

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

E n g l i s h • F r e n c h • P o r t u g u e s e • S p a n i s h



**Living in a world  
of war and violence**

**Peacemaking:  
Exploring Adventism's  
roots and heritage**

**Giving a reason  
for our hope**

**Nutrition and academic  
achievement:  
Are they related?**



Volume 20

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# EDITORIAL

## Blessed are the peacemakers

Just as our chaplaincy conference was proceeding on a peaceful note, suddenly we were surrounded by the sound and fury of war. Guns were roaring. Furious mobs were giving vent to their war cries. With in the conference hall, we seemed trapped in moments of fear, and hours of uncertainty. All around us, the cry of death was much in the air. The atmosphere—so real and so frightening—reminded us of the words of Jesus about wars and rumors. Peace eventually returned, even though war and human brokenness left their indelible marks around us.

That scene is not limited to one location only. It could be Rwanda, Bosnia, Afghanistan, or any other part of the world. Ours is a world in distress. Discord has sowed its seed between nations, organizations, and persons. Every where we can hear a cry for peace and peacemakers.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus voiced a statement, the truth and relevance of which are timeless. “Blessed are the peacemakers,” said the Prince of Peace, “for they will be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9, NRSV).

How are we to be peacemakers? Not all are called to serve as diplomats or negotiators of treaties or as policymakers for nations and international bodies. But all—particularly those who take the name of the Prince of Peace—are called to be peacemakers: to renounce violence in human relations, to encourage tolerance, to promote unity, to stand in the breach and act as those who build, not destroy, and to be agents of social change and spiritual transformation. Such common denominators of peacemaking, so much a part of the Christian core, can create peace where there is discord, can build unity where there is division.

This issue of *Dialogue* explores the great theme of peacemaking, but let me stress some ideas that should remain part of our Christian profession and conduct.

1. *Take an honest look at yourself.* Often our blind spots inhibit our ability to understand others and keep us from finding common ground. We’re not always at fault, but Jesus did say (Matthew 7:5) that before going after the speck of dust from our brother’s eye, we need to remove the log from our own.

2. *Apply biblical principles of conciliation.* Not every dispute can be resolved, but applying biblical principles in relationships increases our chances of success, whether between individuals, churches, or nations. Organizations such as Adventist Reconciliation Services ([www.adventistreconciliation.org](http://www.adventistreconciliation.org)) and Peacemaker Ministries ([www.Peacemaker.net](http://www.Peacemaker.net)) teach these principles and how to apply them in a variety of settings.

3. *Seek to restore and reconcile.* Hans Selye, M.D., says that the desire for revenge is a most destructive emotional experience. Nothing is more destructive to peacemaking than this insidious tendency. Instead, embrace the goal of restoring people in love and seeking reconciliation in relationships.

4. *Practice wise stewardship of civic responsibilities.* Some relational disputes do require the active involvement of an organization’s or even a nation’s best resources to bring about peace. Non-governmental organizations can be good mediators. If we are called to participate in that process, let it be with the knowledge that God has instituted government to maintain order and justice, and let us use our position and influence to achieve that end. If we are not in that position, God has still given us the

Continued on page 4

This international journal of faith, thought, and action is published three times a year in four parallel editions. (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) by the Committee on Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

### Volume 20, Number 1

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**Dialogue** affirms the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and supports its mission. The views published in this journal, however, are the independent thoughts of the authors.

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**Subscriptions** US \$13 per year (three issues, airmail). See coupon on page 6 for details.

**Website** <http://dialogue.adventist.org>

**DIALOGUE has received correspondence from readers in 118 countries around the world.**

# LETTERS

## Biblical basis

I am a student of statistics. I find articles in your journal logical and well reasoned. They are personally helpful to me, and I share them with those around me. Most articles, if not all, are researched based and thought-provoking. They challenge the readers to think through both their faith and their learning. I wish all university students can take advantage of this great biblical based, faith nurturing journal. Finding these articles on the net makes me much more comfortable.

**Sambo D. Haruna**  
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## Appreciation and need

I sincerely thank you for your spiritual nourishment. We have spiritually grown due to your publications. We sincerely need *Dialogue* in bulk to reach as many students as possible with the truth so rationally and beautifully you express. We utterly thirst for the gospel message and are in great need of this.

Be blessed abundantly till the great day. Amen.

**Moses Ouitieng**  
P.O.Box 65  
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## Good news from Venezuela

I send my greetings from the city of Maturín, Venezuela. I am a young missionary in the university where I work (I have a doctoral degree in Education), and I wish to share the news of what the Lord is doing on this campus, using us as His instruments. Currently I am serving as the president of the Venezuelan Association of Seventh-day Adventists College and University Students in the eastern part of the country. We have so many things to share. Basically, let me tell you that we feel *Dialogue* has been a real blessing for both Seventh-day Adventist students and other professionals. Moreover, this journal has proved to be a highly effective witnessing tool. May God's grace keep being manifested in you and your work. The Lord is coming!

**Alixon Reyes**  
Maturín, Venezuela  
Alixdavid79@yahoo.com

*Thank you, Alixon, for your encouraging words. We will be happy to hear from you and publish an article about what your Adventist Student Association is doing. Perhaps you may want to include some activity photographs.—Editors.*

## Editorial

Continued from page 3

responsibility of electing wise leaders who will know how to use the resources of the government to best achieve those ends. This, too, is a sacred duty.

Think about what you can do to be a peacemaker. As you read this issue of *Dialogue*, explore prayerfully your role in maintaining and promoting peace where you live, work, study, or worship. Blessed indeed are the peacemakers, for they are the true followers of the Prince of Peace, and “they will be called the children of God.”



Martin W. Feldbush, Director,  
Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries  
General Conference of Seventh-day  
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## Can't find the third issue of *Dialogue*, volume 19?

Dr. Humberto Rasi kept journal production on time for nearly 20 years. But with the transition to a new editor-in-chief (me), we did not produce the third issue of volume 19. We are also seeking your input about whether we should change the format of the journal in any way. Do you still wish to receive *Dialogue* as a paper-based journal? Or would you prefer to have it available electronically immediately? (Most articles are posted online after a year at <http://dialogue.adventist.org>.) Are there topics you would like to see included? What other recommendations do you have for changing the journal? Please email your suggestions to our managing editor at [schulzs@gc.adventist.org](mailto:schulzs@gc.adventist.org).

Lisa M. Beardsley, Editor-in-Chief

# Living in a world of war and violence: What should a Christian do?

By Stefan Höschele

**War and violence have become common in the world today. As Christians, how we react to it and what we do to be peace makers are questions we cannot avoid.**

War has broken out! Suddenly you are facing questions you never had to face before. The discussions in your ethics classes are now becoming reality: no more time for laid-back deliberations, no more engaging in heated debates just for the fun of it. It is war, and you have to make some tough decisions.

What should you do? A good place to begin is to consider what Jesus would have done if He had faced the challenges of war and violence. The Sermon on the Mount is replete with guidelines on such issues. Jesus is unambiguous and clear: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” “Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:9, 39, 44).<sup>1</sup>

Jesus didn't stop with just instructions; He acted. When the soldiers of the high priest and leaders of the nation came to arrest Him in Gethsemane, He did not try to defend Himself. To Peter who drew his sword in His defense, He said, “Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Matthew 26:52). When He was crucified, He could have asked armies of angels to free Him from the cruelty of the cross. But Jesus chose to die rather than kill.

Jesus' principles regarding war and violence are applicable even today. In most countries, a Christian is under pressures of governments to bear arms. Yet there are several ways in which you can live according to Jesus' example. Your actual course of action may depend on your environment and your personal background, but there are at least eight options for a Christian to consider.

## 1. Moving

Jesus clearly taught that we should not answer violence with violence. But He did not instruct us to seek persecution, endanger our lives, or remain where we are whatever the political climate is. Seventh-day Adventists should not run away to the mountains the moment slightest problems arise; however, there may be times when followers of Jesus will do as the early believers in Jerusalem did (Acts 8). When persecution, violent conflicts, or war activities arise, a simple relocation may be the solution. Peace-loving Christians have opted for this choice for centuries. Mennonites, the first historic Peace Church, have spread into the whole world precisely because they were looking for countries in which they did not have to engage in military service.

Not so long ago, I was talking about war with my ten-year old daughter. Her immediate suggestion? “Why don't we just go to another country where they don't fight?” Of course, such a move is not a decision you can make lightly or easily; still I am persuaded the idea is valid. After all, here on earth, “we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:14). A decision to move may indeed make a statement: that God's kingdom is more important to us than our earthly possessions.

## 2. Staying

Not everybody can move away, and some will deliberately choose to stay. Sometimes fleeing may actually imply denying one's responsibility in society. Indeed following Jesus may mean staying and serving right where you are. Being where you are without engaging in violence can be an encouragement to others. A Christian's firm stand of non-participation in war activities is a quiet yet visible testimony for the gospel.

However, in some cases, staying may not be an obvious decision. Consider Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian and pastor. Born in 1906, Bonhoeffer became a university professor at the age of 24 and had the prospect of a brilliant academic career. He was one of the few to recognize early the dangers inherent in Hitler's National Socialism and he played a key role in the Confessing Church, a movement opposed to state influence on the German Protestant Church of the period. He was well respected as a scholar and a pastor in the United States and England, and he could have easily moved out of Germany to safety abroad, and thus saved himself from Nazi persecution and eventual imprisonment and death. But Bonhoeffer chose to stay in order to support the silent opposition and let his life and ministry be a witness to Christian ethic and truth. His choice cost his life, and staying in his case proved costly. This may be Christ's way for some.

## 3. Words of peace: consoling

Perhaps the most natural response of a Christian to war should be to utter words of peace and consolation. Christ said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27). Whether we move away or stay, echoing these

words wherever the Lord places us is our first task and our highest joy.

During the Bosnian War in the early 1990s, Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was surrounded by enemies. The siege lasted for almost four years, and fleeing the city was most difficult, as was getting inside. However, an Adventist pastor, Mirko Milovanovi, decided to go to Sarajevo and serve there as a counselor, listening to people, encouraging them, consoling them, and praying with them. He could have chosen to remain in a more peaceful area where his life was not endangered. But he knew it was his duty to bring words of consolation to others rather than merely saving his own life.

#### 4. Words of peace: confessing, testifying, witnessing

“Words of peace” may in fact disturb some. Those supporting war, for example, may think that those talking of peace are actually fighting them! Yet Christians cannot remain silent.

As a faith community, we must speak of peace. Indeed, as Adventists we have done the right thing in issuing several statements on peace.<sup>2</sup> In one of them (“Peace,” 1985), we affirm: “The Seventh-day Adventist Church urges every nation to beat its ‘swords into plowshares’ and its ‘spears into pruning hooks’ (Isaiah 2:4). ... In a world filled with hate and struggle, a world of ideological strife and of military conflicts, Seventh-day Adventists desire to be known as peacemakers and work for worldwide justice and peace under Christ as the head of a new humanity.”

Such a stance for peace may involve speaking out whenever countries engage in wars. We cannot support the use of violence, and we should make this clear. There can be no compromise on this matter. As responsible citizens of the state here and the Kingdom of God, our unequivocal position should be promotion of peace, rejection of military actions, and rebuking those who advocate violence. Of course, in pursuing such a course, we must be “wise as ser-

pents, and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16, KJV). But we should make it clear that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a peace church.

#### 5. Actions of peace: healing

The fifth way to follow Christ in times of war is through healing. This has been the Adventist approach for many generations. The American Civil War was raging when our denomination was officially established in 1863, and people were drafted into the army. What did Adventists do? A lively debate within the emerging denomination led to a consensus that Adventists were not to serve as soldiers, but instead serve as non-combatants, caring for the sick and the wounded.

This type of ministry is a direct application of Ellen White’s injunction to avoid bearing arms, but still serving the country. Her words spoken during the American Civil War are applicable even today: “I was shown that God’s people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers. There would be a continual violation of conscience.”<sup>3</sup>

#### 6. Actions of peace: reconciling

While the ministry of Jesus involved much of teaching and healing, His most significant task was the mission of reconciling the humankind to God. Thus, Christian actions of peace must include the ministry of reconciliation, even among groups who are constantly in conflict with each other. The Austrian novelist Stefan Zweig once said, “Just like war, it needs someone to initiate peace.” Why should not that one person be you?

It is indeed sad to note that in history only few Christian leaders have stood up to work for reconciliation between warring parties. The South African Bishop Desmond Tutu is one of them. When apartheid resulted

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in violent clashes, Bishop Tutu spoke against the despicable policy of racial segregation while continually working to reconcile the warring groups. When apartheid ended and a new South Africa emerged, he chaired the nation's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a novel and historic approach to deal with past violence and crime and the raging desire for revenge. Instead of invoking the law of revenge and retribution, Bishop Tutu launched a national movement of confession, forgiveness and reconciliation. Can we as Adventists be known everywhere as people of truth *and* reconciliation?

