the idea of a catastrophic flood still seemed to most scientists, preposterous.

In the following years, the geological community concentrated on developing alternatives to Bretz’s model. In Bretz’s words, the “heresy must be gently but firmly stamped out.”¹¹ Nevertheless, field studies continued to produce data favorable to a catastrophic interpretation, and the conflict began to moderate. Bretz and others found a source for the flood waters. Ancient Lake Missoula to the east had once harbored 2,100 cubic kilometers of water. Some evidence indicated that ice had dammed the lake. A sudden break in the ice would release the water needed to produce the evidence for the rapid erosion seen to the west. The best support for this explanation came later when scientists found giant ripples in both Lake Missoula and the channel region to the west. You are probably familiar with the parallel ripple lines frequently seen on sandy stream beds. These are usually just a few centimeters from crest to crest. The ripples on the floor of Lake Missoula and to the west were gigantic—up to 15 meters high, with a span of 150 meters from crest to crest.¹² Only vast quantities of rapidly moving water could produce such an effect. More recent studies have concentrated on details. Some suggest there may have been as many as eight or more flood episodes.¹³ One of the studies proposed that water flowed at 108 kilometers per hour, eroding the deep channels in the hard volcanic rock in a few hours or days.¹⁴

Eventually Bretz’s masterful interpretations, based on careful study of the rocks, were accepted by most of the geological community. In 1965 the International Association for Quaternary Research organized a field trip to the region. At the conclusion of the conference, Bretz, who was unable to attend,

received a telegram from the participants sending him their greetings and closing with the sentence: “We are now all catastrophists.”¹⁵ In 1979 Bretz was awarded the Penrose Medal, the United States’ most prestigious geological award. Bretz had won; so had catastrophism. This modern-day “Noah” and his likewise unwanted flood had been vindicated.

Turbidity currents

By the middle of the 20th century, some geologists had noticed that strict uniformitarianism contradicted the data from the rocks themselves. Bretz had found evidence of very rapid action. Other scientists were finding sedimentary layers with both shallow- and deep-water components.¹⁶ How could these ever get mixed together under quiet conditions? The resolution: catastrophic underwater mud flows, starting from shallow water and flowing down to deep water. These fast mud flows, called *turbidity currents*, produce special deposits called *turbidites*. Turbidites have turned out to be surprisingly common all over the world. A few other daring thinkers have suggested other catastrophic activities such as mass extinctions caused by influxes of high-energy cosmic radiation¹⁷ and the sudden spread of fresh arctic water over the world oceans.¹⁸ All of these theories indicate a growing departure from strict uniformitarianism.

The coup de grace for the dominance of uniformitarian explanations did not, however, come from the study of the rocks themselves, but from the fossils they contained. Why did the dinosaurs disappear near the end of the Cretaceous, and why were other mass extinctions evident at other levels of the fossil record? Some reasonable cause must be found. Various explanations had been proposed for the extinction of dinosaurs, ranging from starvation to poisonous mushrooms or even hay fever. Nevertheless, their disappearance had

been generally considered a mystery. Then in 1980 Nobel Prize Laureate Luis Alvarez, from the University of California at Berkeley, and others¹⁹ suggested that the unusual abundance of the element iridium found at a number of places throughout the world at the top of the Cretaceous layers might have come from an asteroid hitting the earth and killing off the dinosaurs. The idea engendered a mixed reaction. Some questioned it because the dinosaurs and other organisms did not seem to disappear that suddenly in the fossil layers. Others proposed widespread volcanic activity and global fires, or an impact from a comet instead of an asteroid.

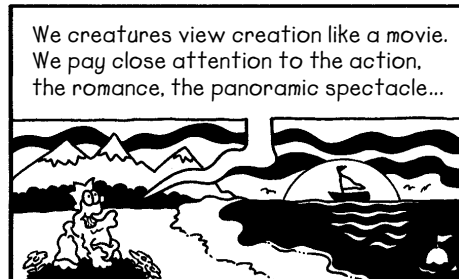
The debate about details continues, but the door to catastrophic interpretations is wide open. The scientific literature now reports a wide range of sudden major changes.

Newer catastrophic ideas

Some of the newer catastrophic ideas propose that comets or asteroids could send ocean waves up to heights of eight kilometers²⁰ and plumes of volatiles hundreds of kilometers above Earth's surface.²¹ Other proposed effects include 500° C blasts of air at 2,500 kilometers per hour that would kill half of the life on earth, and global earthquakes accompanied by ground waves reaching heights of 10 meters. The opening of cracks that span 10 to 100 kilometers and rapid mountain building have also been proposed.²² There is even a suggestion that these impacts could have initiated the break up of Earth's ancient supercontinent called Gondwanaland.²³

Catastrophism has made a rapid return, but it is not exactly the classical catastrophism of two centuries ago that incorporated the biblical Flood as a major geologic event. Interestingly, some geologists recently suggested that an extraterrestrial impact could be related to the Genesis flood account.²⁴ At present, major rapid catastrophes are readily accepted, but in contrast to the biblical

Pontius' Puddle



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flood, which took only one year, an abundance of time is introduced between many major catastrophes. The term *neocatastrophism* seems to be gaining acceptance, as attempts are made to distinguish the newer concept from the older catastrophism. The return to catastrophic interpretations has been identified as "a great philosophical breakthrough,"²⁵ and it is acknowledged that "the profound role of major storms throughout geologic history is becoming increasingly recognized."²⁶ This latter view fits well with the biblical model of the Deluge as an extended series of storms during the year of the Flood.

Neocatastrophism has stimulated reinterpretation of many geologic features. For instance, many sedimentary deposits thought to have accumulated slowly are now interpreted as the result of rapid turbidity currents, and a number of fossil coral reefs, previously thought to have formed slowly, are reinterpreted as rapid debris flows.

Examples of rapid action

Under normal, quiet conditions, changes in Earth's surface proceed very slowly. However, there are many examples of catastrophic activity that suggest major changes in a short time.

Erosion can occur very rapidly. In 1976 the newly built Teton Dam in Idaho (U.S.A.) sprang a leak that could not be stopped, and the rushing water cut through sediment to a depth of 100 meters in less than one hour. The dam was made of soft sediment, which is eas-

ily eroded. However, it has been proposed that Bretz's channels, mentioned earlier, which are in hard basalt rock, were cut to equivalent depth in a few days. The carrying capacity of moving water has been determined to increase as the third to fourth power of the velocity.²⁷ This means that if the speed of flow is increased 10 times, the water can carry 1,000 to 10,000 times as much sediment.

Non-creationists sometimes point out that the geologic column is far too thick to have been deposited in the single year of the Deluge.²⁸ This may not be a significant argument. While most creationists would exclude the lowest (Precambrian) and highest portions of the geologic column from the Flood, some present rates of deposition are so rapid that there would be little problem in depositing the whole column in a few weeks. Turbidity currents can deposit their sediment in a single locality in a few minutes or less, and over thousands of square kilometers in a few hours. Large turbidites, called *megaturbidites*, found in Spain have thicknesses up to 200 meters, along with an immense volume of 200 cubic kilometers.²⁹ There are also several methods other than turbidity currents that cause the rapid deposition of sediments. An intense Deluge lasting a year could deposit a lot of sediment.

The accumulation of thick layers of tiny microscopic organisms such as the White Cliffs of Dover in England is often presumed to require lengthy periods

of time. But such accumulation can occur rapidly. Along the coast of Oregon (U.S.A.), a three-day storm of high winds and rain deposited 10 to 15 centimeters of microscopic diatoms for a distance of 32 kilometers. I have seen a well-preserved fossil bird and many fish in thick deposits of microscopic diatoms near Lompoc, California. A whale was also found in this deposit. Such preservation would require rapid burial before disarticulation of the organism takes place.³⁰ It has been found that disarticulation in birds normally occurs in a few days. Evidently some layers of microscopic organisms have been deposited rapidly.

Some implications

We can learn from the history of the catastrophic-uniformitarianism interpretations. For millennia, catastrophes were accepted, then for well over a century they were virtually eradicated from all scientific thought; now they are well accepted again. This illustrates how science often changes its views, and sometimes even accepts rejected concepts. The Bible, on the other hand, does not change. It is of interest that the reacceptance of catastrophes came mainly from the study of the rocks themselves. We should be cautious about accepting broad views, such as uniformitarianism, that are based on opinion or a restricted amount of information. Furthermore, the newer catastrophic interpretations, now reaccepted by science, show that major events can occur rapidly. This makes the biblical account of beginnings, including Creation and the Flood, all the more plausible.

Ariel A. Roth (Ph.D., University of Michigan) is the editor of *Origins* and former director of the Geoscience Research Institute. His book, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture, from which this article is adapted*, has recently been published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Dr. Roth's address: Geoscience Research In-

stitute - Loma Linda University; Loma Linda, California 92350; U.S.A. Fax: (909) 824-92350. E-mail: gri.ccmil.llu.edu

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Grace Adeoye

Dialogue with a university lecturer and researcher from Nigeria

A devoted mother. A committed evangelist. A college lecturer in tropical diseases. That's just an introduction to the life and ministry of Grace Adeoye, a Seventh-day Adventist in Nigeria.

Brought up in an Adventist home, Grace knew the frontiers of law and the embrace of grace, and saw no dichotomy between the two. As a child, she saw in her mother the strict discipline of Adventism. But along with discipline, she also experienced the love and tenderness of a mother whose life was to influence her own career as a mother, a church member, and a professional.

While a teenager, attending secondary school, Grace had a dream of Jesus asking her to go and tell the world that He was coming soon. A woman becoming a preacher? In Africa? That was unthinkable, and so the dream was dismissed as unrealistic. But its urgency never left Grace. And then in 1986, married and already a professional, Grace conducted her first evangelistic campaign—the first time an Adventist woman had done so in Nigeria. And the crusade was a success. “Glory and thanks to God,” says Grace, and she kept doing this ever since.

Grace Adeoye has a Ph.D. in parasitology from the University of London and teaches zoology in the department of biological sciences at the University of Lagos in Nigeria. She is married and has five children, ages 12 to 20. She serves on the Adventist Church's World Commission on Human Sexuality. She came to the church's world headquarters in 1997 to attend the first meeting of the commission, at which time she spoke about her life and faith.

