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Volume 17

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EDITORIAL

Who am I?

“Who am I?” (2 Samuel 7:18, RSV).

David’s self-reflection is a call to take stock of oneself, to pause before the Almighty and face the searching question, Who am I? A mini-god? A fraud? A machine?

Many answers have been provided: some far from truth; some true but futile, but only one completely fulfilling.

Consider the philosopher. “The unexamined life is not worth living.” So philosophy challenges me to discover who I am. On the one hand, in philosophy’s wisdom, I am born to be the rational. Knowledge is power, and it is power that makes or breaks me. So I must learn to ask the right question, probe the appropriate place, seek the right direction. Life beckons me to come to the mountaintop—to be an authentic person.

On the other hand, in philosophy’s folly, I am a tiny speck in a vast universe—lone, searching, groping, and meaningless. To be or not to be becomes the chief passion of my life. And it does not make any difference to the universe whether I am or I am not. Between wisdom and folly, between optimistic query and pessimistic resignation, I stand alone—bewildered and hopeless.

Consider the primitive. The primitive’s answer to the question, “Who am I?” is one of tribal identification. I find my security in my group. My existence and my hope are governed by my group spirit. I am quick to seal my identification with those visible marks: race, color, caste, status, sex, nationality, or religion. The marks are not only visible, but so exclusive that I retreat into a world of my own to the point of creating a fence that separates “me” from “them.” The separation leads to its own extreme ends: in history an Auschwitz or a Gulag; in ideology a wall of division; in me a retreat into nothingness.

The trouble with such primitiveness is that I never get beyond the cave of self-interest. I become the midge of my own making: tall in stature, short in mind; strong in flesh, weak in spirit; soaring in pettiness, retreating in nobility. Tied to the unimportant, I can never become a full person.

Consider the mundane. If I were to seek my identity in the world of the mundane—be it business or politics or profession—power becomes my focus. On the way to reach the pedestal, I answer the question “Who am I?” with an affirmation of self. In the sentence of life, the subject is “I,” the verb is “am,” and the object is “me.” I am me. Nothing else matters. Every other is a steppingstone; everything is a tool in the direction of power. Love has no meaning. Mercy has no room.

So the philosopher, the primitive, the mundane, cannot satisfactorily answer the question Who am I? And yet, answer I must. Unless I know who I am, I shall not know who you are, and I cannot relate or function adequately. So where do I go for an answer?

I turn to the Cross. When I look up to the Cross of Christ, I see two persons: “the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, RSV), and me. Were it not for my sins, Jesus would not have gone to the Cross. He died on my behalf (Romans 5:18) that I might live. He took the death that was mine in order that I might have life that was His.

Not only am I a sinner, but a sinner sought by God. I am in a relationship with God. With that perspective, I can affirm that I am not a cosmic accident, I am not

Continued on next page.

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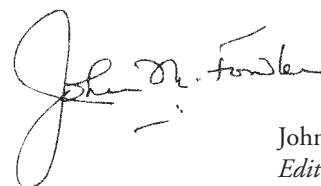
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a paradigm of a long evolutionary process, and I am not a cog in a giant machine, moving in space through endless years in a meaningless cycle. No, I am a child of God—gone astray, to be sure, but pursued by the everlasting love of God. In that divine search, costing the death of God's Son, I find my worth and dignity.

Philosophy may teach me to be rational. Sociology may direct me to live in community. Humanism may invite me to discover the relevance of interpersonal dynamics. Psychodynamics may turn me to look within for self-realization. All these have their place and their value, but at the end of it all, I stand at the fork, helpless. I am in an irreconcilable dichotomy: between the ideal and the real, between the am and the ought. I am at war with myself, and my cry reaches its hopeless nadir: "Who will deliver me?" (Romans 7:15-25, RSV).

But the moment I turn to Calvary, I find freedom. I find forgiveness. I find reconciliation. I am at peace. I find that I am not my own. I am bought with a great price (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). Indeed, at the Cross I discover that the most important issue is not who I am, but whose I am. It is that abandonment of self to the Man of the Cross that leads to true self-discovery.

The Cross helps me to realize that as I come to Christ in total abandonment, I pass from death to life, from nothingness to certainty. I know whose I am. I am a child of God. I am accountable to Jesus: He is my priority, my purpose, and my meaning.



John M. Fowler
Editor

Dialogue helps to establish a church

While I was studying at Adventist University-Cosendai in Cameroon, I was a regular reader of *Dialogue*. After completing my Bachelor of Theology degree, I moved to Ghana to learn English and pursue graduate studies, but God had other plans for me.

In December 2002, I was asked to serve as a pastor in northern Ghana. Unsuccessful attempts had been made to establish a permanent Adventist presence in the city of Navrongo, near the border with Burkina Faso. After studying the situation, I decided to use a different approach to reach the people. First I reprinted excerpts of the most interesting articles published in *Dialogue*. Then I asked Adventist young people to help me distribute the copies among their relatives and friends. Soon, an interest in Adventist beliefs was awakened and I printed more articles from the journal for broader distribution. Bible studies and conversions followed.

By the grace of God, there is now an Adventist congregation in Navrongo with 45 adult members, 19 baptized Pathfinders, 20 Adventurers, and 8 men and women who are preparing for baptism. Although we don't yet have a formal church building in which to meet, this congregation is involved in many nurture and outreach activities.

I am thankful for the articles published in *Dialogue* and for their appeal to people of other faiths and convictions. Please pray that the Lord will strengthen His work in this part of the world.

Elie Brown Buhire
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Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kauffman

The Christian in business: Beyond honesty

by Gary Chartier

To be a Christian in business is to be an effective minister of divine grace in God's world.

For many people, business ethics is about saying “no” to lying, cheating, and stealing. We can all agree that the world would be a much better place if people earned the trust of those with whom they traded, played fairly, and respected other people’s resources.¹ But Christian business leaders can and should adopt a more positive view of the relationship between their faith and what they do at work. What makes Christian business practice Christian is not exclusively or primarily the fact that it doesn’t involve deception, unfairness, or theft, but rather its contribution to making life in God’s world better. Christians in business can participate in the development of God’s world—helping to create and distribute worthwhile goods and services. They can participate in the healing of God’s world by helping to reduce poverty and injustice. At the same time, of course, they need to be sensitive not only to the value of business and of the goods and services businesses make and share with others, but also to their limits.

Several distinctive features of Adventist belief and practice are especially relevant for businesspersons who wish to live responsibly in relation to God and creation. Sabbath rest is a reminder that work, while valuable, is not of transcendent importance. Adventism’s emphasis on embodiment underscores the inherent worth of the material world. And the practice of tithing can build habits of generosity

and responsiveness to others’ needs. However, the principles that ought to guide Adventist business leaders in thinking about the meaning of their profession are those I hope would inform the thinking of all Christians about business. Thus, I focus here on the tasks and opportunities all Christians face in the business world, rather than on the unique challenges confronting Adventists.

Business and creation’s flourishing

The Christian businessperson contributes to the development of life in the world. God is the world’s creator, and creation—in both its material and cultural aspects—is essentially good.

Mainstream Christian faith affirms that bodily life is something worth celebrating—that the whole world, including its material and thus its cultural aspects, is God’s good creation. Christians also believe that God’s creatures are “sub-creators”: God creates in and through their activities, and their freedom enables them to contribute novelty to the world’s history. That’s why it makes sense for Christians to be involved in economic life. By creating valuable products and processes and services, they are joining God in the ongoing development of the good creation.

Of course, there are costs and trade-offs. Some products aren’t worthwhile; they simply waste people’s time and money. Some products are made in ways that harm humans or other creatures. Some products are harmful in themselves—think of, say, chemical and biological weapons. Some business activities, like other components of human culture, reflect the distorting influences of sin in pronounced ways. Just because economic activity is at root a good thing, it doesn’t follow that every product or process or service

someone might create is inherently valuable. But many things businesses make or do really enrich life in God’s world, making life easier, fuller, more enjoyable. People who build houses, manufacture computers, grow food, provide entertainment, design attractive clothing, or sell tasty meals are doing intrinsically useful things, things that make life in God’s world better.

Unlike their Jewish cousins, Christians have too often been tempted to escape God’s good creation, to act as if they might somehow be required to deny the value of the good things God has made and is making. They have acted as if the material world, the social and cultural world, were the work of a second-rate, morally deficient deity, not the God revealed in the history of Israel and Jesus. They have pretended that God’s good creation was corrupt to the core in a way that made involvement in its ongoing development a source of profound moral and spiritual risk.

But to think this way about the world of business is to assume that God’s Spirit is absent from the world and that the underlying dynamics of creaturely life don’t reflect God’s providential ordering. The reality, though, is that the existence of an ordered world is dependent on God’s continuing creative presence. With other believers in God, Christians are convinced that the world never is, and never could be, a place where God’s touch is never felt. And they believe that the basic structure of life in the world bears the imprint of God’s creative providence. God isn’t an alien intruder, who ventures into the world occasionally to perform a magic trick before leaving again. The world is God’s world, through and through, even when God’s creatures fail to realize God’s intentions or frustrate God’s creative design. Our relation-

ship with God isn't somehow separate and independent from our relationship with God's creatures. As Matthew 25, among other biblical passages, hints, we love God in and through our love for God's creation.

Fearful Christians have been right to point out the reality of moral and spiritual brokenness in the world. But they have been wrong to see that brokenness as localized in one place or another, as if, say, the world of sports or the construction industry were corrupt, while the church was a place of purity and safety. Good and evil can't be localized in particular spheres of human endeavor. The impulse to deny that we are parts of God's good creation—by pretending that we are divine or pretending that we or other creatures are worth nothing—causes destructive consequences in every district of human experience. The conflict between good and evil is a conflict in every heart and mind, and it is evident wherever we live and work and whatever we do. For Christians, there can

be no hierarchy of sacred and secular, holy and profane.² There is certainly a need for religious institutions and practices, but God lives in the marketplace as well as the sanctuary. Christians do God's work in the world when they make and distribute excellent widgets just as they do when they heal, preach, or teach.

Business and creation's healing

Christian business leaders can contribute to the healing of the world's brokenness using their special skills and resources to reduce poverty and promote justice. The most basic task of the Christian in the world of business is to contribute to the flourishing and development of God's world. There is nothing exceptionally "spiritual" about the plain, the drab, or the unexciting. Christian business leaders shouldn't accept the material world grudgingly: They ought to celebrate it, contributing to its richness and variety and beauty. But development isn't the only task of the Christian. For Christians

acknowledge, sadly, that the world is full of pain and brokenness. Thus, the Christian businessperson can and should contribute not only to the world's development but also to its healing.

Again, Christians might adopt a super-spiritual stance: The suffering they encounter in the world, they might say, is a matter of attitudes and values, of morality, of creatures' relationships with God. But the suffering of God's creatures is often bodily suffering. It is often reflected in and reinforced by people's material conditions. Think about the hopelessness and penchant for crime to which poverty can give rise. So being an agent of healing, being an agent of God's grace, doesn't just mean offering people helpful beliefs, encouraging appropriate attitudes, and making them aware of the relationship they already have with a loving Creator, helpful as these activities can be. It means improving their material conditions. Because God's creatures are embodied, mediating God's grace in God's world must have a material dimension. And that's where the Christian businessperson can help.

Healing through social entrepreneurship. Being a Christian in business gives one a remarkable opportunity to help transform people's material lives as a *social entrepreneur*. Christian businesspersons can help to meet the challenges associated with disaster and endemic poverty alike by making important strategic decisions about how and where they make products and services, who makes them, and how their businesses is organized. They can choose to provide jobs in poor communities at home and around the world by locating operations there. They can give opportunities not only for work but also for renewed dignity to people—like recovering alcoholics and drug addicts—who need a second chance.³ They can produce and deliver products to developing communities at prices that make them accessible. And when they seek to touch the lives

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of people in developing communities, they can make certain to involve these people in determining what their needs are and how those needs should be met—to *listen*.

Individual business leaders can and should be social entrepreneurs. But they can also contribute to efforts by their church communities to promote economic justice by encouraging church agencies concerned with the relief of poverty to see social entrepreneurship as a valuable economic development strategy. They can emphasize the importance of focusing on long-term, systemic change, using strategies including not only public policy changes but also social entrepreneurial activities.

Healing through fair corporate decisions. As businesspersons, Christians can make a real difference in addressing the problem of poverty. But they can also help to address other challenges, as well. A Christian executive can be conscious of the consequences of business decisions for public health, for instance, following the Golden Rule by refusing to impose on those who live near a factory for which she is responsible a health risk she wouldn't be willing for her own loved ones to suffer. A manager can be loyal to people who have worked for years for his company by refusing to eliminate their jobs simply to earn a few more dollars.⁴ A Christian director can refuse to regard skyrocketing compensation for presidents and board chairs as appropriate when the value of ordinary workers' wages is falling behind and the gap in the power, influence, and material conditions of those at the top and those at the bottom of the corporate ladder is growing dramatically. A corporate leader can honor the basic dignity and equality of those affected by her company's decisions by ensuring that workers and local community members have meaningful opportunities to participate in shaping those decisions—from the shop floor to the boardroom.

Healing through the promotion of just public policy. Christian business people can do a great deal to promote healing in God's world just by making sure their own companies seek proactively to make the world a better place. But they can also affect the public policies that shape economic life. It will be tempting for them to vote and lobby in ways that simply promote their own or their company's interests—by seeking, say, to reduce their own tax burdens even at the cost of needed services. But, in light of a vision of God's inclusive love, they can and should do more. They can lend their voices to efforts to foster economic justice. That means they can press for domestic policies that ensure everyone access to higher education, health care, satisfactory retirement pensions, and economic support in case of unemployment. They can support tax laws that foster a fair, progressive sharing of their countries' fiscal burdens. They can press for international development policies that offer empowerment and foster growth rather than encouraging inefficiency and promoting the purchase of military hardware by governments that cannot afford to make basic infrastructure expenditures. And they can argue for import rules that allow farmers and other producers in developing countries to compete on an equal playing field with those in developed countries (thus benefiting not only these producers but also consumers in the developed world as well).

