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**DIALOGUE**

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**Science finds God**

**What is the purpose  
of prayer?**

**Six myths of marriage**

**Joy: The secret  
of being content**

**Marrying a non-Christian?**

**Alcohol's dark secrets**

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Volume 17

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japhethlagboka@compuserve.com

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A Neville Clouten Portfolio

# EDITORIAL

## Followers first

Jesus' ministry on Earth began with the calling of a group of followers to whom He would entrust His work after His ascension. The task of selecting followers was an awesome one, especially since He had but a few years to prepare them for the work of carrying the good news of salvation to the world. Most of those whom Jesus called were initially like rough-cut lumber that, without the sandpaper of Jesus' companionship, would injure or splinter others when engaged in His service. But regardless of the condition of those Christ called, learning how to follow was a necessary prelude to becoming leaders.

Jesus spent considerable time allowing His disciples to observe His manner of operation prior to assigning them leadership roles. In addressing or confronting scribes, Pharisees, members of tribes or racial groups, and people of other faiths and traditions, Jesus used various approaches in order to provide a broad perspective of what true and effective leadership entailed. The disciples often misinterpreted Jesus' leadership style and purpose. But through the many experiences to which He exposed them, Jesus gently moved the disciples from the rough-cut state toward the condition in which He could use them in leadership roles.

As students pursue their education, it is often surprising how much maturation occurs in the process of observing teachers, fellow students, administrators, and others in leadership roles. Through this process, a transformation begins to take place such that at some point, the student should move from a reactive role toward a more proactive one. For this transformation to take place, students must begin to think of themselves in the new roles for which they are preparing. "Anticipatory socialization" describes the process during which mental transformation occurs prior to the actual acceptance into a new role. Anticipation is an important part of the process, but it usually does not occur by itself—it must be fostered by current leaders who are willing to mentor others. Thus, leaders are built.

The Adventist Church is in dire need of leaders. Many members are comfortable merely following but are not willing to take the risks involved in leadership—misrepresentation of motives, unanticipated obstacles, and mistakes. Examples of mistakes by well-known leaders recorded in Scripture include great men of God such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and Peter—to name a few. The fact that these leaders made mistakes gives us a more balanced perspective on leadership, but does not negate their important contributions to the cause of God.

During their academic careers' students must mentally transition from being followers to accepting that they will or may soon be called upon to lead. Christ prepared His disciples for the leadership responsibilities that would be thrust upon them soon after His death. Had they not learned these lessons, they would never have become effective leaders. The risk of leadership is a challenge, the reward of which can only be realized in the success of seeing a job accomplished.

Like Christ's disciples, leaders eventually move off the scene through retirement, changes to other positions, fatigue, burnout, or death. Thus, there is a continual need to prepare for leadership transitions. No church organization can

Continued on next page

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### Editorial Correspondence

*Dialogue*

12501 Old Columbia Pike

Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 USA

**Telephone** 301 680 5060

**Fax** 301 622 9627

**Email** j.rasi@adelphia.net

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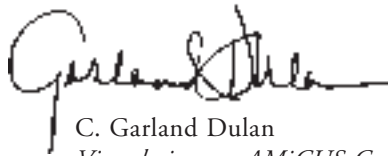
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afford to ignore the great need for future leaders. As you pursue your career, think about the need of your church to fill the gaps in leadership that not only exist today but which will likely increase in the future, and prepare to become a Christian leader.

God is in need of leaders who have prepared themselves by first understanding what it means to follow. Thus, when the opportunity presents itself, they are prepared to accept

the challenge to lead. In doing so, there are not only corporate benefits to the church, but personal ones as well.



C. Garland Dulan  
Vice-chairman, AMiCUS Committee

## LETTERS

### The journal is a blessing

I am very impressed by the content of *Dialogue*. Each issue addresses important subjects for Adventist students and young professionals. Indeed, it is a blessing because it not only nurtures our faith, but also broadens our knowledge, and connects us with fellow believers around the world. Thank you!

**Viviana Camargo**  
Cartagena, COLOMBIA  
britny63@hotmail.com

### Earlier articles still interesting

I would like to know how I can have access to articles and interviews published in earlier issues of *Dialogue*. I believe that they maintain their freshness and are still interesting.

**Carlos Olivares**  
Talca, CHILE  
pastorolivares@hgmail.com

*The editors respond:*

Thank you for your interest in the journal. We have good news for you. Go to the internet and log onto the *Dialogue* website: <http://dialogue.adventist.org>. There you will find a selection of the best articles published since 1994, classified by language, author, issue, and department. Enjoy!

### Dialogue in German?

A few weeks ago I read my first copy of *Dialogue* and liked its content very much. In my opinion, it is a very good journal for Adventist students. If it were published in German, more readers would

benefit from its content. I am willing to help in translating some of the articles and make them available to a wider readership. What do you suggest?

**Jakob Wieck**  
GERMANY  
JakobWieck@gmx.de

*The editors respond:*

We are very pleased to know that you appreciate *Dialogue* and would like to see its articles available in German. A project of this nature will require considerable time and effort as well as quality control. We suggest that you contact the director of the Youth Department in your union and discuss how your idea can become a reality. Consult also with our regional representatives for the Euro-Africa Division, listed on page 2 of *Dialogue*. Perhaps the translated articles can be placed in a website, thus eliminating the cost of printing and mailing. We are willing to grant permission for the translations, if we receive a formal request. Best wishes.

### Dialogue provides credibility

At a public university in one of the French-speaking countries of the West-Central Africa Division, Adventists were facing difficulties in having their student fellowship officially recognized by the administration. I visited the university vice-chancellor to discuss the situation. I introduced myself, showed him copies of *Dialogue* in its four parallel language editions, and explained that the student fellowship was part of a global network of

such organizations sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The vice-chancellor was favorably impressed and remarked that the journal indicated that the student fellowship was a credible entity deserving university recognition. In addition, he asked to receive himself future issues of *Dialogue* because he was interested in its content. I have already placed the vice-chancellor in our courtesy mailing list, as well as the vice-presidents for academic administration and student affairs.

The AMiCUS Committee deserves our gratitude for publishing a quality journal that nurtures the students' faith, gives credibility to our campus ministry, and serves as an evangelistic tool as we relate to public university leaders and faculty.

**Japheth Agboka**  
Abidjan, COTE D'IVOIRE  
japhethagboka@compuserve.com

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U.S.A.

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# Science finds God

by Ariel A. Roth

***All the precision found in the universe and all the complexity evidenced in living things indicate that a Creator God is necessary.***

The intellectual dignitaries of the world were shocked! What they heard could not be true! On December 9, 2004, the Associated Press broke the news that the legendary British philosopher Antony Flew, who had been leading the cause of atheism for more than half a century, had changed his mind and decided that there must be a God. The stunning news quickly spread over the world. Flew's move was precisely in the opposite direction of the now-dominant secular ethos promulgated in most scholarly circles.

Flew's dramatic turnaround, which occurred about a year earlier, was not a conversion to any traditional religion. He believes in a God that had to originate what we are finding, not a God that has produced a supernatural revelation of Himself such as the Bible. However, he comments that he is open to the possibility that God could, or might, have revealed Himself.

Flew is famous. He has written nearly two dozen books on philosophy, and has been called the world's most influential philosophical atheist. Why did such a well-known and prominent thinker reverse himself and declare that there has to be a God? The answer is simple. He did it because of the scientific data. Science, which now rejects God as an explanation for nature, is providing rather overwhelming data that God exists. In an interview,<sup>1</sup> Flew stated: "I think that the most impressive arguments for God's existence are those that are supported by recent scientific discoveries." Especially important to Flew is the Big Bang model for

the origin of the universe and the necessary precision of the forces of physics in order for matter to exist.

Flew is also impressed with findings in the biological world. Life is very complex, and he refers especially to the "reproductive power" of living things, for which evolutionists have not given an account. He further comments that "it now seems to me that the findings of more than fifty years of DNA research have provided material for a new and enormously powerful argument to design." By "argument to design," Flew means the evidence for a designer, and that designer would be God. Flew was willing to overthrow the dominant but restrictive naturalistic (mechanistic) philosophy of science that excludes God, and allowed the data of nature to speak for itself, and that data points to the necessity for a God. In Flew's own words, he "had to go where the evidence leads."

## **The fine-tuned universe**

A lot of evidence indicates that the universe had to be exactly the way it is, or its existence, and especially the existence of the life we find in it, would not be possible. Cosmologist Hugh Ross lists 45 different items related to the physical characteristics of the universe that need to be just right.<sup>2</sup>

Our faithful Sun provides a familiar example. Without our Sun, life on Earth would not be possible because the surface of our planet would be excruciatingly cold. Also, we need the light from the Sun to provide the energy to the plants that keep life going through the food chain. The Sun gives us energy by combining hydrogen to produce helium. This is a complex process that releases energy. It is the same process that takes place when a hydrogen bomb explodes, so we can think of our Sun as a well-controlled hydrogen bomb. Precise values for the forces of physics that keep the fusion of hydrogen under control are involved. We take the Sun for granted and seldom appreciate its faithfulness

as it, day in and day out, makes life possible, and it has been doing exactly the right thing for a very long time. There isn't room for much variation in what we find. For instance, if the Earth were only five percent closer or one percent farther from the Sun, this would rid our planet of all life.<sup>3</sup>

The precise value of the four basic forces of physics is one of the strongest scientific arguments for God. How could these just happen to have the right values and right domain of action just by chance? A master Mind seems necessary to have planned all this out. These four forces are: strong nuclear force, weak nuclear force, electromagnetic force, and gravity. Some, like the strong nuclear force, are extremely powerful; but fortunately, that force works only within the nucleus of atoms, otherwise most everything in the universe would all be stuck together. On the other hand, gravity is very weak but works over very long distances, keeping our solar system and galaxies together. Experiments and calculations indicate that change in the basic force constant of just a few percent for any of these, and the whole universe would collapse. The universe seems to be balanced on a knife edge. The relationship between some of these forces has to be extremely precise. In referring to gravity and the electromagnetic force, physicist Paul Davies comments, "Calculations show that changes in the strength of either force by only one part out of the number 1040 would spell catastrophe for stars like our Sun."<sup>4</sup> This is an incredibly precise value. It means that you have to have a precision within just one part out of 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

Such precision happening by chance is extremely remote, but almost pales into insignificance when you combine the various improbabilities found. To be mathematically correct, when you combine improbabilities, you multiply them; thus you come up

with extremely improbable figures for what scientists are finding. Oxford University physicist-mathematician Roger Penrose did this and found that the precision necessary for the universe was one part out of the number 1 followed by 10,123 zeros.<sup>5</sup> This is a very, very extremely minute chance. If you should try to write that number out by placing a zero on each atom in the universe you would run out of atoms very soon after you got started.

### How did life get started?

The most baffling problem evolution faces is the origin of life. After a century of searching and proposing various kinds of scenarios, no plausible model has emerged. The problem is much more acute now than it was decades ago, because we are discovering more and more intricate systems in living things that are complex and that will not work unless several other parts are present. This is sometimes called irreducible complexity,<sup>6</sup> and represents a major stumbling block to the gradual

evolutionary process, because there is no evolutionary survival value until all the necessary parts are present. It turns out that most biological systems are of this kind, and God seems essential for the origin of any kind of life.

The simplest form of independent life we know of is a tiny microbe called Mycoplasma. Viruses, which are much simpler, do not qualify as the first form of evolved life on Earth because they cannot reproduce themselves; they are reproduced only by the living cells in which they are found. The tiny Mycoplasma is not simple; in fact, it is incredibly complex. Its DNA provides more than half a million bits of information, that, through the genetic code, dictate the formula of nearly 500 different kinds of protein molecules that perform a multitude of essential specific chemical functions in the microbe.

Just one protein molecule is incredibly complex and extremely hard to put together in the exact configuration necessary for proper function. Often

several hundred amino acids tied to one another are involved, and not much variation can occur for the protein to function properly.

Molecular biologist Herbert Yockey, of the University of California at Berkeley, has estimated how long it would take to produce a specific kind of protein on the Earth before any life had started. He assumes this could take place anywhere in all the oceans of the Earth, and he also assumes that these oceans were already well supplied with amino acids. His calculations indicate that it would take 1023 years to produce one specific protein. To put it in another way, the nearly five billion years geologists commonly assign to the age of the Earth is 10,000 billion times too short a time to produce one specific kind of protein molecule. Now, for life, you need lots of all kinds of specific protein molecules, all at the same time and place. Protein molecules are delicate, so by the time you might expect a second specific protein molecule to appear, chances are the first one would have disintegrated long before, thus making the spontaneous origin of life essentially impossible.

Proteins are just the beginning of the problems for the evolution of life all by itself. DNA is much more complex than proteins, and in cells, you need DNA to produce proteins—and you need proteins to produce DNA! To have life you need both, and to have either evolve first is not going to provide the survival value evolution needs to succeed. You also need all kinds of other molecules like fats and carbohydrates, and many highly specialized structures we find in living cells. Furthermore, you need a genetic code. How do you produce a complex genetic code by random evolutionary changes? The code is useless until the DNA that dictates it and the special molecules that read it understand the same language.

After you have evolved the very first life on Earth, that organism will come to oblivion unless it can reproduce

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itself. Reproduction is one of the cardinal characteristics of living organisms—and it is incredibly complex. In reproduction, you have to duplicate all the many necessary parts of a cell or the new organism will not survive. Sometimes the process can be quite sophisticated. For instance, when DNA is copied for a new cell or organism, errors in copying the information can occur. These errors are common enough that life would not be possible if it weren't for a proofreading and editing system. In the cell, there is a set of proteins that checks the new DNA that has been produced, and if an error in copying has occurred, it is removed and replaced with a corrected version. Complexity is even more abundant in advanced organisms. Organs like your eye, which has complex accommodating systems, and your brain, with its 100 million times a million connections, also need to be accounted for. Through all the evolutionary process, many thousands of new kinds of proteins are needed. But at present, on an average, the billions of years proposed for evolution are way too short a time to produce even one specific protein molecule! God seems absolutely essential.

### **A paradox!**

In view of such overwhelming evidence of the necessity for God, why isn't the scientific community proclaiming this? Instead, we find a significant number of scientists fervently trying to demonstrate how life could have arisen all by itself. Other scientists claim that all the fine-tuning we find in the universe is just one case of good luck after another. Still many other scientists who believe in God remain silent when the question of His existence comes into focus. God is essentially excluded from scientific textbooks and journals. As presently practiced, science is the peculiar combination of a search for truth about nature and a secular philosophy that excludes God. We are dealing with

a scientific community that now has such a strong materialistic (mechanistic, naturalistic) commitment, that to include God as an explanatory factor in science is considered to be unscientific. God is not now allowed on the menu of possible scientific explanations. This belies the usual picture we have of science as an open search for truth that follows the data of nature wherever it may lead. This strong secularism in science exists in spite of the fact that 40 percent of the scientists in the United States believe in a God who answers their prayers, 45 percent do not, and 15 percent are not sure.<sup>7</sup> It appears that what some scientists believe in and what they publish when they take science's secular stance can be very different.

In past centuries, science was not a secular philosophy. Some of the greatest scientists of all time, such as Sir Isaac Newton, included God in their explanations about nature. Other leading scientists who helped establish the foundations of modern science, such as Kepler, Boyle, Galileo, Linnaeus, and Pascal, all believed in a God who was active in nature, and they occasionally referred to God in their scientific writings. They saw no conflict between God and their discoveries, because they believed that God is the one who established the laws and consistency of nature that make scientific studies possible. They demonstrated how good science and God can work together. Now the rule is that you must try to explain everything materialistically without God.