### 7. Risking one's life

Several countries do not have the option of a non-combatancy status for those who have reservations against bearing arms. Military service—drafted, voluntary, or otherwise—requires training in and carrying of arms. No alternative is provided. In my country, Germany, young people now have the opportunity of serving their country by choosing to bear arms or serve in a hospital or work in an old people's home. This kind of freedom was not always the case.

Where such freedom is not available, what should one do? What would Jesus do? I am persuaded that He would live the hard way, the gospel way. Take Franz Hasel, an Adventist literature evangelist. His story, as reported by his daughter Susi Hasel Mundy in the book *A Thousand Shall Fall*<sup>4</sup> is just incredible. When he was drafted during World War II, he turned to the Lord in prayer. "Help me to be true to my faith," he prayed, "even in the army. Help me so that I will not have to kill anyone." And to make sure he did not act against his prayer, he exchanged his gun for a piece of wood that looked like a gun. That act could have cost him his life. In this terrible war, he was saved by a series of miracles, some of which you can only experience if you are ready to risk your life for your faith.

### 8. Giving your life

The eighth way of following Jesus in times of war is the most difficult one. Risking your life is breathtaking enough, but actually giving it? God does not demand this of everyone. But one day you may be asked to decide whether you want to kill or accept being killed.

Seven years ago, I lived near Arusha, Tanzania, where the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) is located. This is the court which deals with persons who are accused of having been involved in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Sadly, several Adventists also had to appear before the tribunal. One such was a retired pastor and leader. The ICTR judges declared that the pastor did not have any part in planning or implementing acts of genocide. Still, he was given a 10-year sentence for "aiding and abetting in genocide."

Why such a verdict? In the midst of violence, with Tutsi armies attacking the country from the north and Hutus slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Tutsi in the country, what could a pastor really do? This particular pastor was the moral authority in the mission compound, a campus with a hospital and a school. Although the judges could not find that he was responsible for actively promoting injustice, they judged him guilty—*because he had not done all he could*. In other words, he should have stopped the militia, risked his life, and, ultimately, sacrificed himself for the sake of others.

I am not sure how I would have acted in this particular case, but the judges made a point. As Christians, we must be ready to give our lives rather than kill or tolerate the murder that is invariably associated with war or communal violence.

### What would Jesus do?

In a world filled with violence, injustice, and war, Jesus showed no bitterness. He rather consoled. In a climate full of nationalism, He did not

take sides; He was ultimately viewed as an enemy on both sides. In an age that was full of fear, He did not keep quiet but spoke the truth. In a society where belonging to a group meant that you have to be against another group, He laid the foundation for reconciliation. And He was ready to be killed although He had all the power of the universe in His hands. Are you ready to follow Him?

Stefan Hoeschele, Ph.D., (University of Malawi, Central Africa), teaches Systematic Theology and Mission at Friedensau Adventist University, Germany. He served in Africa for seven years (in Tanzania and Algeria) and is currently involved in planning M.A. programs with concentrations on Mission Studies and Adventist Studies (see [www.thh-friedensau.de/mts](http://www.thh-friedensau.de/mts)). E-mail: [stefan.hoeschele@thh-friedensau.de](mailto:stefan.hoeschele@thh-friedensau.de).

### REFERENCES

1. Unless stated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the New International Version.
2. See [www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements](http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements).
3. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, p. 361.
4. (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2001).

## 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!

# Peacemaking: Exploring Adventism's roots and heritage

by Douglas Morgan

## ***During a time of war and intolerance, what can we learn from Adventism's past commitment to peace and justice?***

Called up for mandatory military service in 2002, Sergei Panchenko the 18-year-old Russian Adventist petitioned for alternative service which, according to a new law passed earlier that year, had to be provided for conscripts who could demonstrate genuine pacifist convictions. However, the military registration commission denied his request on the grounds that the new law would not take effect until January 1, 2004.

Sergei appealed the order. A regional court in the Russian Far East vindicated the determined young Adventist pacifist. Though the prosecutors had hoped to make an example of him, in the end both the military representatives and the court "agreed that his convictions were genuine." Sergei showed that "without doubt, he is a sincere Christian who cannot violate his conscience by carrying weapons."<sup>1</sup>

About the same time, Hee Jai Im in South Korea took a similar stand, but was sentenced to 18 months in prison. In the United States the following year, recently converted Adventist Joel Klimkewicz was court-martialed and given a seven-month prison sentence by the U.S. Marine Corps after refusing orders for a second tour of armed service in Iraq, despite his offer to perform the dangerous task of clearing mines.<sup>2</sup>

The nonviolent ethic that inspired these young Adventists in the 21st century to face prison rather than give up their faith has deep historical roots in

the Adventist movement that emerged in the 19th century. In exploring these roots, we find a heritage, not just of nonviolence, but of *peacemaking*.

"Biblical peace, or *shalom*, is a sweeping wholeness of life," writes Charles Scriven. "Where shalom prevails, freedom and safety prevail; justice overcomes oppression; plenty supplants poverty; joy defeats gloom and shame."<sup>3</sup>

### **A stand for nonviolence**

In the years Seventh-day Adventists were forging their organizational identity, the American Civil War confronted them with the moral dilemma of military combat. The first Adventist Conference (Michigan) was organized in 1861, the year the war began. The first General Conference session began on May 20, 1863, two weeks after the stunning Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, and about six weeks before the great turning point marked by Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

For most early Adventists, influenced by Scripture and by the non-resistance movement led by social reformer William Lloyd Garrison, pacifism was a part of the radical faith that set them apart from the majority of Americans. Moreover, a literal reading of the sixth commandment as well as the Sermon on the Mount fit well with the literal reading of the fourth commandment that the Seventh-day Adventists upheld. In this light, they viewed participation in military combat as a clear and simple violation of the sixth commandment and the teachings of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

At the outset of the Civil War in 1861, President Lincoln called upon the states to raise volunteer forces to put down the "insurrection." But as the war dragged on through 1862 and the possibility of a military draft loomed, Adventists engaged in a vig-

orous debate over how they should respond in the event of a law compelling military service.<sup>5</sup>

In March 1863, guidance came from Ellen White. Her testimony rebuked some Adventists in Iowa who, by rashly declaring their pacifism even though no law existed requiring them to fight, had unnecessarily put themselves in a confrontational stance with the government. Mrs. White urged that Adventists do everything possible to show that they had no sympathy for slavery or for the Confederate rebellion. Yet, the prophet affirmed that "God's people...cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers."<sup>6</sup>

The military draft law enacted that same month provided the option of paying a fee to be exempted from service. The \$300 fee was a huge sum at that time, but messy confrontations with the government could be avoided by paying it. So, despite the financial strain on the movement, the church helped those who could not afford it.

However, when Congress, in July 1864, restricted the fee option to conscientious objectors who were members of a recognized pacifist church, the Adventist leadership moved swiftly in seeking governmental recognition of their noncombatant position. Declaring themselves "a people unani-mously loyal and anti-slavery" but unable to shed blood because of their views of the Ten Commandments and the teachings of the New Testament, they obtained an exemption that gave them the option of accepting assignment to hospital duty or care of freedmen or paying the \$300 fee.<sup>7</sup>

Even with this achievement, individual Adventist draftees frequently suffered denials, temporary imprisonment, threats of court-martial, and



other forms of harassment when attempting to claim their right to alternative duty. Lack of understanding among officers about the governmental ruling, prejudice against noncombatants, and poor communication all had a hand in causing the harassment to continue.<sup>8</sup> However, the time had come to take a public stand.

The General Conference at its 1865 session voted: "While we thus cheerfully render to Caesar the things which the Scriptures show to be his, we are compelled to decline all participation in acts of war and bloodshed as being inconsistent with the duties enjoined upon us by our divine Master toward our enemies and toward all mankind."<sup>9</sup>

Further resolutions at the 1867 and 1868 sessions reaffirmed this position, suggesting that the issues of war and military service were of more than passing or marginal significance. The 1867 resolution declared, simply, "that the bearing of arms, or engaging in war, is a direct violation of the teachings of our Saviour and the spirit and letter of the law of God."<sup>10</sup>

The Adventist pioneers were not in full agreement as to the nature of the scriptural basis for the position they had taken. However, they were united in affirming that adherence to the third angel's message meant being non-combatant. And when the American church next faced military conscription in 1917, the North American Division executive committee found the precedent from the "Civil War" episode of Adventist history clear enough. The church publicly affirmed, "We have been noncombatants throughout our history," and then quoted the General Conference resolution of 1865.<sup>11</sup>

### Prophetic witness

To take a public stand for nonviolence and for the abolition of slavery, as the Adventists did, to build a community dedicated to these principles, is a profoundly political act; perhaps even the most powerful way for Christians to show political responsi-

bility. Such a stance calls for change in the surrounding society and the wider world beyond. This may be termed "prophetic witness" because, in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets, it applies the word of the Lord to societal conditions—not denunciation or doom-saying for its own sake—but to provoke change.

While the Adventist Church has too often been the "silent church" reflected in the title of Zdravko Plantak's comprehensive study of human rights and social ethics in Adventism,<sup>12</sup> I want to offer two examples of peacemaking as "prophetic witness." The first, frequently overlooked, came in the era of the Spanish-American War, during which the United States began its emergence as a world power. Pacifism, and with it protest against war and militarism, appear more prominently at this time than any other in Adventist history. The second, peacemaking as restoring health and wholeness in human communities at every level, which became a hallmark of Adventist missionary work.

### Adventism's protest against war

Historian Sydney Ahlstrom points out that, during the period of the Spanish-American War and subsequent Filipino-American conflict, "patriotism, imperialism, and the religion of American Protestantism" stood in more "fervent coalescence than ever before."<sup>13</sup>

While the majority of American churches joined a consensus that converted the war into a crusade for Christian civilization, Adventists spoke out against the "spirit of militarism" being fostered "right within the bosom of the church."<sup>13</sup> Preaching at the Battle Creek Tabernacle, General Conference President George Irwin declared, "We have no business whatever to become aroused and stirred by the spirit [of war] that is abroad in the land."<sup>14</sup>

After the United States annexed the Philippines in February 1899 and

militarily suppressed an independence movement there, a wide array of voices in American society, including Adventists, charged the nation with imperialism. A.T. Jones, editor of the *Review and Herald* as well as the *American Sentinel* (predecessor to *Liberty*), and Percy T. Magan, a prominent Adventist educator and writer, were among the most vocal Adventist critics of the newly manifest American imperialism.

In his book *Peril of the Republic*, published in 1899 by the evangelical publishing house Fleming H. Revell, Magan decried the forcible annexation of the Philippines as "national apostasy" from the principles of the Declaration of Independence. In this embrace of imperialism, America, he said, was abandoning the "new order of things" established with the founding of the Republic and reverting to militarism and oppression characteristic of the old world.

Magan saw himself in a role similar to that of biblical prophets sent to warn kings and nations about the consequences of departure from the divine intention and called upon all citizens of the coming kingdom of God to be true to principle "in things national as well as personal" and to "work for right principles while it is day."<sup>15</sup>

Adventists, in this period, were not hesitant to apply their apocalyptic worldview to the foreign policy of their own government, and in so doing to hold the government to its own highest standards of human rights. Just over a decade later, an arms race contributed to an orgy of blood-letting between the tribes of Europe—primitive in its impulses but sophisticated in its techniques. With World War I, the century of genocide and WMD had begun.

Attempting to repair the damage, the leading world powers met in 1921 for the conference on naval disarmament, convened in Washington by the Harding administration. This endeavor to do the things that make for peace

elicited considerable and largely favorable comment from Adventist leaders, not the sort of fatalism and suspicion some might expect to see.<sup>16</sup>

From the annual council in Minneapolis, the church's leaders sent an address to the President, praising him for holding the conference and pronouncing that Adventists "strongly favor a limitation of armaments." They declared that they were "forced to this view by the very logic of our belief in Him who is the Prince of Peace, and of our experience as subjects of His kingdom." The address balanced realism about the elimination of war as long as human beings are sinful with hope that change for the better is possible.<sup>17</sup>

### **Adventism and nurturing wholeness**

Peace in the biblical sense of *shalom* also encompasses the full range of human well-being. Peacemaking thus means nurturing *shalom*—restoring health and wholeness in human communities at every level. The historic Adventist commitment to health reform, which connects life in all its aspects with the plan of redemption, and to the humanitarian ideals of medical missionary service have energized this form of peacemaking.

One finds an abundance of examples, once again, during the 1890s and first decade of the 1900s—political action for prohibition, the multifaceted humanitarian mission to Chicago led by John Harvey Kellogg and David Paulson, the church's entire medical missionary enterprise spreading

throughout the globe. I will elaborate on just one episode, in which we see Adventists nurturing *shalom* amongst a sector of American society subjected to centuries-long, systematic oppression.