The limits of business

Adopting a positive vision of business ethics means seeing the real potential of businesspeople to make the world a better place, both by enriching human life and by reducing poverty and injustice. But the Christian in business also has to recognize the limits of business.

The limited value of business and material goods. Material goods are great, but they're not everything. Business people make the world better

by providing goods and services, but those goods and services don't give life its ultimate meaning. The Christian business persons can't, in good conscience, advertise their products in a way that implies that they will meet people's deepest needs; they won't. They're enjoyable, worthwhile, helpful—but they're not divine. Honesty in advertising means promoting products based on their actual merits, rather than pretending they can meet customers' existential needs for meaning, value, and love.⁵

Escaping from the rat race.

Recognizing the limits of business also means recognizing that businesspeople themselves can't treat material success as ultimately important. Instead of trying to indefinitely maximize their incomes, they can say *no* to the rat race, opting for more time with the people they care about, more time to rest and reflect, more time to be. They can explore creative ways to simplify their lifestyles so that they don't feel pressured to enslave themselves to their jobs in order to support their consumption habits.⁶ And they can recognize that their work, while valuable and important, doesn't determine the ultimate meaning and value of their lives, so that saying No to work-related demands needn't undermine their worth as persons. And they can promote corporate policies that enable others, too, to avoid being dominated by the demands of work.

Freeing oneself to take personal responsibility to help others. Material goods are valuable and worthwhile, but they don't define the meaning of our lives. To recognize that can liberate Christian businesspersons to give freely to others. They can contribute substantially to dealing with the pressing problems of the world by developing productive businesses that make or distribute genuinely valuable things. They can also contribute out of their personal resources to making the world a better place, something they will obviously find it easier to do if they

aren't obsessed with acquiring more and more things. There is no magic formula.⁷ And the individual businessperson certainly isn't responsible for meeting, or trying to meet, all the world's needs.⁸ But, gifted with talents and resources, he or she has a real responsibility to make a difference.⁹

A successful professional might consider investing 20 or 30 percent of his income in the work of an international development agency like the Heifer Project.¹⁰ A wealthy CEO might use 50 or 60 percent of her income to support a flourishing jobs program for homeless people. An executive might choose to reduce his work hours, and thus his salary, in order to use his skills on behalf, not of a program or an agency, but rather of a particular needy person or family or community. In any case, recognizing that material possessions are good but not of ultimate importance leaves Christian businesspeople free not only to enjoy what they have but also to reach out to help others.¹¹

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Conclusion

A world in which businesspeople avoid lying, cheating, and stealing would be a great place. But being a Christian businessperson doesn't just mean not actively harming others; it means making a positive difference. The Christian in business makes a difference, first of all, simply by producing or distributing high-quality goods or services that enhance life in God's world. The businessperson can make the world a better place by offering others beauty, variety, efficiency, comfort, health, and any number of other goods. Christian business leaders can do more, though: They can help people overcome poverty, promote empowerment in the workplace, nourish local communities, and foster public policies that embody God's love and justice. At the same time, by recognizing that work, money, and possessions aren't divine, they can avoid being tyrannized by their work or encouraging others to be tyrannized by theirs. And recognizing that material things are valuable but not of transcendent importance, they can free themselves to give more to those in need. By moving beyond a narrow concern with avoiding harm and adopting a positive vision of the value of their work and the good they can do, Christian businesspeople can be especially effective ministers of God's grace in God's world.

Gary Chartier (Ph.D., University of Cambridge; J.D., University of California at Los Angeles) teaches business ethics and law at La Sierra University, in California. He is grateful to Deborah K. Dunn and Roger E. Rustad, Jr., for their critical comments, and to John Thomas for creating an environment conducive to the kind of thinking this article represents. His email address: GChartie@LaSierra.Edu.

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Harry Potter: Innocent fun or destructive tool?

by Steve Wohlberg

By portraying witchcraft as fun and exciting, *Harry Potter* desensitizes kids to the dangers of the occult. This is the devil's plan.

Witchcraft is on a worldwide march. Children, teenagers, and adults around the world are fascinated by mysterious energies flowing through witches. In increasing numbers, young and old are visiting popular witchcraft web sites, buying spell books, joining covens, mixing potions, and practicing magic. Wicca Witchcraft—also called the Craft—seems unstoppable on the move.

In the United States, so many teenagers are embracing the Wiccan Way that National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* aired in May 2004 a story called, "Teens and Wicca." The report drew attention to the growing number of teenagers secretly setting up witchcraft altars in their bedrooms, offering prayers to the goddess, and invoking the aid of spirits.¹ A similar trend is sweeping Canada, England, Europe, Australia, Russia, and other countries.

Why this exploding interest—especially among teenagers—in witchcraft? One reason is clear: Both children and adults are now being exposed to a vast array of pleasantly designed books and magical movies that increasingly portray witchcraft as a safe, exciting, and spiritually empowering religion—especially for young women. Some of the most popular TV programs, films, and fiction books include:

Sabrina, the Teenage Witch (TV series): Features a "girl with supernatural powers" who learns "to use her witchcraft wisely."²

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (TV

series): Stars a blonde teenager whose close friend Willow, nicknamed "The Willow Witch," exhibits "an increasing interest and involvement in Wicca and Witchcraft."³

Charmed (TV series): Features three sexy sorceress sisters who "use their individual powers as good witches to battle the forces of evil."⁴

The W.I.T.C.H series (novels for kids): An internationally popular series that follows the journeys of "five ordinary girls just going into their teens" who have "super powers over the Elements."⁵

The Daughters of the Moon series by Lynne Ewing (novels for kids). Titles include: *Goddess of the Night*, *The Sacrifice*, and *Possession*.

The Sweep series by Cate Tiernan (novels for kids). Titles include: *Blood Witch*, *Dark Magick*, and *Spellbound*.

Moving beyond these highly mesmerizing fiction productions, occult publishers are also capitalizing on the effects of movies and novels by churning out a growing body of how-to-practice-the-real-thing nonfiction works. Advertising dollars are netting results, and sales are soaring. Popular titles include:

Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation by Silver Ravenwolf (1997).

The Book of Shadows: A Modern Woman's Journey Into the Wisdom of Witchcraft and the Magic of the Goddess by Phyllis Currott (1998).

The Wiccan Mysteries: Ancient Origins and Teachings by Richard Grimassi (1997).

Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft by Raymond Buckland (1986).

Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner by Scott Cunningham (1990).

The list is endless. When you

add media productions, captivating novels, and books about witchcraft into a spiritually dry and searching public, the result is: steady Wiccan growth. If you doubt the trend, just go <http://www.walmart.com> and do a search for books about "Wicca." You'll be shocked. Make no mistake about it: Real Wicca witchcraft is growing around the world.

But one series of novels and films towers above all others in popularity and controversy: **Harry Potter**. Most parents view the *Potter* books (written by British author Joanne Kathleen Rowling) as harmless entertainment not worth worrying about. They surely don't see any subtle (or dangerous) Harry-Wicca connection. Others do; in fact, many are certain that dark spiritual forces lurk beneath those magic-made-funny pages. A *Harry Potter* debate is raging—in secular society as well as among Christians. Are Rowling's novels fueling teenage interest in the Craft? "Don't be silly!" shout *Potter* supporters. "Open your eyes!" counter *Potter* critics. Which side is right?

Pottermania

Beginning with their initial American release in 1998, Rowling's first five novels (seven are planned)—*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*—have sold more than 250 million copies in 200 countries in 60 languages. Further fanning the flames of Pottermania is the commitment of Hollywood titan Warner Brothers, Inc. to make each *Harry Potter* novel into a full-length movie. Three films have been released so far internationally, with four more on the horizon. Bottom line: Harry's gone global.

Rowling's series is an action-packed

and highly imaginative sequence of fantasy novels chronicling the adventures of an orphaned wizard boy named Harry Potter who, as a teenager, attends Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to sharpen his sorcery skills in preparation for deadly encounters with “the greatest Dark sorcerer of all time, Lord Voldemort.”⁶ As Harry gets ready for wizard school, he purchases occult textbooks, a wand, a cauldron (for mixing potions), a telescope (to study astrology) and other sorcery-related necessities. Required classes at Hogwarts include: History of Magic, Divination, Charms, Herbology, Potions, Transfiguration, and Defense Against the Dark Arts. Within the pages of each mesmerizing tale, Voldemort tries to kill Harry, yet the wizard boy always escapes through techniques learned at Hogwarts—by casting spells, through good luck, or through assistance from his dead parents.

At the end of each school year the young sorcerer regretfully returns home to spend the summer months with his non-magical relatives, the Dursley family—an unimaginative and droopy clan symbolizing perfect boredom. The Dursleys are classified as Muggles, or non-wizards, folks without “a drop of magical blood in their veins.”⁷ Throughout the Potter books, Muggles typically are represented as an unexciting, stick-in-the-mud group (with few exceptions), whereas witches and wizards who access supernatural powers are cool.

Harmless or destructive?

That’s the gist of *Harry Potter*—at least on the surface. The heated controversy swirls around whether these novels and movies are simply fictitious, harmless entertainment, or whether they might be whetting the appetites of kids and adults to explore real witchcraft. Personally, I believe the latter. Here’s why.

First, the *Harry Potter* books are being read by kids around the world,

and the Wicca witchcraft is growing among kids all over *the same world*. While this isn’t proof that *Harry* enhances Wiccan interest, it seems naive to discern no connection between the two.

Second, while the *Harry Potter* books are filled with fictitious, goofy elements, they also contain plenty of references to real people, real places, and real practices performed by real sorcerers all over Planet Earth. Rowling herself has publicly admitted that fully one-third of her material is based on actual occultism.⁸

This isn’t hard to prove. Beyond mentioning real places like Great Britain, London, the Kings Cross Subway Station, Brazil, Egypt, France, Albania, Australia, Ireland, Bulgaria, England, Wales, Uganda, Scotland, Norway, Luxembourg, and America,⁹ real historical occultists like Nicolas Flamel¹⁰ and Aldabert Waffling¹¹, real occult tools like wands, cauldrons, crystal balls, and tea leaves, the *Harry Potter* books overflow with references to real practices like spell casting, numerology, fortune telling, divination, astrology, palmistry, charms, crystal gazing, out-of-body travel, and spirit-channeling. However, here’s the catch: Rowling consistently mingles these references with silly, absurd, and obviously imaginary elements so as to make the entire brew appear harmless (that’s how the books sneak under the radar screen); yet this sober fact remains: All of these practices are real and are practiced by real witches everywhere. For proof, simply browse the occult section of any major secular bookstore.

Third, no matter what Potter supporters claim, real Wiccan philosophy *does* lurk within *Harry Potter*. For instance, Rowling’s magic vs. Muggles dichotomy (which provides the framework for her entire series) reflects what real witches actually believe. Bestselling Wiccan author Silver Ravenwolf, in her popular nonfiction book, *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation*,

lists the following as a core Wiccan belief:

“We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than is apparent to the average person.... Everyone has these abilities, but most don’t use them, and some people fear these powers. Witches, and other enlightened souls, strive to strengthen these natural gifts.”¹²

This key doctrine of the Craft is essentially the same teaching found within *Harry Potter*. “We acknowledge a depth of power,” Ravenwolf writes, “far greater than is apparent to the average person.” Rowling communicates this Wiccan concept when her books call all average, non-magical souls, Muggles. Ravenwolf says, “Some people fear these powers.” This is exactly what one of Harry Potter’s Hogwarts professors says about Muggles.¹³ Ravenwolf’s occult publisher is Llewellyn Publications, based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Surprisingly, in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Rowling used the name of Ravenwolf’s publisher—Llewellyn—as the name of a hospital ward dedicated to healing the sick! See for yourself:

“Arthur Weasley?” said the witch, running her finger down a long list in front of her. “Yes, first floor, second door on the right, Dai *Llewellyn* ward.”¹⁴

Fourth, evidence shows that kids *have* become interested in real witchcraft as a result of *Harry Potter*. Case in point: The Pagan Federation is a well-organized promoter of Wicca witchcraft in England. Shortly after Rowling’s series hit the British Isles, the federation started receiving “a flood of inquiries” about the details of their religion—inquiries they attributed to “the success of the *Harry Potter* books.”¹⁵ A British publication, *This Is London*, reported the facts in an article bearing the sobering title: “Potter Fans Turning to Witchcraft.” The federation’s media officer, Andy Norfolk, testified: “In response to increased inquiries coming from youngsters we estab-

lished a youth officer. . . . It is quite probably linked to things like *Harry Potter*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Every time an article on witchcraft or paganism appears, we have a huge surge in calls, mostly from young girls.”¹⁶

“Potter Fans Turning to Witchcraft,” “the success of the *Harry Potter* books,” “linked to things like *Harry Potter*,” “a huge surge in calls, mostly from young girls”—these provide convincing evidence, at least for those willing, to see their significance.

The Bible and witchcraft

Let’s shift gears to God’s Word. Is there a real devil? Wiccans don’t believe so. Silver Ravenwolf and other Wiccan authors think Satan is a figment of misguided Christian imagination. Yet the Bible plainly says, “The great dragon was cast out, . . . called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:9, NKJV). Satan not only exists, but he “deceives the whole world.”