■ *How were you named to the Commission on Human Sexuality?*

Perhaps the Nigerian Union had something to do with it. They were familiar with my activities, both in the church and in the community. I have been involved with women's ministry in my local congregation for many years. Several years ago, with the help of some church members, we started a church-based exercise program for women. The idea spread to other churches in Lagos. Today the program is carried out in many churches.

I was also involved on my own in an AIDS control program in Nigeria. Soon I was serving as a coordinator of the government committee for the control of AIDS and HIV. We sponsored some

workshops at the state level. We introduced the program to the Adventist Church. As an Adventist, my goal was to reach every church in Nigeria with education on human sexuality. We had to do this to battle the HIV plague that was spreading throughout the country.

When the Africa-Indian Ocean Division nominated me to serve on this commission, I considered it a great honor.

■ *Does your work for the church conflict with your profession?*

No. On the contrary, they complement each other. As a Christian committed to my faith, I am able to bring to my profession all the values and the responsibilities my faith demands of me.

■ *Would you say something about your profession?*

I am a lecturer in the zoology unit of the department of biological sciences at the University of Lagos. I teach courses such as parasitology and protozoology on the undergraduate and graduate level. I also supervise seminars and projects on various parasitic-related topics. I have students who are involved in projects for their master's and doctoral degrees. In addition, I am involved in my own research, under the auspices of the World Health Organization, the university, and various government organizations.

■ *How did you become interested in parasitology?*

My first degree was in education and zoology. While I was working on my master's degree, I became interested in things that affect human beings. Para-

sitic diseases affecting people are rather common, and I wanted to study the life cycles of certain parasites. I thought there must be a way to break these cycles so people can be free of these diseases. So I got involved in this study and research both at master's and Ph.D. level.

■ *Being a family person, was it difficult to pursue your education?*

Fortunately, I have an understanding husband and wonderful children. In fact four of my children were part of my study program, in that they were born while I was in school. My first child arrived two days after I had a major exam. While I was doing national youth service corps work, my second son came along. My two daughters were born while I was doing my master's degree. I was already employed as a teacher then, and so I had to care of four children while working full-time. It took me four years to complete the master's program instead of the normal two.

When my fifth child was one year old, I left him and the other children with my husband and went to England to begin my Ph.D. program.

■ *Wasn't that a bit too rushed?*

I suppose it was, but I really had no alternative in view of the circumstances. Of the 2000 or so applicants from Nigeria for the commonwealth scholarship for graduate studies in England, I was one of 29 who were selected. I had to make a difficult decision, To proceed with graduate studies or to stay with family? I prayed a lot. I knew God would show the way. Even before I could make a decision, my husband encouraged me to go ahead. I might never get such an opportunity again. So I went to London and was separated from my family for about three years.

■ *What was your specialty in doctoral studies?*

I wanted to choose an area that would be of practical value to my people in Nigeria. The country is affected by

two major health problems: malaria and schistosomiasis. I chose the second, which is caused by a parasite that is transmitted through snails or their larva in water. When people go to wash or to fetch water, the larva penetrate their skin and travel to the spleen and liver. The disease causes blood in the urine and the feces, and often is fatal. So I chose the study of this parasite, and I think I have been able to help the community.

■ *As a young person, who influenced you the most?*

Without hesitation, my mother. She was a godly person, very much committed to Adventist faith and life. She was always involved in church work, and got us involved, too, as soon as we were old enough. She wanted me to be a witness to my faith. Next to my mother, my brother influenced me the most. He was a role model, both in education and in church work. He holds a doctoral degree, but what I admire him the most for is his commitment to witnessing to his faith. He is a lay pastor.

■ *Is that how you got involved in evangelism?*

In a way, yes. But that dream I had as a teenager never really left me. God helped me with the courage that was needed to hold a series of evangelistic meetings. Remember that was in the '80s. No woman had ever held a public meeting in Nigeria. But the Dorcas Society provided a good front for me to open my first series of meetings. The women came to my help. Although the local church felt we should work within the church and not go preaching outside it, we felt called to do so. The first series in 1986 was quite successful and we were able to reach many people. On the opening night, when my translator and I finished the sermon, it started quite an excitement. The women didn't let us get off the platform: they literally carried us out. Later, the church elders

saw what could be accomplished through women.

■ *How is the situation now?*

Opinions have changed, both within the church and in the community. It is not uncommon for women to preach in the church and also hold evangelistic meetings.

■ *Do you have opportunities to share your Christian experience among your colleagues?*

Christianity is something I share every day. If they are having some kind of difficulty, a family problem perhaps, they know I am open to listen to them. I have also conducted Revelation Seminars with some of them. Some have joined me for worship in our church. All of my university colleagues know about my faith and my Sabbath observance, and they respect my convictions. This is also true with my students.

■ *How do you nurture your spiritual life?*

I pray and meditate a lot. I read the Bible and as I do so, I let God speak to me. I also love to read other books on different aspects of spiritual life. I do a lot of public speaking, and as I prepare my talks, I grow along with my hearers.

■ *What would you like to say to Adventist students and young professionals?*

Always put God first; He enables and empowers. Second, don't let anyone or anything take away your faith. Third, wherever you are, share your faith.

Interview by Mark Driskill.

Mark Driskill is director of development for Adventist World Radio. He can be reached at <mdris@compuserve.com>

Dr. Adeoye's address: Zoology Unit, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. E-mail: <matdeplg@infoweb.abs.net>



Victor Issa

*Dialogue with an Adventist sculptor
with a vision for the beautiful*

A perpetual smile adorns his face. Is that a symbol of discovery or achievement? Hard to say, but Victor Issa is a man who combines the challenge of discovery and the satisfaction of achievement in whatever he does—at home, at church, or at work. After all, he is an artist who keeps searching, even as he keeps bringing life to his ideas and form to his vision.

Issa was born in Syria and raised in Lebanon. The influence of those ancient lands left its mark on his young mind. As a boy he grew with centuries of civilization all around him, and had a special appreciation for the beautiful and the creative. So it was not a surprise that when it came to college education, he chose a major in art and a minor in music. He is a 1980 graduate of Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Victor Issa knows how to model clay for bronze casting, turning metal into pictures of quiet beauty and works of enduring art. He employs the old method called “lost wax” process. Using a special modeling clay, he creates exactly the look and feel he wants in the finished pieces. Then he takes the clay sculpture to the foundry where a rubber mold is made and a wax copy is cast. The wax is then dipped in ceramic slurry inside and out. The ceramic is heated, melting the wax (hence, “lost wax”) and hardening the ceramic. Molten bronze is poured into the form. When it is cooled, the ceramic form is broken off. And behold, the sculpture in bronze—with every characteristic and detail as in the original clay model.

Victor is married to Candy, a registered nurse. They live in Loveland, Colorado, and have four girls, ages 9 to 15, all home schooled with Candy as their teacher.

■ Some sculptors see the completed figure before they begin and “release it.” Others see a piece developing as they work. How would you describe your style?

Often, it is a process of discovery. Each piece is different from the other, and each is tuned to the individual model I’m working with. I have tried this exercise several times: I’ll have models hold poses of existing sculptures that I have done, and it is amazing how different the piece looks with different models. The end result is not nearly as successful in my mind as it is interfaced with the model I use for the idea.

■ What sets your sculpture apart from others?

My methodology and finishing re-

flect the classical style. How I arrive at poses and how I capture life in a piece may also make a difference. I work from life as much as possible rather than from photographs. That gives a lot more lifelikeness to my work.

■ What do you mean, “work from life”?

When I come up with a concept, I want to keep it alive through the process from the beginning to the finish. I want the person who is modeling to emerge through the bronze. I’ve seen so many sculptures that look so posed, so lifeless, and so dead. A lot of that is caused by photographed models. Photographs are poses. Sculptors who use photographs are true to what they see in the picture, and the end result is a sculpture that is posed and lifeless. I don’t have my models hold a pose for more than a few seconds. They constantly go in and out of the pose. I tell them “keep it fresh.” I want to keep my models from getting tired out.

■ How much of the sculpture that you do—especially the monument size—is influenced by its environment?

Most of the life-size sculpture I do starts as a maquette. I don’t always think of the piece as going to life size. Once in a while a piece touches me and says, I want to be life-size. Sometimes I look at a piece, and it’s crying to be a fountain.

■ Does your cultural or ethnic background affect your work?

My ethnic background! Certainly one cannot escape from the influence of one’s upbringing. Egyptian art has always intrigued me. And then there is

the subculture of Adventism. How can one escape that? I believe strongly in the need to uplift humanity. I have heard other artists say they sculpt or they paint what's in their heart. I want to make sure that what's in my heart is in tune with God and what I produce will uplift people and will help them appreciate true beauty.

■ *What do you think art is, and why should we care about it?*

Art is everywhere. I can't conceive of life without art. So much is made possible with art that otherwise would not be. Personally, I would be hard pressed to live without art. I can't imagine doing anything else. It is so much a part of my life that I can't even have an objective view on that. Most people don't realize that everything they touch was created in a sense by an artist or sculptor. That's the practical aspect of art.

On the other hand, there is the world of fine art that enriches life beyond measure and beyond words. The animal kingdom has no art in its existence. I believe this distinction is another illustration of the "image of God" in the human family. Fine art serves no practical purpose other than to provide beauty, stimulate thought, and uplift the spirit.

■ *An accountant might see what you do as more of a hobby than a job. What do you do as a hobby? Accounting?*

No [laughs], I love music. I'm involved in a musical group at the church. Photography, too. I don't really need a hobby. My work is so fulfilling in every aspect of my life.

■ *How do you balance the family/work aspect of your life?*

My studio is just 65 feet from the house. I measured that so I can tell people, "I have to go 65 feet to work every morning!" That close proximity to my family has been a tremendous blessing for me. The children come and spend time with me in the studio. I'm always

home for at least two meals a day.

■ *How long does it take to do a single life-size piece?*

Probably about 200 to 250 hours for the clay work. Then there is the foundry work and other details involved. Regardless of how long it takes—and each work is different—what counts is the final result and the satisfaction it produces.

■ *How much does a life-size monument cost?*

Something like the Jedediah commission I did several years ago (which was one and a half times life-size and included a bronze maquette) would cost about 50 to 60 thousand dollars. That would include the foundry work and installation.