After some brief glimmers of hope during the Reconstruction period, racial repression in America was, by the 1890s, rapidly hardening into a comprehensive, legally entrenched social system. As Ellen White pointed out, the nation had failed to seize the opportune moment just after Emancipation to make good on the promise of freedom by using money "freely" for the education and economic empowerment of a people still shackled by the legacy of slavery. The government, she wrote, "after a little effort, left the Negro to struggle, unaided...." The endeavors of various Christian agencies, while often noble and courageous, had been far from adequate to meet the need, and Seventh-day Adventist Church had quite simply "failed to act its part."<sup>18</sup>

By the mid-1890s, a national "capitulation to racism"<sup>19</sup> was in full sway, during which segregation and inequality were deeply embedded in the legal and social systems of the Southern states, and in less explicit but nonetheless real and destructive ways in American culture as a whole. The Adventist prophet, though, urged her people to defy the prevailing currents with what amounted to a multi-faceted mission for black liberation. "Walls of separation have been built up between the whites and the blacks. These walls of prejudice will tumble down of themselves as did the walls of Jericho, when Christians obey the Word of God, which enjoins on them supreme love to their Maker and impartial love to their neighbors. For Christ's sake, let us do something now."<sup>20</sup>

That "something" meant building the structures of *shalom* by providing education and economic opportunity: "The neglect of the colored race by the American nation is charged against them. Those who claim to be

Christians have a work to do in teaching them to read and to follow various trades and engage in different business enterprises."<sup>21</sup>

At the very time much of the white South was determined to restrict black people to sharecropping or some other form of perpetual debt peonage, Ellen White insisted that the cotton field *not* be "the only resource for a livelihood to the colored people. There will be awakened in them the thought that they are of value with God, and that they are esteemed as His property. The work pointed out is a most needful missionary enterprise. It is the best restitution that can be made to those who have been robbed of their time and deprived of their education."<sup>22</sup>

The church never rose as fully to this challenge as Mrs. White had hoped. Yet many of both races, including her son Edson, undertook courageous ventures—risking the violent reaction of white supremacists—in order to nurture *shalom* in all its dimensions. By 1909, results could be seen in 55 primary schools with 1,800 pupils in 10 Southern states, medical facilities in Atlanta and Nashville, the establishment of Oakwood Industrial School, and a modest but solid foundation for an Adventist presence in black America, consisting of at least 900 members where there had been fewer than 50 in 1894.<sup>23</sup>

Subsequently, Adventists seem to have lost much of the vision for being agents of *shalom* for the oppressed. Decades later, prophetic voices from beyond the Adventist ranks, such as that of Martin Luther King, Jr., would be required to prod the church to recover the principles so forcefully advocated by its own prophet in the 1890s.

Adventists of the 21st century face a challenge. In a new era of reconfigured and intensified worship of war-making, what will we do with Adventism's peacemaking heritage? To borrow a

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# Giving a reason for our hope

by Humberto M. Rasi

**“If anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell him, and do it in a gentle and respectful way” (1 Peter 3:15, TLB).**

**Scenario 1:** In his first lecture for a science course, your university professor presents an eloquent defense of evolution and speaks disparagingly of what he calls “illiterate creationists and misguided promoters of so-called Intelligent Design.” You and your classmates keep taking notes as some snickers are heard. As you silently file out of the lecture hall, one of your fellow students asks, “What do you think of evolution?”

**Scenario 2:** During a lunch break at a convention, a colleague notices your menu selection and asks if you’re vegetarian. As you discuss the presentations, he asks what you think of a panel discussion that has taken place on Saturday. As the friendly discussion ensues, he observes, “You seem like a smart person. So, why do you believe in God?”

**Scenario 3:** Your seatmate on a long flight is devouring the best-seller *The Da Vinci Code*. In the meantime, you’ve been reading and underlining a Christian journal. Your fellow traveler turns to you and asks, “Have you read this book? The author says Jesus married Mary Magdalene and that this fact was suppressed by Christian leaders. He also says the divinity of Christ was invented by the council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. This is amazing!”

How would you respond to these questions?

\* \* \* \* \*

Over the centuries, God’s followers have fought their crucial battles on the terrain of the human mind. It is in this arena that arguments are weighed, conclusions are reached, and

crucial decisions made. This is where reason and will are engaged.

Jesus was well aware of the tremendous potential for ideas to reach and change us. “You will know the truth,” He said, “and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32, NIV).<sup>1</sup> And he added, “I am the truth” (John 14:6).

Seventh-day Adventists, particularly those who attend public colleges and universities or are engaged in professional careers, regularly face questions regarding their beliefs, convictions, and lifestyle. These queries are posed by fellow Christians as well as by atheists, agnostics, and followers of other world religions.

We usually respond to these questions by offering rational arguments, providing evidence, or quoting Scripture, depending on the circumstance. We also pray silently that the Holy Spirit grant us supernatural help in offering an answer that will eventually lead others “into all truth” (John 16:13). Whenever we give reasons for our beliefs, we engage in a 2000-year-old activity validated by believers through the centuries—Christian apologetics.

In this essay we will seek to: (1) understand Bible-anchored apologetics as a valuable strategy for Christian witness; (2) examine the approach used by New Testament authors in explaining and defending core Christian beliefs; (3) outline the biblical mandate and method for doing apologetics; (4) review the value and limits of this endeavor; and finally (5) propose an agenda for the future.

## Toward a definition

The word *apologetics* comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which originally meant a speech of defense or an answer given in reply to a legal query, usually during a judicial procedure. Adopted by the early Christians, the word was used eight times in the New Testament, mostly by Paul, either as a noun (*apologia*) or a verb (*apologeomai*) to communicate a sense

of defense or vindication.<sup>2</sup> At its core, this defense centered on the person of Jesus Christ—His divinity and humanity, His death and resurrection, His forgiveness and promise of eternal life beyond the tomb, and the certain hope of His return in glory.

The New Testament provides several examples of apologetics in varied settings. For example, as a response to persecution (1 Peter 3:8-18), as a deliberate argument before a hostile religious audience (Acts 17:1-9), as a speech in front of an educated but skeptical group (Acts 17:16-34), as a personal defense of a consistent Christian witness (1 Corinthians 9:19-23), and as a personal witness for the truth of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-4; John 20:30).<sup>3</sup>

During the second century, the noun *apologia* and the verb *apologeomai* began to acquire a more technical meaning. The word *apologists* was then used to refer to a group of expositors who defended Christian beliefs and practices against various attacks, including charges of illegal and immoral activities.

Since the early 1800s, apologetics has been considered a discipline with various specialized branches, all defending the Christian faith from various perspectives—ethical, historical, philosophical, religious, scientific, or theological.

In its broader sense, apologetics has three dimensions. It is (1) a rational explanation of core Christian beliefs and teachings based on arguments and evidence; (2) a defense of Christianity in response to objections and criticisms; and (3) a challenge to and a refutation of opposing systems or deviant ideologies. In its first dimension, apologetics shows that Christianity is reasonable. In its second dimension, it demonstrates that Christianity is not unreasonable. In the third dimension, apologetics shows that non-Christian thought is unreasonable.

James W. Sire, an experienced evangelical apologist, offers this definition:

“Christian apologetics lays before the watching world such a winsome embodiment of the Christian faith that for any and all who are willing to observe there will be an intellectually and emotionally credible witness to its fundamental truth.”<sup>4</sup>

### **New Testament apologetics**

A careful reading of the New Testament reveals that early on, in addition to proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, “the infant church carried out her apologetical encounter with Judaism, with pagan-

ism, and with deviant tendencies that arose within the Christian community.”<sup>5</sup>

Although the four Gospel writers were primarily concerned with telling the story of Jesus, it is possible to detect in the background a desire to answer and perhaps even anticipate questions and objections from Christian believers, honest inquirers, and cynical opponents. These questions included: Wasn't the Messiah supposed to be not only a direct descendant of David but also a native and resident of Bethlehem? Did He really perform miracles that were witnessed by others? Why wasn't Jesus recognized as the Messiah even by His followers, and why was He rejected and ultimately condemned by the religious authorities? Why was Judas chosen as a disciple, when Jesus knew he would betray Him? Why did Jesus have to suffer a common criminal's death on a cross? Is there sufficient evidence that He actually died and came back to life on the third day? Where did Jesus go after His ascension, and why did He go there? Why hasn't He returned as promised? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John carefully provide answers to these and other key questions, taking into consideration the audience to whom their writings were principally addressed.

In the Book of Acts, Luke depicts the apologetic approach used by the apostles and other early Christian leaders as the church begins to expand its reach during the second half of the first century. Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin outlines the arguments used by the fledgling movement as it confronts the Jewish establishment. Peter's sermon at Pentecost and his speech in the house of Cornelius reveal a Christianity whose scope is broadening.

As Paul's missionary trips reach ever deeper into Roman territory, Christianity engages the pagans of Lystra, the cultured Greeks of Athens, and the pragmatic Romans. During

## **A case study: Paul speaks at Mars Hill**

In Acts 17, we find a useful example of a Christian apologetics address given by a leading missionary and intellectual. Although recorded in summary form, the passage provides an outline (vss. 16-34) for any believer given the opportunity to present the message of Jesus Christ to an educated, curious, and possibly hostile audience.

Around the year 60 A.D., Paul and his companions entered Europe bringing the gospel to Jews and non-Jews. After addressing various groups in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, they had arrived in Athens. Although no longer the Western world's undisputed center of art, letters, and philosophy, the city was still a thriving commercial and intellectual metropolis.

Paul's presentation may be outlined in the following manner:

### **1. Background**

- The motivation (vs. 16): Paul is touched by the many evidences of idol worship in the city and the need of its inhabitants to hear about the true God. According to a contemporary source, there were more than 3,000 deities worshipped in Athens.

- Getting acquainted with the cultural context (vss. 17, 18): After addressing the Jews in their synagogue and other believers, the apostle goes to the marketplace to interact with the people.

- In contact with the intellectual elite (vss. 18-21): The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debate him and become curious about his unusual

ideas. So they extend an invitation to present his philosophy to a select group of educated Athenians with very different worldviews.

### **2. The address**

- Building a bridge of understanding (vss. 22, 23): Paul establishes contact with his audience by praising them for their interest in religious matters and awakens their curiosity by referring to the altar devoted to an unknown god.

- Characteristics of the true God (vss. 23-28): This unknown god is the Creator of everything that exists in the universe. He made all human beings as part of one family, sustains them with His power, and has delimited their habitats. He is accessible to anyone who wants to find him. In fact, some Greek poets referred to this God.

- Implications of these facts (vss. 29-31): This living God does not need to be represented by material objects. He understands our condition and one day will judge all humans through a person He brought back from the dead.

### **3. The audience's reaction**

- Some scoffed (vs. 32), rejecting the preposterous idea that a person could be resurrected.

- Some were willing to hear more about the subject at another occasion (vs. 32).

- Some were persuaded by the arguments and became Christian believers (vss. 33, 34).

these encounters and in repeated conflicts with Jewish believers, the apostle emerges as a powerful apologist for the living Christ and the gospel's truth. His epistles reveal a committed mind, a masterful use of language, and a deep understanding of Jewish, Greek, and Roman culture—all of which is used first, to explain and defend Christianity, and second, to offer a powerful critique of Christian heresies and non-Christian worldviews. He writes forcefully, "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5).

Finally, the letter addressed to the Hebrews presents a forceful defense of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, as the perfect sacrifice for redemption from sin, and as mediator between humans and God. Christianity thus becomes the true religion, superseding Judaism.

### Mandate and method

A key New Testament passage provides the mandate and outlines the method for Christian apologetics. We find it in 1 Peter 3:15 and it is worth quoting it in the context of the previous and following verses: "Do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

Let's unpack the key components of this passage:

- *Be prepared:* An essential part of our witness and proclamation of

God's truth is to study, anticipate, plan, and be ready. Firmly anchored in God's Word, we must be familiar with the prevalent ideas of our time and the arguments that may be used against biblical Christianity. Before getting deep into the subject, we must know the background of the person or persons we are addressing.

- *Give reasons:* The Greek word used is *logos*, which the RSV translates as "account for," implying a rational explanation that can be understood and evaluated. Our arguments must be consistent and based on reasonable evidence.

- *About our faith commitments:* The "Christian hope" centers on the person of Jesus Christ, His divinity, the truth of His existence, and the reliability of His promises.

- *To anyone who asks:* This includes the entire range of individuals, from the honest seeker to the critic, from the simple to the keenest mind.

- *But do it with gentleness:* Convictions must be presented with respect. We must also be open to dialogue. Truth may be rejected simply because it is communicated in an arrogant or condescending manner.<sup>6</sup>

- *Be consistent:* In order to be effective, our words and our lives must match up.

- *Exalt Christ:* The ultimate purpose in our interaction is to lead our listener or challenger to know and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

A review of biblical examples in apologetics reveals that the method used by the apologist varies according to the situation and the context. The explanation and defense of Christian truths may take place in a private conversation, as a lecture in an educational setting, as a public debate, or in writing. The audience may be friendly, curious, or hostile, or a mixture of the three. Hence, the argumentation and rhetoric employed will vary according to the circumstances.