In Scripture, sorcery isn’t imaginary. Moses warned that anyone “who practices witchcraft . . . or a sorcerer . . . or one who conjures spells” is “an abomination to the Lord” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, NKJV). Paul pinpointed “sorcery” as one of the “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19, 20), and John clearly predicted that “sorcerers” will meet their final destiny in “the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8, NKJV). This is serious stuff.

Because Satan exists, and because real witchcraft and sorcery come from him, here’s a key question: How likely is it that Lucifer himself has nothing to do with the most popular series of books ever written, which portray witchcraft, sorcery, potions, and spells as fun and cool for kids? Paul wrote, “We are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11, NKJV). Don’t be fooled. By portraying witchcraft

and casting spells as fun and exciting, *Harry Potter* desensitizes youngsters to the dangers of the occult. This is the devil’s plan.

John wrote, “By your sorcery all the nations were deceived” (Revelation 18:23, NKJV). This non-fiction passage warns that real sorcery coming from a real devil will really deceive real nations in the end-times. Should we not take seriously the Lord’s warning? Should we not flee from witchcraft in any form, including the most modern version of so called harmless entertainment? Should we not lead our children to the truth as found in the Scriptures?

Deuteronomy 18:9 says we shouldn’t even “learn” about wicked occult practices. As a wholesome alternative, Jesus says, “Learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29, NKJV). *He* is the alternative to witchcraft!

Steve Wohlberg is Speaker/Director of *Endtime Insights Radio and TV Ministry*, and Pastor of the Templeton Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Templeton, California. His new book, *Hour of the Witch: Harry Potter, Wicca Witchcraft, and the Bible*, explores these issues fully and is available from Endtime Insights or Adventist Book Centers. To contact Pastor Wohlberg or learn about his ministry, visit <http://www.endtimeinsights.com>.

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The canon of the Bible: A brief review

by David Marshall

**Forty writers,
hundreds of years,
and yet one Book, one
Message, and one Hope.**

Of all the books known to human history, none is so unique in its origin, so stupendous in its claims, so dynamic in its promises, so comprehensive and encompassing in its message as is the Bible. It is no ordinary book. Indeed, it is not a single book, but a library of books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New. Its composition took centuries; its authority has lasted even longer. The first of the 40 authors who wrote the Bible (Moses) was separated from the last author (John) by approximately 1,600 years. The writers came from different walks of life, and had every conceivable level of education from the highest to the lowest. They differed in what they were and what they did: Some were herdsmen, shepherds, soldiers, and fishermen; and others were kings, legislators, statesmen, courtiers, priests, poets, and physicians.

Inevitably their literary styles reflected the differences among them. Some were writing law; others, religious poetry; still others, history; some, lyrical prose; others, lyrical poetry; some were writing in parables and allegories; others, biographies or personal memoirs and diaries; and some were writing prophecy; and still others, quite simply, personal correspondence.

With all this diversity, how were the sixty-six books deemed to be sufficiently “different” or “holy” to be included in what is called the “canon” of the Bible?

The first thing to understand is that no individual or committee of

individuals compiled the Bible. The Bible *grew*. This principle applies to both the Old and New Testaments. The unifying principle that makes the Bible holy, different, a living whole, is this: Christ Himself, the bringer of salvation. As we watch the process by which the books were written and came to be accepted as God-breathed, we receive a sense that the One who was the unifying principle, the bringer of salvation, the source of inspiration, was also at work.

The Old Testament canon

“Few realize,” wrote George Smith, “that the Church of Christ possesses a higher warrant for her canon of the Old Testament than she does for her canon of the New.”¹ This higher warrant lies in the relationship that Jesus established between Himself and the Old Testament. Frequently, He quoted from it as the source of His authority. After His resurrection, He told His disciples that the Cross and everything that had happened to Him was but a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Indeed, Messianic prophecy was scattered throughout the Old Testament. Of course, the New Testament did not have similar weight of authority from the Lord because it had yet to be written.

The authority of the Old Testament was accepted by the people to whom it was addressed—Israel—long before the arrival of the Messiah. One example will suffice. In the course of a clean-up in the temple in Josiah’s reign, the “Book of the Law” long neglected was discovered. The book was presented to the king, and he read it. It had, he realized, been lost owing to the indifference of his predecessors. In former times, it was kept in the tabernacle, then the temple, and the priests frequently read from it. The king had a second copy. The recovery of the Book of the Law was seen by Josiah and

later chroniclers as an event of great significance. The king read passages aloud to the people. The portions that were read came from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 and 29. From this it may be deduced that the “Book of the Law” represented the first five books of the Bible or, at least, part of them. The rediscovery of the book was used as a springboard for the reformation of the kingdom.

During the 70 years of the Babylonian exile, the words of the prophets, then extant, came to be valued a great deal. Judah as a nation ceased to exist, and with it its capital and its temple. But here was still the Book of the Law—and the books of the prophets.

The Jewish *Talmud* asserts that Ezra, who led the people at the end of the Exile, undertook the collecting and editing of the Law and the Prophets. It also suggests that “a Great Synagogue” was convened and that over a period of years all the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings came under discussion. In addition to any work carried out by Ezra, many scholars have suggested that over the decades, members of the Great Synagogue undertook the work of editing.

The Old Testament books are usually divided into four sections: The Pentateuch (the books of Moses), the historical books (Joshua to Esther), the five books of poetry and ethics (Job to the Song of Solomon), and the books of the prophets (Isaiah to Malachi).

The work of forming what we call the Old Testament had, thanks to Ezra and the Great Synagogue, begun as early as 450 B.C. Most scholars now accept that by the time of Christ, the Old Testament existed in the form we have outlined.

Following the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, there was considerable discussion about the canon of Scripture. A rabbi called Yochanan ben Zakkai obtained written permission from the Roman authorities to convene the Council of Jamnia in order to discuss

the canon of Scripture. However, the debate at that council simply centered around four books that were considered “marginal”: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and Esther. After the pros and cons of these four books were discussed, the council decided to include them within the canon, along with the rest of what we know as the Old Testament books. In fact, the council could have done little else; “the books which they decided to acknowledge as canonical were already generally accepted, although questions had been raised about them. Those which they refused to admit had never been included. They did not expel from the canon any book which had previously been admitted.”²

The Council of Jamnia did not invest the books of the Bible with authority by including them in some sacred list. They were included in that list—the *canon*—because they were already acknowledged as God-inspired, authoritative, and had been, in most cases, for a number of centuries.

A contemporary of Christ, Philo

of Alexandria, accepted the Old Testament canon in the form in which it is accepted today. The same is true of first-century Josephus Flavius. The earliest list of Old Testament books extant was drawn up by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, about A.D. 170, and is preserved by Eusebius in the fourth volume of his *Ecclesiastical History*.³

The New Testament canon

The New Testament has three categories of books: the narratives (the four Gospels and the Acts), the letters, and the apocalyptic Book of Revelation.

Although it took only 50 years to write the New Testament, it took far longer for it to assume the form that it has today. Not until A.D. 367 do we find the New Testament books listed in exactly their present form. The list is contained in an Easter letter written by a Christian bishop, Athanasius.

In the two-and-a-half centuries or so between the completion of the last book of the New Testament and the list of Athanasius, there had been much discussion as to which books

should or should not be included in the canon. The Old Testament formed the Scriptures of the earliest Christians. Gradually, however, some Christian writings were placed on a par with the Old Testament, “not by any decree of a council...but by the common agreement of the faithful; the spiritual intuition of the Church came slowly to decide which of its writings should be regarded as ‘canonical.’”⁴

What brought about “the common agreement of the faithful”? What informed “the spiritual intuition of the Church?”

The books discarded from the Old Testament canon came to be called the *Apocrypha*. A further group of wrongly attributed books—called the *Pseudepigrapha*—was also discarded. The Apocrypha contained history and wise sayings. The Pseudepigrapha contained a lot of magic and little history. As we examine the books discarded from the New Testament canon—the New Testament “Apocrypha”—again we sense the presence of supernatural guidance.

The books included were those accepted as God-inspired and proven in their ability to help men and women and to make Christ known. They were acknowledged to have been written by men close to Jesus and involved in the great first-century adventure that took the Christian gospel to the limits of the then-known world.

A Greek contemporary of Athanasius spoke of “the echo of a great soul” and professed to hear this echo in the canonical New Testament books. William Barclay, the noted New Testament scholar, says: “The ring of sublimity is to be found in the New Testament books. They carry their greatness on their faces. *They are self-evidencing.*”

When Bible translator J. B. Phillips came to compare the New Testament books “with the writings which were excluded from the New Testament by the early Fathers,” he could only



“Just a minute, there! Those haven’t gone through committee!”

“admire their wisdom.” He continued, “Probably most people have not had the opportunity to read the apocryphal ‘gospels’ and ‘epistles,’ although every scholar has. I can only say here that in such writings we live in a world of magic and make-believe, of myth and fancy. In the whole task of translating the New Testament I never for one moment, however provoked and challenged I might be, felt that I was being swept away into a world of spookiness, witchcraft and magical powers such as abound in the books rejected from the New Testament. It was the sustained down-to-heart faith of the New Testament writers which conveyed to me that inexpressible sense of the genuine and the authentic.”⁵

The “self-evidencing” point comes across most powerfully when one reads the books that almost got into the New Testament but did not; books that were intended by their authors to be accepted, but were not.

In the second century, a number of books were written called “infancy gospels.” The four Gospels of the canon provide little detail on the first three decades of the life of Jesus prior to the commencement of His public ministry. These infancy gospels were intended to “fill the gaps.”

The so-called “gospel of Thomas” is supposed to give a record of the infancy of Jesus. The child Jesus, while at play, is represented as creating live sparrows out of clay, and of striking dead a small child who “run and crashed against his shoulder.” Jesus the apprenticed carpenter is depicted stretching wooden beams like elastic and exercising an assortment of magical powers to no practical purpose.

No one could possibly mistake this for Scripture. Indeed, Scripture is *self-evidencing*. When you compare the Gospels with these books, there is no question as to why some are “in” and others, without argument, “out.” The line is clear-cut. There is no room for debate.

Immense care was taken to ensure

that the people who had authored the books that were accepted into the canon had known Jesus personally. The hallmark of these men was that they were concerned to demonstrate that the Jesus who *did* those things in the past is the living Christ who still does things.

In the Book of Acts, every single sermon finishes with the fact of the Resurrection. For the New Testament, Jesus is, above all, the living Christ. Because the four Gospel writers were speaking about the living Christ, they gave a vastly disproportionate amount of space to the last week prior to His crucifixion and resurrection. The central concern of the disciples, of Christianity, of Christian theology, is the death and resurrection of Jesus. The books where this was not the central concern were quite simply either not considered or deliberately excluded from the canon.

“We may believe,” says Professor F. F. Bruce, “that those early Christians acted by a wisdom higher than their own in this matter, not only in what they accepted, but in what they rejected.” “What is particularly important to notice is that the New Testament canon was not demarcated by the arbitrary decree of any Church Council. When at last the Church Council—the Synod of Hippo in AD 393—listed the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, it did not confer upon them any authority which they did not already possess, but simply recorded their previously established canonicity.”⁶

In short, the process by which the books of the New Testament came to be accepted was, in all essential respects, the same process by which the books of the Old Testament came to be accepted. Thus these two books—the Bible of the apostles and the Bible the apostles *wrote*—together came to comprise what Christians accept as the written Word of God, the unifying principle of which is Christ Himself, the bringer of salvation. Thus

the Bible, the inspired Word, had its origin, authority, and genuineness in Christ the Incarnate Word.

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Genesis and the cosmos: A unified picture?

by Mart de Groot

For the Christian, God's existence is a given, and scientific laws may be seen as our current description of how God directs His creation.

How should the Bible and natural science be related, explained, or studied? At least two positions seem possible. On the one hand, there are those who hold that a conservative understanding of the Bible and the findings of science cannot be harmonized. On the other, there are those who believe that conclusions drawn from the two disciplines can be harmonized to fit into one overall view of the world. Many in the second group base their belief on the conviction that God is the Creator both of the Bible and of the natural world, and that both have a role to play in our understanding of God's creation.

This essay attempts to present a scientific and a biblical model of the origin of the inanimate natural world and explore how these can be brought into harmony with each other.

The scientific model

Science today claims that it understands how the Universe originated and developed. The claim is one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of modern cosmology. It is the story of the Big Bang.¹ According to this theory, the Universe originated almost 14 billion years ago. One of the attractive aspects of the Big Bang theory is its explanation of the source of the basic building blocks of everything, including life. Whereas the chemical elements formed in the first three minutes of the Big Bang

were simple (mostly hydrogen and helium), the more complex atoms were produced much later. They were synthesized inside stars as the product of the nuclear reactions that make stars shine.

This theory, therefore, requires that stars form so that they can produce the basic chemical elements out of which everything else is made. For stars to form and produce the various chemical elements, the Universe's physical conditions and basic physical parameters need to have very precise values. For instance, to make atoms out of the nucleons formed in the very first minutes after the Big Bang, the numbers of protons and neutrons must fall between very narrow limits. If not, the required atoms would either not have formed, or all stars in the Universe would have collapsed into neutron stars and black holes long ago.

Further, unless the number of electrons in the Universe was equal to the number of protons to an accuracy of one part in 10^{37} , electromagnetic forces would have overcome gravitational forces, and galaxies, stars, and planets could never have formed. And, without stars there would be no complex chemical elements.

Also, for stars (and galaxies) to form, the Universe must not expand too rapidly (for that would tear matter apart before stars are formed), nor too slowly (for that would cause the collapse of the Universe long before stars have had time to produce the more complex chemical elements). To achieve this, the cosmic expansion needs to be fine-tuned to one part in 10^{60} . A very high precision indeed!