■ *What projects are you working on now?*

One involves a sculpture, called "Eden Restored" for a hospital system in the Denver area. It has eight life-size figures of different nationalities, depicting a possible scene in the earth made new. Another project has been commissioned by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The scene includes 10 life-size figures, the second coming of Christ in relief, and a flying angel to one side. It will be unveiled at the Toronto General Conference session in 2000, and its final home will be the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. I have seven or eight sculptures of my own that I am working on from one-third size to life-size.

■ *Finally, do you see a dichotomy between working on spiritual themes and secular themes?*

I don't. Although a lot of my figurative work is classical and thought of as secular in nature, I consider the beauty of the human form spiritual. It is the ultimate beauty—at least so far as our experience is concerned. The name of my business, *Crowning Creation*, reflects

the theme that governs my art: God's act of creation was crowned by the creation of Adam, and then the jewel in the crown, Eve. I find ultimate grace, beauty, and spirituality in that form. When I do a sculpture of Jesus or a heavenly theme, I want that piece of art to express in a tangible form the ultimate spiritual hope we humans have.

Interview by Erik Stenbakken.

Erik Stenbakken is a free-lance writer and photographer who resides in Lincoln, Nebraska, U.S.A.

Victor Issa's address: 3950 N County Road 27; Loveland, CO 80538; U.S.A.

For more of Issa's work, visit <http://www.issav.com>

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The Adventist Church and a billion dollars

by Gary Patterson

That's correct! One billion dollars is a rounded total of tithe contributions for the Seventh-day Adventist world church in 1997. The number boggles the mind and defies comprehension. But let's try to put this in a perspective that we can grasp. World church membership stood close to 10 million at the end of 1997. That means the average tithe contribution per member during 1997 was about two U.S. dollars a week or about \$100.00 for the year.

Let's put these numbers in a time-line perspective. Beginning with the organization of the Adventist Church in 1863, cumulative tithe contributions took 100 years to reach the first one billion dollars—in 1963. It took 10 years before the second billion was reached—in 1973, and four for the third—in 1977. Then the billion mark was reached in three, and then in two years in the 1980s. By 1997 church members were contributing more than one billion dollars tithe annually.

In other words, over its 135-year history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has had a cumulative tithe of about 15

billion dollars. It took 124 years for the first half of that amount to be received, and 10 years for the second half. With the steady growth of membership and monetary inflation, annual comparisons are somewhat meaningless. However, it is interesting to look at the impact on long-term funding and at least try to comprehend such large numbers.

But tithe is not the whole story, of course. Members give additional funds to support the worldwide and local work of the church. These non-tithe funds include wills, trusts, and donations for specific projects. However, the largest portion of non-tithe funds consists of "World Mission Funds," usually collected during the Sabbath school or as part of the combined budget giving by members. In 1997, this amounted to more than 50 million dollars—funds that support all aspects of the maintenance and expansion of the church work around the world, including educational, medical, evangelistic, and pastoral ministries. This article, however, is confined primarily to the source and use of tithe funds.

The spiritual nature of giving

But before we think of how to spend a billion dollars, consider the spiritual nature of this enterprise. What causes people from a variety of cultures, nations, and economic levels to join together and give liberally toward the marvelous work of spreading the good news of salvation? What is the trans-cultural glue that holds us together, as we join with Adventist believers around the world?

Perhaps at the core is what we have in common. And that is not an institutional mandate, but a spiritual commitment and shared mission. Such an observation is not intended as a negative aspersion on the corporate strength and accomplishments that are made possible by the church as an institution. But at the heart of the church—what makes it work—is a commitment to participate in the fulfilling of the gospel commission to all the world. And in the institution of the church we see cooperative financial effort as the best way to provide the funds to achieve such a goal.

The Old Testament origins

In Old Testament times, tithe and offerings were given to the tribe of Levi. Tithe was the assumed and natural response to the blessing of God. It was seen not as an obligation so much as a loving response. Offerings were also given in response to the grace and blessings of God.

From these resources the Israelites funded their religious practices, education, and at times their government as well. Although occasionally there existed varying forms of a rudimentary monetary system during Old Testament times, the tithe was based more on the increase

Cumulative tithe, 1863-1997, in billions of dollars.



accrued from agriculture than on wages. And commerce was conducted largely on the barter system, rather than by using cash. This positive link to daily sustenance and the product of the land provided for a much more direct recognition of, and dependence on, God for survival.

As Israel entered the promised land, the territory was divided among 11 of the 12 tribes. The tribe of Levi was left out of this land distribution, as it was their task to provide the religious direction that would hold the society together. As a result, they needed the support of the tithes from the other 11 tribes. Without this system of support, the Levites could not survive.

These biblical approaches to collecting tithe and offerings provided a model for the stewardship and financial structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Unfortunately, as in the case of the Israelites, our concepts of giving and our relationship with God are often polluted with the pagan idea that views sacrifice as giving up something of our own to appease or bribe an angry god.

While God's relationship with His people is based on a covenant that includes sacrifice, the covenant is based, not on our sacrifice, but on His. There is nothing we can do to purge ourselves of sin. All we need to do is to accept God's sacrifice and enter into a covenant relationship with Him. Through the Psalmist, God expresses clearly and logically this relationship between covenant and sacrifice: "Gather to me my consecrated ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5, NIV). Then to His covenant people He states: "I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most

High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" (Psalm 50:9-15, NIV).

What constitutes a sacrifice? Not the multitude of possessions surrendered. Not the slaying of animals. Not the good works of righteousness. In biblical terms, sacrifice is an act of gratitude, a response of thankfulness toward the sacrifice made by God to atone for sin. He has acted first in love toward us. We respond to that love. There is no other acceptable response than thanks and love to God. Love is the only accurate measure of sacrifice.

But it is so easy for our motives to become mixed or even totally perverted. How can we know when our offerings are self-absorbed and pagan, appeasement-oriented rather than thanksgiving? Perhaps when we begin to worry over whether we are giving too much or too little. Perhaps when we want to control the use of our "thanks-giving" by insisting that things must be done our way by the church or we will refuse to give. This raises a serious question: Is such giving a real act of love? Or is it just religious blackmail?

The New Testament pattern

In the New Testament, church finance developed along different lines. At first, the band of Christians was small and in a confined geographic location. In such a setting, with the expectation of the immediate return of Jesus, there was little felt need for an institutional church or for an organized financial system. Properties and possessions were held in common by the members. And it was largely as a result of the needs of poorer members that appeals for offerings of support and movements toward church structure began.

The apostolic church had no paid clergy, and those who preached were cared for by the people they served while working at whatever employment they could find. As they moved from place to place preaching the gospel,

they established congregations, which in turn sent them on to additional locations to spread the good news. In fact, it was not until later New Testament times that structure and finance and buildings became a significant part of developing an institutional church.

Adventist structure

Arising after 1800 years of Christian history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church had a variety of models from which to draw as it searched for the best in structure and financial operations. At the base, of course, is the biblical principle of tithe and offerings. As to church organization, the primary options were two: the congregational and the institutional. The institutional model that we have chosen centralizes funding, using tithe for the gospel ministry and relying on non-tithe offerings for other aspects of mission such as church and school buildings, utilities, services, and educational and medical work. This centralized mode of operation makes it possible to be more efficient and equitable in reaching the world field.

There are, however, some downsides. When our church was small in its early years, its membership was largely limited to North America and located in a few major centers. Members knew their leaders personally and were directly involved in the work of the church. A General Conference Session was truly that—a general gathering of all church members.

Obviously, such is not possible today, in view of the size and global distribution of our membership. As a result, individual members tend to be less involved in the decisions of the corporate church. For that reason, there are often calls for more congregational decision-making about where and how church funds are to be used. And though such individual interest does spark somewhat greater support for specific projects, the potential for imbalance in such a mode of operation is enormous.

In today's world of millions of mem-

bers and one billion dollars annually, we must not allow ourselves to be caught in an either/or position on structure and finance. While there is merit in selecting individual or church group projects for funding and service to specific needs, yet the balanced and efficient operation of our movement seems best served by a structure that works through the 12 “divisions” of the church as it is now constituted. These world divisions are not permanent and unchangeable territories. In fact, the division structure undergoes regular review and restructuring as political, population, and membership matters make it advisable.

Financial distribution

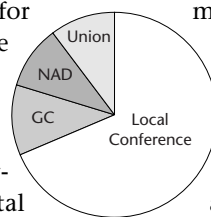
Given the institutional mode we have chosen, how are the finances of the church received, divided, and distributed? The chart below lists the divisions by membership, total tithe for one year, and tithe per capita in an ascending order. (These figures are based on 1996 year-end totals.)

The initial point of tithe receipt is the local church. From here, it is sent in its entirety to the conference/mission of which it is a constituent entity and from which it receives the services and funding for needs of the congregation such as pastoral, evangelistic, administrative, retirement fund contributions for employees, and some educational costs. The amount of tithe expended by the

conference/mission varies from a high of 90 per cent in some divisions, to a low of 68.25 per cent in the North American Division.

Depending on the structure and policies of the various divisions and the unions in their territory, the balance of the tithe is divided between the union and division level, with 1 percent of total tithe being passed on to the General Conference for the worldwide operations of the church (except in North America as noted below). Thus, the tithe is divided among the various levels of governance that coordinate and provide for the work of the church.

In North America, a larger percentage of the tithe is sent to the General Conference than in other divisions. The local conferences retain 68.25 percent of the total tithe, 10.25 percent of which is placed in retirement contributions, thus leaving 58 percent of the tithe for funding the operation of the churches and conference services. The union receives 10 percent, the division 10.40 percent, and the General Conference 11.35 percent of the total North American Division tithe, as represented in the accompanying pie chart.



Changing patterns, unchanging mission

It is clear that the wealth of the world is not evenly distributed, and that some

divisions are donor divisions while others are net recipients. And the contrasts are even more starkly obvious within divisions themselves, as some fields are in the depths of poverty, while others support the work of the church in areas beyond their own borders. It is also clear that over time, the ideal would be for the work of the church to become not only self-sustaining in every field, but also that each entity might also be able to contribute to the expansion of its mission into new territories. Though we continue to work toward this ideal, we are not there yet, owing to inequities of world economy and the newness of the Adventist presence in some areas.

Time was when the entire membership of the church was in North America. But this was not to remain for long, thanks to the vision of our pioneers. Thus began the long decline of the membership ratio of the North American church in relation to world church membership from 100 percent at the start until at the present, it is less than 10 percent. And this is not a negative. It was the mission of our founders to make it so.