It needs to be kept in perspective that over the centuries, humanity's thought patterns have changed dramatically. The intellectual priorities during antiquity were different from those during the Middle Ages, and those differ from our present scientific age. We can expect more major changes in the future. This raises the important question: Is science good or bad? It is both. One of the most important lessons we can learn in this age of

science is that there is good science and there is bad science. Discovering the strength of the forces of physics is good science. Describing the fossil Archaeoraptor as an evolutionary intermediate between dinosaurs and birds is bad science. The fossil turned out to be a composite. The tail of a dinosaur had been so skillfully attached to the body of a bird by a fossil collector that it even fooled a number of scientists who, however, were very anxious to demonstrate that birds had evolved from dinosaurs.<sup>8</sup> We don't want to miss the good science, which is very important; but we don't want to be deceived by the bad science.

How can we tell good science from bad science? Unfortunately, you cannot always trust what scientists say. For instance, if nature is saying that it looks like there has to be a perceptive God to explain the complexities discovered, some scientist may yield to the secular ethos and sociological pressure of the scientific community and not report that. Such biases require that we dig deeper into questions to try and find out what is really going on. This can be laborious, so many do not have time to do it, but at least one can be cautious about accepting scientific pronouncements. If one has the opportunity to study further into a topic, some of the characteristics of a sound scientific conclusion are (1) it agrees with all available data; (2) the idea is testable, especially by repeatable experiments, and it can be disproved; (3) it can predict unknown outcomes; (4) the conclusion is not enshrouded by theory and controversy. Many scientists do not realize how difficult it is to demonstrate a simple scientific fact, and unfortunately, too much of what is published in science is speculative.

### **Conclusion**

In summary: All the precision we are finding in the universe, and all of the

Continued on page 15

# What is the purpose of prayer?

by Dan Smith

**Prayer doesn't change God's character or His heart. But it gives Him huge new arenas to work His wonders.**

Jim Thomas seemed sure that prayer didn't work.

Jim was a high school senior. Every day he prayed, and he prayed for two long years. He prayed specifically for something. He prayed with great faith. But nothing happened. So Jim came to the fatal conclusion—prayer just doesn't work. And he stopped praying. No matter how I tried, I couldn't make him pray again.

What would you have said to Jim?

The hardest questions about God have usually been about prayer:

*If God already knows, then why tell Him what we want or need?*

*If He's already good, then why do we need to pray to persuade Him to do something?*

*If, in the Great Controversy, He has already decided that He has to allow a certain amount of evil, why should we try to argue Him into changing that "line"?*

*Why aren't more miracles and answers to prayer happening? Is it because we aren't praying enough? With enough faith? Or don't have enough people praying?*

I had wrestled with these questions for years, but they crystalized for me during my first summer after college. I was a new, young pastor in Portland, Oregon, helping with a series of evangelistic meetings. The meetings did not start off well. Almost nobody came. Every night we had to take out more chairs so the place wouldn't look so empty. Every morning we would pour out our souls to God, begging Him to send people. And I got stuck there. Surely God already wanted everybody

to come before we prayed. Surely He was already trying to get everybody to come. Surely He wasn't going to make people come against their will. So what exactly was the purpose of our prayer?

So, for the past 30 years I have been wrestling with an answer to all of my own questions, and the thousands of questions asked by my church members while standing around hospital beds in intensive care units, around caskets at wakes, and after every disaster. Here are some of the conclusions I have hammered out.

**1. Prayer serves primarily to build our relationship with God.** Prayer is not like putting quarters into the heavenly juke box, or asking God as the heavenly "genie" to do magic for us. God is all about relationships ("I have called you friends," John 15:15, NIV). Prayer is for praise, worship, communication, listening, and "being" with God. I turn off all the media in the car and just pray, or hang out cocooned in the shower, being with God.

**2. God is a constant.** Whatever our theology of prayer, it cannot undo all our other beliefs about God. God is infinitely, perfectly good. Prayer cannot persuade Him to be better than He already is. He knows the best, and wishes the best for us. And, within the limits of the Great Controversy, He is already doing all He can for the good. He came to give life, life more abundantly. He is not a thief, stealing or taking away life (John 10:10). God is the king who extended the scepter to Esther. He is the waiting father of the prodigal son. The One who told the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you.... Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11). His love, grace, and forgiveness are constants (Romans 8:38-39; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8).

One of my earliest decisions was that God didn't go into a higher gear because of prayer. John 5:17ff. says that God and the Son are constantly working. They never rest, really. No one can ever come back at God and

accuse Him of holding back divine resources. God has already thrown everything He has into the battle!

**3. Prayer serves to change us, not God.** If God is the constant, then we must be the variable. If prayer can't make God better or wiser or more aware or work harder, and if prayer "works" and changes things, then prayer has to change us. We are the variable. So prayer makes *us* more willing, more aware, and more involved. And those of you from my own faith tradition will recognize these famous lines: "Prayer is not to work any change in God; it is to bring us into harmony with God."<sup>1</sup> "Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."<sup>2</sup>

**4. Prayer dials us in to God's wisdom and power.** Jesus said that He sends the sun and rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:43ff.). But the sun would be worthless if you didn't go out and enjoy it! God's grace is a constant—prayer opens up our heart and soul to receive it. Praying for people opens us up to become channels of grace and power to others. We hear God's whispers, His suggestions to call someone, to go spend time with someone, or to send some money to a mission project.

Let me tell a story about a Doug Coe, who teaches people to pray. He told Bob, a brand-new Christian, and new to prayer, to pray for something every day for six months, and if nothing happened, he would pay him \$500. Bob tried it, decided to pray for a country, and Kenya popped into his mind. After several months he sat next to a woman at a dinner, asked her what she did; she ran an orphanage in Kenya. Right then he knew the \$500 was gone! He ended up flying over there, helping them, then got involved collecting supplies from drug and medical supply companies for them. He met with the president of the



country and other officials, and had a huge impact on Kenya! That's how prayer works!

**5. Prayer draws our will into agreement with His will.** God's will is perfect; we are still growing. Therefore God is the constant and we are the variable. Prayer is how we allow God to work in our hearts to realign our thoughts and choices with His will. "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). God recalibrates our desires, and then we can pray for whatever we want, knowing we are praying for what He wants to give us (Philippians 2:12-13).

**6. We can never use prayer to redefine the great controversy between good and evil.** Revelation 7:1-4 makes it clear that God has defined a line where He limits evil, but in the last days He will begin to move that line, to allow the whole universe to see the consequences of evil. We would not want to use prayer to try to make God re-think that line, as if we know better where it should be. "The Lord our God is righteous in everything He does" (Daniel 9:14).

**7. God works through people to answer intercessory prayer.** This is the most challenging aspect of understanding prayer. If prayer doesn't change God, then what good is it? Is it just a psychological ploy, auto-suggestion, positive thinking? No, no, no! Prayer makes a difference, and it is not just playing mental tricks in our head! Prayer involves God, and changes the dynamics of the universe. It just doesn't persuade God to be better than He already is!

The Great Controversy taking place in our world involves two "armies"—God and the heavenly forces, and Satan and his allies down here. If we assume that because God is good and a constant and is already working to the maximum within the limits of this cosmic conflict, then prayer doesn't change that portion of the equation. It can't.

But it can change the human, earthly part of the equation! When we pray, we open our hearts and wallets and time and energy to His will. Now God has huge new resources that were unavailable to Him before! As 1.5 billion Christians get involved, and get excited and passionate about building the kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven," the world changes! Forces of evil are pushed back. We partner with God to "move mountains." Generous offerings are given, people refuse to accept the status quo, they go on mission trips, they form task forces to energize their church, they find answers for the problems of the poor or needy in their area. They fight for social justice. And the world changes.

Does prayer change God? Yes! It doesn't change God's character or His heart. But it gives Him huge new arenas to work His wonders. The world is a better place, and people see the effects of God's actions. And the "Stone" of Daniel 2:44, 45 begins to grow, and the Kingdom of God becomes mighty and powerful locally and all over the world. That's what prayer can do!

I have three analogies that have helped me to understand prayer better: (1) The Ripple Model: You drop a rock into a pond. It makes the biggest ripple at "ground zero," and the ripples spread out until they hit shore. In the same way, when we pray, we open our hearts to God, and He makes the biggest impact at "ground zero," in my life. But because I am in solidarity with my family, when I change, there is likely to be some impact on them. Because I pastor a large church, I may preach better, and impact the members, and they spread out all over the world, and maybe make a difference there. But if I just pray by myself for the president of a specific country, the impact may be quite slight! (2) The same theory works with billiard balls: You hit a cue ball, it hits one ball, and the balls, in solidarity, scatter all over the table. That's what happens

when God can change one person's life through prayer! (3) The World-Wide Web: The web is made of thousands of servers. The more servers there are, the faster messages can spread all over the world, almost instantly. When big servers go down, messages move more slowly or can't get through at all. Every Christian is a node, a server. The more Christians are praying, the greater the network God has to match up donors and recipients, miracles with people praying for help.

There's the famous story that Tony Campolo tells. He was to speak at a Pentecostal college. Before he spoke, a group circled around him, laid their hands on his head, and prayed. One young theology major prayed for a long time about a family he had met that morning. The husband was leaving his family. He described the trailer where he had spoken with them, the address, everything. Campolo wanted him to get to the point! After his sermon, Campolo was heading home, picked up a hitchhiker, asked his name. "Charlie Stolsis," was the answer. The very name mentioned that morning in prayer! Campolo drove off the freeway. Stolsis asked him where he was going. "To take you home."

"How do you know where I live?"

"God told me! You left your wife this morning, didn't you?"

"How did you know that?!"

"God told me!"

Campolo drove him right to his home, went inside, and led them all to Christ. Stolsis is a pastor today! That's how prayer works—one brother had a burden, knew the need, prayed, Campolo heard it, his heart was open, God matched up the need with the answer, and the miracle occurred—all through prayer—but without a theology that prayer has to change God, make God better than He already is!

So that's how I've worked it out so far! I'd love to hear your responses! It's not an easy subject, how to preserve

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# Six myths of marriage

by Calvin Thomsen

## ***The greatest happiness in marriage isn't found in the early euphoria but in the long-term satisfaction found in a faithful partnership of many years.***

Happiness in marriage can be either enduring or elusive. Some are married for 40 years or more, but their love and romance are as fresh and buoyant as though they were married a month ago. Others have hardly opened all their wedding gifts when they feel a sourness set in in their relationship, and they think of a divorce court rather than a permanent home. What makes the difference between enduring happiness and short-lived romance in marriage?

Modern research gives us some clues. John Gottman, professor of psychology at the University of Washington, has done some pioneering research in the current North American context. Gottman has studied thousands of couples, taking into consideration numerous variables that affect marital stability. His research has helped clarify factors that lead to marital happiness, and those that point to an uphill battle leading to possible divorce.

The research also suggests some of the great myths that surround love and marriage. These myths do not originate from ancient tribal legends and rituals, but from common assumptions that most people take for granted. It is worth exploring some of these myths and look at the implications for building a good marital relationship.

**Myth 1: High expectations may ruin marriage.** Marriage is often thought of as a good business proposition—to raise children, manage property, and build alliances between families. In addition, we expect marriages

to be endlessly romantic, passionately sexual, intimately friendly, while still covering all the traditional bases of parenting, family connections, and business management in life.

Such high expectations are sometimes thought of as being unrealistic and harmful to a happy marriage. But recent research indicates that while it is necessary to be realistic in our expectations, high expectations can lead to more investment in marriage and to a better outcome. People with low expectations apparently don't invest as much in a good marriage and are willing to settle for an average marriage instead of a really good one. Gottman says: "People who have higher standards and higher expectations for their marriage have the best marriages, not the worst."<sup>1</sup>

**Myth 2: Men are from Mars and women are from Venus.** This saying, derived from a well-known book by that title, suggests that men and women have deep differences and want fundamentally different things from marriage. A spate of popular books attempts to help couples deal with their differences from the premise that a vast gap exists between what men and women want.

Are men and women different in ways that affect marriage? While the answer, as we shall note, is "yes," the popular books often overlook the important common ground between what men and women want in marriage and their shared longings and needs. And, even more important, they overlook the fact that highly pronounced gender differences have been linked in research with unhappy marriages while "there are very few sex differences in happy marriages."<sup>2</sup> And "male traditionalism" (reflected in a domineering and controlling approach to marriage) is statistically correlated with lower levels of relationship quality in marriage.<sup>3</sup>

Yes, there are some common differences that emerge from the research. Men for example, are more likely to

withdraw in the face of marital conflict and women to get more actively verbal. This probably happens because men tend to "flood" more easily with negative emotions, and it takes them longer to physiologically recover after an argument. Men may also be more likely to try to "fix" problems, while women frequently prefer a man to listen. Men tend to be more visual in their sexual attraction patterns and less likely to be influenced by the relational context. Women are often more adept at attuning to the emotional states of other people, and men tend to be more competitive in conversation.

But, the fact is, research also shows that men and women want remarkably similar things in marriage, and both men and women report that deep friendship is the most satisfying thing in a good marriage. Lists of other factors that actually predict good marriages show that there are only slight differences in how the sexes rank what really satisfies them in an intimate relationship.<sup>4</sup> One of the best-kept secrets in the relational world is that men, on average, suffer more negative emotional and physical health-related complications when they are without an intimate relationship than do women.

Couples who form solid relationships are attuned to the specific personalities of their partners and look at solid friendship as the foundation for a good relationship. They respect gender differences when they exist and look for ways to meet each other's needs. While the Bible uses somewhat different language to describe the role of man and woman in marriage, the common element is a mutually unselfish attitude in which both are open and responsive to the needs of the other (see Ephesians 5:21-33). This is not a description of wildly divergent gender roles or male domination of the female, but of a loving and mutual partnership where both partners are willing to go the extra mile for the good of the other.

**Myth 3. Active listening and the**

**avoidance of anger are the keys to managing conflict in a good relationship.** Over the past several decades a variety of books and articles have appeared suggesting that couples engage in a process known as “active listening” in the midst of marital conflict. Active listening involves clearly identifying one’s own feelings using a feeling word and attempting to restate the concerns stated by the partner in the form of a paraphrase. It’s quite similar to what therapists do when listening to clients. Researchers who carefully studied marital fights expected to find that successful couples regularly used this skill to resolve disagreements and settle conflicts in marriage.

But that’s not what researchers discovered. First, they noted that almost nobody actually talks like that in the heat of a disagreement. People simply don’t use those prescribed “I statements” when tensions run high. Even in the rare instances when they do, there was no direct influence on the resolution of the conflict. In Gottman’s words, “it predicted nothing.”<sup>5</sup> It may be that partners who bought into that model ended up expecting a kind of perfection in the heat of conflict that simply wasn’t realistic.

The research, however, did indicate that active, attentive listening was valuable in several ways. For example, it can help when one partner listens in this way while the other partner is complaining about somebody else (such as the boss at work). It is also very valuable in a “recovery conversation” as couples work to repair a relationship after a fight. And it can definitely help couples strengthen intimacy and get to know each other better when they aren’t in the middle of a conflict. But, marital research shows that, in the heat of battle, few people are able to follow the “rules” of good communication. Most people find it difficult to hear really what their partner is saying, and even the best communicators get caught up in defending their own positions during an argu-

ment. Some patience is in order during marital conflict!