In fact, the number and the precision of the fine-tunings² of the various physical and cosmic parameters are so incredible that one must consider that our Universe was made with the express purpose of being able

to support human life. Here we find evidence for the existence not only of design, but also of a Designer. This is the argument from design for the existence and activity of God. He reveals Himself not only in His love letter to humanity, the Bible, but also in the work of His hands, nature (Psalm 19:1; Isaiah 40:26).

The Big Bang theory also offers an explanation for many processes that would have occurred after the Universe was more than 300,000 years old. The best models of what happened at yet earlier times also seem to explain the Universe as we know it today. However, since none of these processes can be verified observationally, they remain in the area of speculative model building.

A more fundamental difficulty with purely scientific models is that science declares that all phenomena can only have natural causes. Thus, God, as the Sustainer of His creation, is discarded as an active agent in the history of the Universe. For the Bible-believing Christian, however, there are many phenomena for which science has no explanation. Consider, for example, floating axe-heads, feeding more than 5,000 people from five loaves and two fish, resurrection from death, and a virgin giving birth (2 Kings 6:1-7; John 6:1-13; 11:38-44; Luke 1:26-38). Can we really expect that science will one day be able to explain exactly how these happened?

The answer to this question is important. For the Christian, God's existence is a given, and scientific laws may be seen as our current description of how God directs His creation.

The biblical model

The first chapter of the Bible seems to provide the account of the origin of the Universe. While human curiosity may not be fully satisfied, the very first verse of the Bible does answer

four of the five basic questions. “When?” is answered with “In the beginning.” “Who?” is answered with “God.” “How?” is answered by “created.” “What?” is answered by “the heavens and the earth.” The “why?” is answered in the rest of the book. We need to say a bit more about these words.

“*The heavens and the earth.*” The phrase is a so-called *merism*,³ i.e., a term that includes everything between the two extremes of heaven and earth. It can be understood to indicate the totality of all created matter.

“*In the beginning.*” In Hebrew, one explanation of “in the beginning” is that it can denote a period of time preceding what follows; i.e., a period before the Genesis creation week. “In the beginning” gives us some—maybe considerable—time before the start of creation week.

“*Created.*” The Hebrew *bara* (“created” in Genesis 1:1) always has God as the subject; only He can truly create. The Hebrew word *asah* is usually translated “made” in Genesis 1 and in more than 70 other ways elsewhere in the Bible. God is the only One who can create (*bara*); humans can make (*asah*). In Genesis 1, the word *bara* is used in verse 1 when God creates all matter out of nothing, in verse 21 when He creates fish and birds by giving them breath of life as only He can, and in verses 26 and 27 for the creation of Adam and Eve when He creates them in His image.⁴

On the other days of creation week—depending on the Bible version consulted—, God “separates,” “produces,” “brings forth,” or “makes.” On all these occasions, God shapes new forms out of previously created matter. When *bara* is used, there is usually an “out-of-nothing” element, something entirely new that was not there before in any shape or form.

So, “In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth” (KJV) means that God created out of nothing

all matter in the Universe before He did His creative work starting from Genesis 1:3. In His creation of all matter, God provides Himself with the materials for further construction work. This way of working is similar to His using the dry land to produce vegetation (vs. 11), animals (vs. 24), and Adam (2:7).

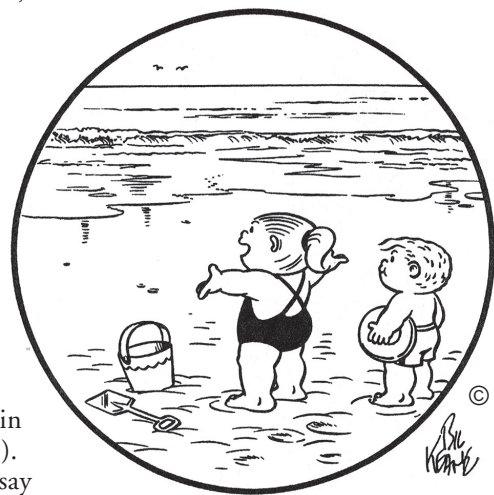
Of course, we know that a certain amount of creation had taken place before creation week. Angels and, most likely, other (inhabited) worlds were created before the Genesis creation week (Job 38:7). Another way of showing that the Earth existed already before creation week has been suggested by Gordon Gray.⁵ He calls it the “subtraction method.” By starting at the end of Genesis chapter 1 and going back in time, now eliminating things as they were created, one arrives at what was already in existence at the beginning of Day 1.

So, starting on Friday afternoon, Eve, who came last, is eliminated first, then Adam, and so on. Proceeding like this, what do we find on the eve of the first day? At no time during our backward journey did we read about the creation of planet Earth, or of water. The Earth, then, must have been made before creation week. However, it is dark, wholly under water, and lifeless. This is exactly the description of the Earth in Genesis 1:2. It seems that this unformed and unfilled Earth has been created before Day 1, and that the very short account of that creation and the condition in which it was then left, are given in verses 1 and 2. Interestingly, when God reveals His creative power to Job, He refers to the Earth as wrapped in darkness by thick clouds (Job 38:9). This verse offers the possibility to say something more definite about the creation of the Sun, Moon, and stars.

In Genesis 1:16 (“the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars” [NIV]) the word for “made” is

not in the Hebrew text. In fact, this passage can also be translated, “the lesser light to govern the night together with the stars.” The record of the fourth day simply says that the stars were to “govern the night” together with the Moon. This reading eliminates the argument for believing that the stars were created on the fourth day, and also avoids the problem of the light from distant stars reaching the Earth within the lifetime of the Universe. There is, therefore, no need to have recourse to the artificial construction that asks us to believe that the stars were created with their light already filling the whole Universe.

To explain how the Earth could be in darkness while the Sun already existed, it is sufficient to read Job 38:9 again. The cloud cover before the first day was so thick that it was dark on Earth. Then, on Day 1, God says, “Let there be light.” The thick cloud cover is lifted enough to bring light to the world. At the same time, it remains thick enough to keep the Sun hidden from view, much as we don’t see the Sun on a densely-clouded day without there being any doubt about whether it is day or



“Every day God lets some of the water out so there’s room to play on the beach.”

From *Count Your Blessings*. Reprinted with permission of Bil Keane.

night. Then on Day 4, the clouds are lifted further and the luminaries are presented in their full glory.

As far as the creative work of the six days is concerned, I believe that that was accomplished in six literal, consecutive 24-hour days. Others have provided ample evidence that the way the Hebrew language numbers the days in Genesis 1 can only be understood as denoting periods of 24 hours each.⁶ About the time frame preceding creation week—the time between “In the beginning” and “the first day”—the Bible gives no firm answer.

However, this is an area where science may have something to say. The Big Bang theory, for example, places the origin of the universe at almost 14 billion years ago. The Bible places creation week about 6,000 years ago or a little more.⁷ By all accounts, even when we have our reservations about various aspects of the Big Bang theory, there could have been a lot of time before creation week in which God could work with His created matter to make many galaxies, stars, planets around other stars (some even inhabited), and even the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth.

Synthesis

We are now in a position to gather the foregoing into an overall description of how the creation process may have unfolded, taking into consideration some aspects of the Big Bang theory. At some unspecified time “in the beginning,” God created all the matter and energy the Universe contains today. In doing so, He was not indebted to matter already present, and His word was sufficient to speak everything into existence in a moment (Psalm 33:6, 9; 148:5; Hebrews 11:3).

God worked with the primordial matter to form, first, elementary particles, and then the simple atoms of mainly hydrogen and helium in the first three minutes. According to the Big Bang theory, when the Universe

was 300,000 years old, galaxies were formed, and, in those galaxies, stars. In the Universe, it seems that God had a special role for the stars to play. They were the cooking pots where He prepared most of the chemical elements He later used in the formation of the Earth. Together with the stars, planets formed. Again, according to the Big Bang theory, some 4.5 billion years ago, this led to the formation of the Sun and its planets. Planet Earth was composed mainly of the more complex chemical elements important for life. However, the Earth was unformed and unfilled, covered with water, and enveloped in dark clouds.

Then, approximately 6,000 years ago, God visited the Earth to accomplish His plan for this planet and its inhabitants. He took six literal days to form the Earth as a habitat for the life He then created to fill it. The firmament, vegetation, fish, birds, land animals, and our first parents were brought into existence. Some of these were brought forth from terrestrial matter, others were treated in a more specialized manner when they were imbued with special characteristics. The difference is reflected in the use of the Hebrew words *bara* and *asah*.

Of course, the above scenario is only one possibility. It is neither definitive nor complete. There are many unanswered questions simply because we were not present to witness what happened. This scenario is the best I can think of that harmonizes our current understanding of science with biblical faith—both contribute to a unified picture.

In all this, the overriding importance of a correct paradigm is clear. The conclusions scientists draw from their observations of nature change radically when a different paradigm is used. God does make a difference to the Universe! This is no surprise, because He is not only the Creator, but also the Sustainer. Not only does God make a difference to the material Universe, He asks for the privilege to

make a difference to our lives as well. Comparing the eternal future with God with the limited lifetime of the Universe, it cannot be too difficult to say “Yes, please!”

Mart de Groot (Doctor of Natural Sciences, University of Utrecht) spent most of his life as a research astronomer and later served as an Adventist minister in Northern Ireland. Recently retired, he continues to research, lecture, and write. His e-mail address: mdgr@arm.ac.uk

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PROFILES



Daisy de Leon

Dialogue with an Adventist professor focused on research

Sitting with Daisy de Leon in her office, the first thing you notice is the number of family pictures that decorate her wall and desk. Mentioning how cute the children in the pictures are brings out the bubbly side of Dr. de Leon. As a new grandmother, she proudly displays the picture of her granddaughter, Vivianna, and quickly informs me that another grandchild is on the way. Family is obviously very important to Dr. de Leon and her husband, Marino, parents of three children.

Born in Bronx, New York, she grew up in Puerto Rico. From her childhood, her parents insisted that getting a good education was one of the most important things one could do with one's life. In 1977, Daisy graduated from the University of Puerto Rico, San Juan, with a bachelor's degree in biology. Three years later, she completed a master's degree in molecular biology from the same university. Then in 1987, Dr. de Leon completed her Ph.D. in endocrinology at the University of California, Davis.

Dr. de Leon always showed a fascination for research and medicine. In school, her role model was Albert Schweitzer, the brilliant musician and the erudite theologian who won the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize for his compassionate medical missionary work among Africa's lepers. Currently, Dr. de Leon serves as associate professor of physiology and pharmacology, and as assistant to the dean for diversity at the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University. In addition, she is involved in breast cancer research. She has worked at Loma Linda since 1993.

■ *Let's get right to your current research. A recent study concluded that incidence*

of breast cancer in French women was significantly less than in women in the United States. The study found that it was the wine that was helping to decrease the incidence of breast cancer. Previous research had shown that the use of alcohol increases the incidence of breast cancer, but now research seems to indicate that the protective effect of the wine was produced by a chemical found in grapes.

Well, can I say, "Drink more wine?" No. Studies have been done for some time to see if grapes contain any possible chemo-preventive factor. Health food stores carry pills that contain grape skin extract. These extracts combine several parts of the grape with the grape seed, which has potent antioxidants that seem to help in the prevention of breast cancer. Scientists have also found a couple of chemicals in broccoli that inhibit breast and prostate cancer. In addition, research indicates that consumption of green vegetables has a protective effect. So your question has really to do with diet and nutrition.

When scientists were looking for the gene that affects breast cancer, they discovered that only five percent of all breast cancers are hereditary. Even though you may have the bad gene that may increase your susceptibility to breast cancer, it's encouraging to know that proper diet and nutrition can have preventive effects.

■ *Above and beyond diet changes, are there any other steps that women can take to limit their risk of breast cancer?*

It's important for women to understand their bodies and the changes that take place in their breast. If a woman is between 35 and 40 years of age,

she should have what is known as a baseline test. After 40, a once-a-year mammogram is necessary. Education is critical for women to understand the risks, but there is no magic bullet in terms of breast cancer. There is no 1-2-3, no A-B-C, of how to prevent it.

■ *As a Seventh-day Adventist, how do you connect your religion with your work?*

First, I experience a sense of wonder. As a scientist I am amazed at the marvels I discover each day about the human body. Is it possible that this body and mind and how all the intricate systems that work within us could have been a result of chance and random evolution? The more I look at the human body and how it functions, the more I am forced to join the Psalmist and exclaim, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Second, humility. Because of this wonder and because God has given me a unique insight to understand the phenomenal way in which our bodies function, I am driven to certain humility. A deep spiritual experience overwhelms me, and I am determined all the more to serve God, to study His creation, and to serve my fellow human beings. Religion helps me to stay close to God and to His creation. Every time I learn something new in my field, it brings me closer to God, because it makes me realize that we would not have been able to exist if it hadn't been for such a powerful Being that has developed us in such a phenomenal way.

■ *Do you find that you are able to share your faith in your profession?*

Being a scientist and being a Christian seems incompatible to many people. That has not been the case with me, and certainly is not the case for a lot of my colleagues. We see that the opportunity to understand the intricacies of God's creation is a marvelous way to understand a little bit more about God.

I have always felt very comfortable with my values; it was wonderful for me that I was able to explore and become a Christian on my own. It's different for my children, however, because I feel that being an Adventist is the best I have to offer them. So their choices are significantly reduced when it comes to that. I've had my challenges as a parent trying to give them the freedom of choice and yet trying to work it out so that the freedom of choice takes them to what I believe is the best choice.

■ *How do you juggle your roles as a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a teacher, and a researcher?*

I take it a day at a time and as it comes. I've been very fortunate that my husband and I share the same religious convictions and core values that allow us to have a happy relationship. We value our relationship with God, and that is essential to our relationship. We value each other as individuals, we respect our differences. We both believe that family is essential.