### The value of apologetics

At its best, apologetics seeks to eliminate obstacles, open avenues of understanding, and persuade people of the truth and credibility of the Christian faith. Ultimately, the believer engaging in apologetics wants to help non-Christians commit their lives to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and behave in ways consistent with that commitment.<sup>7</sup>

Biblical Christianity's claim sets itself apart from non-Christian theists, such as Jews and Muslims. The differences center mostly on the person of Jesus Christ. Both Jews and Muslims find it difficult to believe that Christ is God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, who became incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth, who died and resurrected, who offers salvation to those who accept Him, and who will come again in glory to this world. Agnostics and atheists, on the other hand, not only doubt or deny that God exists, but also that He created the universe, communicates with human beings in various ways, performs miracles, and will grant eternal life to those who believe and trust in Him.

Obviously, Christian apologetics is not for the soft-minded or weak-hearted! It demands deep reflection, continuing study, and humble courage. In addition, rational arguments that provide support for biblical faith are also valuable for Christians whenever they have sincere intellectual questions about core Christian beliefs. And this is a common occurrence among thoughtful Christians. Such arguments, however, are not proofs or demonstrations that would compel all rational people that God exists or that Christianity is true. Nonetheless, they provide evidence that the biblical-Christian worldview is coherent, believable, and more reasonable than its competitors.

Thus, engaging in apologetics helps establish the faith of Christian believers and provides them with

arguments to explain and defend their convictions as they interact with seekers, skeptics, critics, and followers of other religions. Apologetics compels Christians to master the biblical worldview, to understand and be able to critique the culture that surrounds them, and, in a foreign missionary setting, to become well acquainted with the culture and worldview of those to whom they wish to bring a saving knowledge of the gospel.

### The limits of apologetics

Adventists engaged in the explanation and the defense of their faith commitments need to recognize the limits of apologetics. Rational arguments cannot serve as the foundation of belief. Neither will such arguments necessarily bring non-believers to faith.<sup>8</sup> “[A] Christ like life,” wrote Ellen White, “is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in

favor of Christianity.... Not all the books written can serve the purpose of a holy life.”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in our natural condition we are unwilling to submit ourselves to God. Were it not for the subtle but powerful influence of the Holy Spirit we would not recognize our lostness and our desperate need of a Savior. That was precisely why Jesus came to this world—“to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10, RSV).

Nonetheless, apologetics can help create the context for respectful dialogue and can aid in building bridges of understanding with seekers. Thoughtful apologetics can also strengthen Adventists by fostering inquiry and removing obstacles to the development of a deeper, more mature faith. Ellen White wrote: “The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified

by those who serve Him intelligently.”<sup>10</sup> However, our worldview and our arguments should be anchored in the Scriptures, which are divine revelation for human beings of all times. We must also be balanced Christians, avoiding the extremes of rationalism and emotionalism—lifeless disputes and unreliable feelings.

When it is solidly based on the Scriptures, reason is not an enemy of faith and can instead be a strong ally. God Himself created us with the ability to think and to choose. Jesus declared that “the first and greatest commandment” required loving God with all our “mind” (see Matthew 22:37, 38; also Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27). A consecrated Christian life involves submitting all we are to Jesus, who is Truth. Loving God implies obeying His will, which must be understood rationally in order to act upon it.

In addition, “reason at least has veto power. We can’t believe what we know to be untrue, and we can’t love what we believe to be unreal. Arguments may not bring you to faith, but they can certainly keep you away from faith. Therefore we must join the battle of arguments.”<sup>11</sup>

James E. Taylor, a contemporary Christian apologist, argues for finding a middle ground between overemphasis on reason and overemphasis on faith: “Too much confidence in reason may lead to doubt or unbelief because no combination of arguments and evidences can prove conclusively that God exists or that Christianity is true.... However, too much emphasis on faith to the exclusion of reason may also lead to doubt or unbelief because there are legitimate questions of an intellectual sort about Christianity, such as the problem of evil or the problem of religious pluralism, that trouble sincere believers and seekers.”<sup>12</sup>

Ultimately, the various factors that lead a person to commit his or her life to Christ are beyond human com-

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prehension and control. They usually involve a combination of personal experiences, human relationships, cumulative rational evidences, the intercessory prayer of friends, and the ever-present, powerful influence of the Holy Spirit.

### The task ahead

Our civilization is experiencing a deep crisis of truth. The idea of objective truth is being attacked or completely abandoned in postmodern culture. Multiple creeds and ideologies compete with biblical Christianity around the world. At its deepest level, the crisis of our time is spiritual.

Adventist colleges and universities can help prepare our future ministers and professionals in critical thinking, acquainting them with the current ideas that oppose biblical Christianity, and showing how to answer opposing arguments. Our thought leaders need to be able to argue for the truths of Christianity and the solidity of Adventist beliefs in the give-and-take of real life.

More materials prepared by and for Adventists will also be useful in this important task. For example, a handbook on Adventist apologetics would be helpful to these students, to the thousands of Adventists attending public institutions of higher learning, and also to Adventist professionals who wish to have at hand ready answers to questions about their faith.

Ultimately, our struggle as Seventh-day Adventists is against secular unbelief and misguided beliefs, not against the atheists, agnostics, followers of other religions, or heretics themselves. In fact, by God's grace, each of them is a potential citizen of the new kingdom that Christ will establish. Our respect for individuals created in the image of God must lead us to polish our arguments and invigorate our outreach. Without apology, we should be always ready to "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3).

Humberto M. Rasi (Ph.D., Stanford University) is the author of many articles and editor of several books. He served as chief editor of *Dialogue* for almost 20 years. A longer version of this essay was presented during the III Symposium on the Bible and Adventist Scholarship, and can be found in <http://fae.adventist.org>. His e-mail address: [h.rasi@roadrunner.com](mailto:h.rasi@roadrunner.com).

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible passages are quoted from the New International Version.
2. New Testament passages in which the words *apologia* or *apologeomai* are used include:
  - Acts 22:1: "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my *defense*."
  - Acts 25:16: "An opportunity to *defend himself* against their charges."
  - 1 Corinthians 9:3: "This is my *defense* to those who sit in judgment of me."
  - 2 Corinthians 7:11: "... what eagerness to *clear yourselves*."
  - Philippians 1:7: "Whether I am in chains or *defending* and confirming the gospel."
  - Philippians 1:16: "Knowing that I am put here for *the defense* of the gospel."
  - 2 Timothy 4:16: "At my first *defense*, no one came to my support."
  - 1 Peter 3:15: "Always be prepared to *give an answer* to everyone who asks you."
3. See James W. Sire, *A Little Primer on Humble Apologetics* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2006), pp. 14-25.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
5. Avery Cardinal Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 2005), pp. 1ff.
6. See James W. Sire, *Why Good Arguments Often Fail: Making a More Persuasive Case for Christ* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006).
7. See Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 2001), pp. 17-22.
8. Paul's address on Mars Hill brought some results, since "a few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others" (Acts 17:34). However, Paul was aware of the limits of argumentation: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:18, 20, 21).
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## Guidelines for Contributors

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

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

1. To nurture an intelligent, living faith
2. To deepen commitment to Christ, the Bible, and Adventist global mission
3. To articulate a biblical approach to contemporary issues
4. To offer ideas and models of Christian service and outreach.

*Dialogue* usually assigns articles, interviews, and reports to specific authors for publication. Prospective authors are urged (a) to examine previous issues of our journal, (b) to carefully consider these guidelines, and (c) to submit an abstract and personal background before developing a proposed article. Unsolicited submissions will not be returned.

Check our website:

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# Nutrition and academic achievement: Are they related?

By Georgia E. Hodgkin

**Do you live to eat? Or eat to live? How you perceive and how you proceed on these issues can make a lot of difference in your life.**

Does academic performance depend on what you eat? Is there a link between proper nutrition and academic achievement? Consider some recent findings:

- Students who paid attention to their daily nutrient needs performed academically better in school.<sup>1</sup>
- Inadequate nutrition negatively influenced intelligence and academic performance.<sup>2</sup>
- Low levels of protein and iron indicated a correlation with low achievement scores.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Those with poor nutrition scored lower on tests of vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general knowledge.<sup>5</sup>
- Those who did not have break-

fast scored lower in tests of speed and accuracy of response on problem-solving.<sup>6</sup>

- Those with iron deficiency anemia were found to have shorter attention spans, irritability, fatigue, and difficulty with concentration, which led to poor vocabulary, reading, and other test scores.<sup>7</sup>
- Protein, in particular tryptophan, improved alertness.<sup>8</sup>
- Those slightly malnourished showed that their intelligence and performance were affected. Improved nutrition corrected these impairments.<sup>9,10</sup>
- Temporary hunger adversely affected attention, interest, and learning. A review of some 30 studies indicates that skipping breakfast interferes with cognition and learning.<sup>11,12</sup>

While dietitians cannot guarantee that a student who chooses well what and how much he or she eats will necessarily get all As, nutrition does lay the foundation for an alert, retentive brain, a plus for study. Energy level, attention span, and academic performance are influenced by eating habits.

Those habits are largely your responsibility. You must choose to build a strong, supportive foundation for the learning on which your career is built. Balanced, sound nutrition is an important part of that foundation.

The food we eat provides energy needed for all the body systems to function at optimum levels. Every organ and function of the body requires adequate nutrition and energy. Body cells, including those that are part of the brain, need nutrients and energy for their function and repair. Hence, the importance of what we eat and what we drink.

## What shall we eat?

The energy needed by the body comes from only three sources: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Carbohydrates are made up of starches and sugars. The body breaks down (metabolizes) the carbohydrates into glucose which is the only source of energy the brain can use.<sup>13</sup>

Consuming just carbohydrate is not enough. The breakdown process of starches and sugars into glucose requires other nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. The brain also needs a steady supply of protein, an essential requirement for the health and repair of all body cells. In addition, the brain and the central nervous system need fat to support the myelin sheaf with its fatty layer that surrounds the nerves.

Thus, just as the body in general requires a balanced nutrition consisting of carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals, and water, so does the brain, with its intricate nervous system, in order to function optimally.

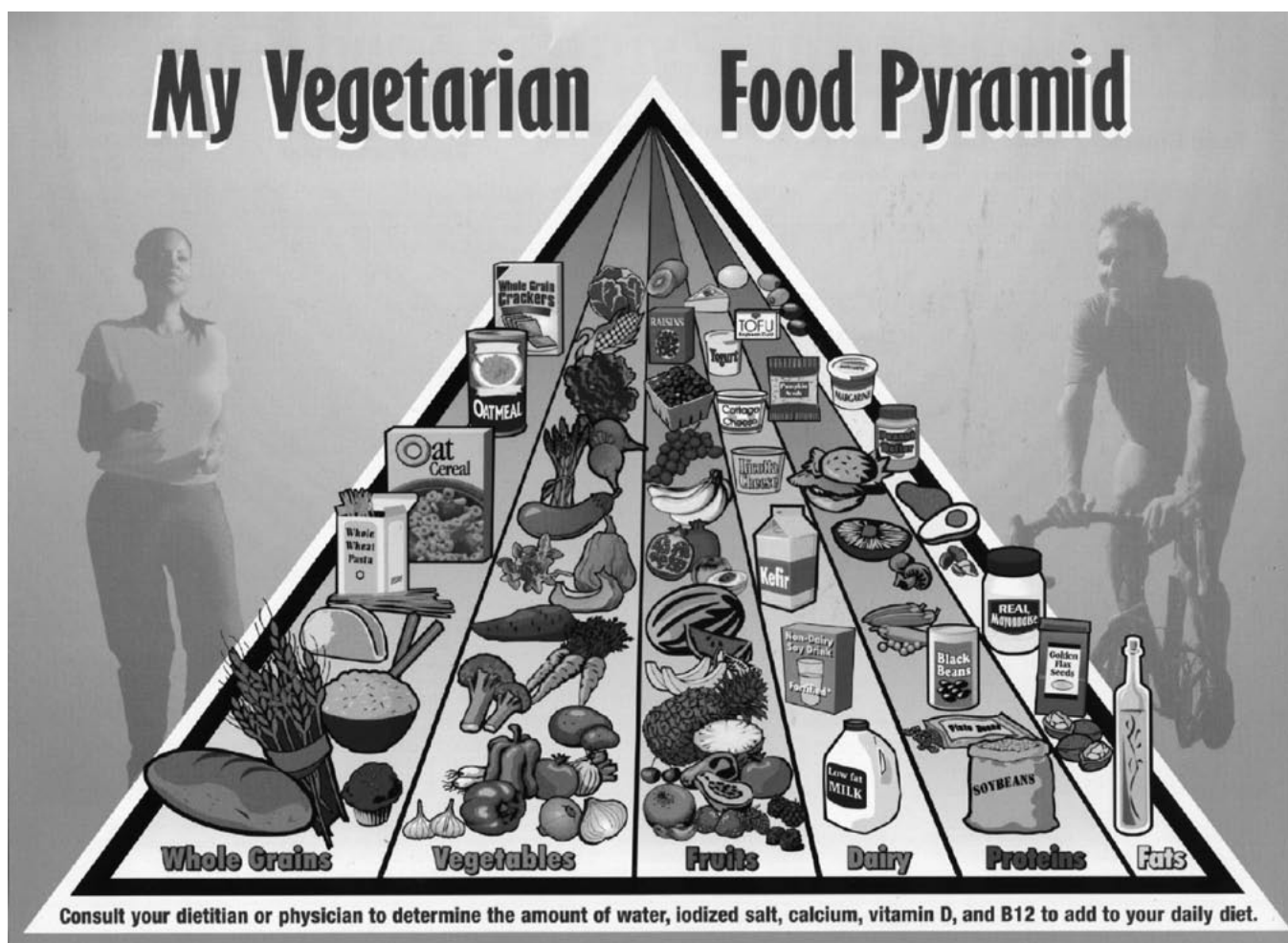
How do we ensure balanced nutrition? Several tools are available. Let us note three common ones. First, governments periodically issue national guidelines for nutrition. For example, the United States Departments of

## Box 1: Summary of Dietary Guidelines

1. Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages.
2. Maintain body weight in a healthy range.
3. Engage in regular physical activity.
4. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables every day.
5. Consume three or more ounces of whole-grains daily.
6. Consume three cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk products.
7. Keep total fat intake between 20 and 35 percent of calories; limit *trans* fat and cholesterol.
8. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugar.
9. Consume less than 2,300 mg. of sodium per day.
10. Clean your hands, food contact surfaces, and fruits and vegetables.