The research on anger in marriage is also interesting. Anger by itself was not found to correlate statistically with divorce, but contempt and defensiveness did so reliably.<sup>6</sup> Couples that bicker a lot aren’t necessarily less happy than couples who don’t. Many couples that tend to bicker also know how to kiss and make up, and a certain amount of conflict and bickering was actually found to correlate with lasting passion in marriage.<sup>7</sup>

It isn’t anger itself that undermines marriage. But the failure to resolve anger can. Research indicates that “ventilating” anger is a problem. Several different researchers have discovered that trying to “get it all out” by unloading it on the spouse actually increases the level of anger and stress for the person expressing it. And the overall ratio between positive and negative statements to the spouse can definitely help predict the likelihood of divorce. Happy couples were found to give at least five positive comments for every one that was negative. A conflictual, bickering style is also a problem when only one spouse is comfortable with that style—when one partner likes to bicker and the other is emotionally devastated and finds that the stress lingers for hours or even days.

The Bible affirms that anger is not a sin (Ephesians 4:26, NIV), but it also says that we should not “let the sun go down while you are still angry.” Active listening can be part of the relationship repair after a conflict, but we may need to forgive both ourselves and our partners for imperfections in the way we handle disagreements.

**Myth 4: Marriages inevitably go downhill over time.** Most people believe that passion inevitably dies and marriages become mundane as time goes on. While many couples do report a decline in marital satisfaction over time, there are several interesting findings in recent research that shows that this is not inevitable. In fact, mar-

riage is like many other things—it really is possible for it to get better with practice. Marital therapist David Schnarch says that it is only later in life with a monogamous partner that people can begin to discover their passionate and sexual potential.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Gottman’s research showed that many couples discover more tolerance, more appreciation, and much greater desire to be with each other over time. The greatest happiness in marriage doesn’t seem to be found in the early euphoria, but in the long-term satisfaction found in a marriage of many years.

Passion was not an age-dependent thing. We now know much about both the biochemistry and neurology of love and passion. The “chemistry” of a relationship does change over time. There is an initial euphoria in new love that generally lasts for about two years, and the specific type of chemistry that characterizes a long-term relationship isn’t the same as the intoxicating chemical brew of new love. But many people give up on a relationship after the initial chemistry begins to shift. They get into a series of relationships that don’t seem to last more than two years, not realizing that the emotional satisfaction of a long-term love may be more fulfilling than the rush of new love.

**Myth 5: A person who seldom feels spontaneous sexual passion is probably sexually dead and a poor marriage partner.** When images of superheated sex constantly bombard us in the media, most married people feel that they should be continually ablaze with passion for their spouse. If they get caught up with bills and laundry, seldom think about sex, and aren’t just drooling at the thought of leaping into bed whenever the opportunity arises, they may feel guilty.

Until quite recently, sex experts assumed that everybody experiences sexual desire in a similar way. Something you experience triggers a subjective feeling of arousal. The arousal generates the desire to

be sexual. But, as Michelle Weiner Davis notes, “for some people, sexual desire—the urge to become sexual—doesn’t precede feelings of arousal, it actually follows it.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, there are people who seldom experience passionate fantasies. But if they become sexual with their spouse, they may discover that they enjoy the experience deeply and feel much more bonded to their partner.

People who have felt a nagging sense of failure, guilt, and alienation from their spouses may discover that putting this myth to rest helps them feel a lot better about themselves and more responsive to their partner. It’s also a reminder that the context of a stable, committed marriage in which people don’t neglect each other’s intimacy needs can actually be the setting to generate marital passion. The choice to invest in marital intimacy is good for both husbands and wives.

**Myth 6: Opposites attract.** The elaboration on this is a belief that we

are attracted to somebody a lot different from us because we feel more complete in the face of his or her difference. Once again, there is some truth to this, but it isn’t entirely so. People do seem to find some differences are a positive thing and a point of attraction. But research shows that the best matches include more similarity than difference and that being similar in a variety of ways (such as age, education, religious preference, basic life values, etc.) is linked with greater levels of marital satisfaction.<sup>10</sup> Research on temperament types (such as the Meyer’s Briggs inventory) shows that couples may enjoy some differences, but that couples who are opposite on all the four scales are less happy than couples who are more similar.<sup>11</sup>

The best way to approach the issue of difference is to realize that most of us enjoy a few key differences in ways that give balance to our lives. It’s good to embrace those differences and not go into a massive “reform project” mode once we have tied the knot. But, if you are searching for a partner, don’t just assume that lots of differences are going to be easy to overcome. Differences you may overlook early in the relationship may become more challenging over time. It is far better to look for somebody who really *does* share your basic values and lifestyle.

### Some conclusions

Marriage is a great adventure. It is also one of life’s most challenging arenas. In a world swirling with false images of love and romance, the more we know, the more effective we can be in both the search for a partner and in building a great marriage once we’ve found that special person.

What principles stand out? First, make sure you are building strong friendship with somebody you are thinking of marrying or the person you actually married. Work on building strong communication but don’t expect perfection, especially in the heat of an argument. Don’t get deceived by

an initial rush of euphoric chemistry or panic when it wears off. The ingredients of lasting passion and commitment are quite different from what you see in the movies and on TV.

Build on the points you have in common—especially in the area of basic life values and the way you actually live your lives. If you aren’t yet married, just remember that those commonalities may be more important than you realize.

Calvin Thomsen is pastor for family ministries at the Loma Linda University Seventh-day Adventist Church in California. He is completing a Ph.D. in marital and family therapy and teaches courses on family therapy, marital therapy, and sex therapy at Loma Linda University and pastoral counseling at La Sierra University. Email: cthomsen@lluc.org.

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# Joy: The secret of being content

by Céleste Perrino-Walker

***It's both our commission and our privilege to live in joy and walk in light, spreading both to the world around us.***

It's possible to mistake happiness for joy. Easy, in fact. People walk around on their little patches of earth thinking they've got that "joy, joy, joy, joy down in their hearts" when really what they've got is fine weather, good health, and a full stomach. Or, the opposite is possible. It's quite common to be so miserable that you feel you are as far from joy as the north is from the south, and never the twain shall meet.

The fact is, that if any outside element, circumstance, or person affects your joy, then what you've got isn't actually joy. Joy is like faith. While faith is hoping in something you can't see and believing in the promise of something you can't touch, joy is believing in the hope of heaven. Joy is looking at the bigger picture. Joy is fuel for the journey, not the scenery you pass through along the way.

## **When the going gets tough**

Joy is made manifest by difficult circumstances. That's when it comes out. That's when you flex it, like a muscle. Happiness, on the other hand, dissolves in the face of hardship. Joy endures through hardship. That's the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is a feeling. Joy is a state of being.

The good news is that joy is available for the taking. Praying for His followers, Jesus said, "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, *so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.* I have given them your word

and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one" (John 17:13-15, NIV).

When Jesus said, "The world has hated them," He means us. The world in rebellion against God hates us. Don't expect a pat on the shoulder from the world. Expect a cold shoulder. But, what the world gives us isn't important. We have a full measure of joy in us. Today. Right now. This minute. Joy is constant and abiding regardless of our circumstances.

## **Like it like that**

Anne Hobbs Purdy, a young woman who made her way to Alaska to teach in a remote area, was anxious to fit in and be accepted by the native people. She questioned a native Alaskan about when she'd stop being a *cheechako*, a newcomer, and start being an Alaskan. The Alaskan native told her that some people never became Alaskans. They never learned to like it the way it was. They just tolerated it.

This, I believe, is the key to living a more joyful Christian life.

We can't be joyful Christians if we never learn to like life the way it is. We can't be joy-filled Christians if we just tolerate it. This is what Paul meant when he said, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13, NKJV).

Sitting in prison, cold, hungry, and alone, Paul did not wish himself on a tropical beach surrounded by friends, drinking coconut milk and feasting on dates. He lived where he was, not wishing to be somewhere he wasn't.

It was in the living, in being cold, hungry, and alone that he was warm, fed, and comforted by God who exists always, but most closely, in the terrible ordeals through which we must sometimes pass. *If we don't get to any of those places, we will have only half an experience.*

Many of us are used to a life of ease. If it's painful, a drudgery, or difficult, why do it? If something can be fixed, fix it. If it can be improved upon, make it better. Christians don't settle for the status quo and don't simply get by—we go forward. Because it isn't in our comfort that we grow, it's through our discomfort.

We can miss this vital lesson if we try to skip over the discomfort part. Think about your own prayers for just a minute. Write down a few that make your top 10 list on a regular basis. Now analyze them. How many are requests for God to make something easier for you and how many are requests for Him to take you somewhere uncomfortable, somewhere that may make life harder for you, but under His guidance and in His service?

## **No pain, no gain**

Most of us go to great lengths to avoid painful situations. It's no wonder we have a difficult time learning from God, who sends us "trials." At the first hint of pain, we're looking for the exit. But joy and pain go hand in hand. James, one of the leaders of the early Christian church, said, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4, NKJV).

The joy is in the trial in the same way the power is in God's Word. The question is, can we not simply *endure* a trial, gritting our teeth, clamping our eyes shut and bracing ourselves, but

can we relax and simply “be” in the trial, asking God what is the lesson He wants us to learn? Isn’t that what James is saying? “The testing of your faith produces patience.” Moving through the trial, as opposed to ranting and raving over it, makes us patient. We are better able to relax and “be” in the trial. We have clearer vision to accept the lesson of the trial.

Then, patience has its perfect work, meaning that eventually we start to look for the good or the lesson in the trial as a first response rather than looking for a way out of it, looking for someone to blame, or even just bracing ourselves to get through it and get it over with. The Psalmist was even able to say, “Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice” (Psalm 51:8, NIV).

### **Avoiding the martyr complex**

Each of us, on a daily basis, has the opportunity to serve others, but how many of us take advantage of not only doing that, but doing it cheerfully, gladly, *as if you were doing it for Jesus*? The apostle says, “Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people” (Colossians 3:23, NLT). This doesn’t mean “work as unto the Lord for then you can feel superior to others.” As someone who has spent a lot of time tied to the “stake” I can tell you that serving the Lord is not the same as having a martyr complex, though there are times I dearly wish it was. It’s much easier to let feelings of self-righteousness power your work than to give it freely. This verse calls us to that higher level of servitude. It calls us to loving service that expects absolutely nothing in the way of reward.

Try this. The next time you have to do something for someone else—respond to a phone call, pick up their dirty laundry off the floor, prepare a meal, loan money, feed their pets, whatever it is—try this experiment: Simply offer your service to God, not

the person you are serving, but God. Your service will become an expression of the joy that is flowing from your heart. As a result, your feelings of self-worth and fulfillment will not depend on any human response to your actions, but will be rooted in the fathomless love that God has for each of us, His obedient children.

### **The gratitudes**

One easy way to keep your tank full of joy for the journey is to count your blessings. Once when I was deeply depressed, I began keeping a “gratitude journal.” Every night before I went to bed, I listed in my journal five things for which I was grateful. Sometimes it was an easy exercise, but there were times when I struggled to find even five things I was grateful for. Having this “assignment” ahead of me, I subconsciously began to look for things throughout the day that I could write down later. In this way, I was consciously seeking out positive aspects of my life. I was training my mind to look for the positives. Soon I realized that many of the unpleasant things went unnoticed because my brain was not assigning them importance. They were not important, and I was not writing them down.

If you want proof of how this works, just decide that you are going to notice a particular type of car. I had never seen a PT Cruiser until a friend bought one. I started consciously looking for them. Suddenly PT Cruisers were *everywhere*. I couldn’t leave my house without seeing at least a half dozen. Before a week was out, I think I’d seen just about every color of this model. Jesus said, “Seek and you will find” (Matthew 7:7, RSV) We can apply this principle to many areas, including joy.

### **What are you waiting for?**

It’s not enough to simply be aware of our own joy, though that’s a start. It’s also important for us to share our joy. Lack of joy in people’s hearts is

one of the main reasons why we see so many tragedies, both personal and corporate, around us. When we don’t have joy, there is nothing better coming in the end. When we do have it, it makes all the difference.

We all know what a life of hopelessness looks like. You can see it by reading a newspaper or watching the evening news. There’s a debate among some Christians about how bad it’s got to get before Jesus comes back. Is it as bad as Noah’s day? Is it as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah? When is “bad” bad enough? If you ask the parents of a child who was abducted and murdered, or the friends of sniper victims, or soldiers fighting in a war, or a cancer patient, or people dying of hunger or AIDS, they’ll tell you, it’s plenty bad enough. God’s not waiting for it to get worse. Any atrocity is “bad enough.”

God is waiting for us. He’s waiting for His people to live out the joy He’s placed in their lives and share that joy with others. When the *Titanic* went down, hundreds of people perished. It’s true that there were not enough lifeboats to save everyone, but many perished not because of a lack of lifeboats (many lifeboats were not completely filled), but because they did not get into the lifeboats.

Jesus gave us the commission: “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15, NIV). He gave us the joy—the motivation—to accomplish this mission. It’s our responsibility to go into the world and tell the good news of the gospel of Christ. Not just the pastor’s responsibility. If it was just the pastor’s job, Jesus would have said, “Support your pastors as they go into all the world....” But He didn’t say that. He said to each one of us, “Go.”

It’s interesting that He didn’t say, “If you feel like it, you could go into all the world;” or “You can beam satellite programs into all the world;” or even, “If you feel called to be a missionary, you can go into all the world.” He

simply said, "Go."

It's not like we have far to travel. The world is all around us. We're all connected to other people in some way. That's the part of the "world" we're responsible for. What's going on in your world, and what are you going to do about it?

### Which brings us back to joy

We come full circle when we realize that it's the joy Jesus placed in our hearts that gives us the courage, strength, and stamina to go out and obey His commands and fulfill His commission. Without joy, we're just going through the motions, and sooner or later we're going to crash and burn.

But, there's no need because we're King's kids. Ellen White says, "Why should not our joy be full—full, lacking nothing? We have the assurance that Jesus is our Saviour, and that we may freely partake of the rich provision He has made for us.... It is our privilege to seek constantly the joy of His presence. He desires us to be cheerful and to be filled with praise to His name. He wants us to carry light in our countenances and joy in our hearts."\*

We can have that light, that joy, each and every day. It's both our commission and our privilege to live in joy and walk in light, spreading both to the world around us. Fill up your tank with joy, and begin your journey today.

Céleste Perrino-Walker is editor of *Listen* magazine. This article is adapted from her book *Joy, The Secret of Being Content*, recently released by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Her mailing address: 27 Robshaw Place, Rutland, Vermont 05701, U.S.A. Email: editor@listenmagazine.org.

\* Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1964), p. 142

## Science

Continued from page 7

complexity evidenced in living things indicate that a Creator God is necessary. This is what convinced Antony Flew that there must be a God. God seems essential to explain what science has found. The observations on the forces of physics, proteins, and DNA are all repeatable, hence provide high-quality scientific evidence for God. Unfortunately, the secular idealism in science is so strong that the idea of a designer God is now generally rejected by the scientific community. This rejection is based on personal and sociological factors, not scientific data.

Ariel A. Roth (Ph.D., University of Michigan) is the former director of the Geoscience Research Institute and editor of the journal *Origins*. He has published more than 150 articles in scientific and general journals. His recent book, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture*, has been translated into 13 languages. Now retired, he continues to research, lecture, and write. His email address: arielroth@verizon.net.