■ *What counsel can you give to readers who are interested in research and would like to pursue it as a career option?*

Research is a fantastic enterprise, and there are a lot of programs now that allow for students from junior high on up to get involved in research. Many universities have research programs. There is a lot of ways these days where people can get involved with research, particularly in the Adventist Church. Since we value the body so much and are committed to promote good health, research is definitely a key element to advance medicine and care of the body.

More than one hundred years ago, Ellen White—one of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers—wrote counsels on health prevention that were ahead of her time. For example, she stated that large amounts of sugar were harmful to our bodies. In my young days, I personally wondered how that could

be? I love sugar, chocolate, and everything that is sweet, but today we know from chemistry and research why sugar is harmful to the body. As we now know, her warning on the dangers of tobacco consumption were right on target. Isn't it fascinating to see that a woman with limited formal education had a wisdom that didn't come from herself and was guided to give us such understanding on health?

Research is critical, and I'm very happy that Loma Linda University has put a lot of effort and money to foster research in various health areas. This allows us to have someone like Dr. Leonard Bailey who, with his team, performs amazing heart transplants. Our university is still moving forward and providing an environment where you can feel comfortable being a Christian and retain your values and at the same time be a scientist who enjoys research.

■ *What brings you satisfaction in your work?*

Many things: To complete a project that allows me to push scientific knowledge forward. The opportunity to work with a colleague and know that our interactions have provided some benefit for us all. The opportunity to be able to assist students in something that will make a difference in their life is satisfying. To be in the right place at the right time to contribute—that, to me, is fulfilling.

Interview by Dustin R. Jones

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PROFILES



Jaime Jorge

Dialogue with a world-renowned Adventist violinist

Jaime Jorge's passionate mastery of the violin has delighted audiences around the globe. A committed Christian, Jaime has dedicated his unique talent to sharing God's love through classical concerts.

Born in Cuba in 1970, Jaime began playing the violin at age five. At age 10, his family left Cuba and emigrated to the United States where young Jaime began studying with the famous violinist Cyrus Forough, a student of the great David Oistrakh.

Over the years, Jaime has played his violin in a variety of settings, from high school auditoriums to churches to the world-renowned Carnegie Hall. He has performed before heads of state and other government officials around the world, including the Americas, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Russia. He averages more than 75 concerts annually, performing for over half a million people each year—sometimes as many as 44,000 in a single performance.

Jorge has won awards for five of his albums, two of which were recorded in Europe with the Czechoslovak National Radio Symphony in Bratislava. His Christmas album, *Christmas in the Aire*, was recorded with the 75-member Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra.

Jorge is a graduate of Loyola University of Chicago. After briefly studying medicine at the University of Illinois, he chose to leave medical school to serve God full-time with his musical talent. Jaime married Emily, a gifted vocalist, in August 1997. In addition to accompanying his demanding concert schedule, Jorge is an adjunct professor of music at Gardner-Webb

University in North Carolina.

■ *Your dad was a pastor in Cuba. Was growing up a Christian in communist Cuba difficult for you?*

Just about all Christian young people experienced some kind of harassment and alienation. In school, we were made fun of by the students and the teachers. We were often interrogated about our beliefs and belittled for not being communists. Even in our neighborhoods, some kids would not allow us to join in playing games because of our religious convictions. We never knew when they would include us, leave us alone, or tease us.

■ *Music has always been important in your family. Your mother was an accomplished musician herself. But what was it about the violin that drew you? What led you to work so hard to master it?*

What initially drew me to the violin was its ability to communicate so much: there was room for deep passion, guts, but also for sweetness and delicateness. But really, what led me to work so hard was my mother's commitment to my developing the talent that God had given me. I loved to perform, but hated to practice. She forced me to practice. The music came easy for me. I don't remember having to struggle as much as others around me. But as I became older, I did develop a bit of a desire to perfect whatever I played and interpreted.

■ *Who had the most effect on your spirituality?*

My father. He has always had a deep commitment to the Lord and for shar-

ing the gospel (he was a pastor until he retired a few years ago). I've always seen him live what he believed and preached.

■ *Jaime, you were once quoted as saying, "As I look back on my life thus far, I can see that the most difficult, lowest points came when I was farthest from Jesus, but He never gave up on me." What do you do today to nourish your relationship with God?*

The only way to continue to grow in a relationship with God is to spend time in study and prayer. The only way I can be a well of encouragement and even instruction is by replenishing that well with Jesus on a daily basis. That is what I strive to do in my personal relationship with the Lord. I'm not always consistent and successful at it. But it's the only way to be able to give to others.

■ *You were able to study with two of the world's greatest violinists. What other elements have influenced your music?*

My mother, Paul and Stephen Tucker (my arrangers and producers), and other well-known artists (both classical and religious) such as Itzhak Perlman, David Oistrakh, Yo-Yo Ma, Placido Domingo, Herbert von Karajan, Oscar Peterson, Van Cliburn, Quincy Jones, David Foster, and Larnelle Harris. Those are just some. I also love composers such as Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky. All of these artists pushed themselves to attain the highest possible standard in what they did. It's what I strive to do also. And, I especially admire those that have decided to forego worldly fanfare and recognition for a life of sharing their talents for God's glory.

■ *Despite your obvious talent and interest in music, you originally took up medicine. Was it hard to give up your dream of becoming a doctor? Are you glad now that you chose music over medicine? When was it you felt God's call to full-*

time ministry?

I never wanted to be a musician. I understood well the life of sacrifice and uncertainty that being a musician, especially a Christian musician, was like. I had funded some of my recordings and put myself through college and part of medical school by performing. But sometime after my first year at the University of Illinois School of Medicine, I felt the Lord was trying to get my attention. So I began to pray, without really wanting to hear what the Lord had to say. Finally, after eight months of praying (and being scared), I asked the Lord to give me a sign. The sign came, and I asked for a second one. That one came, too, and at that point I decided that I should do what the Lord wanted. That was in 1996. It was not hard to give up my dream of being a doctor because I really wanted to do the Lord's will. I thought medicine was where the Lord thought me. So when I knew for certain, I was at total peace with it. I've never looked back, regretted it, or had second thoughts about it.

■ *You have recorded several albums to date and produced two videos. Through all these projects, you have had numerous challenges, yet God has always provided. What advice would you pass onto young aspiring musicians considering recording their first album?*

We've now recorded 10 albums since 1987. They began very humbly, simply, and inexpensively. The best advice that I can pass on to someone aspiring to record an album? Well, first, choose the compositions you feel that the Lord wants you to put on your album (by praying about it first). Second, choose melodies that people recognize and relate to. So many artists load up on original music, but because people don't know the artist, it's harder to convince them to pick up an album of unknown music. Third, commit yourself to recording the best possible album that you can record. Don't compromise on the quality of the delivery

and performance. Set the highest standard, and don't stop until you reach it.

Interview by Nicole Batten

Nicole Batten is the publicity director at Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho. Jaime Jorge's address is 9536 Mountain Lake Dr.; Ooltewah, Tennessee 37363; U.S.A. To learn more about Jaime Jorge, read his autobiography, *No More Broken Strings*, (Pacific Press, 2002). His book and his albums are available online at <http://www.AdventistBookCenter.com>.

Guidelines for Contributors

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

The editors are interested in well written articles, interviews, and reports consistent with *Dialogue's* objectives:

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2. To deepen commitment to Christ, the Bible, and Adventist global mission
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LOGOS

With all your might

The lesson from Vermeer's kitchenmaid

by Penny Mahon

I have been a teacher at Newbold College, in England, for 20 years. Before that, I taught in secondary schools for five years. Teaching is my life. Although I love my job and would never consider doing anything else, there is one confession I have to make. I really don't relish grading. If I'm faced with a pile of papers, I'll find *anything* else to do before I submit to the inevitability of marking. And once I start, I don't have a lot of sticking power. In fact, I can only manage the task for a pretty short space of time before my concentration starts to wander and I have to have a break.

Marking is my Achilles heel, the bane of my professional life. And I suspect or at least I hope I'm not the only teacher who finds the grind of grading a pile of 20 or 30 papers the least pleasant aspect of a generally stimulating and enjoyable job. Yet there's no getting around it. Grading has to be done, and despite its elements of tedium, it is a vital part of the job, essential to the development of our students, to their personal progress, to the fulfilment of their potential.

This kind of experience is not unique to teaching. Every job, every role in which we find ourselves, contains these less-than-exciting elements, the things we will put off if we can. It will differ from person to person, but I seem to remember that writing papers while a student was a task I would defer as long as possible. Or again, it might be the more tedious administrative responsibilities such as the writing of extensive reports that we may struggle to confront.

So when I am faced with my particular challenge, it always helps me

to remember a very special painting. I teach a visual arts class at the college as well as literature classes that are my main specialty, and paintings are a great personal resource for me. The one I have in mind is a quietly beautiful painting by the elusive Dutch artist, Jan Vermeer (1632-1675). He is renowned for a small number of exquisitely delicate paintings in which light and color are pre-eminent. He paints with a sureness of touch that makes him one of the great masters. This particular painting is called *The Kitchenmaid*, and it hangs in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. It's one example of his characteristic depiction of Dutch interiors.

The Kitchenmaid celebrates for me the sacredness of the mundane, the holiness of the ordinary. In the delicate blues and muted yellows of the scene, we see a plain working woman, sleeves rolled up for her task, attentively pouring milk from a jug into a bowl. Her face is framed by her cap, and her eyes focus carefully on the job in hand. On the table lie the everyday objects of a kitchen: crusty, fresh-baked bread, woven basket, pottery jug, a blue apron. Perhaps breakfast is being prepared. The woman's action is thoughtful, quiet, and unobtrusive. She concentrates totally on what she is doing. She gives it her complete and undivided attention despite its ordinariness, its apparent lack of importance, its pure simplicity. And Vermeer has managed to make this simple act almost holy by the significance, beauty, and calm he has invested in the scene.

As I gaze at this painting, one verse comes to my mind: "Whatever your



hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV). And the message seems to apply to this painting perfectly. Like this woman, we are faced with tedious, mundane, apparently insignificant jobs every day. Grading is not glamorous: it's not like performing in front of a large class of students eager for our wisdom, it's not about being powerful when we're on important committees and boards, it isn't exciting like a trip to a seminar in some exotic location. But it is essential to our profession.

So when I am faced in my daily work with the dull things, the ordinary things, with the apparently trivial and with the less-than-exciting, I remember Vermeer's kitchenmaid and the rapt attention she gives to the simple act of pouring milk. And I realize that the quality of energy, concentration, and excellence we invest in our every action is a key to our personal integrity. Whether we have other eyes upon us or not, we should do it wholeheartedly, with commitment, with all our might, since that is the biblical mandate. For these acts are the ones by which our true character is measured.

Penny Mahon (Ph.D., University of Reading) chairs the Department of Humanities and is dean of students at Newbold College in England. Her email address: pmahon@newbold.ac.uk.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Exploring the relation between faith and science

by L. James Gibson

In the past two centuries, the Genesis account of Creation has come under serious attack from both those who study the biblical text and those who study nature. Ironically, some of the most damaging criticism has probably come from biblical scholars.

Biblical criticism and secular science influence the present culture in highly significant ways. These cultural influences are widely disseminated through the public media and public education. Christians are not immune to these cultural forces; questions about the historicity of Genesis 1-11 are widespread. A small but vocal number of Seventh-day Adventists have publicly questioned the need for our church to maintain a position that contradicts the predominant culture.

The structure of the conferences

Against this backdrop, the Executive Committee of the General Conference in 2001 authorized a series of meetings on the subject of faith and science, to run from 2002 to 2004. The first International Faith and Science Conference took place in Ogden, Utah, from August 23-29, 2002. The group included nearly 80 church scholars and administrators, along with several editors of church publications and a few others. About half the group were scientists, one-third were theologians and Bible scholars, and the remainder were church administrators. More than one-third were working outside of North America, and many of the others brought an international perspective to the discussions. The group was truly multi-national and multi-disciplinary.

The meetings began with a keynote

address by the General Conference president Jan Paulsen. Sabbath was a day to rest, worship, and enjoy fellowship. The meetings began in earnest on Sunday morning with several lectures on how to understand the text of the early chapters of Genesis, and relevant comments by Ellen White. The schedule included time for discussion as well as formal presentation. Monday's topics included some philosophical and historical aspects of relating faith and science, as well as an overview of some of the scientific issues. This discussion continued on through Tuesday morning. Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday were devoted to lectures and discussion of theological issues relating to Creation and their implications. On Thursday, the group worked to discuss ideas for the other scheduled conferences.

Regional conferences were held in several parts of the world in 2003, including Avondale College, Australia; Glacier View Ranch, Colorado; Pretoria, South Africa; Aurangabad, India; Friedensau University, Germany; Nairobi, Kenya; and Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. More than 400 people, representing at least seven Divisions of the Adventist Church, participated in these regional conferences. Each group produced a statement. These statements were presented to the group at the Second International Faith and Science Conference.

The second international conference took place in Denver, Colorado, August 20-36, 2004. More than 130 persons were present; about one-third were scientists, about one-third were theologians, and about one-third were church administrators and editors. During

the final day and a half, the organizing committee prepared a statement and presented it to the larger group for reaction and comment.

Response to the conferences

The organizing committee's report stressed a number of points, of which I will mention only a few. First, the committee noted that the conferences were conducted in an open and cordial atmosphere, despite the significance of the differences in viewpoints that were expressed. Second, the committee noted that believers must learn to live with a certain amount of tension between faith and understanding. Third, the committee found that the extent of tension regarding origins varies in different parts of the world, being most strongly felt in those countries where science has the most influence. Fourth, the committee found that the creation doctrine is foundational to Seventh-day Adventist faith, and that there is strong support for the church's statement of Fundamental Belief regarding creation. The committee also affirmed the historic Seventh-day Adventist understanding of a Creation in six literal days, a fall into sin that resulted in death and evil, a catastrophic Flood as an act of God's judgment, and the church's mission to call all to worship God the Creator.