From U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (Washington, DC: 2005). Complete guidelines may be found at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)





**Box 2. My Vegetarian Food Pyramid**

Agriculture and Health and Human Services publish the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, based on the research of nutritional scientists. Updated every five years, the guidelines provide a basis for healthy eating habits. Box 1 provides a summary of these guidelines.

A second tool for choosing good nutrition is what is known as the food pyramid. Box 2 pictures the pyramid for vegetarians. *My Vegetarian Food Pyramid*<sup>4</sup> divides foods into groups based on the nutrients found in the foods. The major nutrients of each group are listed in Box 3. The *Pyramid* also gives the number of servings of each of the food groups recommended

to provide the number of calories required by an individual. (To find the calories you need, go to >MyPyramid.gov<, enter your age, gender, and activity level.)

A third tool regarding nutrient contents of a food item is the food label on packaged foods. This may not be available in all countries, but provides a simple guide as to serving size, calorie count, and selected nutrient content. See Box 4 for an illustration of the food label in U.S.A.

With information from the *Dietary Guidelines*, the food pyramid, and labeling on food packages, you have a reasonable system whereby you can choose foods that will ensure a bal-

anced, sound nutrition. You will also be able to maintain a healthy weight and a sense of well-being.

**Proteins: body builds from amino acids**

Protein can be found in many foods. In fact in all foods—even celery, watery celery. Not much, but some. The daily recommended allowance for protein is 0.8 grams (gm) per kilogram (kg) body weight. A male weighing 70 kg (154 lbs.) needs 56 gm of protein per day, whereas a female weighing 50 kg (110 lbs.) needs 40 gm per day. Following the *My Vegetarian Food* recommended servings in number and size for 2,000 calories for women and 2,500 calories

for men would result in a total protein per day of 67 grams for women and 80 grams for men.<sup>15</sup> Both results exceed the recommendation.

Proteins have been categorized as *complete* and *incomplete*, based on the amino acid profile of proteins in a food. Since vegetable protein may have a slightly different amino acid profile from meat, vegetable sources have been labeled as incomplete. In the past vegetarians were encouraged to choose complementary protein sources for a given meal, e.g., milk with cereal, beans with bread, etc. Current findings support consuming a variety of proteins over the course of a day, negating the intentional complementation of proteins at every meal.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to ingested protein, amino acids are available for absorption and building of proteins the body needs via the desquamated cells from the rapid sloughing of the cells lining the gastrointestinal track. A mixed and varied diet of sufficient calories plus the amino acid pool in the gastrointestinal tract provides sufficient protein.<sup>17</sup>

Vegetable proteins provide the amino acids necessary for good health without several negative substances abundant in meat. Saturated fat, especially tender cuts of meat, is a major

negative, since it enhances the formation of cholesterol. All meats contain cholesterol, the waxy substance deposited in blood vessels as atherosclerotic plaques. Pre-formed cholesterol, too, is a major negative. Better diets use vegetable proteins, i.e., beans, legumes, meat alternates, nuts, and seeds. These protein foods are not accompanied with saturated fat and cholesterol.

### What shall we drink?

The body needs water. Approximately 50 to 60 percent of one's total body weight is water. Sources of dietary water include liquid foods (yogurt, ice cream, custard, pudding), drinks (water, beverages), solid foods (fruits and vegetables are 73 to 95 percent water), and water of oxidation (200 to 300 cc per day). The estimated requirement for water intake is one milliliter per calorie ingested. An young adult needing 2,000 calories would require 2,000 milliliters or 8.3 cups of water a day.<sup>18</sup>

Bottled water is costly but may not be avoided in countries where pure drinking water is not available. A disadvantage with bottled water is that its mineral content may vary considerably, depending on its source.<sup>19</sup> Dentists have also noted a rise in cavities possibly related to the prevalence of the use of bottled water, since many brands do not contain the fluoride that is essential to dental health.

Young adults often choose beverages that do not provide any nutrients. Soda pop, for example, is flavored water and sugar without any nutritional benefit. Each 12 ounce can contains 150 to 180 calories or 7.5 to 9 teaspoons of pure sugar. Ellen White spoke of other non-nutritive beverages: "In relation to tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcoholic drinks, the only safe course is to touch not, taste not, handle not."<sup>20</sup>

Studies regarding the use of coffee and tea give conflicting results. Some studies show that caffeine increases athletic endurance,<sup>21,22,23</sup> elevates mood,<sup>24,25</sup> enhances a sense of happi-

ness,<sup>26</sup> may reduce the risk of obesity by decreasing white adipose tissue proliferation,<sup>27</sup> and may increase resistance to cold by increasing brown fat.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, studies have also documented certain risks associated with coffee-drinking: a decrease of muscle tone,<sup>29</sup> a decrease of memory functions in the presence of distracting noises or at high dosages,<sup>30</sup> an increase of distractibility,<sup>31</sup> mood depression on withdrawal,<sup>32</sup> blood pressure decrease,<sup>33</sup> possible tachycardia with high doses,<sup>34</sup> blockage of adenosine receptors which may cause CNS stimulation,<sup>35</sup> acting as a diuretic by increasing renal blood flow,<sup>36</sup> decrease of cerebral blood flow with possible increase of blood glucose,<sup>37,38</sup> increase of anxiety in those that are caffeine sensitive,<sup>39,40,41,42</sup> possible increase of anger, aggression, and violence in young but a decrease in older men,<sup>43</sup> and possible increase of urinary calcium loss and negative calcium balance.<sup>44,45</sup> Studies also show caffeine intake may cause gastroesophageal reflux,<sup>46,47,48</sup> lead to caffeine addiction,<sup>49,50</sup> increase risk of dehydration,<sup>51</sup> increase the incidence of myocardial infarction in women consuming more than five cups of coffee a day,<sup>52</sup> increase incidence of primary cardiac arrest in men and women drinking more than five cups a day,<sup>53</sup> and raise blood glucose levels in those who are insulin independent.<sup>54</sup> The ingestion of caffeinated and other soft drinks may also decrease the consumption of milk and fruit juice.<sup>55</sup>

The popular media tends to extol the virtues of alcohol, wine in particular, as beneficial to health. The phytochemical, resveratrol, in wine is responsible for the benefit; resveratrol comes from the skin of the red grape. Eating the grape or drinking red grape juice provides the same benefit. The American Heart Association has stated that with the relationship of ethanol "to a number of health hazards...there is little current justification to recommend alcohol (or wine specifically) as a cardioprotective strategy."<sup>56</sup>

### Box 3: Nutrients in each food group<sup>14</sup>

1. **Grains:** carbohydrates, protein, fiber, B vitamins, iron, folate, trace minerals.
2. **Vegetables:** carbohydrates, fiber, folate, Vitamin C, beta-carotene, Vitamin K, trace minerals.
3. **Fruits:** carbohydrates, fiber, Vitamin C, folate, trace minerals, phytochemicals.
4. **Dairy:** protein, calcium, Vitamin D, riboflavin, Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>.
5. **Protein:** protein, zinc, iron, Vitamin B<sub>6</sub>.
6. **Fats:** fatty acids, Vitamin E.

With all these cautions and concerns, what should one do about beverages? The best course is to choose beverages that benefit your health.

*My Vegetarian Food Pyramid* suggests that your health is well served by milk and its products, juices of fruits and vegetables, and water. If you choose alternates to milk, choose brands that provide the nutrients of milk. A serving of milk typically provides 8 grams of protein, 20 to 30 percent of the Daily Value (DV) of calcium, 30 percent DV of riboflavin, 20 to 25 percent DV of Vitamin D, 25 to 35 percent Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. Read the label on the milk replacement—soy, nut or rice—you choose.

### Conclusion

With so much evidence about making the right choice in what you should eat and drink and how diet affects your performance in study and your health, it is only reasonable to give yourself the benefit of a sound nutritional advantage. Ellen White wrote some 150 years ago: "Fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, free from spice and grease of all kinds, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet. They impart nourishment to the body, and give a power of endurance and vigor of intellect that are not produced by a stimulating diet."<sup>57</sup>

That intellectual vigor and power of endurance is yours to have. Give yourself a major advantage throughout your academic career, and indeed the rest of life, with balanced, sound nutrition. Follow the nutritional guidelines available to you, choose wisely what you eat and drink, exercise regularly, and follow the health principles that are part of the Adventist advantage (For more information on nutritional guides, consult the sources available online. See Box 6). Your brain needs the nutrients good food provides. Maximize the time, energy, and financial investment of higher education by attending to your nutritional needs.

Your lifetime career depend on an alert, retentive, well-fed brain.

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## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 cup (114g)  
Servings Per Container 4

### Amount Per Serving

Calories 260 Calories from Fat 120

	% Daily Value*
<b>Total Fat</b> 13g	<b>20%</b>
Saturated Fat 5g	<b>25%</b>
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg	<b>10%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 660mg	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 31g	<b>11%</b>
Sugars 5g	
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>

### Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 2% • Calcium 15% • Iron 4%

\* Percents (%) of a Daily Value are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may vary higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

Nutrient		2,000 Calories	2,500 Calories
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400 mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Fiber		25g	30g

1g Fat = 9 calories,  
1g Carbohydrates = 4 calories  
1g Protein = 4 calories

### Box 4. A food label.

Continued on page 32

## PROFILE



The year 1979 marked a significant milestone in Brazilian history. That year the all-male parliament made way for the first elected woman senator: Eunice Michiles, a Seventh-day Adventist.

Born in an Adventist home, Eunice's childhood was shaped largely by the values of her missionary parents, with her father serving as a pastor in remote areas of Northeast Brazil. Her father's absolute dedication to serve the spiritual and social needs of the poor and the underprivileged in largely neglected regions led her to an early resolve to transmit the values of the gospel to the political and social fabric of the country.

## Eunice Michiles

A dialogue with the first woman, first Adventist, senator of Brazil

Her interest in social service with a Christian commitment led her to politics, and the first great door opened when she was elected to the federal senate in 1979. Later she also became the first woman counselor to the State of Amazon Accountability Office.

In 1984, Michiles was also nominated to run for the republic's vice-presidency. Her career was not simply politics for its own sake; she saw her public role as an opportunity to instill in the country's governance agenda issues that were little discussed until then. Her political platform was specially distinguished by the defense of women's rights, sustainable development, ecological education and family planning. Her involvement in family planning and welfare issues received international recognition when the United States Congress awarded her a Medal of Honor for her distinguished work in the area.

Even though she is immersed in public life, Eunice continues to be an active and involved member of her local Adventist church. She teaches a Sabbath school class, leads out in women's ministries, and devotes her talents wherever the church needs them most. In 2005, she was part of the South American Division delegation to the General Conference session at St. Louis.

### ■ *Tell us a little about your early life.*

My parents, Theófilo and Edith Berger, were an adventurous couple. They pioneered Adventist missionary work early in the 1930s in northeast of Brazil, a very needy region of the country. They devoted themselves completely to ministry, offering spiritual and material assistance to their parishioners. Their dedication, long hours of service, and a loving willingness to do whatever they could to make God's love meaningful made a lasting impression on me as a child. That's where I caught the true essence of the gospel—to go beyond preaching and get involved with real-life problems, with joys and concerns, of those for whom you minister.

### ■ *What were the most impressive facts that marked your life during this period?*

The loss of my father. On one of his long missionary trips into the hinterland, my father contracted typhoid fever—a serious illness at that time—and after a few weeks of struggle, he died. I was 10. The sudden tragedy completely changed our life. We moved to a two-story house behind an Adventist school, where my mother worked as a laundress to care for me and my younger brother. I took over some responsibilities and even worked at a factory. Life was very hard, and I developed a big inferiority complex. But the Lord provides help just when you need it most. For me, help came from one of my school teachers. She took a deep interest in me, and with a word here and a tap on the shoulder there, she made me realize that I am precious to God and that God will use me for His purposes. She would read my school assignments and would commend my work. She instilled in me

self-confidence and a dependence on God. Slowly I overcame my feelings of inadequacy.