But with this burgeoning growth in the world church and the shift in membership percentages comes the realization that North America, at some point, can no longer finance the world work of the church as was the case for many years. In fact, we long ago passed that point. I can remember in my own lifetime when we reached the first one million membership mark. And at that time, North America was yet almost one-third of the world church. As we are reaching 10 million members worldwide, the ratio is now less than one in ten.

Increasingly, the leadership and the financing of church activities are being assumed by the members in each region of the world. Consequently, more and more the funding of donor divisions needs to be focused on territories yet

Division	Membership	Tithe in US\$	Tithe per capita in US\$
Southern Asia	239,887	\$1,007,248	\$4.20
Eastern Africa	1,579,726	\$6,883,582	\$4.36
Africa-Indian Ocean	1,169,680	\$8,092,569	\$6.92
Southern Asia-Pacific	951,205	\$20,889,978	\$21.96
Inter-American	1,654,683	\$73,206,162	\$44.24
Euro-Asia	114,868	\$5,306,087	\$46.19
South American	1,433,612	\$117,722,450	\$82.12
South Pacific	291,776	\$37,590,589	\$128.83
Euro-Africa	456,155	\$66,411,545	\$145.59
Trans-European	92,841	\$26,673,636	\$287.30
Northern Asia-Pacific	161,188	\$49,194,754	\$305.20
North American	858,364	\$507,406,826	\$591.14

unentered by the Adventist message (which at the outset included nearly the whole world, but now requires a new understanding). There is certainly a place for individual projects and donations as the Lord impresses the need on hearts and blesses with funds. But at the core of the miracle we are experiencing in the global membership growth is the efficient, equitable, and shared funding provided through the channels of the church organization, under the blessing of God.

This may sound like cheerleading for the institutional church—an optimistic view that fails to acknowledge that there can be problems and inefficiencies in the structure. It is not intended to be so. Indeed, I recognize that the church is not perfect—primarily because its membership and leadership are made up of people like myself, fallible, prone to self interest, and slow to perceive all God would lead us to know and do.

But in spite of all this, the church prospers and grows. It is not ours—it is God's. And the marvel of it all is that at His calling, we may be partakers of the miracle of His grace in giving the gospel to the whole world, far beyond the wildest imagination of anything we could accomplish individually, or even through the isolated efforts of our own little congregations. And how exciting it is to remain informed and involved! The numbers are beyond my ability to comprehend. As God said to Abraham, it is like trying to count the stars, or number the sand of the seashore. The miracle of grace is that we can be a part of it—even if we cannot fully comprehend it all.

Gary Patterson (D.Min., Vanderbilt University) is a general field secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and directs the Office of Mission Awareness. His address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, Maryland 20904; U.S.A. E-mail address: 74532.22@compuserve.com

Heavens fall...

Continued from page 7.

Hans and Sophie took their latest pamphlet to the university campus for distribution, they were apprehended. And though they divulged no names, their arrest was quickly followed by that of other members of the White Rose. Professor Huber, who to the end was the only professor at the university to support openly the White Rose, was also arrested. At his trial preceding his execution, he stated, "My actions and my intentions will be justified in the inevitable course of history; such is my firm faith. I hope to God that the inner strength that will vindicate my deeds will in good time spring forth from my own people. I have done as I had to do on the prompting of an inner voice. I take the consequences upon myself in the way expressed in the beautiful words of Johann Gottlieb Fichte: 'And thou shalt act as if on thee and on thy deed depended the fate of all Germany and thou alone must answer for it.'"

Hans and Sophie were also summarily tried and convicted, and they were beheaded on the evening of their trials. But they had stood up for right. Inspired by their commitment to Jesus Christ, influenced by a godly mentor and a courageous professor, they had made a statement in favor of truth. As Sophie had stated it simply, "Somebody, after all, had to make a start."

Hans and Sophie were buried in Perlach Cemetery in south Munich. In the city of Munich, graffiti appeared on the walls. It read, "Their spirit lives."

I wonder, Does their spirit live? Does it live in the hearts and minds of Seventh-day Adventist university students and professors? Are we willing to manifest the courage of our convictions and to show what it means to be a Christian in our age? Their spirit can live, it will live, if we accept the challenge to "stand for the right though the heavens fall," if we will determine by the grace of God

to resist the pernicious trends that pervade contemporary society and live the type of dedicated Christian lives that the world so desperately needs to see.

Greg A. King (Ph.D., Union Theological Seminary) is associate professor of biblical studies at Pacific Union College. His areas of interest include Old Testament studies and biblical ethics. His address: One Angwin Avenue; Angwin, California 94508; U.S.A. E-mail: gking@puc.edu

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13. This retelling of the story of the White Rose, including the quotes, is largely taken from the account in Garber, *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, pp. 162-171. It also gleans from Anton Gill, *An Honourable Defeat* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1994), pp. 183-195. The latter is available on-line at: <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/Holocaust/gill-white-rose.html>

The gift of affirmation

by Bryan Craig

Without encouragement it is hard to battle the problems we confront in life, and difficult to survive.

Helen Keller has been admired by the entire world. Yet she was not always an attractive example. Born blind and deaf, and full of energy, she vented her frustrations in fits of anger and of rage. With or without provocations, she would turn physically violent and strike out at the nearest object or person. Whatever her hands could find became the object of her terror. She would kick, bite, and hit if she didn't get her own way. Her mother tried being close and sympathetic. Her father tried shouting (as if she could hear), and even hinted that she should be sent away to a home for the insane. One author described her early childhood as that of "an uncontrollable wild animal."

But when Helen turned 6, someone new entered her life. Someone with tenderness and caring. Someone who believed in Helen and saw through those deaf ears and blind eyes. Someone who knew Helen had tremendous potential locked with in her innermost soul. Someone who knew the miracle of affirmation.

Ann Sullivan was not a miracle worker. Herself an early victim of handicaps, she had overcome them, and she knew that she could pass on that helping touch by being gentle and warm. She knew how to administer discipline and direction, but she also knew how to do so with care and concern. During those first days, Helen would kick and bite her new teacher, throw things at her, and show in every possible way her defiance and disobedience. But Ann was made of sterner stuff. Every act of Helen's anger brought a gentle and firm reminder from Ann that such acts are unacceptable. She would gently slap her, deny her food except as she was willing to eat with proper man-

ners, but always rewarded Helen with a hug or a loving pat in response to the slightest sign of Helen's obedience.

Years later, recalling their first meeting, Helen wrote, "I felt approaching footsteps and I stretched out my hand, as I supposed, to my mother. Someone took it, and I was caught up into her arms and held close to her. She had come to reveal all things to me and more than everything else, to love me." That love opened for Helen the beautiful world around her. She grasped Ann Sullivan as someone who could change her life, who could give vision without eyes, hearing without the ability to hear, and life in all its fullness.

How did it happen? Ann Sullivan believed in Helen. She was an affirmer—one who knew that affirmation can bring out all the hidden possibilities even in a helpless child.

What is affirmation?

The word *affirm* means to "make firm" or "to give strength to another." Psychologists tell us that we tend to define who we are in the context of how others feel about us. We all crave affirmation and encouragement from others. Such affirmation gives us a sense of belonging and identity.

When we encourage someone with positive comments, we, in fact, give them strength to acknowledge their own giftedness and the contribution that they make to life. Without such affirmation, it is hard to battle the problems we confront in life, and difficult to survive in a community, school, or workplace where competition is the rule of the day. Indeed, without the warmth and the care that accompany affirma-

tion, we are likely to become alienated.

Affirming another person is perhaps the most tender healing touch of one human being to another—a touch that encourages one to realize one's God-given potential. In all my years as a counselor I have come to realize that there is no personal growth without affirmation. As someone has said, "the greatest good that we do to others is not to give them our wealth, but to show them their own wealth." Or as Solomon stated, "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act;" "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others, will himself be refreshed" (Proverbs 3:27; 11:25, NIV).*

In the absence of affirmation

If people don't receive encouragement and affirmation from those around them, they feel a sense of insecurity and inadequacy. That in turn can lead them to act strangely just to get the feeling that they are accepted, approved, and appreciated by others. Some become "people pleasers" and hope that others will affirm them for the good they do. They might even allow people to "walk all over them" in order to receive affirmation for being "nice" or "helpful." Others may become workaholics, hoping that their performance will dazzle and attract the affirmation of others. Others may become perfectionists, striving hard to do their work perfectly or insisting on always having the right answers to the problems that they confront. All of this perfectionistic behavior is driven by the hope that "if I do it right" or "if I have the right answer" I'll get to be respected and appreciated by others. Still others take on the role of a "martyr," hoping that by their suffering they will be appreciated as a "saint," while others adopt controlling behaviors in the hope that as they control situations and people they will be valued for their skill and respected for their ability. Whatever the behavior is, people try to prove their

worth and solicit the affirmation that they need to carry on the tasks that they perform for others in community.

Jesus and affirmation

Jesus knew the value of affirmation. Everything He said and did was designed to encourage and build others. His words carried a great healing power. His gentle affirming touch healed the wounded, restored the brokenhearted, and comforted the anxious. His affirmation encouraged individuals to rise above their frustrations and to realize their full potential. He empowered people.

Jesus affirmed the repentant thief on the cross when He promised that the thief would be with Him in paradise. Jesus affirmed Zacchaeus. He told him that whatever others thought of him, He considered him as a citizen of His kingdom. "Salvation," Jesus said, "has come to this house" (Luke 19:9).

Jesus affirmed the little children. The disciples wanted to get rid of them, but not Jesus. He believed in the possibility of such children becoming part of His kingdom. "Let the little children come to me," He said in a memorable assertion, "and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16).

Consider the widow who came to the temple with an offering of just two mites. The temple leaders had no time or use for her. But Jesus recognized in her a total commitment to God's cause: "She, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on" (Mark 12:44). That's affirmation.

Observe also how Jesus affirmed the woman caught in adultery. Her accusers were ready with the law and the stones. They wanted justice. They smelled blood. But Jesus saw not the sin, but the sinner in need of grace. He offered her forgiveness, and counseled her, "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11, KJV). That's affirmation: to believe that a woman, sinner though she was, could

reach out and grasp God's grace and forgiveness—and live the purposes for which the Creator made her.

Such affirmation builds people. It empowers them to lead a new life. It challenges them to see the new self within.