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## Prayer

Continued from page 9

powerful world-changing prayer, but without damaging the character of God. Let me know what you think! God bless!

Dan Smith is the senior pastor of the La Sierra Seventh-day Adventist Church on the campus of La Sierra University, in Riverside, California, U.S.A. This article is adapted from his book, *Lord, I Have a Question: Everything You Ever Wanted to Ask God but Were Afraid to Say Out Loud* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2004). His email address: dsmith@lasierra.edu.

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## Dialogue on-line

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## PROFILES



The island of Sicily has the highest concentration of Adventists in Italy, and is the homeland for Dora Bognandi, a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist. She was born in 1949, in Piazza Armerina, Sicily. Determined yet humble, Dora is known for her courage and conviction throughout the country. She embodies what religious liberty is and should be. Currently she is working for the “Fondazione Adventum” (Adventist Foundation), a social branch of the church.

Mrs. Bognandi was baptized in 1966 and has been working for the Adventist Church since 1985. In 1992, she became an assistant to Ignazio Barbuscia, who at that time served as director of the Religious Liberty Department. In 1999, she was elected director of the Religious Liberty and Communication Departments of the Italian Union of Seventh-day Adventists. She is married to Pastor Adelio Pellegrini, and they have two sons, both working for the church.

■ *Mrs. Bognandi, what made you become a Seventh-day Adventist?*

I didn't experience a conversion from another religion or denomination. The Adventist Church has always

## Dora Bognandi

### Dialogue with an Adventist dedicated to religious freedom in Italy

been my family. However, in my youth I went through a stage of indifference toward the Christian faith. As it often happens, one must get knocked down, before one can look up. I did have my knock down—the time when I lost my daughter. It was a specially difficult moment in my life. Those tragic days made me realize how deeply I needed God and His love. I also realized how important it is to have church friends around me. Without the help of God and that of my extended family, I couldn't have pulled myself up.

■ *What attracted you to accept the position of director of religious liberty and communication for the Italian Union? What is your function in these areas?*

My work consists in representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the Italian society. Despite my limitations, I feel a bit like an ambassador of the church to the community at large. I also want my church to know the best of Italian culture and religious traditions so that as Adventists we can adequately communicate our biblical faith and unique mission. The Department of Religious Liberty brings me in contact with the religious, political, and cultural institutions of Italy. My assignment is to ensure that church members have their rights and privileges—of belief, worship, conscience, and witness—protected and honored. I work also to help church members respect other people's rights and beliefs. As a communication director for the church, I am responsible for editing our monthly magazine *Il Messaggero Adventista* (similar to *The Adventist Review*), and for caring for two web bulletins—*BIA*, with news

aimed at Adventist members, and *AND*, written for non-Adventist readers. I must also guard the good name of our denomination by disseminating news from and about the Adventist Church.

■ *Why is religious liberty important to you?*

Because it is the foundation of all liberties. Religious liberty is the right to believe or not to believe in God according to the dictates of one's conscience, without any external interference. I believe that this is a fundamental human right. The Italian Constitution guarantees this freedom, as it also guarantees the right to change one's religion and to witness for the same. A commitment to religious freedom helps me to stand above every political and social organization and speak of a God to whom all social orders are subject, and in whom one can find life's meaning and purpose. Religious freedom helps me to speak of a righteous God or of an ideal that I hold. It helps me to respect people who think differently from me and work with them for the benefit of humankind.

■ *As a woman, what special insights can you bring to the responsibilities you hold?*

Perhaps a particular insight and interest for other people, a feature more commonly found in women than in men. Perhaps also the caring quality that comes easily to a woman is helpful in the work I do.

■ *Italy is predominantly Catholic. What is the standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in your country in terms of government rights, recognition, and freedom?*



The Italian Adventist Church has had pastors who worked with distinction for the Religious Liberty Department, like Gianfranco Rossi and Ignazio Barbuscia. Thanks to them our church secured a special agreement with the Italian State, which was turned into law in 1988. For the first time in the world's history (in a country where Roman Catholicism has its Holy See), a law was passed that made special provisions so that Adventists could observe the Sabbath on Saturday in the workplace, at school, the university, and so on. We owe this extraordinary result mainly to the Sabbath observance of so many faithful church members. The 1988 special agreement includes also the following points: official recognition of Adventist ministers; acceptance of our stand on not bearing arms and substitution of community service instead; chaplaincy services by Adventist pastors in hospitals and jails; and legal acceptance of weddings officiated by Adventist ministers.

■ *Tell us something about the current status of the Adventist Church in Italy. What are the major trends and challenges?*

As in other western countries, our church in Italy is affected by secularism and moral relativism. But we also face a still greater challenge: introversion—that is, a tendency to focus on our own problems and needs instead of reaching out to meet the needs of people around us. The world is changing at an impressive speed, and militant religious fundamentalism is on the rise. We have to bring to this world what we define as the “Present Truth,” that is the truth aimed at the particular needs of our time.

■ *What is the public image of our church in the country? What are we known for?*

In Italy, we are a minority among minorities. We have only 7,000 baptized members in a population of almost 58 million. It isn't an easy matter to attract notice because of the very obvious presence of the Catholic

Church and the limited human and financial resources at our disposal. However, the law gives us the opportunity to access public funds called *Otto per Mille* (Eight per Thousand) collected from state tax revenues. This gives us the opportunity to do much good and provides us with a lot of visibility, because every year the name of the Adventist Church is found on more than 30 million income tax returns. As a result, we receive funds that we use for social, humanitarian, charitable, and cultural purposes. We have nine radio stations in Italy, we make use of internet sites, and of course we work through ADRA and other public initiatives.

■ *What gives you the greatest satisfaction in your work?*

I feel the most satisfaction when I can solve a problem faced by one of our members related to Sabbath observance. In spite of the law, some employers still expect Adventists to work on Sabbath. I love to see the joy on the face of our believers when the problem has been solved. I am satisfied, too, when the secular media make reference to our stance on religious matters or human rights violations or when non-Adventist religious circles praise an Adventist doctrine they had harshly criticized before. If our church is appreciated and makes a good impression, I am extremely happy.

■ *Which Adventist doctrine has been specially appreciated in Italy?*

Not just a doctrine, but several. For instance, health reform. Once we were much criticized for our positions with regard to tobacco, alcohol, and harmful drugs. Today we are more and more appreciated by other church leaders, and we are also imitated. Other examples are the tithe principle and our way of observing the day of rest.

■ *How are you able to combine and keep balance between your various roles*

*as wife, mother, and church leader?*

This is one of my greatest concerns. It is not easy to completely devote yourself to your work and then carve out some time for you and your family. You can make it only if you enjoy the love and cooperation of your family. I thank the Lord because my family has been a blessing in this respect.

■ *You have a busy life. How do you keep your connection with God alive?*

Very often I wake up at two or three in the morning and start reading my Bible. I talk to God, and I tell Him what in that moment happens to cross my mind. I unburden myself to Him. Then I go to sleep. God gives me the strength that I need. Sometimes I feel a burden because of my responsibilities and my sense of inadequacy for the great task I have. But then the words of the Scriptures come always to my mind, and I feel comforted and motivated again.

■ *What would you tell one of our readers who may be thinking of devoting his or her talents to work for the Adventist Church?*

Working for the church is the most beautiful thing that can happen in one's life. You are off on an adventure whose horizons become wider and wider as you discover new destinations all the way through.

## Interview by Roberto Vacca

Roberto Vacca is a radio producer for the network of Adventist radio stations in Italy “La Voce della Speranza.” His email address: [r.vacca@libero.it](mailto:r.vacca@libero.it).

Mrs. Dora Bognandi may be contacted through her email address: [d.bognandi@avventisti.it](mailto:d.bognandi@avventisti.it) or by writing to the Department of Religious Liberty, c/o Unione Italiana Chiese Avventiste; Lungotevere Michelangelo 7; 00192 Rome; Italy.

## PROFILES



Dr. Neville Clouten travels the world with his sketchbook in hand, gathering impressions that have inspired his teaching philosophy, ideas about architecture, and what he has captured in watercolors. He presents watercolor workshops on the *Queen Elizabeth II* and the *Queen Mary II*, and leads groups of friends and artists on European river cruises.

Clouten received his degrees in architecture from Sydney University, Australia; Ohio State University; and his Ph.D. from Edinburgh University. He is a fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and received the Michigan President's Award for the year 2000 from the American Institute of Architects.

He worked with the Opera House Project in Sydney as researcher and official guide, and as an architect in Stockholm, Sweden. For the past three decades, his particular interest in the academe has been in architectural education. He became inaugural chair of the Department of Architecture at Andrews University in 1980. From 1990 to 2003 he was dean of the College of Architecture and Design at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, Michigan. His publications

## Neville Clouten

### Dialogue with an Adventist architect and artist

include drawings and more than 60 articles in architecture, art, science, and education journals. The book *Academic Lite: Treasures of Creativity and Reflection From Life as a University Professor* reflects his wry sense of humor, and his philosophy on the importance of keen observation and discovery in the process of creativity. In the foreword, Paul Stephenson Oles shares his impressions of Professor Neville Clouten: An accomplished academic with an "intimate familiarity" with his field of study and a "whole human being." He is "someone who throws out the book and invents new rules."

Clouten's lifelong pursuit to explore, understand, and share the exuberance of the creative process is inspiring. The accuracy of his comment—"over the years, the centrality of creativity in human experience has remained important to me"—was confirmed when he showed me the prototype of a chocolate bar that was a design project by his architectural students, based on their preferences of chocolate. The prototype later became a real product.

His watercolors and sketches are regularly exhibited in juried art shows, including the Polk Art and Technology exhibition and the Michigan Water Color Society. His artwork is in private collections and corporate offices. Watercolors from the series, "Impressions and Reflections" are regularly exhibited in galleries.

■ *Dr. Clouten, let's begin with your sketchbook.*

Virtually all my life I have carried a sketchbook. I am fascinated by time and place as well as accuracy. My intent is to record impressions in my sketchbook. As well as standing alone,

some sketches are developed toward entertainment, as I want to connect with and appeal to people through that which is visually interesting.

■ *Do you have a theme?*

Yes, I have been influenced by my father who was a fisherman. Thus the sea or lake plays an important role in my art. One of my latest watercolors is "Low Tide at Boccadasse, Italy." The sand/beach between the "stranded" boat and the cycle of the incoming tide give a sense of expectation. I enjoy imagining a conversation between people and with the elements of a watercolor.

■ *Who have influenced you significantly on your ideas and expression in art?*

My art teacher at Sydney University, Lloyd Rees, made a notable impression on me as a person and as a mentor. His lectures were personable and he shared his experiences. He connected as a person with his art and carried this into his theme and style. I have letters from him that I treasure. Here's one letter where Dr. Rees comments that some of the simple, insignificant things that I had done—participating in an art project as a student and buying him a cup of coffee—had made a lasting impression on him. I have some of his watercolors and books. Donald Schon of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in his writings on reflective practice and his personal association, informed my own practice and focus on artistry in teaching.

■ *Why does watercolor appeal to you?*

I am fascinated by the way that this medium does its own thing. I enjoy entering into a conversation with the

paper and paint, and watch how the temperature and humidity introduce variation. The drying of the watercolor often brings unexpected results. I find the process fun and enjoy the creative process, and often the result.

■ *Why do you enjoy the creative process?*

Creativity is connecting with people. It is communicating for the purpose of connecting—connecting between art and religious convictions, and sharing these with others. It is what Ellen White was talking about when she wrote that we are all creators and have the God-given power to think, to act, and to do.

■ *Do you have a philosophy of art?*

The creative process provides a model for reflecting on my role as teacher, administrator, and artist. Photographs remind me of experiences, but I cannot compete with nature. Realism in art leaves out a whole lot. Through the medium of art, one's perceptions and worldview can be shared with others. A subject from nature or the built environment can trigger a flood of ideas. I may be able to put some of these on paper and share with others. It may even be possible for the watercolor to share passion.

■ *So, what is the creative process?*

Creativity begins with a need; a real need, a human need. This is the starting point in architecture: Should there be a new building or not? This is true of Genesis and it is apparent in the New Testament as well. Creativity requires keen observation. It is problem finding, problem solving, and reflecting on the process. Analysis and synthesis are required, and ideas must be run through a filter to decide whether they are worth something. It is a creative moment. Holding a pencil is to me symbolic of the continuity between this life and heaven. There are creative themes in worship, music, musical instruments, architecture, and the literature of the Scriptures. In

heaven I anticipate we will carry on the process of creativity. The last phase of the creative process is communication. Engaging others in this process is part of the passion.

■ *As a Christian professional, what has given you the greatest satisfaction?*

I am satisfied with my architectural career. I have won competitions with my architectural ideas. I have designed churches; but I recall with pleasure designing a chapel for a retirement center, which included everything from the building to light fittings and communion glasses. I have found enjoyment as a teacher, as servant-leader, working with different kinds of people and reflecting on different methods of teaching. In the design studio setting, each student engages in creativity and reflection.

I am very conscious of the Lord's leading in my life. I reflect on this in my new book with the working title, *A Plan Larger Than I Can Draw*. I have had glimpses of God as Creator through my limited excursions in the creative process.

■ *Of all your life experiences, is there one that you would like to share?*

My wife, Norene, and I had spent Friday sketching Mayan ruins in the jungle. Mid-afternoon we drove our Volkswagen towards the Pan-American Highway to find a campsite. The lack of road signs and ambiguous map information delayed us, and we were anxious to find a place to pitch our tent before sunset. As we climbed the steep mountain road, we came across a car. One of the Mexicans called out, "Where are you going?" "To Tuxla." "You are on the right road. We are Seventh-day Adventists and are going to Linda Vista College, a few miles further." We followed Dr. Rodriguez and his family, and joined in the vesper service at the school. We met Dr. and Mrs. Butler who insisted that we stay in their home. We were given a parcel to take to Mrs. Graves at the

clinic just across the Guatemalan border. She was grateful for the company and gave us mail to deliver to the Adventist hospital in Nicaragua. Not only were we inspired by these loyal missionaries, but we were left with the lasting impression that while we may know at certain points in our life that we are in the right place at the right time, faith is fundamental in the Christian life in the midst of turbulence and uncertainty.

■ *Do you have any parting counsel for your readers?*

Everyone can combine passion with reflection. Our impressions of the aesthetic experience add to the compass of life. Dutch Architect Aldo van Eyck commented, "Architecture can do no more and must not do less than assist one's homecoming."

Norene and I have come to know and appreciate a more meaningful life. If it is true for the secular world, it is infinitely more important for spiritual truth. Life with the Holy Spirit, in both the broadest sense and in the specifics of eschatology, cannot do anything more and must not do less, than assist us on the way to the Homecoming that really matters.

## Interview by Delyse Steyn

Delyse Steyn (D. Ed., University of South Africa) is professor and chair of the Department of Communication at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Neville Clouten's address: 8695 Maplewood Drive, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103, U.S.A. 269-471-4163. Email: nclouten@yahoo.com. Some of his watercolors can be seen at <http://www.nevilleclouten.com>.

# ACTION REPORT



## University students meet in Ecuador

by Erton Kohler

Converging on Santa Cruz, the most accessible island of the Galapagos Archipelago, Adventist university students and their friends from various regions of Ecuador met in early April 2005 to hold their convention. The event took place at the municipal auditorium of Puerto Ayora and brought together 120 representatives from the North and South Ecuador Missions.