The committee's report was given to the General Conference president and then presented to the General Conference Executive Committee at the Annual Council held October 8-14, 2004. The GC Executive Committee appointed a small group to prepare a response to the report of the organizing committee. The council voted to approve a statement that strongly endorsed the church's historic, biblical belief in a six-day creation, the historicity of Genesis 1-11, and a global flood. The statement also called on the church's educational system and all members worldwide to proclaim and teach this understanding. (See below,

“An Affirmation of Creation.”)

Prospective

The series of Faith and Science Conferences resulted in an increased understanding of the significance of the biblical doctrine of Creation, as well as the tension that exists between faith and science in the area of origins. All Seventh-day Adventists should understand these points. What tools are available to help church members deal with these realities?

A first resource is the Internet. A number of creationist organizations provide educational materials through that medium. The church's own Geoscience Research Institute is a good source of information on science and faith. The URL is <http://www.grisda.org>. At this site, readers will find all the articles published in *Origins* over the past 30 years, along with articles

from *Geoscience Reports*. The section for teachers includes a compilation of Frequently Asked Questions on Creation, a collection of reviews of Creation videos, and PowerPoint presentations on certain topics of interest.

A second resource consists of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. One goal of the series of Faith and Science Conferences, reinforced by the action of the Annual Council, is to encourage all Seventh-day Adventist schools to present these issues in a way that encourages faith in the biblical teaching.

A third resource is publications. Over the years, Adventists have published numerous scholarly books and articles about Creation and science. Many of these articles may be found in journals such as *Dialogue*, *Origins*, and *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*. Other Christian groups have produced many

books and magazines that discuss evidence for creation.

Although a large amount of material is available dealing with faith and science, controversy will continue because of the nature of the issues involved. We can never scientifically demonstrate the truth of either Creation or evolution. What we can do is to become informed about the claims of both faith and science, and the nature of the systems of thought that underlie these claims. The Faith and Science Conferences have made significant contributions to that goal.

L. James Gibson (Ph.D., Loma Linda University), a researcher and lecturer, is the director of the Geoscience Research Institute, in Loma Linda, California, U.S.A.

An Affirmation of Creation

*Representatives of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, meeting as Executive Committee during its Annual Council, October 8-14, 2004, received the report presented by the Organizing Committee of the Faith and Sciences Conferences. After discussing its content and implications, the leaders approved a response statement, whose main points include the following:**

Whereas belief in a literal six-day creation is indissolubly linked with the authority of Scripture, and;

Whereas such belief interlocks with other doctrines of Scripture, including the Sabbath and the Atonement, and;

Whereas Seventh-day Adventists understand our mission, as specified in Revelation 14:6, 7, to include a call to the world to worship God as Creator,

We, the members of the General Conference Executive Committee at the 2004 Annual Council, state the follow-

ing as our response to the document, “An Affirmation of Creation,” submitted by the International Faith and Science Conferences:

1. We strongly endorse the document's affirmation of our historic, biblical position of belief in a literal, recent, six-day Creation.

2. We urge that the document, accompanied by this response, be disseminated widely throughout the world Seventh-day Adventist Church, using all available communication channels and in the major languages of world membership.

3. We reaffirm the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the historicity of Genesis 1-11: that the seven days of the Creation account were literal 24-hour days forming a week identical in time to what we now experience as a week; and that the Flood was global in nature.

4. We call on all boards and educators at Seventh-day Adventist institutions at all levels to continue upholding and advocating the Church's position on origins. We, along with Seventh-day

Adventist parents, expect students to receive a thorough, balanced, and scientifically rigorous exposure to and affirmation of our historic belief in a literal, recent, six-day creation, even as they are educated to understand and assess competing philosophies of origins that dominate scientific discussion in the contemporary world.

5. We urge church leaders throughout the world to seek ways to educate members, especially young people attending non-Seventh-day Adventist schools, in the issues involved in the doctrine of creation.

6. We call on all members of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist family to proclaim and teach the Church's understanding of the biblical doctrine of Creation, living in its light, rejoicing in our status as sons and daughters of God, and praising our Lord Jesus Christ—our Creator and Redeemer.

** For a full text of this statement and other related documents, visit the website of the Geoscience Research Institute: www.grisda.org and check under “Members.”*

The Elijah Project: You are invited!

by Alfredo García-Marenko

The Elijah Project is an initiative of the Adventist Church to financially sponsor 10,000 Voice of Youth evangelistic campaigns around the world during 2005 and 2006, with the participation of 10,000 youth speakers, along with 100,000 young people—16 to 30 years old—involved in 10,000 evangelistic teams in their local churches and other auditoriums.

This new project is supported by the Center for Global Evangelism, the Youth Department, the Personal Ministries Department of the General Conference and the Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI). Youth Department leaders at all levels of the church organizations serve as coordinators and promoters of the Elijah Project in their respective territories. Our Managing Committee will deal with all requests received only through the Division Youth Directors.

Worldwide celebration. The Elijah Project was launched as part of the celebration of the 125th Anniversary of the Adventist Youth Society in the Year of Witnessing, which is also linked to the celebration of the Year of Commitment in 2005. In order to receive the evangelistic resources for the Elijah Project, interested college and university students must contact their conference or mission Youth Department office as soon as possible. Each Adventist student association or fellowship is invited to take part in the Elijah Project, ideally during 2005-2006.

Connotation and objective. Some readers may ask, Why Elijah? Referring to John the Baptist, the Bible makes a significant connection: "He will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and

power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17, NIV). The ministry of John the Baptist as herald of Jesus Christ in his first coming to planet earth, reached God's expectations and was successfully performed "in the spirit and power of Elijah".

Today, Adventist young people are given the privilege of assuming a similar responsibility, by announcing the soon return of Jesus Christ and preparing a people for this climactic event. They can become the protagonists in a worldwide evangelistic movement "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord".

Your opportunity. While traveling in all the world Divisions, I have met many young people active in various ways in the mission of the church. I know that many more are willing to be involved in new initiatives, if they are challenged, organized, and trained appropriately. If you wish to learn more about the Elijah Project and how to apply for support, contact the Youth Department in your area. Cutting-edge resources, including CDs and DVDs with the "New Beginnings" series of evangelistic sermons in 33 languages are available to maximize the youth efforts.

Bottom line: "Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ's first advent" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 62). This is your opportunity to be involved



in the gospel proclamation and to prepare the way for Christ's second coming!

Alfredo García-Marenko is the world senior youth director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and an associate editor of *Dialogue*. His address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, Maryland 20904; U.S.A.

University Students Congress

The International Congress of Adventist University Students sponsored by the Euro-Africa Division AMiCUS will take place in Lido di Jesolo (Venice), Italy, October 28-31, 2005. For more information, log onto: www.amicus.euroafrica.org.

ACTION REPORT

NASDAS: Adventist students in Northern Australia

by Jenny Ludwig



I believe every Adventist student should have the opportunity to be part of an Adventist student society. The joy of fellowship with like-minded young people is immense, the rewards and possibilities amazing!

What has led to this outburst? The founding of Northern Australian Seventh-day Adventist Students (NASDAS). There are several such student associations in Australia. However, NASDAS, currently based in Townsville, Queensland, is special; it is the first one established in northern Australia. After years of dreaming for such a society, a group of students founded NASDAS in November

2003, and I had the privilege of being part of the event.

NASDAS aims to provide a forum for spiritual, mental, physical, and social development for Adventist tertiary students in our region. The organization's major goal is to build students' faith in God and to motivate them to spread the good news of Jesus.

The year started with the universities' orientation week. NASDAS put together "show bags" containing NASDAS and local church social calendar, Adventist Book Centre vouchers, *Signs of the Times* magazine, and a balloon. Students were invited to a

meal, games, and a swim day. A get-together at Friday vespers provided opportunity for students to discuss issues they face on their campuses. Each student also wrote down his or her goals for the year. Sabbath afternoon featured a special program on maintaining one's relationship with Jesus while pursuing university studies. The guest speaker, special music, singing, skits, and Sabbath afternoon walk on the beach made the weekend a memorable one.

The new group has other plans for the future: weekly Bible studies in the university library and monthly Sabbath afternoon forums

Send us your group's report

Leaders of Adventist university student associations are invited to send a brief report of their group's activities and one or two digital photos for publication in *Dialogue*. Include all relevant information about the student group, describe its main activities, challenges, and plans, and list the name, position, and email address of the report's author. Send them to Humberto M. Rasi (h.rasi@adelphia.net) and to Esther Rodriguez (rodrigueze@gc.adventist.org). Thank you!





on topics of current interest. All in all, NASDAS plans to help keep all Adventist students in universities in Northern Australia in close affirmation of their faith and in pursuit of God's plans for them. In integrating their academic life with their faith commitment, Adventist students will grow both mentally and spiritually, and reach God's ideal for them. They will know how to live in the midst of a culture alien and at times hostile to their faith, and they will also know how to sing the Lord's song in a strange land.

This is why I would encourage each student, wherever he or she is, to get involved with an Adventist student group; if there is none in your area, start one, and make a difference in the life of young people searching for spiritual meaning while being assaulted by a secular culture.

Jenny Ludwig is president of NASDAS. If you'd like more information, contact NASDAS@jcu.edu.au. Or write to NASDAS: P.O. Box 100; James Cook University, Qld 481; Australia.

New student association in Burkina Faso

by Ben Issouf Ouédraogo

The Association of Adventist Students in Burkina Faso (known by its French acronym AEA-BF) was launched in December 2003. It now has about 100 active members in its three regional centers, which are located in the capital city of Ouagadougou, and in two other cities. The founding members elected a general council and also an executive committee responsible for coordinating programs for Adventists attending public universities and secondary schools in the country.

The association sponsored several initiatives during 2004: In April, a prayer vigil centered on the theme "Salt, don't lose your flavor," with 60 participants. In May, the association received formal recognition from the government. In June, we held a day of fasting and prayer in preparation for the final exams.

In October the AEA-BF coordinated a mini-campmeeting as prelude to the beginning of the new school year. The program focused on issues such as the Adventist student and politics, religious freedom, and the meaning of the Sabbath. Speakers included pastor Sylvain Ballais, president of the Burkina Faso Mission, who addressed the question, "Can Adventist theology be modern?" Pastor Michée Ballais, chaplaincy director, spoke on moral reform versus conversion. The topic of Pastor José Luis Santa Cruz was, "How your love for God can help you succeed in your studies."

We are pleased with the associations achievements during its first year of existence; however, in 2005 we plan to expand our activities to other campuses in the country. Among the upcoming activities are a choir fes-

tival as well as a national meeting of Adventist students in the capital.

We ask our colleagues in other parts of the world to pray for us as we move forward with limited resources. Our association's inspirational theme is "Saved from sin; empowered to serve" and our goal is "Students in church and Adventists on campus."

Ben Issouf Ouédraogo is a third-year medical student and serves as the president of the Association of Adventist Students in Burkina Faso. He can be contacted by email at: aeabf_president@yahoo.fr or benissouf@yahoo.fr.

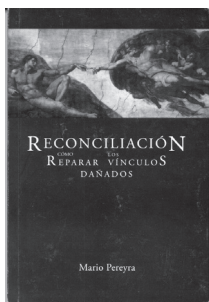


Members of AEA-BF General Council.



From left, some of the association leaders: Norbet Kambiré, Firmin Poda, Ben Issouf Ouédraogo, Eric Zoundi, and a student member.

BOOKS



Reconciliación: Cómo reparar los vínculos dañados **[Reconciliation: How to Heal Broken Bonds]**

by Mario Pereyra (*Publicaciones de la Universidad de Montemorelos, 2003; 172 pp.; paperback*).

Reviewed by Julian Melgosa

Mario Pereyra is no stranger to Adventist scholarly writing. A psychologist with extensive clinical and research experience in several countries and varied cultures, and a committed Christian, Dr. Pereyra has written profusely on topics such as happiness, forgiveness, reconciliation, and hope—all with the rare feature of scholarship blended with the Christian perspective. His earlier works in Spanish—*Psicología del perdón* (1993) and *Psicología de la esperanza, con aplicaciones en la clínica práctica* (1999)—have prepared the ground for this important theological and psychological work on reconciliation. This book follows the author's established pattern and offers to readers not only a means to understand the scope of conflict and reconciliation but also a tool on how to intervene to repair offences and wounds.

To begin with, Pereyra offers theoretical concepts on relationships as well as specific ways to prevent and treat interpersonal deterioration and cultivate harmony in human relations.

The idea of reconciliation (as opposed to conciliation) is emphasized. Reconciliation grows out of the maturity of solving conflicts without the intervention of an arbitrator. Reconciliation goes beyond a commercial transaction into an emotional restoration of previous, satisfactory ties. This finds theological support in Jesus' instruction to give first priority to reconciliation (Matthew 5:23-26) and Paul's concept of the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20) to which all Christians are called.

The author reviews contemporary reconciliation models advocated in professional literature, examines them against scriptural teachings, and offers a model based on the parable of the prodigal son. The model consists of successive steps, described in detail in chapters 6 through 9:

- Discord (conflict that causes emotional separation).
- Insight (conscious awareness of the conflict and intent to solve it).
- Deliberation (analysis of reconciliatory alternatives).
- Re-union (restoration of the damaged ties)

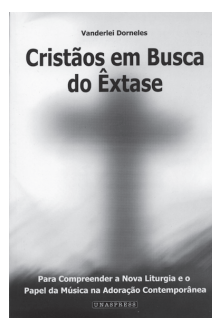
In discussing each of these steps, the author provides not only techniques and strategies involved in the process

of reconciliation, but also self-help tips and formal intervention techniques for the professional counselors.