The challenge to build up

Perhaps it's time to remember the words of the apostle: "Encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). The apostle believed that we ought to "be devoted to one another in brotherly love" and "honor one another" (Romans 12:10). And we should "spur one another on toward love and good deeds,...and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24, 25).

But how do we affirm? Here are three suggestions:

1. *Just do it!* Don't assume that others know how you feel, and how much you appreciate them. Tell them. An intention to affirm is only good when you act upon it.

2. *Do it frequently.* Most of us are like a slow leak in a tire: we need to be "pumped up" often. We need to receive encouragement and affirmation from each other. So not only should we affirm, but we should do it frequently.

3. *Don't be put off by those who have difficulty accepting your affirmation.* Some find it hard to receive encouragement. They may respond by saying, "Oh, you didn't need to do that!" But remember that the best way to receive affirmation is to give it. The more you give, the more there is to go around.

Remember what Solomon said: "He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:25).

Bryan Craig is a marriage counselor and director of Family Ministries for the South Pacific Division. His address: Locked Bag 2014; Wahroonga, NSW 2076; Australia. E-mail: 102555.1501@compuserve.com

**Except as otherwise noted, all Scripture passages in this article are quoted from the New International Version.*

Try health!

The success of campus outreach in Romania

by Stefan Mihaicuta, M.D.

Soon after I graduated from medical school in 1990, I received an invitation to meet with fellow Adventist students from various universities in Romania. At its very first meeting, this group had a clear, focused agenda. The country had just freed itself from the communist yoke, and so the group's one point agenda was not without its urgency and appeal: "How can we tell other students on our campuses about Jesus and His soon coming?"

But first we needed to know Jesus personally. We needed to understand the meaning of conversion, of belonging to Jesus. We talked, studied, prayed, and decided to meet again. For six months, we prayed and waited.

In mid-1991, we felt we were ready for action. The Timisoara Adventist Church launched a long-term evangelism in the largest cinema hall in town. We volunteered to help out in this outreach work. We invited students from various colleges. Working with students was a real eye opener. Students are privileged people—with the advantages of a child and the rights of an adult. They have high self-esteem. They want to know. They are greedy for the Western lifestyle. They all have the same stressors of limited time, irregular meals, lack of sleep, and inadequate exercise. They live in an environment that glorifies the secular and leaves no room for the spiritual. They ask the same questions: Who am I? Where did I come from? Does God really exist? What happens after death?

The Timisoara evangelistic campaign gave us a perfect opportunity to interface with university students. The students found themselves eagerly drink-

ing at the fountain of truth. After two months, five students and a veterinary professor were baptized. The experience simply thrilled us. We continued to pray that God would use us to communicate His love to the unchurched students.

We then took the next bold step. We requested the university authorities to assign a public place on campus where students could meet and discuss spiritual and religious issues. Imagine this in a former communist country where religion was dismissed as the opium of the masses. Within 10 weeks, four groups of Adventist students were holding Revelation seminars on different campuses. The attendees were largely agnostics or atheists, and they came to hear the Bible proclaimed. The format of the meetings was simple: a sequential study of Revelation, a personal testimony, and prayer. Refreshments and opportunities for discussion and interaction followed.

Our main objective in these meetings was to introduce students and young career people to history's greatest person, Jesus Christ. And then we wanted to connect them with the Adventist Church. Many of these students had not rejected Jesus, but they hardly knew Him, and what little they knew were the communist caricatures of Him. Few understood the enormous implications of His sacrifice on the cross—that it brings pardon, confidence, and hope.

We discovered that the most effective method of meeting these students was by being friends. As Ellen White states: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs,

and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 144).

Before the end of our first year of campus ministry, 10 students had been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Fifteen more were baptized the following two years.

Enter the health message

As the year 1993 dawned, we encountered new difficulties in our on-campus witness. An Orthodox student association assumed control of all religious activities, and they refused us the use of any university hall for our gospel meetings. So we turned to health as an outreach avenue. Our meetings focused on subjects such as: "Love and marriage," "How to communicate with your mate," "Self-esteem," and "Yoga and Christianity." We invited Adventist specialists to present one or two of these topics twice a year. Student attendance was high, and our church became well known on the campuses as well as in the surrounding communities. In fact, local radio-talk shows featured Adventist pastors. More than 200 students started coming to the Adventist Church, although they have not yet come forward to be baptized.

Our first health program was a Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking, conducted in a classroom in Timisoara Medical University. A doctor-pastor team led the program, with many Adventist students helping out. In the first seminar, 26 students enrolled, with 22 successfully kicking tobacco out of their lives. A year later, we conducted a "Breathe Free" program. Thirty enrolled, with 28 marching out as victors.

Because the results were very encouraging and interesting, we wanted to take the message to the scientific community. We presented a paper at the Romanian Respiratory Medicine Reunion: Bucharest, 1997 and compared the effectiveness (see Table 1) of the two stop-smoking programs.

None of the participants had tried any other therapy to quit smoking. During the seminars we developed relationships with the participants. After the seminars we had meetings and phone calls where we talked about their problems, encouraged them, and even prayed together. Some of the participants abandoned the groups after a few days, so were not included in our observations. The follow-up findings are in Table 2.

Our paper not only presented the success of the non-smoking seminars, but also compared the two methods. For example, we learned that Breathe Free is more efficient than the Five-Day Plan, and that it has a high self-motivation component. In either program, the team spirit of support, mutual assistance, and sustained relationships play a vital role.

The happy outcome

For those of us who launched these health programs, the rewards were not only the joy of seeing fellow students gain victory over an dangerous habit, but also the fulfillment of having done something wholesome for the community. Two of the participants in the stop-smoking seminars later became Adventists. Right after the second seminar, our team was invited to present the program over the Timisoara Radio, one of the most popular regional stations in Romania. The program was so successful that the station invited us to present other health topics. Since 1994 the radio broadcasts brief "Lifestyle Tablets," based on the "New Start" program, twice a week before the morning news—an excellent time slot.

Table 1: Participants in the non-smoking seminar

Data	5-day Plan — Group A	Breathe Free — Group B
Number of participants	26	30
Sex	12 Males, 14 Females	16 Males, 14 Females
Average Age	28	32
Duration of Smoking	10-15 years	10-15 years
Intensity	15-20 cig./day	20 cig./day
Cigarettes	Unfiltered (predominant)	Unfiltered (predominant)
Co-morbidity:	13	11
chronic bronchitis	8	10
chronic hepatitis	2	0
gastric ulcer	1	1

Table 2: Follow-up findings

Time	5-day Plan Still non-smokers	Breathe Free Still non-smokers
2 weeks	22 (84.61%)	28 (93.33%)
2 months	20 (76.92%)	24 (80%)
6 months	14 (53.86%)	20 (66.66%)
12 months	12 (46.15%)	18 (60%)

What have we learned from this experience?

- Adventist students in secular universities can be useful instruments in God's hands to take His message of love to other students and change their lives.
- Health programs open the doors of opportunity for witness that may have been previously shut.
- Students ache for meaningful personal relationships. If Adventist students are friendly and show that they care, this can make a difference.
- Outreach programs in secular campuses need not be costly. Just use simple approaches that emphasize care, concern, and a genuine interest in the other person's health, and spirituality.
- As students experience the fellowship of a Christ-centered, grace-oriented, and loving church, they naturally inquire about Adventist distinctness and church membership.
- Organize an AMiCUS chapter or

an Advent Fellowship on the campus. Once registered, Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS) can function more easily in fostering activities that strengthen fellowship and outreach. AMiCUS not only strengthens the Adventist student community through interpersonal relations and sharing, but also provides an excellent organized outreach to other students and professionals in the community.

- The best way to fight Adventist secularism is to get involved in Adventist mission—where you are.

Stefan Mihaicuta, M.D., is assistant professor of pulmonology at Timisoara University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Romania. His mailing address: Dimbovita str., nr 8A, app. 9; Timisoara; 1900 Romania. E-mail: mihaicuta@mailexcite.com

Books



Heirs of the Reformation: the Story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe,
Hugh Dunton, et al., eds. (Grantham, Lancs., England: Stanborough Press, 1997; 274 pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Floyd Greenleaf.

Heirs of the Reformation is one of the first attempts by Seventh-day Adventists to delve into the history of their church in Europe. Believing that most European Adventists know little about the origins and development of their church, Harry Leonard of England and Baldur Pfeiffer of Germany conceived a popular book that would both inform and inspire. Accordingly, an editorial committee at Stanborough Press published this collection of brief stories of leading individuals and short historical accounts of Adventism in almost all of the countries of Europe.

Like all books, this one has both shortcomings and virtues. Because some 40 authors wrote the approximately 50 chapters, readers will find the text uneven. The book is not cohesive; each chapter stands alone and readers derive a segmented view of Adventism in Europe. However, this discontinuity is a tacit reminder that the Adventist story in Europe has indeed been segmented. For many legitimate reasons, there is not a European Division of the General Conference comparable to many divisions elsewhere. Church organization in Europe has repeatedly changed, which means that the history of European Adventists has been fragmented.

These circumstances also account for many of the problems in tracing the record of Adventism in Europe. The editors deserve much credit for assembling the chapters and putting them together with thematic observations in the introduction. One such theme is that European Adventists have inherited the legacy of the Protestant Reformation.

The book implicitly bears out that notion. Compelled with the conviction that they have a special, biblically based message, Adventists have established a presence in nearly all European countries, but Europe has not been an easy place to transplant differing religious ideas or a church first organized in the United States. Intolerance from established churches, hostility from authoritarian regimes, and debilitating effects of secularism, to name some of the problems, have all contributed to the hard and sometimes bitter milieu European Adventists have endured. Compared to many other parts of the world, church growth has been slow; in some places it barely exists. The editors believe that the present mood of European Adventists is to increase their stress on eternal veri-

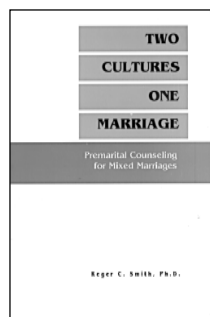
ties in their message while retaining distinctive doctrines of the church. This trend coincides with the mentality of the Reformation.

The book offers an anecdotal rather than an academic look at the church, but it includes academic features. Authors occasionally offer thought-provoking reflections about what they have written. Graphs depicting the pattern of the church's growth in many European countries provide invaluable information. The appendices carry a tabulation of Adventist populations in European countries and a list of Adventist missionaries originating in Europe. Also very helpful are bibliographic entries at the end of each chapter.