The theme of the meeting was “Always Faithful,” and the program focused on three issues: Adventist identity, creationism, and evangelistic outreach. The main speakers included Roberto Biaggi (director of the Geoscience Institute at River Plate University in Argentina), Walter Alaña (principal of Ecuador Adventist Technological Institute), Samuel Sandoval (a pastor in Peru), and the author of this report.

With the encouragement of the local government, the students participated in an ecological project, cleaning designated areas of the island and enhancing the habitat of several natural species. The authorities formally awarded them a certificate of appreciation for their service to the community.

At the beginning of the convention, Veronica Eras joined the Adventist

family through baptism. For 10 years she had been involved in church activities, and during the long flight from the mainland, she decided to begin a new life with God. Another participant who had been studying the Bible and was inspired by the meetings was also baptized toward the end of the program.

Leaders for the university students’ associations were elected for both Ecuador missions. The program closed with a moving communion service in which the participants committed themselves to remain always faithful to Jesus and His teachings.

Felipe Arturo Ramos Escalante, a first-year law student, thanked God and the organizers for the convention, and stated, “I brought with me a friend who is not yet a member of our church, but he has been very favorably impressed by the lectures and the activities in which we participated.” He added, “As an Adventist student, I have faced many difficulties, and this meeting has strengthened my resolve to be faithful.”

Monica Jacqueline Ayala Soto, who is completing a degree in pedagogy, especially appreciated the strong arguments presented in support of cre-

ationism. In addition, she testified that “meeting with other university students who experience similar joys and challenges strengthened my faith.”

Ironically, the picturesque Galapagos Islands—designated by the United Nations as Patrimony of Humanity—where the convention was held, was the location where in 1835 Charles Darwin gathered specimens and elaborated arguments that he would later include in his book *On the Origin of Species*.

The Adventist Church in South America promotes the creation of Adventist student associations and the convening of such meetings because this is a critical time in the life of our students. If properly involved and supported, they will become the professionals and leaders that our congregations and their communities urgently need.

Erton Kohler is director of the Youth Department and *Dialogue* representative for the South American Division. His email address: [Erton.kohler@dsa.org.br](mailto:Erton.kohler@dsa.org.br).

## Philadelphia Adventist Network

by Lakisha Hull

In the autumn of 2001, two Adventist graduate students living on very modest incomes and attending a secular university in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, found themselves with no family or contacts in the area. Although there were many Adventist congregations in the city, there was no ministry to Adventist young adults providing social and spiritual support.

So Shermese Woodbine and the



author of this report decided to do something about it. With much prayer and ground work, we launched the Philadelphia Adventist Network Ministries (PAN) to equip the next generation of church leaders while providing a safe haven for young adults interested in fun activities with a spiritual mindset. PAN responds to the call of the great commission by reaching out to the unchurched or under-churched while reaching in to Adventist young adults desiring to strengthen their relationship with God.

From a very small beginning, PAN has grown into a ministry that connects more than 100 Adventist young adults with Christian events, social activities, and Bible studies. The diverse group includes college and university students as well as young professionals, both married and single.

Bible studies held twice a month are the backbone of the ministry. These meetings are made possible by group members who open their homes to those interested in meeting other Adventists and discussing the Word of God. The studies address issues and concerns relevant to Christian young

adults in the 21st century. Depending on the topic, guest speakers are invited to lead in the discussions. Many members use this informal vesper program as an opportunity to testify of God's guidance in their lives and to solicit support for personal challenges.

PAN also organizes social activities such as game nights, potlucks, and outdoor excursions. An electronic network is used to provide information on upcoming events and programs.

This ministry, created by young adults for young adults, faces the usual obstacles: limited funds, inadequate transportation for members, and the frequent turnover in membership as students graduate and move away. Future plans include expanding outreach events in volunteering and community service, and developing a mentorship and tutoring program for urban youth.

To learn more about the Philadelphia Adventist Network, contact us through our email address: [panministries@yahoo.com](mailto:panministries@yahoo.com).



## Adventist students active in the Philippines

by Redentor A. Feliciano

When Adventist students at the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) established an AMiCUS chapter in 1999, no one took us seriously. Four years later, the chapter was officially recognized by CLSU as one of the significant student organizations on the campus. The significance is found in the fact that ours is the only religion-based organization, and our role on the campus is to contribute toward the development of character and Christian faith. Today CLSU, one of the leading universities in the Philippines, finds our AMiCUS chapter playing a constructive role in the lives of both Adventist students and others.

This constructive role, through God's providence, has strengthened Adventist students to stand firm for their faith and witness for their belief. As a result, we have witnessed a number of baptisms in the past few years. The organization is also the Lord's instrument in reviving Adventist churches in nearby communities as we visit them and lead out in Sabbath services. This is particularly appreciated where churches do not have full-time pastors.

One activity that has brought stu-

Continued on page 23.

## He breathed into his nostrils: God's kiss of life

by Larry L. Lichtenwalter

In his book *Mortal Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery*, surgeon Richard Selzer tells of the night he stood by the bed of a young woman recovering from facial surgery. Her mouth was twisted with palsy. Almost clownish. There had been a tumor on her cheek. To remove it, Selzer had to cut a tiny twig of the facial nerve—the one to the muscles of her mouth. Her mouth would have this awkward twist the rest of her life. A young man was in the room with her, standing on the opposite side of the bed. Together, this couple seemed to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from the surgeon. “Who are they?” Selzer asked himself. “He and this wry-mouth I have made, who gaze at and touch each other so generously, greedily?”

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“Will my mouth always be like this?” she asked, looking his way.

“Yes, it will. It’s because the nerve was cut,” Selzer explains.

She nods, and is silent.

But the young man smiles. “I like it,” he says. “It’s kind of cute.”

All at once Selzer knew who the man was. He understands and lowers his gaze. Unmindful of the surgeon’s presence, the young husband bends to kiss his wife’s crooked mouth, Selzer so close he could see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers—to show her that their kiss still works.<sup>1</sup>

One wonders how God twisted His mouth to breathe into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). Can you imagine it? The gift of life is conferred on humankind in an intimate face-to-face encounter. God forms a work of art out of moist clay. A bond with this piece of art begins to grow in the gentle process of making. Then comes that incredible moment. The final touch. Who would have thought it? Only God! Living lips are placed against cool earthen nostrils. A silent puff of life giving breath moves from God’s mouth to His lifeless clay sculpture. Earthen lips flush with life. Cold expressionless eyes open to see God’s dancing eyes. God’s smiling face still very much close. God’s hands still cupping either side of his face. It’s Adam’s first experience of life—face-to-face encounter with God. What a moment! What intimacy!

### A God-given identity

The Book of Genesis was good news for the generation of Israelites preparing to enter the promised land.

People uncertain of their identity and unsure of their purpose in life or in their future. People who needed to get their spiritual and moral bearings in the midst of an immoral God-denying culture. People struggling to believe that the promised land was far better than Egypt or any home they might make for themselves in the wilderness. They needed to stand apart and be different from their pagan neighbors. So do we, God’s end-time people! You and I! What better image can be given us than that of God cupping Adam’s face in His hands and twisting His lips against Adam’s earthen nostrils to bring life? That God made us in His image? After His likeness? That our spiritual and moral identity come directly from God? (Genesis 1:26-28)

In the mid 1990s, toymaker Mattel introduced Barbie, the world’s No. 1 doll, into the male-dominated world of multi-media software and video games. The 11½-inch beauty mannequin now walks and moves in a creative interactive computer program. There’s *Fashion Designer* where you can create as many as 15,000 different outfits that Barbie models in a 3-D walk down a runway. And there’s *Barbie Storymaker* where you can create your own Barbie movies, complete with plots and action. It was a ploy to get girls as hooked on computers as boys are. For more than 40 years Barbie has been a medium through which young girls have imagined life and envisioned themselves into the future.

It makes me think about the different theories of human nature envisioned in our world today. Evolutionists, sociologists, psychologists, New Agers, Marxists, Buddhists, Muslims, and varying shades of Christians have each dressed human beings up with this or that form of being. Marxists tell us we are made by our society. Evolutionists tell us we are the high end of natural biological development where the fittest survive. New Agers tell us we are gods and part of a larger cosmic consciousness.

Existentialists tell us we have an open road ahead where each one of us determines ourselves by our choices and the things we value. Jean Paul Sarte writes that “man is like a bubble of consciousness in an ocean of nothingness, bobbing around until the bubble pops.”

If we don't have a clear sense of inner identity, we can feel lost and anonymous amid the billions of people with whom we share this planet. The future can seem absurd, empty, meaningless. Much of the moral breakdown in our society today and the dysfunction in our families comes because there is confusion about who we really are.

But the good news of Genesis is that we have been made in the image of the God who loves us and is at work to redeem us! This “mouth-to-nostril” awakening from inert dust is unique, significant. It is the centerpiece of biblical teaching about who we are. Our purpose in living. Our accountability. Our rights, dignity, and moral character.

### A spiritual center

Naomi Rosenblatt writes that, “Being made in the image of God invests us with a portable spiritual center.”<sup>2</sup> Wherever we go, that portable spiritual center goes with us. “If we define ourselves as being made in the image of God, no one else can ever define us to ourselves.”<sup>3</sup> With this sense of spiritual identity firmly embedded within us, no one can ever usurp it or whittle it away—even when we are undergoing difficult life passages. That's what Israel needed to hear so long ago. That's what we need to hear today as God's remnant people on the verge of the heavenly promised land. It must ever be part of our end-time gospel message to the confused and lost world of people all around us (Revelation 14:7; 10:1, 5-7; 4:11 21:1, 5).

Genesis' “mouth-to-nostril” awakening tells us not only that God has the

power to bring something out of nothing—including the nothingness of our lives—but that He has the heart to do so. This has been affirmed at Calvary where the lips of Jesus were shaped with words of woe, anguish, and forgiveness. Revelation promises us that in the new creation, the face of God will once again be intimately seen by human beings (Revelation 22:4). His lips then will be shaped with words of blessing and a joyful smile—even singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

Right now, in the midst of our hurt and trials, sin and fallenness, we are invited to ponder that incredible first moment of divine love—God twisting His lips to breathe life into human beings who would reflect His personal and moral qualities in the world. The cross affirms those roots and provides the moral context and power for us to be fully restored in His image (Romans 5:10-21; Revelation 12:10, 11). The promise of the new creation affirms not only who we are but also where we are headed (Revelation 22:3, 4; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Colossians 3:1-10). We live in the moral light streaming from creation both past and future. It affirms our moral identity and heritage—who we are in the world.

Praise God with wonder! Who are we that God thinks of us so (Psalm 8:3-6)?

Larry Lichtenwalter, Ph.D., pastors the Village Seventh-day Adventist Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan. His email address: [llichtenwalter@misda.org](mailto:llichtenwalter@misda.org).

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## Philippines

Continued from page 21

dents from different faiths to our meetings is the musical concert. The concert is not only a spiritual experience but also an event that promotes appreciation for Christian music and Christian faith. At first, it was a challenge for us to conduct this activity on a secular university where the concept of music is so different from what we planned to offer, but, with God's guidance, we have so far conducted two well-attended major concerts.

Another activity that has brought appreciation and attention to AMiCUS is our prison ministry. Once a month we visit the jail in the nearby city of San Jose and bring to the inmates both the joy of music and the hope of the gospel. Our program lasts for one hour, and during that time we get to reach the hearts of many inmates. Only time will tell how many have found a new hope and direction in God.

Our other activities include Voice of Youth crusades, medical and dental camps, health and spiritual lectures, children's story hours, sport fest, spiritual retreats, camping and hiking, serenading, branch Sabbath schools, and many others. Almost all the expenses come from student contributions, even though our students just barely meet their university costs.

Our group is inviting student organizations from different parts of the world to network with us. We invite them to share their activities with us so that we may learn more of the different ways of ministering to the people around us. Our email: [clsuamicus@yahoo.com](mailto:clsuamicus@yahoo.com).

Redentor A. Feliciano is the editor of the AMiCUS-CLSU Newsletter.

## VIEWPOINT

# Ellen White and her critics

by Leonard Brand

***Ellen White's critics have based their studies on inadequate research design and faulty logic, and we have a right to be skeptical of their conclusions.***

Does God ever communicate information to humans? Do we dare challenge the claim that God did speak to His prophets? New information published in a recent book, *The Prophet and Her Critics*,<sup>1</sup> attempts to answer these questions.

Ellen White was a prominent leader, speaker, and writer in the early decades of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Her ministry spanned from the 1840s until her death in 1915. Seventh-day Adventists believe that she was a spokesperson for God, receiving information in visions for the benefit of Adventists and others. She wrote this information in books and articles, making her one of the most published women in history.

Critics have challenged her claim to receiving divine communication, maintaining instead that she copied her ideas from other sources. Portions of her writings do show some similarity to what is found in books by other authors that she is known to have owned and read. The issue is whether the other authors were the source of her ideas or, as she claimed, reading these other books only helped her to better express the concepts she received from God.

Is it valid for these critics to challenge a prophet of God? 1 Thessalonians

5:20, 21, Deuteronomy 18:22, and Matthew 7:15-20 clearly indicate that there will be true prophets of God and false prophets who do not speak for God, and we have the right and the responsibility to distinguish between them. We also are obliged to evaluate critically the work of those who claim to have judged a presumed prophet and found him or her wanting.

I set out to evaluate the work of Ellen White's critics, and Don McMahon, a physician, completed new research with the potential to determine whether her health principles came from God, as she claims, or from the abundant writings of other 19th century health reformers.<sup>2</sup> This research offers what appears to be the first scientific evidence on the nature of inspiration.

### **Ellen White's critics**

My evaluation of three of White's prominent critics, Walter Rea,<sup>3</sup> Jonathon Butler,<sup>4</sup> and Ronald Numbers<sup>5</sup> focused on the quality of their research. Did they use a good research design? Did they collect their data in a valid manner? Do their data support their conclusions? If they had submitted their work as a thesis for a graduate degree, would they have received a passing grade?

Walter Rea's basic claim is that phrases or even series of sentences in Ellen White's books are identical or very similar to other books in her library. He argues that this negates her claim of divine inspiration, and shows that she copied her ideas from others. However, there are several reasons why his evidence does not support this

claim. First of all, the amount of similarity is not nearly as great as he tries to make it appear. That can be determined from careful scrutiny of the exhibits in his book. Secondly, he cites two arguments against his conclusions, and his efforts to refute these arguments fail to do so. The data he uses cannot test those arguments. Third, the principal line of reasoning of the entire book is based on faulty logic. He does present evidence that refutes the claim that her writing was all original, or that her material was verbally inspired, or dictated by God. The problem is that he then jumps directly to the opposing conclusion that there must not have been any divine communication.

But this black-and-white, either-or reasoning fails to consider an intermediate explanation, which can be found in her own description of how she wrote her books. Her claim is that God spoke to her, giving her principles, which she wrote in her own words. She says that she often felt unable to adequately express these concepts, but was instructed that she would be better able to write clearly by reading other books on the subject.<sup>6</sup> This explanation is consistent with all of Walter Rea's data, and thus he fails to present any evidence that could negate a role of divine inspiration in her writings. It will require a different type of evidence to test her claim of inspiration.