■ *Do you think those early difficulties contributed to the fulfillment you found later in life?*

Certainly. Generally, we don't understand why certain things happen to us, particularly difficult things. But God transforms pain and losses into valuable lessons. He did that to me and strengthened me to face the next challenge. When I finished teaching school, I got married, and I went through a major change. I moved to live in the country side of the State of Amazon, a place of great natural beauty, but social misery. God used me there. I not only taught, but helped build 127 schools, contributing to the elimination of illiteracy in that region. I had the Adventist education as a model. The challenges were many. At one point, a varicella epidemic hit the region and many people died. The Adventist upbringing and philosophy of service made me get involved. I was fully immersed in relief work, worked with health teams, and saw literally so many saved from the jaws of the epidemic. During my social work, some people asked for prayers. That was when I felt truly needed. One day, a man sent for me. He was in his final moments of life. He asked me to recite Psalm 23. When I finished, he died in my arms. Those were years of intense self-sacrifice—and spiritual fulfillment. I discovered that God had a special purpose for me.

■ *How did you get involved into politics?*

My husband's family was really involved in politics. I preferred to remain in the humanitarian and teaching fields. When we moved with my four children to the capital of Amazon, I began to manage an enterprise. I soon found out that I could not be far from humanitarian work, so I decided to run for public office. I faced a lot of prejudice and political persecution.

But God had a plan, and in five years I became the first woman senator in Brazil.

■ *Is it possible to promote peace through politics?*

Jeremiah 29:7 says: "And seek the peace of the city...for in its peace you will have peace" (NKJV). We cannot talk about peace when there is social injustice, misery, when the laws go against biblical principles, and when people are prevented from worshipping God. I worked on legislation involving religious liberty and environmental matters that have gained global importance today. Gender equality is another issue that is dear to my heart. There are many other areas in which we should labor to bring Christian values and concern, and as a result bring about transforming changes. Through politics, the Christian community has the opportunity to put biblical teachings into practice and fight for the promotion of peace in the most diverse spheres.

■ *How did you live the biblical principles during your service?*

I'll give you one example. In the Amazon, I saw women dying, weakened by successive pregnancies. It was urgent that they receive information about family planning. Besides that, women's rights in the Constitution itself were limited. Thus, I sought to propose and write new laws. By invitation of other countries, I lectured on the importance of women's participation in politics and their right to equality before the law. My involvement in such issues took me to countries as far away as Iraq and China. To this day, the matter of women's rights is a subject of great importance. The participation of women in politics and leadership roles is still limited. In many countries, for instance, the working woman does not have access to child care within her own workplace.

Such conditions related to gender

prejudices are contrary to biblical teachings. Doesn't the Bible picture women of prominence like Deborah, who was a spiritual and political leader in times of war? Or the virtuous woman of Proverbs, who successfully reconciled her professional life, humanitarian activities, and her family? Or Mary, the woman chosen by God to be the mother of our Savior? We need to take the biblical teaching on the equality of men and women seriously and implement them in real life—in politics, church life, workplace, or wherever. The Bible should be at the foundation of our actions in private and public life, in the pulpit, in our business, and at home. We are challenged to do that. The way Jesus treated people should be our model.

■ *How can Christians get involved in public matters to promote peace?*

We can get involved in many ways. Consider serving in public office. Get involved in the process of legislation and the debates that circle around them. Pray for the instituted authorities. Be alert and involved in great social issues pertaining to matters that must be a source of concern to Christians: alcohol and drug questions; matters relating to religious liberty, including the right to keep the Sabbath; educational priorities, etc. Make the Christian concern felt in such areas without getting partisan or sectarian. Our involvement must be wholesome and positive.

■ *Could such participations pose any threat to Christian life?*

In any human enterprise, even in Christian environments, we have to choose: Are we going to act according to human will or divine orientation? The same with politics. In fact, the challenges here may be even greater. Don't you think Daniel in Babylonian politics faced more challenges than a common Jew living not far from Daniel? Daniel had the keys to the kingdom, and money may have been

a great temptation to him. He must have suffered strong political pressures to accept laws and behaviors that were contrary to biblical convictions. The challenges to a Christian involved in politics are not few, and the risks to move away from God are real. But Daniel was faithful, just as Joseph and Esther were. We cannot lose sight of the fact that our kingdom is not of this world and that all our political action should have the sole purpose of helping others to see a kingdom beyond this one.

■ *What final message would you like to leave to the readers of Dialogue?*

Challenges and difficulties will come in life. Without them, life is not normal. But the main point is, never give up. You will suffer injustices, but cultivate love and act with concern to change the world. Give love the first place in all your relationships. Keep your focus on God, and you can make a difference in the world. Each day, allow the Word to become flesh in your life. Let the Christian ideal govern your actions. This is the principle of any political action capable of promoting and establishing peace.

## Interview by Henrienne Barbosa.

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Website: <http://www.euniceMichiles.com>.

## Peacemaking Continued from page 10

phrase from James White, How interested are we, during our own time of perilous conflict, in marching with the ranks of those “who have enlisted to serve under the prince of peace”?<sup>24</sup>

Douglas Morgan (Ph.D., University of Chicago) professor of history at Columbia Union College in Maryland, U.S.A. An earlier version of this essay appeared in *The Peacemaking Remnant: Essays and Historical Documents* (Adventist Peace Fellowship, 2005).

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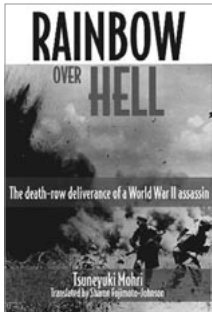
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# BOOKS



**Rainbow Over Hell: The Death-Row Deliverance of a World War II Assassin**  
by Tsuneyuki Mohri, tr. Sharon Fujimoto-Johnson (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 2006).\*

Reviewed by Lisa M. Beardsley

How does a school boy still in his teens become an assassin? Why would a mother throw herself off a cliff or a girl raise her hands in a slow dance before being blown apart? This book will grip history buffs as well as thoughtful moderns who wonder why young men willingly face gunfire, suicide missions, and torture for the sake of a “righteous” war. The willingness to give up one’s life to protect the Divine Nation “was proof of being Japanese.” In a current world of war, that willingness is not limited to the Japanese.

Saburo’s story recounts the savage battle of Saipan that began June 11, 1944. Unaware that they had been abandoned, Japanese soldiers and civilians desperately fought the overwhelmingly stronger American forces, believing the military strength of the Rising Sun would dawn on their more than 365 nights of hell. It never did.

Fiercely loyal to the Divine Emperor, Saburo infiltrated the civilian detention camp and assassinated a Japanese man said to be a traitor, spreading “lies” that Japan had surrendered and lost the war. The military policeman who gave the orders to kill did so again and Saburo unflinchingly murdered a second time for the honor of the Divine Nation. After waging guerilla warfare for nearly four months past the end of the war, the rag-tag band of soldiers and civilians finally surrendered. Saburo was imprisoned and tortured. He confessed to the murders and was sentenced to die, while the military policeman who gave the orders went free and returned to Japan.

The narrative moves swiftly. The reader, having seen the brutality of the war, now gains a level-eyed, unadorned picture of the rage and confusion of this betrayed young man as he faces death in Guam. A rehearing reduced the sentence to life imprisonment. Saburo was moved to Oahu Prison in Hawaii.

Years later, Saburo stood at the site of the prison with a television documentary crew. “It’s all so changed,” he reflected. “There’s nothing to indicate that a prison had ever stood there.”

Indeed, so much had changed. Not just with the prison site, but in life itself. The gripping and fast-moving story

tells how God changes lives and events to bring about beauty out of ashes, love out of hatred. The prisons of war, death, revenge, and hopelessness that once imprisoned Saburo gave way to the sunshine of hope. By means of retelling the making of a documentary television program about “Paul of Okinawa,” this is a story within stories, and the two postscripts by the author and translator’s notes at the end testify how the power and grace of God in this one life continues to hang a rainbow of hope over the hell of futility that often seems to surround human existence.

The author’s observation provides an insightful perspective on the perpetual question of war. “War is the slaughter of humanity under a country’s flag. And it is the ultimate evil and sin by humanity against humanity. Why do human beings cause war and hate and fight each other? The cause is found deep in the human soul. And the cure must be the peace that comes to the soul through the love of Jesus Christ.”

\* The book was originally published in Japanese as *Jigoku-no Niji* in 1998 by Mainichi Newspapers Company and in 2005 by Kodansha Publishing Company.

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**Faith Step by Step: Finding God and Yourself**  
by Reinder Bruinsma (Grantham, England: Stanborough Press, 2006).

Reviewed by Israel Bamidele Olaore

Reinder Bruinsma is an intricate weaver. With words and arguments, precise and well chosen, he weaves his work on *Faith Step by Step: Finding God and Yourself*. The task is well done, and the result is a masterful journey through challenging and complex explanations, trying to hold the hand of a seeking postmodern traveler toward discovery of God and self. The author presumes a postmodern, scientifically astute, intellectually savvy, and philosophical reader. The introductory chapter beautifully summarizes the book and calls for a decision: “to have a relationship with an awesome loving God” (p.15).

Continued on page 26

# Einstein's brain

By Clifford Goldstein

***The God who created Einstein's brain is also the one who can make you understand what you are and what you can be.***

Everyone always wanted a piece of Albert Einstein (an interview, a quote, a signature, a memento, whatever), and that obsession with him didn't die when he did either. So great was the mania for anything Einstein that after the man's death his brain was snatched out of his head like a walnut out of its shell. The brain that had, for almost a half century, dominated physics, disappeared like one of the subatomic particles that had so fascinated it.

One rumor said that someone had dissected the organ and stored it in a garage in Saskatchewan, next to hockey sticks and deflated basketballs. The truth, however, was that—after performing an autopsy on Einstein in 1955 (who died of an aortic aneurysm)—the attending physician, Dr. Thomas Harvey, opened up the corpse's skull and removed the brain, ostensibly for medical research. The only problem was, the doctor took the brain and never returned it (supposedly, too, Einstein's ophthalmologist got the eyes, which he would on occasion take out and show around at parties).

"Harvey kept the brain himself," wrote a journalist about the fate of Einstein's brain, "not at the hospital but at home, and when he left Princeton he simply took it with him. Year passed. There were no studies or findings. And, in turn, no legal action was brought against Harvey, as there was no precedent in the courts for

the recovery of a brain under such circumstances. And then Harvey fell off the radar screen. When he gave an occasional interview—in local newspaper articles from 1956 and 1979 and 1988—he always repeated that he was about 'a year from finishing study on the specimen.'"<sup>1</sup>

After holding on to "the specimen" for 40 years, and doing little with it but doling out small pieces to a select few, Dr. Harvey—whose practice sank after it became known what he had done (being a ghoul wasn't exactly a great medical career move)—made a decision. Now in his 80s and perhaps feeling guilty, he decided to give the brain back to the family, which meant an Einstein granddaughter living in Berkeley, California. Journalist Michael Paterniti, who befriended Dr. Harvey, offered to drive him from the East Coast to Einstein's granddaughter, and so off they went on a cross-country trip in a Buick Skylark with Einstein's formaldehyde-soaked brain floating in a Tupperware bowl in the trunk.

Paterniti wrote a book, *Driving Mr. Albert*, that recounted one of the more unusual road trips in American history: an old guilty doctor, a gifted journalist, and, of course, Albert Einstein's brains sloshing in the trunk for about 3,000 miles, which (as one could imagine) caused spasms of hoopla along the way.

The most insightful scene, however, came toward the end of trip, when the two men met Einstein's perplexed granddaughter, Evelyn. Although she knew that they were coming with her famous grandfather's brain, she wasn't quite sure what she was supposed to do with it. At one point Evelyn Einstein and Paterniti were sitting in

the front seat of the Skylark when he opened the lid to show her Grandpa Albert's brain.

"I lift the lid, unravel a swath of damp cloth, and then maybe a dozen golf ball-size chunks of the brain spill out—parts of the cerebral cortex and the frontal lobe," Paterniti wrote. "The smell of formaldehyde smacks us like a backhand. . . . The pieces are sealed in celloidin—the pinkish, liver-colored blobs of brain rimmed by gold wax. I pick some out of the plastic container and hand a few to Evelyn. They feel squishy, weigh about the same as very light beach stones."

She and Paterniti passed pieces back and forth for a few more moments, and then Evelyn, who remembered her grandfather very well, looked up at Paterniti and said, "So this is what all the fuss is about?" A moment later she fondled another piece and commented, "You could make a nice necklace of this one."<sup>2</sup>

Then, calmly, quietly, they placed the pieces back into the Tupperware container and closed the lid on Albert Einstein's brain.