If it is true that European Adventists do not know much about the history of their church, they can rest assured that their peers around the globe are probably equally uninformed about denominational history beyond their regions. Adventists in Africa, Asia, and the Americas will learn much from *Heirs of the Reformation*.

Perhaps this impressive little volume will prompt additional publications about the Advent movement outside North America, something that would be apropos to the era of Global Mission.

Floyd Greenleaf (Ph.D., University of Tennessee) is a retired Adventist educator and author. His two-volume work, The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean (Andrews University Press, 1992), was reviewed in Dialogue 5:3.



Two Cultures, One Marriage: Premarital Counseling for Mixed Marriages,

by Reger C. Smith (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1996; 136 pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Linda Mei Lin Koh.

Reger C. Smith, professor of social work at Andrews University, has provided a very practical and much needed guide for couples and counselors of couples in culturally mixed marriages.

Smith's book highlights important issues that counselors should address when they work with couples who marry across cultures. Such issues are: (1) Characteristics of successful dual culture relationships; (2) Bible teachings on interfaith and inter-religious marriages; (3) Children of mixed marriages; and (4) Personal skills that foster successful cross-cultural counseling. The book also carries suggestions for for-

mats, content, and methodology in mixed-marriage counseling.

While the author acknowledges that the book is not a comprehensive treatment of the subject of intergroup marriage, it serves as an excellent introduction to acquaint counselors with the relevant guidelines and pitfalls for cross-cultural counseling. The author brings a Christian perspective to his task, cautioning counselors against a negative attitude toward intermarriages. It is the counselor's task to guide the partners to make the appropriate decisions; it's not his or her job to prevent or to encourage the marriage.

Smith discusses the characteristics of specific cultural groups in the United States, and this is helpful to counselors in understanding the dynamics of how culture affects marriage. The book is well written and well-documented. The appendices contain a good set of counseling homework and a questionnaire for counselors to use for a good start. Readers who are counseling professionals will not want to miss this guidebook.

Linda M. L. Koh (Ed. D., Andrews University) is the director of Children's, Family and Women's Ministries of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, with headquarters in Silang, Cavite, Philippines. An excerpt of Dr. Smith's book is published in this issue of Dialogue, pp. 8-10.



Heaven's Lifestyle Today,

by P. William Dysinger (Silver Spring, Maryland: The Ministerial Association, 1997; 160 pages; paperback).

Reviewed by Hedrick J. Edwards.

In *Heaven's Lifestyle Today*, William Dysinger has synthesized what must be his finest thoughts on health and healing as an essential theme of the Christian message and mission. Few persons are better qualified to address the subject with objectivity and authority. The author—physician, educator, co-founder of a School of Public Health, and consultant in international health development—has contributed the better part of 40 years to the health and healing ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Grounded in the medical and health sciences, he is passionate for world mission.

Dysinger approaches his theme in the context of the three angels' message of Revelation 14. The author's thesis is that health and healing, properly conceived and translated into

the individual and corporate lifestyle of believers, is key to a correct interpretation of the gospel. He reminds his readers of the essence of that gospel: good news about a God who is worthy of our trust and worship and who, as a Father, comes to His children as healer of our physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Thus, he points out in Part One that, as an indispensable element of intelligent worship, we are to "eat to the glory of God," "drink to the glory of God," and do "all to the glory of God."

In Parts Two and Three, Dysinger identifies Babylon and explains the consequences of false worship. Babylon is no trite metaphor, nor is it seen as a particular organization. It is the spirit of "impure passion"—a plethora of confused life concepts and destructive practices which function in opposition to the glory of God and to authentic worship. Basic to such confusion, the author observes, is the false notion permeating much of the religious, business, and social world that "if it feels good and tastes good, it must be good; therefore live by your feelings" (p. 87). This is the foundation of self-idolatry, whose origin is Satanic.

The author argues that a lifestyle governed by such a principle, rather than by the principles of the gospel, is dominated by stress and is inconsistent with health, healing, and true rest. Citing a number of research findings, he explains that the pandemic of addictions, the spread of deadly diseases, the abuse and neglect of women and children, the break-up of marriage and the family, and pathologies of various kinds, are only some of the more obvious natural consequences of such a lifestyle. The gospel message, by contrast, leads to faith in Jesus and is best expressed in lifestyles that harmonize with the Creator's health-giving, life-giving purposes for all humankind.

Heaven's Lifestyle Today is significant because of the way it integrates broad spiritual insights with relevant scientific data and a practical appeal. It speaks to the head as well as the heart. There is enough depth and detail to occupy the informed and thoughtful reader. At the same time, the book is replete with concrete illustrations that make it readable, sometimes interesting, and often challenging to the uninitiated and inquiring. Its 160 pages are well-structured and well-documented, having detailed references at the end of every chapter and a seven-page glossary after the discussion.

Hedrick J. Edwards (Dr.P.H., Loma Linda University) chairs the Health Education Department of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines. He has served as educator and missionary in several countries.

Teach one, reach one: Literacy and Adventist mission

by Ardis Stenbakken

Not so long ago, two 12-year-old boys in Chicago lured a toddler to an apartment on the ninth floor of a building and threw him out the window. Now they are in prison. If you were responsible for rehabilitation or for witnessing to such juveniles, what would you do?

What would you do if you knew of a young mother whose children were always sick—the illnesses were preventable, but the mother never seems to pay attention to the material you or the church or the government provided for her?

If you knew a man in your church who obviously loved the Lord, but rarely participated in church activities and never could study the Sabbath school lesson on his own, how would you get him involved?

Or suppose you were asked to begin an Adventist church in a village or in an inner city, almost anywhere in the world; what program would be most effective?

The answer to all these questions is literacy. Take the Chicago story. At the time the boys went to prison, one of them was on Level 3—the classification for the worst behaved and most uncooperative juveniles. School accomplished nothing. Then he was assigned to a Christian literacy tutor. Within two years he improved so much that he was on Level 1, among the best behaved and most cooperative. Best of all, he met Jesus. “I am a changed person,” he says, and the prison officials confirm the change.

The challenge of a billion

In the ivory towers of academia it's hard to imagine someone other than a small child who cannot read, but the

United Nations estimates that in the world today there are about one billion adults who cannot read or write well enough to function or reach their basic goals in life. Many cannot read anything at all. The UN further estimates that by the year 2000, 98 percent of these will be in developing regions of the world. In 1990, Asian developing countries accounted for 70 percent of world's illiterate population. In 48 of 102 developing countries, the illiteracy rate exceeded 40 percent. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that the United States literacy rate at greater than 95 percent, but the 1993 U.S. *National Adult Literacy Survey* found that at least 45 percent of the U.S. population has low or severely limited basic skills. Other developed countries have similar problems.

According to UNESCO, a literate person is “someone who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life.” Illiteracy is particularly a problem for women. High rates of illiteracy still prevail in much of northern and sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In countries with high illiteracy levels, the illiteracy rate among women aged 15 to 24 is at least 25 percent higher than men in the same age group. For older women, illiteracy is high in almost all developing countries, typically twice or more of the young women aged 15 to 24.¹

Literacy and the church

So improved literacy is important, but why is it important to the church? Primarily because literacy opens the

door to understand what the gospel is all about. The literate person can go directly to God's Word, and find there God's plan and purpose for life. Literacy also makes it possible to find fulfillment of one's needs—physical, emotional, social, and spiritual.

An important part of the ministry of the church is to meet the needs of people. That's what Jesus did. Ellen White states: “*Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'*”²

The value of needs assessment cannot be over-emphasized. Jesus knew the needs of the people, and His ministry was directed to fulfill those needs. If we know the needs of people today, we can develop appropriate responses. One of the most obvious needs is the need for literacy—the ability to read and write.

The facts and figures are staggering, but they also tell the story. The world population is just over 5.2 billion. The complete Bible is now available to 97 percent of these people in their mother tongue. Yet many of these people cannot read. Non-readers comprise the vast majority of the peoples yet to be reached with the gospel.

Literacy is important to the church in two principal ways: for nurture into more mature members and for evangelistic outreach. It is obvious that unless a person can read with at least a minimal degree of fluency, he or she cannot read the Bible. Or anything else that the church produces. These persons cannot do any type of Bible study that requires reading or writing. They cannot read

Ellen White or any other devotional or instructional material. If they are parents, they cannot read the Sabbath school lesson to their children.

Illiterate members would also find it difficult to participate fully in church leadership activities. Furthermore, many of these illiterates live in areas of the world in which it has been particularly difficult to spread the Christian message. With so many members illiterate, how can the church involve them in outreach activities?

Those who have studied church planting have discovered that in areas of the world where less than 50 percent of the population is literate, teaching reading, particularly classes based on the Bible, is one of the quickest ways of building up a congregation. In a survey in the United States, half of those surveyed said that the reason they wanted to learn to read was so that they could read their Bibles and participate in church activities.

The Word, Jesus Incarnate, is supreme. But unless one knows how to read, accessing the Word is difficult. It is important that Christians be able to study and confirm their faith. An African pastor once said, "Dictators love an illiterate electorate; illiterates will believe anything they are told." We do not want church members who will believe just any new thing they are told; we want them to study verse upon verse, to know and hold onto the truth.

Literacy and Christian development

Nonreaders are captives, prisoners of their handicap. As we carry out Christ's work, we too can say: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me"; therefore he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4: 18, 19, NIV).

As Hammerly remarks, "To provide the gift of reading to others is a signal Christian service that empowers them

to live more interesting and far more useful lives. Furthermore, the teaching of literacy lends itself quite well to sharing the Gospel in a gradual, tactful way."³

Bible literacy can assist the church in other ways as well:

1. It gives church members a way to minister to others in a non-threatening way. It encourages both the tutor and the learner to become daily Bible readers.
2. Non-Christians will know that the tutor cares about them because of the help they receive. They will be curious about why the tutor is so loving and kind; they will be more open to the gospel.
3. Bible literacy strengthens the existing congregation if church members learn to read. A Bible-reading church is a strong and growing church.
4. Literacy programs can build non-political cooperation with governments because almost all governments want their people to be able to read. Literacy strengthens community life and promotes a better understanding of issues related to health, parenting, environment, sanitation, etc.
5. The church becomes active in the local community. Literacy is one of the best forms of social and community service that the church can engage in.