A journal article<sup>7</sup> claiming that Ellen White's understanding of the final events of Earth history came from current events in her day similarly fails because of faulty logic and inadequate evidence. We will not deal further with that, but will proceed to the book *Prophetess of Health*, by Ronald Numbers. Numbers claims to show that Ellen White derived all of her health reform principles from the works of other health reformers of her day. There were a number of such health reformers during the 19th century, who published many books and articles, a



number of which were in Ellen White's library, with her underlining.

Ellen White's main health vision occurred in June 1863, and the next year she wrote her principles of healthful living in the book *Spiritual Gifts*. She said she did not read the works of other health reformers until after writing the health section of *Spiritual Gifts*, but after writing *Spiritual Gifts*, she read those other books and was surprised to find so many concepts similar to her own. Numbers discounts her claim, and states that before her health-reform vision of 1863 "Seventh-day Adventists were already in possession of the main outlines of the health reform message."<sup>8</sup>

Numbers' history of these events is instructive, but his use of the history to determine whether her health principles were revealed to her by God is fraught with serious errors of logic and inadequate evidence. First of all, such research must be based on a complete list of her health principles, and also the health principles of her supposed sources. These must be compiled using the same approach for all, to provide an unbiased set of data. Then all of these principles can be compared with modern medical findings to determine which of them has been medically verified. Of course, medical knowledge keeps advancing and changing with new discoveries, so it is not an absolute standard. However, that is not a serious problem because it still allows a comparison of the *relative* level of accuracy of different health reformers. That will be adequate for our purposes. Numbers did not come close to doing this, but used anecdotal evidence—comparison of a few health principles—without any indication of how he chose these examples rather than many others that he did not discuss.

Second, Numbers focused on similarities between the health principles of White and the other reformers, but did not discuss the significant differences that exist between them. This is not appropriate, for an unbiased

research design must compare both similarities and differences.

Third, Numbers did not attempt to analyze objectively the hypothesis of divine inspiration, but stated clearly his assumption that the data should be evaluated without recourse to that hypothesis. But a scholarly study attempting to determine the truth of a hypothesis cannot begin by assuming the hypothesis is false.

In summary, the research designs used by these critics were uniformly unsatisfactory, and they did not have the data to support their claims. Several books have been written in response to these critics. My evaluation is that these books are helpful, but still are not the careful, objective study needed to test the hypothesis of divine communication as the source of Ellen White's writings. However, a new study of her writings on health has used the proper research design, and offers possibilities for testing the divine communication of her health principles. This research was done by Don McMahon, a physician with considerable experience in studying and lecturing on modern medical principles of healthful living.

### **Testing the hypothesis of divine inspiration**

McMahon compiled a list of all the health concept in the writings of Ellen White and of the other prominent health reformers of her time. The same approach was used in compiling each of these lists. Then they were all compared with modern medical science, and each concept was judged as either verified or not verified by modern medicine. Each health concept was then categorized as a health principle or a physiological explanation of a health principle. For example "drink lots of water" is a principle, a statement of *what* to do. A physiological explanation would not say what to do, but *why* we should do it. McMahon called the principles "whats," and the explanations "whys." Finally, current

medical opinion was also used to decide whether each health principle (each "what") is expected to have a minor effect or a significant effect on health.

This provided the database for the test we have been looking for! We can now test two hypotheses: (1) "Ellen White's health concepts can be satisfactorily explained as borrowed from the other health reformers of her day," and (2) "Ellen White's health writings contain information that cannot be explained as arising from health concepts available in her day; they show she must have received information from an extrahuman source."<sup>9</sup>

In the 1950s medical opinion was clearly contrary to Ellen White's health principles, but new medical research in the last half of the 20th century has changed that. Of the 46 "whats" in *Spiritual Gifts*, 96 percent have been verified by modern medicine, with 70 percent being significant to health, and 26 having a minor effect. In contrast, the health principles ("whats") of the five other health reformers studied ranged from 35-45 percent verified. Not only that, but when we compare the lists of unverified principles for all these reformers, the difference between Ellen White and the others is further emphasized. Ellen White's two principles in *Spiritual Gifts* judged by McMahon to be unverified are: avoid leaven in bread, and usually eat only two meals a day. In contrast, here is a sampling of unverified principles from the other reformers: don't heat your house, if you must eat meat then eat it raw, don't comfort children (crying is good for them), don't let children eat fruit, don't drink water (get your liquids only from fruit), don't use any salt, wear very little clothing even when it is cold, don't use soap, bathe only once or twice a week, marital sexual activity is dangerous to health, children should avoid eating potatoes, and avoid strong odors (even pleasant ones, like the scent of flowers).

Since Ellen White had very little formal education, and certainly no medi-

cal education at all, how did she know how to avoid those principles that may have seemed valid 150 years ago but are now known to be very wrong? And where did she get the numerous health principles that the other reformers did not espouse? The latter point is especially significant, because the principles that are unique to her have a higher level of accuracy than the principles found both in her writings and in the writings of one or more of the other health reformers. The accuracy of her health principles cannot be derived from any human source available anytime during her lifetime. This seems to refute hypothesis one, above, and is consistent with hypothesis two—communication from an extrahuman source. Does anyone have another explanation?

After writing *Spiritual Gifts*, Ellen White says that she read the other reformers' publications, and used some of their material. This can explain why her percent of verified health principles in her book *The Ministry of Healing*, published in 1905, had slipped down from 96 percent to 87 percent. Even so, the unverified principles in *The Ministry of Healing* are ideas that can be argued over, but do not include any of the strange principles advocated by other health reformers.

So far I have discussed the "whats," but the "whys" present a different picture that reveals something about the nature of inspiration. Ellen White's "whys" are no more accurate than the "whys" of the other reformers, and thus they seem to come from a different source of information. It appears that God gave us the principles for healthful living that will improve our quality of life, but left it for us to figure out the physiological explanations ourselves. And in fact it would have often been impossible to give correct physiological explanations for many health principles in the 1800s without using medical terminology and concepts unknown until the late 1900s.

Health principles like "drink lots

of water," or "don't drink alcohol" are easily communicable and understandable by anyone in any era of history, even if they don't know the correct reasons for these principles. Our lives and our relationship to God will benefit if we follow the principles of living that He gave us, even if we don't understand the reasons why.

### **Ellen White and principles of sexual relationships**

Ellen White's critics have argued that she advocated unbalanced concepts of marital sexual relationships, but this seems to be based on a careless reading of her writings. In her day it was common for health reformers to advocate a restriction of sexual contact to perhaps once per month. Contrary to what Ron Numbers implies, Ellen White never advocates any such restriction. She does discuss problems caused by "animal passions," and husbands "worse than brutes," and advocates that wives try to divert their husbands' minds from the "gratifications of lustful passions." To understand what she is condemning, we must know what kind of relationship she is describing. Is she condemning normal sexual relationships of married couples who are loving, unselfish, kind, understanding, and passionate with each other? Or is she describing the insensitive behavior of self-centered, demanding husbands, or even perhaps some type of abusive behavior?

She wrote in an era when sexual topics were not openly discussed as is more common now, but careful study of her writings clearly indicates that these "animal passions" she condemns are in the second category described above. When we compare her descriptions of a relationship in which true love governs a husband, and the characteristics and/or results of "animal passions" or husbands "worse than brutes," there is a dramatic difference between the two lists. She is talking about the quality of marital relationships, not about the frequency of sex. One man tried to get her blessing on

his proposed tract advocating that sex should be limited to procreation. Her only comment to him after his sales talk was "go home and be a man." In this case, he took the hint and did not publish his tract.

### **Conclusions**

God allows us to make choices, and to accept the consequences of those choices. This includes the choices that we each make regarding our view of inspiration. However, if a person challenges the Bible or the writings of Ellen White, we have the right to expect that such challenge will be based on a high quality of scholarly research. Ellen White's critics discussed here have based their research on inadequate research design and faulty logic, and we have a right to be skeptical of their conclusions.

The research of Don McMahon, by far the most careful and objective research on this topic, indicates that the claim that Ellen White's health principles were copied from other reformers is not even close to being realistic. To follow these health principles is to show our grateful thanks to the Creator who cares not only for our salvation, but also wants to help us live more healthful, happy lives. These gifts from God are given freely by His grace. The accuracy we see in God-given health principles also can encourage us to trust His communication on other topics—to listen to and believe God's communication to us through His messengers. In His kindness He has sent us these messages to keep us from being fooled by the enemy of us all.

Leonard R. Brand (Ph.D., Cornell University) is professor of biology and paleontology at Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California, U.S.A. Email address: lbrand@llu.edu.

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## OPEN FORUM

# Marrying a non-Christian?

*I am very much in love with a man I met at work. We are both in our thirties and are compatible in every area except religion. Even though he's not a Christian, he goes to church with me, and I believe in my heart that he will convert someday. There's no one at church for me to date. Besides, this man's moral standards are higher than are those of all the other men from church whom I've dated. What do you think my chances are for converting him? I'm willing to take my chances.*

I understand the difficulty. Looking for someone with whom you can share spiritual oneness drastically reduces the field of eligible candidates. There is a chance that your friend may convert. But the biblical admonition against the union between a believer and a non-believer still exists. Never marry in hopes of someone changing. If you fail to match in your spiritual values as well as mentally, emotionally, and physically, you are compromising your beliefs and standards. This puts you on dangerous ground.

Don't try to ignore the problem, justify the relationship, or disobey God. Instead, take a hard look at what this means for you and the one you love. Unless you do it now, in all the years to come you'll deal with the consequences of being unequally yoked.

Imagine the frustration two builders would experience trying to work on a house from two different sets of building plans. Differing designs and materials would produce such confusion and conflict that the project would fail. Even the casual observer would say, "You can't build a house from two differing blueprints."

The same advice applies to naive lovers who enter marriage with differ-

ing sets of spiritual blueprints. When one is a Christian and the other is not, they enter an arena where they can never achieve spiritual oneness. What a difference it makes in marriage when both partners can turn to God in the midst of turmoil and together find a refuge and strength!

It's amazing how much disobedience flourishes under the rationalization that I found in your letter. You need courage to end this relationship. The pain will be severe, but the peace afterwards will be even more incredible. Surround yourself with Christian friends who can support you in prayer. If you make the hard choice now, you will soon have peace.

*I am 28 years old and studying in a public university. I really like some of the ideas about courtship in your books, but I'm not sure non-Christian girls are a bad influence on me. What do you think about dating outside one's faith?*

Some single young adults become really uncomfortable when people quote Paul's warning: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14, NIV). They begin the rationalizations: "I know she's not a Christian, but she goes to church with me, and I just know she'll convert." "But there's no one at church to date!" "I know she's not a Christian, but she has higher morals than any of the other girls I've dated."

I understand the rationalization as well as the difficulty. Yes, she may convert someday. But the admonition against a relationship between a believer and an unbeliever still exists. There are scores of Christlike men and women in our churches married to unbelievers. Some become Christians after they married. Others married without heeding the scriptural advice. But they all

carry the pain of spiritual loneliness.

Spiritual compatibility is important. During a time of stress, two who worship together can tap into a source of strength to carry them through the tough times. No couple goes through life without being touched by adversity or tragedy. This imperfect world carries much evil—heartache, pain, disappointment, illness, emotional upheavals, financial setbacks, and death. When a couple needs to seek God in prayer, they find great strength and courage as they seek Him together, rather than singly!

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers" is godly wisdom. Unmarried Christians must heed it or reap the consequence of living in a home where the shadows are never lifted. God didn't give this advice to keep you from finding a mate, but to protect you from pain. Don't get yourself so wrapped up romantically with someone who doesn't share your faith that you can't bear the thought of a future without that person. The safest way to protect yourself from such pain is to maintain a policy of dating only those of like faith.

Nancy Van Pelt is a certified family life educator and a family and consumer science professional. She has authored 27 books, which have been translated into more than 30 languages. These two questions and answers have been selected from her new book with Madlyn Lewis Hamblin, *Dear Nancy: A Trusted Advisor Gives Straight Answers to Questions about Marriage, Sex, and Parenting* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2005).

# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## Alcohol's dark secrets

Scientific research shows that the danger of alcohol is too pervasive to be ignored.

by John F. Ashton

What the ads say and the movies portray about alcohol is very different from the effects alcohol produces on our bodies and in our communities. Young men and women whose minds and desires are being targeted by the carefully orchestrated media campaigns are not being told the dark secrets of alcohol. They are not being told, for example, that alcohol has the potential to feminize men. Contrary to what alcohol advertisements would have us believe, the more alcohol a man drinks, the less of the male hormone, testosterone, his body produces. In fact, alcohol stimulates the liver to produce an enzyme that converts the testosterone to the female hormone oestrogen.<sup>1</sup> This is why men who drink heavily can develop breasts, lose hair, and develop feminine patterns of fat deposits.

Has anyone told you about this effect of alcohol before? Have you seen statements on any of the macho beer advertisements or on beer bottles and cans warning that excess consumption of this product may cause feminization in men? Is not this effect the very opposite of the message of many of the beer ads which imply that "real men" drink beer? This feminization effect of alcohol has been known for many years. A search under "alcohol and feminization" on the U.S. National Library of Medicine medical research database <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query> reveals a number of studies about this aspect of alcohol. So why have we not been told?

### Alcohol's effects on masculinity

But there is even more to this dark side of alcohol. Some of the studies that will come up in the above search reveal that when female rats were exposed to alcohol in their diet during pregnancy, they produced feminized male offspring. In one experiment, adult male offspring of mothers who had consumed either an alcohol-free diet or one containing 5 percent alcohol were released near a caged receptive female and a caged male. Rats from the alcohol-free control group mothers devoted 29 percent of their time to the receptive female compared to 13 percent of their time near the male, whereas rats from the alcohol exposed mothers devoted 20 percent of their time equally to both the male and the receptive female.<sup>2</sup> In another study, 44 percent of the male rats prenatally exposed to alcohol failed to ejaculate when mating with a receptive female even though they had normal genitalia.<sup>3</sup> Recent animal studies have further confirmed that prenatal alcohol exposure can produce the abnormal sexual behavior, which is possibly explained by a testosterone mechanism.<sup>4</sup> These findings in animal behavior suggest that there might be quite sensitive social issues associated with alcohol consumption that many people with vested interests would not wish discussed.

The dark side of alcohol does not stop here. We are only just beginning to expose its sinister secrets. Alcohol consumption during human pregnancy can lead to the fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) in the child. These can include malformation of organs including the

heart, central nervous system, genitals, and the brain.<sup>5</sup> In fact, for nearly 20 years it has been recognized that FAS is the leading cause of intellectual impairment in Western culture.<sup>6</sup>

### Alcohol and pregnancy

Young drinking males are not immune from fathering deformed offspring, either. As far back as the early 1930s—in a handbook for mothers and mothers-to-be entitled *All About the Baby*—Dr. Belle Wood Comstock observed that children of alcoholic fathers often showed various signs of both mental and physical degeneracy. She suggested this could be explained on the basis of the almost unbelievable supposition that alcohol in the blood can serve to poison the sperm of prospective fathers.<sup>7</sup> In February 1991—60 years later—Dr. Gladys Friedler of the Boston University School of Medicine reported to the American Association for the Advancement of Science that fathers' exposure to alcohol had been found to affect the growth and development of their children.<sup>8</sup>

Animal and human studies have also shown that alcohol damages male sperm, decreases sperm count, and can cause testicular atrophy.<sup>9</sup> Studies using rats found that when the animals were allowed to drink alcohol freely, their testis were smaller and the sperm ducts degenerated. Their sperm was found to have significantly reduced motility and was not able to fertilize a receptive female despite successful matings.<sup>10</sup>

It has been known for years that alcohol consumption causes impotence in men and delayed satisfaction in women.<sup>11</sup> However, the alcohol industry has cleverly diverted attention from this fact by capitalizing on our natural interest in sex and the role that alcohol can play in seduction by reducing inhibitions. By using ads for alcoholic beverages that imply an association with sexual success, our attention has been

diverted from the effects on impotence. This further illustrates how our thoughts and behaviors can be manipulated by clever strategic marketing.