The book is well organized, follows a logical sequence, and makes reading natural and pleasant. All through the book, the author offers a rich variety of cases (mostly from his own counseling experience) that makes concepts and ideas practical. There are also suggestions, both individual (how to manage anger and violence or how to deal with remorse) and interpersonal (how to grant forgiveness). Another distinctive strength is the integration of Scripture, not only as a foundation but also as a source of personal advice. Considering the widespread use of the Internet, it would have been useful to include more references to the worldwide web, particularly to targeted sites where readers can find further information to help themselves and others.

Although the book is of primary interest to those in helping professions—counselors, psychologists, social workers, and pastors—others interested in the growing field of interpersonal relations will also find it useful.

Julian Melgosa (Ph.D., Andrews University), an educational psychologist by training, is currently president of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines.



Cristãos em Busca do Êxtase **[Christians in Search of Ecstasy]**

by Vanderlei Dorneles, 2nd edition
(*Engenheiro Coelho, São Paulo: Imprensa Universitária Adventista, 2003; 271 pp.; paperback*).

Reviewed by Azenilto G. Brito

As a theologian, journalist, and professor of communication and philosophy at the Brazil Adventist University, Campus 2, Vanderlei Dorneles has produced an illuminating work in his *Cristãos em Busca do Êxtase* (Christians in Search of Ecstasy). A cover subtitle explains that the objective of the book is "to understand the new liturgy and the role of music in contemporary worship." However, this explanation seems quite modest, for the scope of the book goes far beyond.

The work is not based on field research, but on a broad bibliography of works by specialists in history, science, religion, and philosophy that describe the phenomenon of religiosity in post-modern times. Dorneles finds that

people are more concerned with relating to divinity, not through a mere theoretical knowledge of truth, but by feeling it as it acts in some way in their innermost lives.

The author goes back to the “primitive” forms of worship, establishing a parallel with the surprising revival of mysticism and the more bizarre forms of past religious forms in this twenty-first century that promise seekers more “effective” ways of grasping eternal realities. Dorneles discusses how, in that persistent search for religious fulfillment, varied means have been resorted to, ranging from meditation to mind-modifiers both in the form of natural herbs and synthetic drugs.

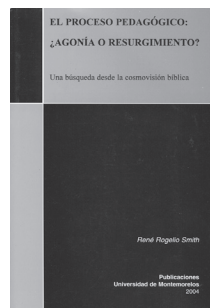
The book’s introduction gives a panoramic view of how his study will lead the reader along humanity’s history of religious thought and practice. The author also offers a preview of the eschatological *grand finale* of all the present trends and directions in religion and philosophy. Here, perhaps, he might have simply whetted the reader’s appetite, leading to a gradual discovery rather than revealing too much of the final outcome.

Dorneles then offers the reader a solid assessment of the current charismatic movement, tracing its roots to John Wesley’s revival, passing through the 19th century’s Holiness Movement to its tremendous expansion today. But he doesn’t limit his analysis to history and the impact of this movement in the present; he proceeds to make a detailed exegesis of those Bible texts that deal with the phenomenon of speaking in tongues.

The book has a well-organized, didactic format, with summaries of subjects covered and themes to be developed, conclusions, and a modern referencing system. It has five main divisions followed by a general conclusion and bibliography: I: Trance in Primitive Religions; II: Ascension and Decline of Reason and a Return of the Sacred; III: Pentecostal and Charismatic Worship; IV: The Psychology of Trance; V: Bible-based Worship and the Integrity of the Mind. Some care should be taken in future editions to correctly reproduce several proper names (e.g., Schaeffer, Douglass, Gunnar).

This book is recommended reading for those who wish to better understand the religious ferment of our day, its causes, consequences, and implications for the future.

Azenilto G. Brito is an editor and translator residing in Bessemer, Alabama, U.S.A. He and his wife operate an evangelistic website called “*Sola Scriptura Ministry*” at www.azenilto.com. His email address: profazenilto@aol.com.



**El proceso pedagógico:
¿Agonía o resurgimiento?
[The Pedagogical Process:
Agony or Revival?]**

by René Rogelio Smith (Montemorelos, Nuevo León: Publicaciones Universidad de Montemorelos, 2004; 208 pp; paperback).

Reviewed by Fernando Aranda Fraga

Education is in crisis. The discipline that should provide method in the midst of madness, order in the face of chaos, challenge to live as opposed to the embrace of meaninglessness is in serious crisis. Is it because education today lacks a firm anchor? Or is it because it has joined many other disciplines that prefer to love darkness rather than be guided by light, and indeed see no difference between the two?

These are highly philosophic questions, demanding answers without evasion, study without subtleties. René Smith, a life long educator struggling with such issues, makes a serious attempt to answer these questions from what he considers as the unshakeable foundations of Christian pedagogy: the biblical worldview. With that commitment, this professor who has spent most of his professional life at River Plate Adventist University in Argentina, researching and lecturing on the philosophy of education, throws his opening salvo with two fundamental questions: “Is contemporary pedagogy constrained by the agony of an uncertain future?” Or, “Is it possible to foresee and foster an educational revival anchored in and motivated by a firm hope?”

Dr. Smith is a writer in a hurry—a purposeful hurry. He doesn’t waste or mince words. He sets out the dilemma in the opening pages and takes seven chapters to set out his answers, well argued, well crafted, well readable—taking the readers through a journey in philosophy, anthropology, and theology.

Smith shows how presuppositions regarding the world, humans, and knowledge provide the foundation for the educational model a teacher, an institution, or a system chooses in order to develop the principles that govern educational practice. Every pedagogical system is founded on a specific worldview. It is important, therefore, that this worldview be clearly understood and outlined so as to know what values are promoted and what objectives are selected.

After defining the concept of worldview—its history and implications—the author analyzes its connections with anthropology and theology as well as its implications for educational philosophy and practice. He then reviews con-

Continued on page 31.

FIRST PERSON

The amazing power of God's Word

by María Emilia Schaller de Ponce

“My word that goes out of my mouth...will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11, NIV).

I became a Seventh-day Adventist in February 1982. Three months later, I completed my medical training, and entered medical practice. When I was baptized at the La Aurora church in Santa Fe, Argentina, the members welcomed me with a gift of a Bible, perhaps the best gift I have ever received. It stayed with me always—at work, at worship, at home. Avidly I read the life of Jesus and was taken up by the rich promises God's Word contained. Joining the church had not been easy because my family was opposed. So I had to grasp firmly the promises of God's Word, never letting go of that little Bible. I had to memorize and trust in those promises. I needed close acquaintance with the Author of those promises.

A few months later, while I was on rotation at a public hospital in another city, the guard announced the arrival of a new patient in the emergency room. I rushed to find Roberto shaking an empty bottle of a psychedelic drug. Evidently, he had swallowed the whole thing—a case of an attempted suicide. To make things worse, his wife was with him, completely drunk. Both were psychiatric patients, both were addicts. Immediately I sent him in an ambulance to the toxicology unit of another hospital because our hospital lacked the infrastructure to deal with the problem. He was given the proper

treatment and sent back to our hospital for follow-through.

I admitted Roberto in a ward and called his psychiatrist, who set up a list of medications to be administered intravenously in a solution, and listed other factors to be considered. I became uneasy and shared my concern with a colleague. I was assured not to worry, as the patient's body was probably used to huge doses of medication.

We left Roberto with the I.V. An hour later a nurse called me saying that Roberto was reacting in a strange way. I rushed to his room, and found that far from sleeping, he was very excited. The medications had produced results contrary to the expected ones. There was Roberto, shaking like a reed. His eyes were enlarged and filled with fear and anxiety.

When he saw me, he shouted: “Get rid of this I.V.! It's no good; they always give me this, and it's no use!”

I drew near to listen carefully. He lowered his voice, and this time pleaded, “Please, doctor, remove this I.V. It's only making things worse. What I need is somebody to talk to. I need somebody to listen, and somebody who will talk to me.”

So I said: “Of course, Roberto, I'll call your psychiatrist right away.”

“No!” he said. “He'll just dope me up with more medications. He won't listen or talk with me. Please stay and let's talk!”

“Well, Roberto, I'm not a psychiatrist. Anyway, what do you want to talk about?”

“Anything...”

“Look, I'll talk to you about the best thing I can share with you. I'll talk to you about Jesus.”

“About Jesus? OK, but there's a problem.”

“What is it?”

“I'm a Jew!”

A real problem! I got up to contact Roberto's doctor, when he shouted, “Don't go away!”

“Roberto, I'm not a specialist, I need to call your psychiatrist. Besides, you don't let me talk about the Friend who has helped me so much.”

“It's all right. Talk to me about *that* Jesus.”

I still remember the contempt in his voice and the indifferent expression on his face when he referred to *that* Jesus. With a silent prayer, I opened my Bible and started reading about Jesus. I remember absolutely nothing about what I said. I just read the Gospels, since early in my Christian life that's all I knew to share with others. After a while, I saw the unbelievable. Roberto had quieted down, stopped shaking, and finally dropped off to sleep.

The next morning I visited him again. He was seated on a bench in front of his hospital room. He was thin, emaciated, with a drawn face, and the anguish in his eyes reflected the long illness he had suffered. But he was waiting for me to come back and talk to him more about “that Jesus.” Again I opened my Bible and read to him a long time about Jesus and again I remember absolutely nothing about the content of my reading. Roberto watched me intently. His enormous eyes looked at me and sometimes rested on the Bible. He nodded agreement, sometimes sketched a question, or made a comment. As a physician, I reasoned, “This makes no sense. Here's is a psychiatric patient, he's loaded with drugs, he's not a Christian, and here I am talking about Jesus. It makes no sense.”

Roberto was finally discharged, and

was able to go home. I said good-bye, and thought he looked a little better. I didn't take note of his address to visit him and to continue reading from the Word of God. Why did I fail to do that? Because of my ignorance of the power of the Word.

Sometime later, I returned to Santa Fe to take some specialized training. After three years, on an autumn afternoon, I was crossing a square in the city when a gentleman passed me. After a few steps he turned and said, "Hey! You're a doctor... and let me see... you have a double name... María Emilia? Yes! You're Dr. María Emilia. And I bet you can't imagine who I am. I'm Roberto, that desperate man whom three years ago you helped, on that terrible night!"

I fell silent at what I was seeing. Roberto! This couldn't be that patient I took care of on night duty in another city, three years before; but, yes, it was. His gaunt figure had filled out, his eyes no longer reflected despair, but serenity. The transformation was remarkable. Roberto noticed my perplexity and continued.

"Yes, doctor. I myself can hardly believe the change that's taken place. Great things have happened in my life. When you talked to me about Jesus, I believed your words, and told myself that Jesus was going to help me. I left the hospital and one day, some Christian ladies found me. I told them my experience, accepted Jesus, and finally was baptized as a Christian. My life before that was real hell. I was on drugs. My children grew up alone, without a father. Now they're teenagers and for the first time I am with them, I listen to them. My wife has also changed. Our family is whole again. I'm a different person, thanks to Jesus. Look, María Emilia, *I'll never forget what you told me about Jesus, I'll never forget it.* When you were talking to me, I believed in Jesus, took hold of Him, and knew that He would save me."

I stood there astonished. I didn't

know what to say. Here was the man who three years before had tried to take his life. Now he was totally sane, with none of the anguish that had been there, eyes filled with peace and hope.

I can't remember a single word I read to him by his hospital bedside. I only know I read the Gospels, for that's all I knew of the Bible at that time to share with others. I even thought that perhaps I was wasting my time; what I was doing made no sense. But three years later on a bright autumn afternoon, I learned the lesson of my life: God's Word has power to change lives and it will accomplish its purpose. As God promised long ago through the prophet, "My word that goes out of my mouth . . . will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Maria Schiller de Ponce, who holds degrees in medicine and theology, teaches in the School of Health Sciences at Universidad Adventista del Plata, in Argentina. Her email address: facscrin@uapar.edu.

Let's Talk!

Do you want to send a comment or a question to Pastor Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? You can do it through a website:

<http://www.letstalk.adventist.org>

The website's goal is to foster communication between young Adventists around the world and the office of the General Conference President. You'll also find useful links and a searchable database of questions and answers on many topics at the same site. Check it out!

Book

Continued from page 29.

temporary influences on education such as the New Age movement and deconstructionism. Smith also discusses prevalent anthropological dualism, that pits those who place the accent on the human soul against those who stress the role of the body. The pedagogical consequences of such dualism are very important for education. This serves as the prelude to an exposition of the monist biblical anthropology that sees humans as integral beings.

This important historical analysis leads to a review of the theological crisis and confusion of our time. The chapter ends with a thorough presentation of the biblical foundations for education, where hope and theology merge and provide the best support for pedagogical theory. A didactic synoptic picture summarizes the chapter's content and shows the important differences that exist between the Greek and the Hebrew frames of mind, founded on four key concepts which determine educational philosophy: God, humans, ethics, and time.

The author deserves commendation for his skilful handling of philosophical concepts and trends in educational philosophy and practice. Studious research and careful documentation add weight to the book and will be very useful for Christian teachers and students as they struggle with serious issues in educational philosophy and pedagogy.

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OPEN FORUM

Archaeopteryx: A flying reptile?

I'm intrigued by the Archaeopteryx, a fossil that is mentioned in many science textbooks. Was it a bird or a reptile? Do its features and its location in the fossil record support the evolutionary hypothesis or the creationist perspective?