Here's where you come in. You are literate. You are a church member. So why not teach someone to read and write? Why not make your local church get involved in a literacy program? Why not teach one and reach one?

Ardis Dick Stenbakken is director of Women's Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. She is a certified Laubach literacy tutor and a Literacy Volunteers of America tutor trainer. Her postal address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904; U.S.A. E-mail address: 102555.2653@compuserve.com

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1. *The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics* (New York: United Nations, 1995).
2. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1942), p. 143; italics supplied.
3. Hector Hammerly, "The Teaching of Literacy and ESL/EFL as Outreach Ministries." Unpublished manuscript.

Be involved in literacy—and make a difference!

- Read to a child.
- Read to a shut-in.
- Create literacy awareness in your community or congregation.
- Find out about literacy programs in your area.
- Assess what type of literacy program is still needed.
- Make a financial contribution to a literacy program.
- Set up a literacy program.
- Provide literacy tutoring space in your church.
- Become a literacy tutor.
- Direct a literacy program.
- Provide transportation to a student to a literacy class.
- Provide baby-sitting service during the literacy tutoring session.
- Give a gift of reading materials.
- Get involved in your community's education system.
- Advocate equal education for all.

If you desire to....

If you desire to begin a literacy program and would like further information, write to the Women's Ministries Director in your division (their addresses are listed on page 2 of this journal). Request the Women's Ministries resource, *So You Want to Begin a Literacy Program?* There may be a small copying charge. Or write directly to Ardis Stenbakken, whose address is listed at the end of the article. Cost of the resource manual: US\$5.

Expand Your Friendship Network

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

Bernadette Achille: 28; female; single; a teacher, pursuing advanced studies; interests: reading, music, travel, and sewing; correspondence in French or English. Address: 657 Lotissement Copaya; 97351 Matoury; FRENCH GUYANA.

Mylene Chua Aguirre: 26; female; single; a nursing aid working at a hospital; interests: travel, gospel music, playing the piano, and singing; correspondence in English or Pilipino/Tagalog. Address: c/o Royal Valley S.D.A. Elementary School; McArthur Highway, Bangkal; Davao City; 8000 PHILIPPINES.

Jamida Ezen Ahsoon: 26; female; single; a nurse at Penang Adventist Hospital; interests: nature, playing the guitar, cooking, and collecting stamps; correspondence in Malay or English. Address: 1 E Advent Court; No. 1 Midlands Drive; Penang; 10350 MALAYSIA.

Julita C. Alberio: 29; female; single; holds a degree in agricultural education; interests: reading, singing, and travel; correspondence in English. Address: Sitio Dapdap, Balocaw; Abuyog, Leyte; 6510 PHILIPPINES.

Leah C. Almazora: 25; female; single; a registered nurse; hobbies: reading, listening to religious music, playing the piano, and making new friends; correspondence in English. Address: 1221 Scott Avenue; Dalhart, TX 79022; U.S.A.

Marcia Diniz Teixeira de Amorim: 23; female; single; completing a degree in plastic arts at Universidade Federal da Bahia, studies voice and teaches art; interests: collecting postcards, photography,

electronics, and nature; correspondence in Portuguese, English or Spanish. Address: Avenida 2 de Julho, No. 54; Periperi, SSA - BA; 40725-720; BRAZIL.

Jane Kerubo Arama: 29; female; single; completed a degree in art history and education; interests: reading novels and listening to music; correspondence in English. Address: University of Eastern Africa, Baraton; P.O. Box 2500; Eldoret; KENYA. E-mail: ueab@tt.gn.apc.org

Karen Delnia de Assis: 20; female; single; works as an artist, planning to study archaeology; interests: history, soccer, and sports in general; correspondence in Portuguese or English. Address: Av. Benedito Bento 868, J. Morumbi; S. Jose dos Campos, S.P.; 12236-580 BRAZIL.

Rodrigue K. Ayevor: 22; male; single; a painter and decorator; interests: art and missionary activities; correspondence in French or English. Address: Eglise Adventiste du 7e. Jour, Paroisse d'Adidogome; B.P. 1222; Lome; TOGO.

Leslie Ann M. Bejarin: 19; female; single; studying toward a degree in accountancy; interests: play table tennis, collect stamps and postcards, and listen to music; correspondence in Filipino or English. Address: 143 Quezon Avenue; Midsayap, Cotabato; 9410 PHILIPPINES.

Rotcel Caballero: 25; female; single; studying foreign languages; interests: learning about other cultures and breaking intercultural barriers through music and art; correspondence in Spanish, French, English, Italian or Dutch. Address: C/ Adams E-14; Parkville, Guaynabo; Puerto Rico 00969; U.S.A.

Erik Coro Velázquez: 28; male; single; studying toward a diploma as electrical technician; interests: collect postcards and stamps, sports, religious subjects, and poetry; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: Ave. 74, Edificio 66-B, Apto. 3, 2o. Piso; Pueblo Griffó, Cienfuegos; 55500 CUBA.

Cleide Da Silva Deodato: 22; female; single; a teacher in an Adventist school; interests: camping, exchanging postcards, and making new friends; correspondence in Portuguese, Spanish or English. Address: R. Pedro A. Zimmermann 564, Sitio Cercado I; Curitiba, PR; 81810-260 BRAZIL.

Asamoah Emmanuel: 21; male; single; studying toward a degree in theology;

interests: singing and playing the piano, collecting postcards, and Bible study; correspondence in English. Address: Valley View College; P.O. Box 9358; Airport, Accra; GHANA.

Sibyla Encalada: 21; female; single; studying obstetrics and children's health at Universidad de Antofagasta; interests: music, camping, nature, and studying about human reproduction from a biblical-Christian perspective; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: Avda. Angamos esq. Gral. Borgoño; Hogar Universitario Lenka Franulic; Antofagasta; CHILE.

Rene Flores: 28; male; single; completing a degree in music and working as a radio operator; interests: travel, singing in groups, communication, and playing the piano and flute; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Universidad Adventista de Chile; Casilla 7-D; Chillán; CHILE.

Sonia Regina Friedrich: 42; female; separated; a secretary; interests: travel, evangelism, and making new friends; correspondence in Portuguese or Spanish. Address: Rua Marechal Deodoro, 277, Vila Diadema; Diadema, S.P.; 09912-020 BRAZIL.

Nkosilathi Hadebe: 22; male; single; pursuing a diploma in technical education in mechanical engineering; interests: swimming, camping, intercultural interaction, and computers; correspondence in English. Address: Chinhoyi Technical College; P. Bag 7724, Hostel D; Chinhoyi; ZIMBABWE.

Yariela I. Hernández: 22; female; single; studying business administration at Universidad Adventista de Centroamérica; interests: reading, swimming, and making new friends; correspondence in Spanish. Address: Apartado 138; Alajuela; 4050 COSTA RICA.

Leila Isaura de Jesus: 34; female; single; holds a degree in human resources and piano; interests: music, singing, and making new friends; correspondence in Portuguese. Address: Rua Guatucupa, No. 9, Vila Lilia; Sao Miguel Paulista, S.P.; 08010-400 BRAZIL.

Juliet N. Kalemela: 22; female; single; studying accounting by correspondence; interests: music, travel, reading novels, and singing; correspondence in English. Address: c/o Miss M. Kasato; P.O. Box 4041; Kampala; UGANDA.

Cyntia d/o Kandiah: female; single; a nurse, originally from India; hobbies: reading, drawing, and making new friends; correspondence in English. Address: 52 H, Block 5; Asbhy Flats; 30450 WEST MALAYSIA

Amoah Eric Kwaku: 23; male; single; studying business and economics; hobbies: football, music, drama, and writing songs; correspondence in English. Address: S.D.A. Church; P.O. Box 128; Akim-Oda, Eastern Region; GHANA.

Abraham Lozano: 23; male; single; studied theology at Universidad de Montemorelos; interests: Christian music, travel, and writing poetry; correspondence in Spanish. Address: C. 13 #660, Col. Libertad; Tijuana, B.C.N.; 22300 MEXICO.

Fernando Martínez: 23; male; single; a native of Argentina studying agricultural engineering; interests: camping, stamp collecting, and good music; correspondence in Spanish or Portuguese. Address: Universidad Adventista de Chile; Casilla 7-D; Chillán; CHILE.

Niwagwene Phidel Mayeye: 24; male; single; completed a certificate in teacher education at Tukuyo Teachers College; hobbies: singing and listening to religious music, athletics, and sharing Christian experiences; correspondence in English. Address: c/o S.C.B. Mayeye; P.O. Box 128; Sumbawanga; TANZANIA.

Martha J. Melo: 31; female; single; an industrial psychologist; interests: poetry, music, vegetarian cooking, sports, and ecology; correspondence in Spanish, English, Portuguese or French. Address: Jr. Coronel I. Suárez 241, Urb. Chacra Cerro Km. 13; Comas, Lima; PERU.

Matthew Munofa: 26; male; single; studying toward a degree in English and history; hobbies: listening to music, weight lifting, soccer, and learning other languages; correspondence in English or Portuguese. Address: Box 31418; Lusaka; ZAMBIA.

Luis Alberto Pacheco S.: 33; male; married; a graphic arts and computer technician; studying social and mass communication at Universidad del Sur de Bogotá; interests: painting, playing piano and flute, writing poetry, and directing a radio program to help young people; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: Calle 102 #13-54; Almacén Juvenil

Turbo; Antioquia; COLOMBIA.

Arnelle Clarisse Pakeli: 24; female; single, with 2 children; a postal employee; interests: religious music, reading, nature, and learning about other cultures; correspondence in French or English. Address: Centre de Tri-postal; Yaounde; CAMEROUN.

Louere Grace Paypa: 22; female; single; a registered nurse studying toward a medical degree; interests: piano and clarinet playing and collecting stamps; correspondence in English. Address: Mindanao Mission Academy; Manticao, Misamis Oriental; 9024 PHILIPPINES.

César Alexis Rifo I.: 20; male; single; studying forestry engineering; interests: Christian music, singing, jogging, bicycling, and volleyball; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: Avda. Altamira 02060; Villa Altamira; Temuco; CHILE.

Karim Eddine Rouibet: 31; male; single; a petrochemical engineer, planning to pursue advanced studies in that field; hobbies: listening to classical and religious music, playing chess, and studying the Bible; correspondence in French or English. Address: B.P. 39 K.S.M.; Bl. Des 20 Logts des Enseignants; 15000 Tizi-Ouzou; ALGERIA.