## **A matter of fact about the fact of matter**

Put aside the weirdness of the scene (sitting in a car with Albert Einstein's granddaughter and passing around parts of his brain as if they were stolen jewels). Instead, consider the fact that they were holding in their hands the literal (and we mean *literal*) place that almost three centuries of Newtonian physics were overthrown. Within those "golf ball-size chunks of the brain" the foundation of nuclear physics had been formulated. Somewhere right there, in those "pinkish, liver-colored blobs," the formula  $E=mc^2$  emerged, a concept that changed the world. Those little pieces of matter (no longer gray but pink) pulled the theories of special and then general relativity out of the air, theories that showed that time and space were not absolute but change depending upon the amount of



matter involved and the speed of the observer. In short, those few clumps of matter that they held in their hands while sitting in the front seat of a Buick Skylark on a street in Berkeley, California, had created some of the most fascinating and valuable ideas in the history of humanity.

Though the symbolism of the scene presents many possibilities, one is—Could Einstein and all his genius, his ideas, his passions (Albert was somewhat of a Casanova), be limited to this brain matter, to those rills and crevices composed of neurons and fiber? Or could it be restricted to just his entire physical structure—his brain and the rest of his body?

Is that, in the end, all Albert was?

Ultimately, what are any of us, really—purely physical beings, living by physical laws alone, exuding emotions, ideas, art, and creativity the way the stomach secretes peptic acid and the liver bile? Are we, and all that we do and think and create, nothing more than purely physical phenomena, nothing more than the motion of atoms, the synthesis of proteins, the binding or activation of adenylate cyclase, the sequence of ACTH, alpha-MSH, beta-MSH, and beta-lipotropin? Is the question of whom we'll marry merely different confluences of physical vectors? Could, ideally, everything about us—our thoughts, our desires, our choices—be explained, expressed, and predicted the same way that we can the motions of the stars?

The answer depends on one major question, and that involves our origins. How did we get here, and why? If we're the products of purely physical forces within a purely physical universe—with nothing existing outside of matter and motion, nothing greater than matter and motion, nothing beyond matter and motion—then how could we be anything other than matter and motion? Could the whole ever be more than the sum of its parts? Of course not, some would argue. Thus, in this view, we are physical processes

totally determined by antecedent physical activity, which means that we have no more free will than a windup doll or a computer running a program.

### The sentence

A young man stood before the judge, who had just sentenced him to 10 years in prison. When asked if he had anything to say, the criminal said: "Yes, I do."

"OK," the magistrate responded, nodding, "go ahead."

"Judge," he asserted, approaching the bench, "how can you in good conscience sentence me to jail? It's not fair."

The judge dropped his reading glasses to the end of his nose, looked down at the defendant, and asked, "It's not?"

"No!"

"OK, explain."

"It's because," the man said, edging even closer, "from the moment I was born, from my family, from my genes, from my upbringing, from my environment, from my friends—everything predetermined me to a life of crime through no choice of my own. I couldn't have turned out any differently. I'm no more responsible for my actions than water is for flowing down stream. I had no choice for any of the things I did."

The judge sat there, silent, pondering. After a few moments, he leaned forward and, speaking directly into the young man's face, said, "Well, son, I'll tell you how I can sentence you to 10 years in prison. From the moment I was born, from my family, my genes, my upbringing, my environment—everything that ever happened in my life has forced me, from no choice of my own, to sentence you to these 10 years."

The judge then slammed down his gavel, and a police officer took the prisoner away.

### Organic robots

Are we, then, like that judge and criminal, so totally captive to physical forces that everything we do—from

what we eat for breakfast to whom we love—are not really free choices but the inevitable outcome of what came before? However it might otherwise feel, are our "free choices" as predetermined as our DNA? "Everything that happens," wrote Arthur Schopenhauer, "from the largest to the smallest, happens necessarily."<sup>3</sup> If we take this purely materialistic view of reality, it's hard to believe otherwise.

On the other hand, if the idea of our existence as being nothing but the random motion of nonrational atoms seems about as adequate as love being nothing but hormonal excretions, then our origins must come from something greater than physical laws, something more than motion and matter. There would have to be a power greater than the mechanical and physical laws that run the universe, something that created not only those laws but along with them our freedom, our creativity, and our capacity to love—aspects of our existence that don't appear to be defined only by nature's laws.

And who else—or what else—could that power be, other than God, the Creator? When the Bible says that humanity was made "in the image of God" (Genesis 9:6), this could mean that things such as human freedom, creativity, and love are the manifestation of the character of God Himself. Again, if there is no God who has created a world in which free choice exists, one in which freedom functions at a level beyond the purely physical, then it's hard to see ourselves as anything but organic robots hard wired with neurons instead of silicon chips.

Which is it?

The answer's important because within it we can find meaning and purpose to our existence, if any exists at all. After all, it would be hard (though maybe not impossible) to discover much meaning and purpose were we nothing but matter and motion, beings with no control of our thoughts, actions, or choices. (It would be depressing, too, for if we are purely

physical processes alone, then we have no choice but to imagine ourselves as free even though we're really not.) On the other hand, if we're beings created by a conscious force who has made us free and has given us the capacity to make choices on our own, then our lives can take on a whole new dimension, one infinitely beyond mere physical forces that can no more choose for themselves than the pages of a book can select the words that will go on it.

Again, which is it? Are we mere automatons, or free beings created in the image of a loving God?

This question is just another way of asking, Who are we? What are we? What do our lives mean? Consider these questions in the context of God's revelation.

And the good news is that you don't need Einstein's brain to find or understand the answers, either.

Excerpted from Clifford Goldstein's latest book, *Life Without Limits* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 2007). Used by permission.

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## Faith Step

Continued from page 23

The book is no simple attempt at spoon-feeding. It demands of the reader to figure out life applications to the thoughts and concepts proposed as necessary stepping stones to God and self-discovery. Carefully choreographed chapters that are meant to be sequential are placed in an ascending order to a decision for God. Meaning is followed by Truth, which if well understood and appreciated will lead the seeker to Faith. These first three chapters are meant to establish in the mind of the reader the reality of God.

At this point, who cannot but agree with Bruinsma that "this awareness of the divine does not come as the result of deep thinking or the reading of sophisticated philosophical books or even through a diligent reading of the Bible, though all these things have their place. It is a gift that just comes to us" (p. 60).

Hope follows Faith on to Grace, Rest, and then Community. The last three chapters, Responsibility, Commitment, and Mission, seek to establish for the seeker-reader reasons for wanting to affiliate with Christians. This may happen if the reader gets that far in the heavy reading involved in this book. Overall, the book is heavy on doctrinal correctness and Christian apologetics but light on experience, which according to the author, is one of the major values of a postmodern person.

The author opens the chapter on stress and rest with the experience of reading an article in the in-flight magazine on a trip between the UK and the U.S.A. in 1997. "Ancient Wisdom" by Nan Chase, a frequent contributor to the *Washington Post*, illuminated the virtues of Sabbath observance as a way of life (p.109). Anyone could relate with the experience, which brought home the doctrine of the Sabbath better than a thousand sermons.

The kernel of the book: "without the unfaltering conviction that Christ has conquered death and brought real quality life within the reach of all who want to accept it, the Christian message is diluted to a humanistic philosophy" (p. 79). Bruinsma's argument on church affiliation is based on design. "God knows that most of us crave for community—that's how he designed us. Right from the very beginning he determined that it would not be good for humans to be alone. He knew that they would need and enjoy company. That's why he made us as males and females and gave us the possibility to procreate" (p. 127).

I am all for community, commitment, and mission, but I sure hope our seeker-reader makes it to the point of commitment.

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## VIEWPOINT

# A fistful of dollars

By Raúl Esperante

### **The contradictions of postmodernism when trying to explain “evil.”**

Is there a line in human history and conscience that divides what is right from what is wrong? Is marriage a sacred institution in which there is no room for a third party? Is lying permissible under some circumstances? Is moral integrity a basic essential to decent functioning of the human community? Is there a marked distinction between white and black or is there a shady area of grayness where anything goes and everything is possible?

Time was when the very asking of such questions was considered weird and unacceptable. But no longer so. With postmodernism bursting onto the scene, the distinction between black and white seems to disappear and the certainty of not just grayness but various shades of gray have begun to define human conduct and behavior. A lie is no longer a lie, but a statement that has become inoperative during a course of time. Virginity is no longer a virtue to be preserved until the wonder and mystery of matrimony envelops the young. Mass media and television are no longer transmitters of just information and entertainment, but shakers and shapers of the norm for society from politics to sex to business to life's real quality. Clint Eastwood works no longer for just a fistful of dollars to re-establish order in the wild West; on the contrary, the criminals of *The Italian Job* are praised because they are able to take a fantastic loot from another resourceful (and traitor) robber.

For decades our parents and grandparents wished for clear answers to divisive and alienating approaches. Some of them were socialists, some capitalists. Some of them were for abortion, some against. Some were liberal, others conservative. Well, postmodernism ended all such divisions with two different strategies: On the one hand, it changed the name of the various options or approaches to requalify as problems; on the other, it taught us that it is more advisable to dwell in shades of gray.

Postmodernism has proved to be very successful in modern and technologically advanced societies, where religious beliefs and their implications are relativized and reinterpreted. Now, it is said, we do not need to be ruled by a canon of absolute truth and standards because such “absolutes” do not actually exist. The absolute has become obsolete. Our beliefs are defined by our experience, not the other way around; our morals are based by what we enjoy doing, not by what we decide to avoid.

### **The problem of evil**

If there is one concept deeply affected by postmodernism, that is the notion of evil. For postmodernism, evil is nonexistent. Evil is just made of unfavorable circumstances resulting from the random actions of natural elements.

But this trend is not an accident. It was inevitable as more and more Darwinian ideas were allowed free reign in arts and sciences, educational, social, and psychological realms, and even in philosophy and theology. The theological scene, surrendered to Darwinism, is the most pathetic of

all, so that it is not uncommon to see some present-day theologians reject the biblical concept of sin but speak of evil as a necessary and unavoidable reality, resulting from the performance of natural forces ultimately allowed by God. Many theologians see the Fall and Adam and Eve as myths. Some who accept the Fall do not consider it a negative experience. After all, the serpent told Eve the truth—Eve did not die when she ate the fruit, and she gained the knowledge she was after—knowledge of good and evil that made her more like God. Far from regarding the Fall as the ruin of humanity, such advocates regard it as a liberation from self-imposed and biological constraints. In this postmodern view, so well advocated by Patricia Williams,<sup>1</sup> evil becomes an agent for the personal development, providing human beings with knowledge about themselves and their environment.

Living in such a context, Christians may feel disappointed at the lack of valid answers offered by society when discussing vital and overarching dilemmas. Even our children are sinking in the sea of relativism as they find themselves without meaning and relevance in a society plagued by moral ambiguity and spiritual uncertainties. Such a challenge to moral and spiritual stability becomes even more acute when we face unexplainable tragedies like the recent tsunami that washed away more than 200,000 lives in one gigantic sweep. What is the Christian response to such a challenge?

In the light of Patricia Williams' interpretation, one wonders what positive value and knowledge were obtained by those carried away by the raging waves of the ocean? Or to go back to the original scene, was the knowledge Eve acquired in Eden worth it? In opposition to what Aristotle and others may claim, knowledge is not always a good thing, nor is it always a developmental achievement. We can all recollect events we would rather not have known, as is the case with war

survivors. As William Dembski puts it, if the knowledge resulting from the fall of Eve “was such a great blessing, why did God employ angels and a flaming sword to keep humanity from trying to get back into the Garden—to their pre-Fall state?”<sup>2</sup>

### The biblical answer

Those of us who still think of ourselves as belonging to the old school do not hesitate in telling our children that biblical “myths” are in fact the best explanation for the humanly unexplainable: the origin of evil. But for many the biblical account is not satisfying. Even Jesus did not offer

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another—be it scientific, biological, materialistic, or theological—explanation for the problem of sin. His succinct theology of evil can be summarized in a brief phrase: “An enemy has done this” (Matthew 13:28, NKJV). We may not be able to process every implication of His explanation, but it makes sense. Jesus tried to shift the focus from *why* evil exists to *how* one can be free from it.

The fact of evil is real. It faces us each day. It surrounds all of us. It baffles our understanding. The Christian call is not to try to understand its intricacies here, but to know how to be freed from its curse. While it is impossible to explain the why and the wherefore of sin, we are given an understanding of how we can obtain freedom from its clutches. The gospel of Jesus is the good news of salvation from sin. That salvation will ultimately lead us to an eternal process of education in which God Himself will teach us about the mystery of sin and the wonder of His redeeming love. When sin will be no more, eternity will open to the redeemed the possibility of knowing all that we need to know.

Jesus did not portray evil in a relative light. His theodicy has no gray areas as some scholars have interpreted. The Bible is clear about the origin of evil and their consequences: “sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12, NIV). The Bible does not only specify *how* evil came to be, but also defines *what* is evil in the first place. This is what disturbs many people—postmodern thinkers first among them—who insist

on wearing gray glasses. In so doing, they keep trying to offer a different origin for sin because if we change the source, we feel we are not responsible.

What our children and churches need to know is not so much *how* evil came to be, or how to explain it within a particular scientific paradigm or theological model, but to get to know *who* was its originator and how to call him by his right name. If we get to know the who of the origin of sin, we would shift our focus from explaining to fighting sin for what it is.