Ever since it was discovered in 1861, *Archaeopteryx lithographica* (see photo) has been a controversial fossil. Its remarkable finding has provided certain credibility to Darwin's theory of evolution. *Archaeopteryx* has a mixture of characteristics found in birds, reptiles, and theropod dinosaurs, and for that reason, scientists are divided regarding its origin, flight capacity, and position in the alleged evolutionary sequence from reptiles to birds. The ornithologists consider it as an arboreal bird with unusual traits and numerous reptilian characteristics, but reject the claim that it descended from dinosaurs. On the other hand, most paleontologists see *Archaeopteryx* as an intermediate link in the evolution of theropod dinosaurs to modern birds. For them, *Archaeopteryx* is a winged dinosaur that lived on the ground. Obviously, this conclusion assumes that dinosaurs were the ancestors of birds.

Archaeopteryx has several avian characteristics: the presence of a furcula (fused clavicles), the anatomy of the fingers and pubis, the existence of hollow bones, and the presence of feathers that appear modern. A recent study of the skull of one *Archaeopteryx* specimen, using high-resolution computerized tomography, has revealed that the brain of *Archaeopteryx* had lobes like the brain of a modern bird. However, similar results have been found in pterosaurs (flying reptiles) using the same technique.

Therefore, this evidence does not conclusively support the avian nature of *Archaeopteryx* since pterosaur dinosaurs also have this characteristic. The recent discovery of hollow bones in *Archaeopteryx* is not a definitive evidence for active flight either, because some birds of the family *Bucerotidae* (e. g., ground hornbill) have very great hollows in their bones and, nevertheless, are poor flyers.

J. H. Ostrom* and other paleontologists suggest that the similarity between *Archaeopteryx* and theropod dinosaurs is much greater than the similarity between *Archaeopteryx* and birds. Therefore, *Archaeopteryx* would be a flying dinosaur with feathers. In fact, one of the seven well-known specimens was initially identified as a pterosaur, while other two specimens were identified as *Compsognathus* (a theropod dinosaur). This misidentification was not caused by bad descriptive work; the problem is that *Archaeopteryx* without feathers—or with feathers that have yet not been observed—looks extraordinarily like *Compsognathus*. This is the reason why certain paleontologists do not consider *Archaeopteryx* as a bird, but as a feathered dinosaur. Some say that the problem in determining the relationship of *Archaeopteryx* resides in the examiner's perspective when examining the fossil.

Paleontologists also debate whether *Archaeopteryx* was able to fly and whether it was terrestrial or arboreal. Studies on several anatomical characteristics of *Archaeopteryx*—including feather symmetry, wing anatomy, and inferred muscular mass—have led to contradictory conclusions. Nevertheless, most experts maintain that the possession of feathered wings

is a convincing argument in support of the capacity to fly. Published studies show that the same set of characters can be interpreted in two contradictory ways, resulting in very different models for the habits of an *Archaeopteryx*.

We must recognize that though *Archaeopteryx* has a mosaic of reptilian and avian characteristics, its well-developed wings and feathers of modern appearance would have required an enormous evolutionary change that has not yet been satisfactorily explained. This gap exposes a number of challenges to the proposed evolutionary scenario. What was there between *Archaeopteryx* and its predecessors without wings and feathers? No specimens have been found to illustrate such an evolutionary jump. Not only do we need to provide models for the evolution of feathers, but also for the rise of structures, organs, and physiology that would make possible their effective use. The development of flight ability by primitive reptiles would require the acquisition of very complex physiological and anatomical adaptations, including the capacity to keep the body temperature constant (endothermic; reptiles are exothermic), a high rate of metabolism (reptiles have a low metabolic rate), and loss of adaptations and organs that were already fully useful and optimized in the ancestors. Feathers must have co-evolved with the structures that control them and make them work. It is not simply the appearance of a cover of plumage, but also a set of characteristics that contribute to the operation of a very sophisticated structure.

One wonders why *Archaeopteryx* (and any other alleged ancestor of

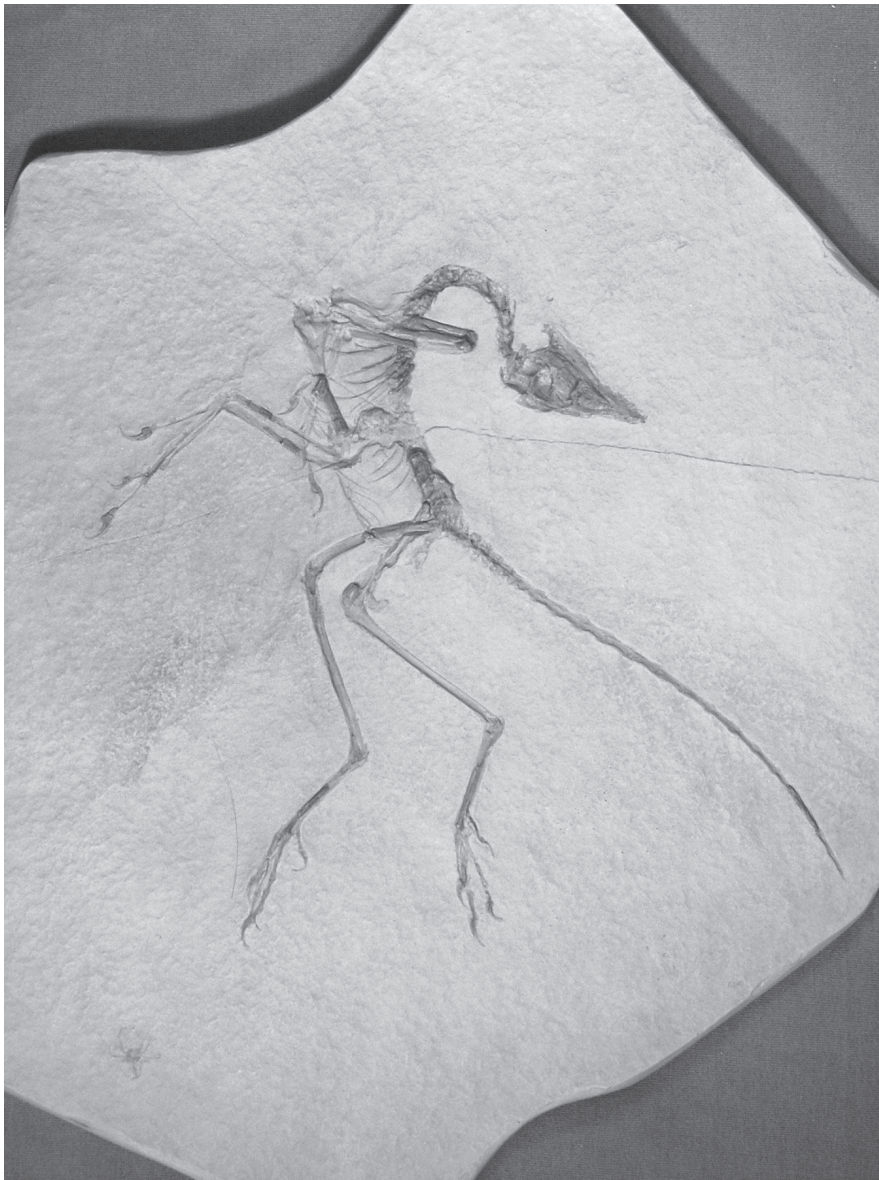


Photo by Timothy Standish

or when such an evolutionary jump could have happened.

Archaeopteryx has been an enigma since it was discovered, owing to its puzzling combination of characteristics, many of which are common in some theropod dinosaurs; others are reptilian, while some others are specific to birds. What is more remarkable is the presence of modern feathers on what seems to be the body of a theropod. It is no surprise that ornithologists and paleontologists do not agree about the nature of this animal.

I believe that *Archaeopteryx* was a unique creature with characteristics that perhaps cannot be catalogued within any present category of living beings. Its origin and nature seem obscure, and, is possible that it is just one more example of the enormous creative capacity of the Creator.

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For a fuller treatment of this topic, check his article “¿Qué es Archaeopteryx?” in *Ciencia de los Orígenes* 68 (2004), and also Timothy Standish, “Fossil birds,” in *Geoscience Reports* 87 (2004). These articles can be found at <http://www.grisda.org>.

* J. H. Ostrom, “*Archaeopteryx* and the origin of birds,” *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 8 (1976): 91-182.

the birds) would have had wings or precursors of wings during millions of years if these organs were not fully functional. According to Darwinian theory, only the best fitted survive, and structures that are not an advantage to the species disappear. The question is, then, why evolution would have maintained a structure for million years until it became fully operative? If that happened, then we could believe that evolution has the

capacity of predicting the future needs of a species, which implies supernatural powers. And if the structures were indeed fully functional, why should natural selection “improve” or change structures that already work suitably? The validity of natural selection as the motor of evolution is thus in question. In this sense, *Archaeopteryx* does not help solve the mystery of how flight came about in evolutionary terms, what their precursors were,

CAMPUS LIFE

So you want a job?

by Humberto M. Rasi

After years of effort and sacrifice, you're finally completing your coursework and anticipating the day when you'll receive your diploma. Your dreams will soon be a reality. You're also looking forward to starting your career. How exciting! But how can you improve your chances of finding a job that will match your skills and provide personal fulfillment? Of course, you're praying that God will continue to guide you as He has faithfully done in the past. Here's some information for you to think about as you look to the future.

Qualities employers look for

A recent report lists 20 qualities that employers look for in prospective employees.* Check the list, and do an honest and careful self-assessment to determine how well qualified you are to receive a good job offer:

1. Communication skills (verbal and written)
2. Honesty and integrity
3. Interpersonal skills (relates well

- to others)
4. Motivation and initiative
5. A strong work ethic
6. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
7. Analytical skills
8. Flexibility and adaptability
9. Computer skills
10. Detail-oriented
11. Leadership skills
12. Organizational skills
13. Self-confidence
14. Friendly personality
15. Tactfulness
16. Well-mannered
17. Creativity
18. Above-average grades
19. Entrepreneurial skills
20. Sense of humor

Reasons for *not* getting a job offer

Maybe you have many of the qualities listed. What pitfalls should you avoid during your job interviews? A group of experienced recruiters have provided the 15 most common rea-

sons why candidates are not offered employment:

1. Sloppy application form, with questions not answered or left blank
2. Arrived late to the interview without an explanation
3. Did not do homework or research the company
4. Poor personal appearance or hygiene
5. Inability to express oneself in depth
6. Cocky, overbearing, or aggressive manner and body language
7. Lack of enthusiasm or interest in the job opportunity
8. Negative attitude about past supervisors or employers
9. Limited questions asked about the job or company
10. Money seems to be the highest priority
11. Wanting to start at the top, expecting too much too soon
12. No clear-cut professional goals, poor planning
13. Memorized and rehearsed answers
14. Rude or condescending attitude toward other employees
15. Did not commit and ask for the job

At an appropriate time during the interview, tactfully inquire about the work schedule in relation to the Sabbath.

We wish you every success in your job-seeking endeavors. May the Lord help you find a position that will engage your talents, help others, and allow you to be His ambassador at work.

* Source: *Job Outlook 2004*, prepared by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in the United States.

I see that you guessed wrong on 50 percent of the test questions... You might want to consider becoming a weatherman.

From *The Lighter Side of Campus Life*. Previously published in *Campus Life*. Reprinted with permission.



Humberto M. Rasi (Ph.D., Stanford University) is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Dialogue*. After serving as an employee and a supervisor for almost 50 years, he still remembers his first job interview.



THE ASSIGNMENT

The young man was climbing the hill, slowly, a step at a time. His bowed head seemed to indicate that something was bothering him. Perhaps he was lonely, or discouraged. He was coming to seek guidance from the wise man that lived on the hill on the outskirts of town. Entering the counselor's house, the young man found him reading, deep in thought. "Excuse me, sir," he said hesitantly. The old man lifted his eyes. Timidly, with a courteous bow and a voice of desperation, the young man said, "I have come seeking your help... sir." After a short pause, he continued, "I have dreams that I believe I can achieve, but no one thinks I have the ability to reach them. People see little value in me."

The old man continued his reading. After a while, he said, "Before I can give you any counsel, I need your help. Are you willing?"

Somewhat disappointed for having his own needs ignored, the young man nevertheless responded, "I will try, sir."

The wise man stood up. Stretching himself a bit, he said, "I may need to pay a large debt in the future, for which I will need money. Here is my gold ring. Take it to the market and find out how much I can get for it, but don't settle for anything less than five gold coins. There is my horse. Go!"

The young man held onto the ring tightly and upon reaching the market place, went from stall to stall, offering it in exchange for cash. The fruit seller ignored him. The clothes merchant told him that he was not interested. The farmer selling chickens continued to bargain with a customer and waved him away.

Finally, the young man reached the pig seller's stall. After examining the ring for a while in his dirty hand, he said with a covetous smirk, "Tell the owner

that I may be willing to give him five bronze coins for this."

"I fulfilled your assignment, sir," said the young man upon his return. "No one in the market is willing to give five gold coins for your beautiful ring."

"That's fine," responded the wise man. "Now we know how little the market people value this ring. Go to the jeweler in town and show it to him."

When the jeweler saw the gold ring, he quickly stood up and used a silk handkerchief to hold it carefully. Bringing it under a lamp, he examined it in detail with a magnifying glass. "A masterpiece," he said softly. "If the owner of the ring is in a hurry, I will buy it for 10 gold coins myself. But if he gives me time to bring out all its beauty, I shall find a wealthy customer willing to pay at least 20 gold coins for it."

The wise man listened attentively to the report the happy young man brought back and then told him, "Don't let the ignorant tell you the value of something they know nothing about. Listen only to the appraisal of the skilled specialist, the one who can recognize the true value of a master artist's work."

And with a smile, the wise man placed the golden ring back on his finger and waved the young man good-bye.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS STORY IS UNKNOWN.



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Invitation

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