### **Alcohol and advertisements**

The alcohol industry spends millions of dollars each year researching and producing messages and images that will best persuade us to buy its products. The bottom line is to increase sales and thereby increase profits. Some of the cleverest and highest paid minds in the world are employed to convince young people to start drinking. The industry knows that once they start, many of them will be customers for life.

These marketing campaigns have been highly successful. For example, in Australia between 1993 and 2001, alcohol consumption in the general community increased by 10 percent over and above the already high levels.<sup>12</sup> Young women were particularly targeted by the beverage industry in the early 1990s through the promotion of discounted drinks and the development of fruit juice and cordial mixes that appeal to the female palate. As a result, female drinking rates have soared. The 1996 Women's Health Australia Study found that of 14,762 women aged 18-23, 70 percent reported engaging in binge drinking, with 25 percent doing so weekly. Only 9 percent of the young women surveyed said they were non-drinkers.<sup>13</sup> The alcohol industry has successfully persuaded thousands of women to become drinkers.

### **Alcohol and health**

One of the not-so-hidden snares of the alcohol-sex connection is that alcohol facilitates casual sex before marriage,<sup>14</sup> and this practice exposes young people to high risk of contracting the insidious disease *chlamydia trachomatis* (CT), a sexually transmitted disease that despite the lack of physical symptoms can have serious long-term consequences if left untreated. Young

females are particularly vulnerable to an ascending infection, which can result in pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which in turn may lead to tubal infertility. In the case of men, the disease can cause sterility.

Promoting the heart health benefits of alcohol is another alcohol industry marketing strategy. How often do you see articles in newspapers and magazines extolling the latest findings of how beer and wines, particularly red wines, protect against heart disease? In the context of very moderate drinking, these claims may have some truth. But by the same token, how often do you see articles reminding that even moderate drinking can cause a significant increased risk of cancer, particularly breast cancer in women? A search on the U.S. National Library of Medicine medical research database under "alcohol and cancer" reveals hundreds of studies linking alcohol consumption with an increased risk for a number of serious cancer types—yet how often are we warned that alcohol either causes or promotes cancer? Furthermore, alcohol, even in modest amounts, appears to increase the risk of stroke.<sup>15</sup> So this beverage is far from being benign in terms of health effects.

### **Alcohol and social effects**

Nor is it benign in terms of social effects. We are well informed as to the link between alcohol and road accidents. But the social side to alcohol is much, much darker. Alcohol consumption is a contributing factor to many violent crimes. One of the most devastating aspects of alcohol use relates to its role in terrible crimes against women—rape and domestic violence. In the United States, conservative estimates of sexual assault suggest that 25 percent of American women have experienced sexual assault including rape. Approximately one-half of those cases involved alcohol consumption by the perpetrator, the victim, or both.<sup>16</sup>

Alcohol is estimated to be involved

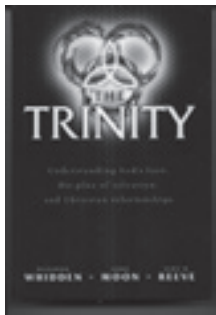
in about 50 percent of all incidents of domestic violence. In a survey of more than 2,000 American couples, rates of domestic violence were almost 15 times higher in households where the husbands were often drunk as opposed to being never drunk.<sup>17</sup> Recent U.S. Department of Justice statistics give a similar picture of alcohol's involvement in intimate partner violence. Two-thirds of victims abused by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, reported that alcohol had been a factor, and about half of alcohol-related violence incidents reported to police involved current or former spouses, boyfriends, or girlfriends of the offenders.<sup>18</sup>

Alcohol does not cause domestic violence, but it is involved as a major factor, acting as a powerful disinhibitor by unlocking deeper feelings and frustrations. Strong evidence for the disinhibiting role alcohol plays in domestic violence comes from a 2003 study by the Research Institute on Addictions at the University of Buffalo. The study of 270 men with a predisposition for physical violence toward their female partners found that on days when the men drank, they were eight times more likely to be violent toward their partners compared to the days when they had no alcohol. Moreover, on days of heavy drinking—six or more drinks within a 24-hour period—the chances of any male-to-female partner violence was 18 times higher compared to days of no drinking.<sup>19</sup>

For a large proportion of the population, alcohol is a curse and it is no surprise that the Bible records God's hatred for drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21). No one who loves God as Creator and Redeemer will ever take that first sip and get on the road to become a slave to alcohol.

Continued on page 32

# BOOKS



**The Trinity:  
Understanding God's Love,  
His Plan of Salvation, and  
Christian Relationships**  
by Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and  
John W. Reeve (*Hagerstown, Maryland:  
Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2002;*  
288 pp.; hardbound).

Reviewed by Aecio E. Cairus

*Trinity* is not a biblical term. But the concept of Godhead with three Persons—coequal, coeternal, copurposive—is very much a biblical doctrine. From Genesis to Revelation, from the creation account to the baptismal formula to the Great Commission to the Pauline benedictions, to the recreation account, the doctrine of Trinity is clearly visible to the believer's eyes of faith. In history, the Christian sees the Nicean council in 325 A.D. as settling the issue. However, the doctrine is still one of the most misunderstood and often denied teachings of Christian beliefs. The misunderstanding has not left Adventism untouched.

Hence this book by three Seventh-day Adventist professors at Andrews University is both timely and indispensable not only as an academic and theological clarification, but also a personal blessing to the readers. The long subtitle is no doubt meant to underline the significance of the doctrine in order to attract readers of all persuasions. But from the viewpoint of contemporary literature, it could probably be titled "The Doctrine of the Trinity for Adventist Readers." The whole of the book is geared to this audience, as implied on page 9 and indeed manifested throughout the work. The reason is explained in the introduction: Not only are Adventists under attack by other Christians as being ambiguous about this doctrine (which is true only of the early times of the denomination), but there is also a revival of anti-trinitarianism among some Seventh-day Adventists who look back at those pioneering times as the golden age of Adventist theology.

The book begins with an examination of the biblical evidence for the full deity of Christ and personality of the Holy Spirit. This, as anybody conversant with the doctrine of the Trinity knows, is the crux of the problem. These fundamental teachings of Scripture are under attack by its historical rival theories (Arianism, which denies that Christ is fully and truly God, and modalism, which considers all three divine persons as manifestations of one and the same individuality). Then, the book presents an excellent historical review of the history of ideas about God in Christianity in general, and in Adventist history in particular. The

latter is priceless for teaching this doctrine in Adventist institutions, since there is little in print about the subject. All parts of the book are generally accurate and well documented.

In organizing the book, the authors have chosen to concentrate on the biblical and historical aspects of the doctrine. The authors seem to assume that the content and purpose of the doctrine is well known to prospective readers, which may not be the case, especially not after polemic attacks by their opponents, which tend to blur these issues.

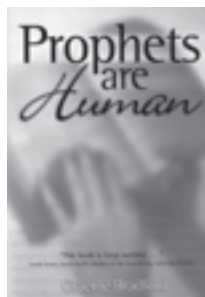
From a didactic viewpoint, it would have been better if the book had started with a systematic approach, explaining the theological need, internal logic, and symmetry of trinitarian teaching in contrast to rival theories, before presenting the biblical evidence of the deity of Christ. A reader of Whidden, Moon, and Reeve's *The Trinity* would probably have been aided by such a systematic introduction, but he or she can probably get it from other sources.

On the evidence for the personality of the Holy Spirit, the work is rather short. It repeats the standard proof-texts found in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* and other works, but seems oblivious to the interpretation of those texts by both Arians and modalists, who do not deny the personality causing the actions there described, but attribute them to the Father acting through the Spirit, and in this way eschew the separate personhood of the Spirit.

On the whole, however, the book is convincing and can be used effectively both as preventive medicine and remedy in the presence of polemic attacks.

An excerpt of this book was published in *Dialogue* 16:3 (2004) with the title, "The Trinity: Why is it important?"

Aecio E. Cairus (Ph.D., Andrews University) is director of the Theology Department at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines. His email: [cairus@aiaas.edu](mailto:cairus@aiaas.edu).



**Prophets Are Human**  
by Graeme Bradford (*Victoria, Australia:  
Signs Publishing Company, 2004;* 91  
pp.; paperback).

Reviewed by Juan Carlos Viera

"Let me tell you a story—a story that begins in the middle of the 19th century and continues even today. It is

a story about a woman, a remarkable person. She had little formal education, but wrote books whose influence has affected thousands and has created a movement that is very much alive all over the world today.”

Graeme Bradford could well have begun his book that way, for his work is as gripping as a story told by a master storyteller. Indeed, he tells his story well, and reaches the common as well as the serious readers with his gripping message about Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A senior lecturer in the faculty of theology at Avondale College in Australia, Bradford knows well his subject, his audience, and the communication mode.

The book is structured as a conversation between an imaginary Adventist couple. It moves from doubt to assurance, thanks to the weekly visits of their pastor and a teacher from the college. Although the author states in the introduction that he has been doing his research for more than 20 years, the setting of the story is contemporary: The husband finds the arguments for doubting on the internet! Does it sound familiar?

The book deals succinctly with the main criticisms raised against Ellen White and her writings: that she used other non-inspired sources; that she made mistakes in her writings as well as in her life; that she taught or supported ideas that later were dismissed by science; etc. In the story, the pastor and the teacher try to clear the path to assurance by comparing the experience of Ellen White to the Bible prophets and, of course, they find the same issues with the biblical writers. The author's conclusion is that prophets are imperfect human beings, using an imperfect human language and living imperfect human lives in imperfect cultures. Despite all that, God sends His perfect and divine message to us through them. The correct test of a true prophet should be based on the divine message he or she brings, not on behavior or mistakes of human origin.

The author advances persuasive arguments in an easy-to-read style. For the reader who wants to spend one or two hours on the subject, this is the right book.

Juan Carlos Viera (D. Miss., Fuller Theological Seminary) served as director of the Ellen G. White Estate and is the author of the book on the same subject, *The Voice of the Spirit* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1998).



### **The Battle for the Bible**

by David Marshall (Grantham, England: Autumn House, 2004; 192 pp.; paper).

Reviewed by Kwabena Donkor

The status of the Bible in Western culture and in contemporary theology appears to be on the decline. This is the result, in part, of centuries-old battles over the accuracy and historicity of the Bible. A clear understanding of these issues is indispensable to one's confidence in the foundational document of the Christian faith. In *The Battle for the Bible*, David Marshall traces briefly the history of some of the significant battles over the integrity and dependability of the Bible.

Before identifying the battle lines, Marshall devotes the first section of three brief chapters to discussing the composition of the Bible with regard to its language, authors, and manner in which the different books from different periods were brought together.

In section 2, Marshall begins to draw the battle lines. The 18th century saw the rise, among scholars, of skepticism and charges of mistakes and inaccuracies in the extant texts of both the Old and New Testaments. Marshall's discussion of the Masoretes, Essenes, Dead Sea scrolls, *Codex Sinaiticus*, the Chester-Beatty *Biblical Papyri*, and the *Washington Codex* is presented as a vindication of the Bible's integrity.

In section 3, Marshall extends the battle for the Bible to include the story of the English Bible. From the persistent and heroic efforts of characters such as Bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne, Caedmon of Whitby, Aldhelm, Bede, Wyclif, and Tyndale, to the story of the Coverdale, Matthew, Great, Geneva, Bishops', and King James' Bibles, Marshall discerns the divine hand at work in preserving the Bible and making it accessible to God's people. Marshall sees Bible translations and the production of new versions adapted to the times as a needed ongoing task.

In section 4, Marshall brings archaeology to the battle arena. He shows how archaeological finds have settled erstwhile embarrassing questions regarding particular personalities and cities mentioned in the Bible, but supposedly not referenced anywhere else. His discussion includes the significance of the Rosetta Stone, the Behistun Rock, as well as *tells* and digs that have unveiled Babylon, Nineveh, the Hittites, Ur of the Chaldees, Jericho, the Philistines, and the divided kingdoms of Israel. With regard to the New Testament,

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## Alcohol

Continued from page 29

John F. Ashton (Ph.D., FRACI) is Honorary Associate in the School of Molecular and Microbial Biosciences at the University of Sydney, Australia. His most recent book *Uncorked: The Hidden Hazards of Alcohol* (Warburton, Australia: Signs Publishing Co., 2004) is co-authored by Dr. Ronald S. Laura (D.Phil.), Fellow of the Philosophy of Educational Research Centre, Harvard University.

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## Attention, Adventist Professionals

If you hold a degree in any field and have an email address, we encourage you to join the Adventist Professionals' Network (APN). Sponsored by the Adventist Church, this global electronic registry assists participant institutions and agencies in locating consultants with expertise, volunteers for mission assignments, and candidates for positions in teaching, administration, or research. Enter your professional information directly in the APN website:

<http://apn.adventist.org>

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## Ellen White

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## 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](http://www.amicus.euroafrica.org).



# INTERCHANGE

## Expand your friendship network

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

**Ariel Aguilera González:** 20; male; single; studying nursing at Universidad Católica del Maule: interests: camping, playing the guitar, and making new friends; correspondence in Spanish. Address: 5 Oriente # 437; Talca; CHILE. Email: alejandro\_gonzalez\_199@hotmail.com.

**Magdalena Alvarez Zabaleta:** 42; female; married; pursuing a degree in biology at Universidad Estatal del Uruguay; interests: making new Christian friends, learning about other cultures, and creationism; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: 25 de Agosto esq. Francisco Maciel; Suárez, Canelones; 91200 URUGUAY. Email: magda\_289\_63@yahoo.com.ar.

**Jana-Lee Megan Atkinson:** 18; female; single; studying law at Waikato University; interests: classical and sacred music, playing the violin, and sharing my faith; correspondence in English. Address: 26 Addison Street; Cambridge 2531; NEW ZEALAND. Email: jma13@waikato.ac.nz.

**Vincent Ayo:** 37; male; married; a community development assistant in the Lira District; interests: working among the vulnerable, listening to Christian music, and making new friends; correspondence in English. Address: Amucha S.D.A. Main Church; P.O. Box 63; Lira; UGANDA.

**Edward Ayaz Bhatti:** 20; male; single; pursuing a degree in business administration at Pakistan Adventist Seminary; hobbies: music, travel, and reading; correspondence in English. Address: United Church Bata Pur; P.O. Box Lahore; 53400 PAKISTAN.

Email: adward4u@yahoo.com.

**Neida Calizaya H.:** 23; female; single; completing a degree in commercial engineering at Universidad Domingo Savio; interests: reading, discussing spiritual subjects, music, and sports; correspondence in Spanish or Portuguese. BOLIVIA. Email: caliyu@hotmail.com or caliyu2003@yahoo.com.