Eduard-Dismas Sakubu: male; married, with 3 children; holds a diploma in humanities and is a radio operator; interests: reading and sports; correspondence in French, Swahili, Kirundi or English. Address: c/o Beatrice Simbaruhije, Facagro - Burundi; B.P. 2940; Bujumbura; BURUNDI.

Khin Khin Su: 19; female; single; studying toward a degree in mathematics; interests: reading and listening to music; correspondence in English. Address: c/o U Khin Maung Nyunt; D-15 Myo Ma Market; Kalembo, Sagaing Division; MYANMAR.

María Isabel Tames: 50; female; divorced; working for Adventist World Radio and studying English; interests: exchanging postcards, travel, reading, listening to classical music, and cooking; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: Apartado 1737-4050; Alajuela; COSTA RICA. E-mail: rmadvent@sol.racs.co.cr

Yee Yee Than: 23; female; single; completing a degree in mathematics; hobbies:

cooking, singing, listening to music, and making new friends; correspondence in English. Address: c/o U. Than Ngwe - Daw Tin Ohn; Bayint Naung Road, Aung Mingalar Quarter; Kalembo, Sagaing Division; MYANMAR.

Many Joy Tobongbanua: 25; female; single; completing a degree in dentistry; interests: reading, swimming, cooking, and classical and religious music; correspondence in English. Address: Baga-as Subd.; E. B. Magalona, Negros Occidental; PHILIPPINES.

Alice-Blanca Visan: 19; female; single; studying international business at the Academy of Economic Studies; hobbies: exchanging postcards, music, cars, and working with children; correspondence in Romanian, Italian or English. Address: Masina de Paine Street, No. 39, Bl. OD 59 A. Sc. A, Etj. 7, Apart. 29, Sector 2; 72213 Bucharest; ROMANIA.

Tanya Zueyva: 25; female; single; a teacher at a church school; hobbies: reading, exchanging postcards, and making new friends; correspondence in Russian or English. Address: Pzerzhinskogo, h. 14, apt. 25; Ryazan City; 390013 RUSSIA.

If you are an Adventist college/university student or professional and wish to be listed here, send us your name and postal address, indicating your age, sex, marital status, current field of studies or degree obtained, college/university you are attending or from which you graduated, hobbies or interests, and language(s) in which you would like to correspond. (We will also list your e-mail address if you provide it.) Address your letter to *Dialogue Interchange*: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A. Please type or print clearly. You can also use e-mail: 104472.1154@compuserve.com We will list only those who provide all the information requested above. The journal cannot assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information submitted or for the content of the correspondence that may ensue.

His guiding hand

by Claudio Durán

Looking back on the wrong turns, detours, and zigzags of my life, I am deeply thankful to realize how God has been guiding me step by step.

I was born in Guaqui, a small town in the highlands of Bolivia. My father attended a Catholic school and served for a time as altar boy. He kept a few images of saints on a shelf at home and frequently used Latin phrases he learned in church.

As a boy, I was curious, fascinated by language and interested in reading. While taking religion classes in the elementary school, I was able to learn the entire catechism by heart. The local priest was so impressed that, when I was ready to begin my secondary studies, he urged my parents to take me to the capital and enroll me in a Catholic secondary school so that I could eventually become a priest. Those plans, however, never materialized.

I chose instead to become a teacher, and while attending normal school I lost interest in religion. During those years, many Latin American countries were in turmoil, shaken by political demonstrations, uprisings, and revolutions. Prompted by my love of freedom and a passion for justice, I began attending leftist discussion groups where the history of our countries was analyzed from a Marxist perspective. Soon the Cuban revolution gave us hope that similar changes could also occur in my homeland if we acted courageously together. In a few years I moved from nominal Christianity to militant atheism.

A vivid vision

When I completed my teacher training, I traveled to Havana with a group of political activists. There I received a

scholarship that allowed me to continue my advanced studies in Cuba. I threw myself totally into study and research, not only of literature but also of political ideas. One night, when I was about to go to sleep, I had a vivid vision. For a fleeting second I saw Jesus dressed with a red robe, looking at me with a kind expression. I was stunned. How could a militant Marxist receive a vision of Jesus? In whom could I confide and discuss the meaning of what I had seen? I decided to keep silent and file away that unforgettable vision.

Eventually I returned to Bolivia, ready to organize revolutionary cells and change the status quo. Only a full revolution would free our homeland from oppression, ignorance, and backwardness. I made contact with similar groups in neighboring Peru. We were ready for everything, but progress was slow. At that time, Che Guevara, the legendary revolutionary, was caught in the Bolivian jungle and shot, abandoned by the professional politicians who had sent him there. We were saddened and disenchanted. I wondered if I had been following a mirage in my search for freedom and meaning in life.

In 1974 both my parents died, and I returned to my hometown. I felt lonely and aimless. My nights were wasted in debauchery. One night I decided not to go out and to stay sober. Looking for something to read, I found an old Bible that had lost many of its pages. Starting with the first chapter of Genesis, I moved on until I reached the story of the Tower of Babel. Years before I had mocked that story, but that night it made a deep impression on me. Had I also been defying God?

A clear voice

The following year, while teaching in a public school in the town of Rosario, I met the principal of the Adventist school and we became friends. One day I asked him for something to read, "as long as it did not speak about God." He loaned me *The Seventh Day*, by Booton Herndon. I was fascinated by the prophecy of the 2300 days, the story of the Advent Movement, and the meaning of the Sabbath. I read the book in one sitting, all through the night. As the first rays of dawn entered through the window, I began hearing voices that mentally tormented me. It was as if demons wanted to prevent me from following the truth. My friends were deeply concerned, but did not know how to help me. On September 7, I fell on my knees and for the first time in my adult life I prayed to God for deliverance. In the midst of my confusion I remember hearing His voice saying, "You must serve Me." Suddenly, I felt an inner peace. One of my teaching colleagues was the son of a Protestant minister. "What church should I join?" I asked him. His honest reply was, "The Lord will show you the way." And that was what happened.

On one occasion I had served as courier, taking a letter from an acquaintance to the Adventist Mission headquarters in La Paz, the capital. Someone hinted that the letter had not been delivered. I felt deeply offended. The next time I traveled to the capital I inquired about the letter and was told that it had indeed reached its destination. When I asked where I could buy a Bible, they directed me to the Adventist Book Center. I was surprised by the variety of books available and asked the attendant to recommend one to read. He showed me a copy of *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White. With curiosity, I paged through it and my eyes fell on the chapter titled, "The Bible and the French Revolution." For someone steeped in revolutionary ideology, the title was intriguing. I bought the book and read it,

jumping between chapters. As I reached the last page, I had made a decision: I was going to become a Seventh-day Adventist.

I asked the local Adventist pastor to lend me a Bible study guide and I went through it lesson by lesson. My mouth savored slowly the delicious teachings of the Bible. As I reached the end of the series I filled out and signed the form requesting baptism in the Adventist Church. My brother was shocked by my decision. On December 27, 1975, I was baptized in the waters of the Mauri River, near the place where I first knew the gospel.

The guiding hand

During the following year I immersed myself in reading the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. Nothing could distract me from that in-depth study—not even the news. I wanted to understand God's message through the Scriptures and to establish a deep personal relationship with Jesus. But there was also much I needed to unlearn.

In 1977, after teaching for 12 years in public schools, I joined the staff of our Bolivia Adventist College. I was not interested in how much I was going to be paid; my desire was to attain a fuller understanding of God's will for my life

and to serve Him wherever He needed me.

While teaching at the Adventist College in Bolivia, I was able to defend in political circles the value of Christian education. I declared that Adventists had established rural schools years before the government had thought of doing it. Adventist teachers had been pioneers for authentic freedom.

Now, 23 years after my conversion, I see how God's hand has guided me all through life, in spite of my mistakes and willfulness. With the Apostle Peter, I acknowledge that joy and hope are found only in Jesus Christ, "for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, NIV). My wife Ruth and I have a Christian home, a son and a daughter—Edson Claudio and Nidia Esther. As director of the education department in the East Bolivia Mission, I am honored to promote the values and objectives of Bible-based, Christ-centered education. I know by experience that one can find true peace and everlasting freedom only in Jesus Christ.

Claudio Durán Muñoz is the education director of the East Bolivia Mission. His address: Casilla 2495, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.

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A Victor Issa Portfolio



"The Swing" (1986); life-size, 112 cm. high. At one of our sculpture shows, a grandmother saw my "Teen in Training" and chose to commission me to sculpt her four grandchildren. This is the first in a series of four pieces.

The sculptor in his studio, working on a life-size bust of Jesus. "In this piece," states the artist, "I am attempting to portray the expression on our Saviour's face as He welcomes His children home."





"Grandma's Fudge" (1993); 41 cm. high x 48 cm. wide x 41 cm. depth. This sculpture was commissioned by a family in Denver, Colorado on the occasion of the family matriarch's 70th birthday. Three of the grandchildren modeled for the piece, and "Mama K" modeled through photographs and videotape. The sculpture was a surprise birthday present.



"Girl with Flower" (1995); 27 cm. high x 19 cm. wide, shown in clay. Portraiture, and particularly portraits of children, are age-old challenges for sculptors. The project began as a class demonstration with one of the students serving as the model.



"The Jester" (1996); 150 percent life-size, 204 cm. high. This delightful piece was commissioned by the Wichita Performing Arts Center in celebration of the theater's 25th anniversary. The sculpture was dedicated in Wichita, Kansas in June of 1996.



"Grandpa, the Storyteller" (1994); 114 cm. high x 115 cm. wide. This life-size of the original piece made possible additional detail and more expressive faces. My father-in-law provided some of the dimensions for this version of this popular sculpture.

"Royalty" (1996); 55 cm. high x 36 cm. wide x 34 cm. depth. This piece was inspired by its model, a news reporter who was in Loveland, Colorado covering our annual sculpture show. As a culture and a civilization, the ancient Egyptians still provide a great deal of beauty that seems to transcend time. I am currently working on a life-size enlargement of this sculpture.



"Teen in Training" (1996); life-size, 46 cm. high x 59 cm. wide x 41 cm. depth. Most children who own toy phones have probably done what is portrayed in this piece. Our four daughters did.