The failure of postmodernism in explaining the essence of evil resides in the fact that human beings cannot live permanently in shades of gray. Human beings need answers. They need to know that there is a solution that transcends philosophical considerations. There is in fact a solution that gets into the practical realm of experience. Because the price of putting an end to sin—which Eastwood tried to accomplish by using his guns and for just a fistful of dollars—Jesus accomplished it by shedding his own blood.

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# FIRST PERSON

## Dreaming of a world without war

By Hee Jae Im

On a hot summer day in August 2002, I reported to the Nonsan Basic Training Center in South Korea for a two-year army service. I was 23, two years older than the average age of the new recruits. I had to swallow my pride and salute the younger ones. Although this went against my culture where the younger always pays respect to the older, it was a well-understood reality in the military. But this was the least of my concerns. A greater burden was fast brewing in the horizon that would test my faith and challenge my beliefs. While my fellow cadets were in basic training and would kill even for a bite of a *Choco Pie* (famous Korean snack), I had to struggle with a basic issue: holding firm to my faith or carrying arms. The very notion of conscientious objection to carrying a weapon had been a sensitive issue among Seventh-day Adventists. In 2002, a significant number of conscientious objectors were found among our church members in South Korea. One of my friends, Young Chul Yoon, was already serving a two-and-a-half-year sentence for refusing to carry a weapon. I began to ponder seriously about the social and personal consequences that I must face should I choose to take the same narrow path by refusing to carry arms. I toiled and struggled with this decision because I lacked the confidence to carry out my conviction. I kept reading the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books that were available in the military training center. I experienced greater mental agony as I held the Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. As I read about all the warriors of faith, hope and inspiration started

to spring up within me. A renewed sense of confidence came over me.

After the six weeks of training at the Nonsan Basic Training Center, we were assigned to different military bases around the country. I was sent to the Wontong base in Gangwon Province (*wontong* in Korean is homonymous with *dissatisfaction* and *dismay*). It was only early November, and the base was already frigid and covered with snow. Every day had its share of dreadful situations with the North Korean military. Once in a while, South and North Korean soldiers would fire at one another, and tension would escalate. Despite all the difficulties and concerns, I had a feeling that God must have a special role for me, and I found peace in my heart and was not afraid.

The Sabbath-keeping issue was another burden I had to face. This was especially an issue during the first two weeks, since I served on the front line. There was serious, visible tension between my captain and myself, a fearless private. The tension between us was relentless and nerve-racking. I would remind myself, "If God is with me, who can be against me?" By the grace of God I was allowed to keep the Sabbath, not in a nice and warm church environment, but in a cold and dangerous mountain. Anyway I was happy that I could praise God, study His Word, pray and call upon His name. I worshiped by myself and was filled with tears not of sorrow, but of gratitude and delight.

As the Sabbath-keeping issue was resolved, there still remained the issue regarding my noncombatant army

service. As I opened the Bible and read one of the commandments, "Love your neighbor as yourself," I could not help but correlate that verse to our North Korean neighbor. I was stuck with this dilemma of being a Christian and a soldier. I had no choice but to pray. I sincerely prayed that God would guide me in the right direction in this matter. Soon thereafter, I came across a passage from *The Great Controversy* that helped me to crystallize my decision. "When warned against going unarmed among savage and hostile tribes, he [Dr. Wolff] declared himself 'provided with arms'—prayer, zeal for Christ, and confidence in His help. 'I am also,' he said, 'provided with the love of God and my neighbor in my heart, and the Bible is in my hand'" (p. 361). Upon reading this, my heart was pounding and I cried out: "God, is this what you want me to do? Are you telling me to put down my gun?" The phrase "love your neighbor," the North Koreans, kept echoing in my mind. After three days of much agony and prayer, I finally came to realize that in God's entire creation only human beings worry about their life. I made a decision not to protect myself with any weapon any longer. "God, I will surrender myself to you. Please accept me and help me."

My refusal to bear arms led to a trial and imprisonment. The trial and the sentence were reported by a news service as shown below:

### Court Martial and Military Prison (newspaper article)

*"Any last words?" asked the judge.*

*Private Hee Jae Im immediately replied, "I have decided to unarm myself according to the dictates of my conscience. I am not implying that my faith is at its pinnacle or that I have been a fervent Christian all of my life. But having lost my parents at an early age, I have always held a tender place in my heart regarding death. I cannot in good conscience bear arms in this country—my country—that is so divided. I choose*

rather to pray to God for the reunion and salvation of these two nations. I cannot say how many more soldiers will make decisions like mine to refuse to carry arms. But it is my undying hope and prayer that this country will amend its law to respect every form of conscientious objection. I sincerely wish that no one will ever experience the pain that I had to endure.”

His voice began to shake as tears were welling up in his eyes.

3:15 p.m.

Having inquiries for the other three accused, the court held an intermission for 30 minutes.

Hee Jae Im turned his face back towards his friends sitting in the audience. As his eyes met his friends, he quietly smiled at them. His friends easily noticed that Hee Jae’s eyes were blood-shot. Hee Jae passed a stack of letters to one of his friends.

Many of our ancestors of great faith may have faced trials and afflictions in the likes of Hee Jae who is standing inside the courtroom awaiting the verdict as the accused who claims innocence. What made our ancestors of faith great was their decision to keep the faith while most believers simply grumble in times of despair. In those fleeting seconds that felt like years, Hee Jae closed his eyes. Whatever may be racing through his mind now, we may not know, but it is possible that he was thinking about those ancestors who remained true and faithful with their eyes firmly fixed on God.

3:45 p.m.

The court resumed, and reached a verdict.

Very quietly, everyone held their breath

to listen to the judge deliver the sentence.

“Hee Jae Im is sentenced to serve one-and-a-half years in prison with additional 73 days of military imprisonment!”

—Cited in *Adventist Weekly News* (March 19, 2003). Reported by Bum Tae Kim.

### My refusal to bear arms

The story behind my final decision to refuse to bear arms began in my childhood. I was very young when I lost both my parents. My mother passed away when I was only 11 years old. Four years later, my father passed away. Death suddenly shattered the blessings of a happy family. However, as I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, God always remained faithful to me as my guiding light. I know that He had led me to become a theology student (I am the only Adventist in my immediate and extended family).

During my sophomore year in college, the pain of being without my parents burdened me a great deal, and I started to question my miserable life: “Why should my life be miserable like this? Why me, Lord? Why?” The death of my parents left a deep mental scar on my mind and overwhelmed me. Since then I had been struggling with the problem of death. The childhood trauma is perhaps one reason why I looked at life as a precious gift from God. And my bitterness toward death turned into an opportunity to give life to others instead of death. Refusing to take up arms was just the first step in practicing that opportunity.

Some Christians say that taking up

arms does not necessarily mean “to murder.” They may be right. However, when I decide not to carry arms, I’m actually making a strong confession and proclamation that I would rather live for others than bring about an end to someone’s life.

Some justify war killings as necessary to protect their family, neighbors, and churches. But is it ever right for human beings to kill others for any reason whatsoever? Is it right for Christians, who claim to be excited about the return of Christ Jesus and the future life, to kill someone in order to save theirs? It is unfortunate that everyone in this life is subject to death. With the inevitability of death, should we not, especially as Christians, avoid being the cause of someone else’s death?

Even at this moment I find that I am self-centered in many ways, and I am disappointed at myself from time to time. Yet, I am holding on to the faith that the Lord will continually renew my strength. I believe that God is the only One who is perfect and He is strong enough to change my life. It is my fervent prayer that I will realize His will in my life and practice it daily until our Father in heaven returns in glory to take us to our heavenly home, i.e., a world without war. My wish for all is to take courage and stand firm for Christ, although the heavens fall.

Hee Jae Im is now a student at the Graduate School of Theology, Sahmyook University, Seoul, Korea.

# ACTION REPORT

## Adventist youth at work at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The news was as startling as it was disturbing. The Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro had scheduled its selection examinations for 2008 school year on a Sabbath. Adventist students throughout Brazil were affected; most of them would not take the examination and would thus forfeit attendance at the country's prestigious university. But the news came as a challenge to GAJA-Rural (Adventist Youth Action Group of the Rural University), a student organization on the university campus that cares for the spiritual and social nurture of the Adventist youth and fosters evangelism in the campus and the local community.

As soon as GAJA received the news, members and leaders of the student organization turned to the only means of support they knew. Prayer always comes first, and Adventist young people fortified their faith by seeking God's intervention. Then came earnest negotiations with the university

authorities to reschedule the examinations to non-Sabbath hours, but this was not easily accomplished. More prayers, more waiting, and more negotiations, but we were running against time. Soon church leaders approached the university administration and placed the issue in the context of keeping one's faith and practicing it as part of freedom of religion. Finally, God answered our pleas and the university administration agreed to confine Adventist students in isolation during Sabbath hours and let them take the entrance examinations after the Sabbath.

"Such a victory for our faith would not have been possible, if it weren't for the good testimony that GAJA had on the campus," say pastors Lourival Preuss and Jael Eneas, directors of communication, education, and religious liberty departments of the local conference.

Keeping one's faith is our calling. The student group is committed to enable Adventist students at the university

remain alert and conscious of their faith and life. The Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro is located on a beautiful campus of 8,150 acres of rural land, approximately 130 miles from the city. Its landscape, architectural beauty, and excellent academic program draw students from all over Brazil, Latin America, as well as several African countries. But the physical, academic, and social excellence of the campus also poses its own challenges to a small group of Adventist students as they strive to live their faith in a campus of 2,100 students. The challenge is one of preserving one's faith in the midst of the secular world and remaining loyal to the demands of that faith.

To keep the Adventist reality alive and well and to preserve a nurturing and witness atmosphere for the Adventist student core, GAJA-Rural was founded in 2006. In a year's time, GAJA faced its first test with the Sabbath examination issue and experienced first-hand the intervention of God.

GAJA's aim is to provide spiritual support to every Adventist youth on the campus. GAJA also promotes several activities such as distribution of Adventist literature, conducting regular worship services, prayer meetings, Bible study forums, and arranging for social togetherness. In addition, the organization is also conscious of the great commission through its own special recipe: inviting students of other faith to participate in our activities; hosting campaigns such as blood and bone marrow drives, dental treatment (with the support of ADRA), and health seminars and lectures.

Nurture within and witness outside are our twin goals.



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## Nutrition

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### Box 5: Online resources

To keep current with nutrition, check out the following sources:

- [www.llu.edu/llu/nutrition/sahp.html](http://www.llu.edu/llu/nutrition/sahp.html). Loma Linda University Website on nutrition. Provides a list of links to additional sources; also offers an online basic nutrition course.
- [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov). Provides information on your daily calorie needs, taking into account your age, gender, and activity level. Click on options for good information on daily nutrition recommendations, including vegetarian options.
- [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org). Click on "Food and Nutrition Information" for a myriad of topics
- <http://www.tufts.edu/med/ebcam/resources/websitesgovt.html>. Lists several government web sites on nutrition

## Send us your group's report

Leaders of Adventist university student associations are invited to send a brief report of their group's activities and one or two digital photos for publication in *Dialogue*. Include all relevant information about the student group, describe its main activities, challenges, and plans, and list the name, position, and email address of the report's author. Send them to Susana Schulz ([schulzs@gc.adventist.org](mailto:schulzs@gc.adventist.org)). Thank you!



# 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.

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# ET CETERA

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## 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: schulzs@gc.adventist.org. We will list here only those who provide all the 10 items of information requested above.

*Dialogue* cannot assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information submitted or for the content of the correspondence that may ensue.

## Manufacturer's recall

Author unknown

All individual units known as "Human Beings" are being recalled by Manufacturer regardless of make or year:

This is due to a malfunction caused after delivery in the internal wiring of the original prototype (code named "Adam" and "Eve"), resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect is technically termed, "Serious Internal Non-morality," but more commonly known as "SIN."

Some of the symptoms of the SIN defect:

- Loss of direction
- Lack of peace and joy
- Depression
- Foul vocal emissions
- Selfishness
- Ingratitude
- Fearfulness
- Rebellion
- Jealousy

The Manufacturer, Jesus Christ, is providing factory authorized repair service free of charge to correct the SIN defect. He has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs.

To repeat, there is no fee required. The number to call for repair in all areas is: P-R-A-Y-E-R.

Once connected, please upload the burden of SIN through the REPENTANCE procedure. Next, download ATONEMENT process into the heart component of the human unit.

No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, Christ will replace it with:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Patience
- Self-control

Please see the operating manual, Holy Bible, for further details on the use of these fixes.

As an added upgrade, the Manufacturer has made available to all repaired units a facility enabling direct monitoring and assistance from the resident Maintenance Technician, the Holy Ghost. Repaired units need only make Him welcome, and He will take up residence on the premises.

**WARNING:** Continuing to operate a human being unit without corrections voids the Manufacturer's warranty, exposing the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list and will ultimately result in the human unit being incinerated.



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Professionals'  
Network

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