**Israel Nwafor Ejornwa:** 22; male; single; pursuing a degree in chemical/petrochemical engineering at Rivers State University of Science and Technology; hobbies: singing a cappella, football, and reading; correspondence in English or Eleme. Address: No. 66 Oyigbo Rd.; P.O. Box 615; Nchia – Eleme City, Rivers State; NIGERIA. Email: issyhimself@yahoo.com.

**Franco Forte:** 29; male; single; holds a degree in computer science; interests: natural medicine, psychology, reading Ellen White, and making new friends; correspondence in Spanish or English. Address: P.O. Box 019030; Miami, Florida 33101; U.S.A. Email: forte\_franco2000@yahoo.com.

**Franchely Gabriel:** 19; female; single; pursuing a degree in secondary education at Adventist University of the Philippines; interests: adventures, music, and sports; correspondence in English. Address: P.O. Box 1834; Manila; 1099 PHILIPPINES. Email: franchely2003@yahoo.com.

**Cristina Alexandra de Godoy:** 22; female; single; pursuing a degree in library science at Universidade Estadual Paulista; interests: handcrafts, movies, reading, and exchanging mes-

sages; correspondence in Portuguese or Spanish. Address: Rua Rodrigues Alves, No. 668, Apt 7 - Bairro Alto Cafezal; Marilia, SP; 17504-050; BRAZIL. Email: gcrisbr@yahoo.com.br.

**Eliseu Jorge Henriques:** male; single; studying at School of Economics, Universidade Agostinho Neto; interests: writing poetry, football, and making new friends; correspondence in Portuguese or English. Address: 513; Lubango; ANGOLA. Email: elieujorge@yahoo.com.

**Marcos Herrera:** 21; male; single; studying theology at Universidad Adventista de Centro América; interests: reading on religious subjects, write poetry, and exchange ideas with friends; correspondence in Spanish, Portuguese, or English. Address: Col. Santa Eugenia, block 25 #34; Sonzacate, Sonsonate; EL SALVADOR. Email: marcosh17@yahoo.com or marcosh9@hotmail.com.

## Invitation

If you are an Adventist college/university student or professional and wish to be listed in Interchange, send us the following information: (1) Your full name, with your family name in capital letters; (2) your age; (3) your sex; (4) your marital status; (5) your current field of studies or degree obtained and specialty; (6) the college or university you are attending or from which you graduated; (7) your top three hobbies or interests; (8) language(s) in which you would like to correspond; (9) the name of the local Adventist congregation of which you are a member; (10) your mailing address; (11) if available, your email address. Please write clearly. Mail this information to *Dialogue* Interchange; 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; U.S.A. You can also use email: ssicalo@yahoo.com We will list here only those who provide all the 10 items of information requested above.

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# FIRST PERSON

## The voice He gave me

by Charles Ngandwe as told to Anita Marshall

I was born in Zambia, Africa. My maternal grandfather's name was Kafuti, and my grandmother was Kasongo Mwelwa. I do not know their birthdays, nor their places of birth. I know that my grandfather was born in 1900, and was initiated as Chief Mwata Kalumbu in 1930 or thereabouts, a position he held until he died at 100 years of age.

My mother had leprosy, though it was kept well under control with medication, so she did not suffer the disfigurement and loss of limbs often associated with the condition. She married, but my father left her before she knew that I was on the way. We were the poorest of the poor, and the only home we could find stood in the grounds of a graveyard in the Congo.

Strong winds would beat against the house, and the whistling of those winds often sounded like drowning people calling for help. There were strange visitors in the night, and dreadful beatings

for me. But I was an innocent child. Why were these things happening?

I was 7 years old when we returned to Zambia. To give you some idea how poor we were, I have to tell you about the cassava tuber. It can weigh 10 kilograms, and inside is a root that would spoil the cassava flour if not removed. This root is used for smearing on the floors of houses, or burned on the fire to get rid of mosquitoes. It has no food value at all, but that is what we ate, and, through the mercy of God, survived on!

I attended a Roman Catholic school, but the stress of never having enough to eat, and no proper bedding or clothes, left me in poor health. I was asthmatic, yet I loved to sing. I even belonged to a male choir at school, and often sang in the Adventist church to which I belonged. But a severe asthma attack brought me to my knees one day. Friends came and prayed around my bed, while I cried out: "Lord! Either take the asthma and leave me the voice, or take the voice and leave the asthma!"

Suddenly it was as if someone had poured ice-cold water over me. Within minutes I was running the two miles to church. I had a singing appointment that I wasn't going to miss! The Lord took away the asthma that day, and it has never returned. In thanking Him, I said, "Lord, I dedicate my voice to praising your name!"

Six years after my baptism in July 1974, however, my spiritual life was at an all-time low. I had no work, marriage to my girlfriend had not happened, and I was desperate. Then I received a letter explaining that the writer had heard about my voice, and as they needed a bass singer, would I



join their church-based quartet? Would I?! My faith came trickling back to me.

In my new location I was given help to work as a cab driver, but after a serious knifing in the driving seat of my own taxi, I felt a change of direction was needed once more. I decided to go to South Africa to pursue my dream as a singer. For a poverty-stricken young man, this was lunacy of the highest order, but with God's direct intervention, on occasions too numerous to mention here, I eventually found myself in Cape Town, South Africa. I had no money, no means of support, and very little clothing, but I was on my way to seeing my dream fulfilled.

As we drove from the station to Helderberg College, I was fascinated by the sheer beauty of the place. For once I forgot all about the fear nurtured throughout my long trip. All would be well. I closed my eyes and thanked the Lord who had brought me to this place.

As I entered the office of the lady who was to be my tutor, she sprang from her chair, exclaiming, "I don't believe it! After hearing your voice on tape I was expecting a very tall man! Does that strong voice really come from this tiny skeleton?" The tape Mrs. Dunbar referred to had been sent to her by my friend Darryl, and as we

### 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!

talked about my long journey to the college, who should walk in but Darryl himself! He just wrapped his long arms round my thin frame and squeezed me to his chest, all the while telling me how happy he was that I had made it.

As the next day would bring my first singing lesson with my tutor, my excitement knew no bounds—and didn't ensure me a good night's sleep! That first lesson is so deeply etched in my mind that I could give you every detail from the moment she asked me to say, "Ah!" through all the objectives of singing, the purpose of voice training, commitment and discipline, all the way to how singing widens culture through providing insight into the thoughts and feelings of other people, how it enriches the imagination, strengthens health through deep breathing, develops self-confidence, and gives pleasure to one's self and friends—and, oh, so many more things that I can't tell here! Suffice to say that that first 30-minute class opened up such a window on the world of singing that my head was spinning as I left. I wondered if I would be able to live up to the expectations placed on me, but calmed myself with: "This is the teacher I came all that way to learn from. Everything she tells me, I will do."

I had arrived at Helderberg as the college was preparing for a singing tour of the country from Cape Town to Pretoria and back, and Mrs. Dunbar decided that I should be included in the tour group. But first I had to face an audition. There was a great sense of expectation as I stood before a professor and a very select audience, and my tutor admitted later that her hands had been sweating because she had not known how well I would perform! After the performance, the old professor wiped his eyes and told me, "Since Paul Robeson died in 1976 I have not heard a voice of such quality." Mrs. Dunbar was delighted. We drove back to college lit up with the impact I had made, not only on the professor, but on all who had been present.

The tour started with a performance at the George Town City Hall to a full house. Then we headed inland. Pretoria was the highlight of the trip, but as we headed back to Helderberg, Mrs. Dunbar knew she would have a fight on her hands persuading the college authorities to let this penniless singer stay on as a student. My willingness to do any work, down to cleaning toilets if necessary, and my tutor's persistence paid off. The committee vote went in my favor. I could stay at college and work on the farm to pay for my tuition and lodging.

I owe Helderberg College so much. It still holds a very special place in my heart. Not only did it set me on the road to a singing career, but it was where I found my wife—though something of my earlier troubles returned just before our wedding when, in 1994, I had to have a serious operation. A broken bone was pinching the nerve to my kidneys. If the condition had not been righted, I would not have lived for more than three months.

In September 1996, my wife and I stepped onto English soil. We had come to stay. In 2004, I came first in the very popular television song competition, "Stars in Their Eyes," singing the Paul Robeson song "Ole Man River." I was left wondering how I could thank the Lord enough for all that He had done for me.

As to the future, who can tell what might happen? "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26, KJV).

Anita Marshall's brief glimpse into the life of Charles Ngandwe (the "g" is silent) is based on excerpts from the book, *The Voice He Gave Me* (Grantham, England: Autumn House, 2004), with additional material from her interviews. Anita lives in Grantham, Lincolnshire, England. She loves writing and gardening. Her email address: [anita\\_marshall@hotmail.com](mailto:anita_marshall@hotmail.com).

## The Battle...

Continued from page 31

Marshall employs archaeological finds to confirm the building activities of King Herod, and Jesus' ministry in the vicinity of Capernaum in Galilee.

Finally, in section 5, Marshall concludes by pointing out that in spite of the merits of archaeology and the discovery of ancient manuscripts, the truth of the Bible does not depend on these. Thus the invitation is extended to taste and see; read, discover, and encounter the Man of the Book, Jesus Christ.

Marshall's book is concise, readable, insightful, and illuminating. It is clear throughout where he stands in the battle for the Bible: the Bible is a supernaturally inspired and preserved book. If there is a weakness in Marshall's work, it is this—a lack of discussion, at least in an introductory way, of contemporary ideas that are at odds with the biblical worldview; ideas that are as potent in displacing trust in the Bible as are doubts and skepticism over the text of the Bible. The book's emphasis on the text of Scripture means that it is certainly an invaluable introductory resource to all who are interested in understanding the trustworthiness of the text of the Bible as we have it today.

Kwabena Donkor (Th.D., Andrews University) is an associate director in the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His mailing address: 12501 Old Columbia Pike; Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A. Email: [bagy80@hotmail.com](mailto:bagy80@hotmail.com).

An excerpt of Marshall's book was published in *Dialogue* 17:1 (2005) under the title, "The canon of the Bible: A brief review."



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- Undergraduate programs:
  - Visual Arts
  - Visual Communication
  - Communication Sciences

### School of Administration

- Undergraduate programs:
  - Public Accounting
  - Business Administration
- Graduate program:
  - Master of Business Administration

### Theological Seminary

- Undergraduate program:
  - Theology
- Graduate program:
  - Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology
  - Doctor of Ministry

### School of Engineering and Technology

- Undergraduate programs:
  - Computer Systems
  - Computer Systems Engineering
  - Industrial and Systems Engineering
  - Electronic and Telecommunications Engineering
- Graduate program:
  - Master of Computer Science

### School of Education

- Undergraduate programs:
  - Education Sciences
  - Clinical Psychology
  - Educational Psychology
  - Preschool Education
  - Primary Education
- Graduate programs:
  - Master of Arts in Education
  - Master of Arts in Teaching
  - Master of Arts in Language & Hispanic Literature
  - Master of Arts in Mathematics Education
  - Master of Arts in Family Relationships
  - Doctor of Education

### School of Health Sciences

- Undergraduate programs:
  - Dental Technology
  - Dentistry
  - Medicine
  - Nursing
  - Nutrition and Dietetics
  - Clinical Biochemistry
- Graduate Programs:
  - Specialist Degree in Ophthalmology
  - Master of Science in Public Health

### School of Music

- Undergraduate program:
  - Music

### Pre-university Programs

- 2 years (6 quarters)
- Biomedical Sciences
  - Accounting Sciences
  - Social Sciences
  - Physics-Chemistry-Mathematics
  - Executive Assistant in Accounting Sciences

Distance Education is available online: Business Administration, Public Accounting, Education Sciences, and Theology

\*Instruction in Spanish



## Postal Address

Apdo. 16-5, C.P. 67500, Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México.

Tel & Fax : +52.826.263.2490

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◀ **“Beach at Barbados” (Watercolor; 38 x 23 cm.)**  
 The collection of surfboards provided color to a human setting. The afternoon’s conversation must surely involve the morning’s surf. Now the muscles are a little weary and it is time for rest.

## A Neville Clouten Portfolio



▲ **“Church of the Transfiguration, Kizhi Island, Russia” (Watercolor; 36 x 26 cm.)**  
 In contrast to a freer expression, the structure of the 18th century wooden domes called for a clear definition of form while keeping the softer tones of aging wood.



◀ **“Boats at Crail Harbor, Scotland” (Watercolor; 38 x 26 cm.)**  
 The impressionist technique is consistent throughout this composition, except for the definition of the gunwales of the four boats.

**“Chapel of the Archangel Michael, Kizhi Island, Russia” (Watercolor; 27 x 20 cm)** The natural setting and wooden building have been treated with a loose technique in soft colors to capture the impression of my experience. ▶



**“Afternoon in Barbados” (Watercolor; 36 x 24 cm.)**

On each of several visits, I found three men conversing in the shade, while the paint on three boats deteriorated in the sun. The Queen Mary II appears on the horizon as reference to life moving on regardless of the disinterest of the men. ▼



**“Low Tide at Boccadasse, Italy” ▲**

**(Watercolor; 21 x 37 cm.)** A very small beach at this Italian Riviera town disappears at high tide. When the tide is out, the local residents enjoy the beach. On this late afternoon, the fisherman in the boat converses with friends while preparing for the tide to come in.

**“Helsinki Harbor, Finland” ▶**

**(Watercolor; 58 x 43 cm.)** The representation of the water is broken, while horizontal areas of color extend to the harbor buildings and sky, and the vertical lines of white paper on the masts provide an overlay to the composition.





**“Moorea Morning, Tahiti” (Watercolor, 43 x 34 cm.)**  
 The experience of stillness just before the arrival of a wind-storm led me to rapidly drop two colors onto wet paper. This watercolor has been one of my most sought-after compositions. ◀



**“Lake Tellico, Tennessee, U.S.A.” (Watercolor; 32 x 22 cm.)** My wife and I became interested in a small waterfront lot with a view toward retirement. I wanted to capture the evening light on the water. We did not buy the property, and this watercolor became a less expensive way of enjoying the view! ◀



◀ **“Fez, Morocco” (Watercolor; 51 x 51 cm.)** The mix of hanging cotton and fleeces—souvenir items for sale—and the normal life of local residents provided me with a sense of life’s continuum in this city.



◀ **“Mother Lode/ Motherboard” (Watercolor; 72 x 52 cm.)** During California’s God Rush, Mother Lode became the richest vein of the precious metal. More than a century later, the Silicon Valley created enormous wealth through computer boards.

**“Queen Elizabeth II at Southampton” ▶**

**(Watercolor. 20 x 28 cm.)** I arrived at the Southampton Terminal for my first transatlantic crossing—the first of many on which I would present watercolor workshops. The rapid sketching and painting technique conveys the urgency of getting on board before the ship’s departure.



**“Restaurant, Dakar” ▼**

**(Watercolor; 36 x 25 cm.)** As I stood sketching at this site in the capital of Senegal, I was suddenly surrounded by many school children during recess. Intrigued, they wanted to see the marks I was making on the paper. Then, at the sound of the school bell they left as suddenly as they had come.

**“Old Sydney Town” (Watercolor; 37 x 25 cm.)** The replicas of convict buildings at the deserted theme park near Sydney are given life by the inclusion of townspeople.



**“Sketch, San Gimignano, Italy” ▶**

**(Watercolor, 19 x 14 cm.)** I visited this Tuscan hill town during my first trip to Europe and I return as often as possible. The sketch uses a limited palette of colors, highlighting the sunlit sides of the 13th century towers.

