community through conversation

SPECTRUM

The Ultimate Trip | *"With a Little Help from My Friends"* | **The Investigative Judgment: Adventism's Life Raft** | *Hope Deferred Makes the Heart Sick* | **Art and Poetry from Adventist Universities** | *Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses: Three "American Originals" and How They've Grown*

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Cover: *Still Life With Paper Boats* (oil on canvas) by Maria-Jose Triguero (above).

About the artist:
Maria-Jose grew up in Ecuador and immigrated to Canada at age eleven. She is a junior at Canadian University College, working toward her bachelor of education (elementary education emphasis) with a minor in art. Her inspiration comes from Oswaldo Guayasamín, an Ecuadorian painter and sculptor. To her, art cannot be defined simply through dates, paintings, or long-established techniques, but rather through the creativity in everything. Combining her love for teaching and art, she hopes her students may embrace the art of learning.

Artist's Statement:
Still life has always been my least favorite type of painting; at first glance, there's no story, no lesson to learn. This was my attempt to make still life meaningful. The painting resulted from making origami boats and placing them in a moving sequence on my desk. The frozen moment illustrates the tenuous stability and life choices available when at sea, which represents the life's different possibilities. The fragile paper boats are one's current circumstances, and the immovable sea suggests a stagnant life stage—the viewer must decide their next move.

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Contingency Plans | BY BONNIE DWYER

"Christ is contingency. . . .Contingency is the only way toward knowledge of God, and contingency, for Christians, is the essence of incarnation."

It is the poet Christian Wiman writing on the lessons of sorrow in *My Bright Abyss* (all quotes taken from Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013). With bracingly honest words, he sketches his changing relationship with Christianity, and his fight with cancer. But faith, the lack of it, the return to it, the struggle with it, takes center stage, not the cancer. He speaks of pain and sorrow, but also of joy. Of silence and the varieties of quiet, and this: "The purpose of theology—the purpose of any thinking about God—is to make the silences clearer and starker to us, to make the unmeaning—by which I mean those aspects of divine that will not be reduced to human meanings—more irreducible and more terrible and thus ultimately more wonderful. This is why art is so often better at theology than theology is."

My summer vacation in words is underway. I am excited to think anew about change in the Christian life, which for Wiman is its essence. "Faith is not faith in some state beyond change," he asserts later in the book, "Faith is faith in change."

Then this,

> *The minute any human or human institution arrogates to itself a singular knowledge of God, there comes into that knowledge a kind of strychnine pride, and it is as if the most animated and vital creature were instantaneously transformed into a corpse. Any belief that does not recognize and adapt to its own erosions rots from within. Only when doctrine itself is understood to be provisional does doctrine begin to take on a more than provisional significance. Truth inheres not in doctrine itself, but in the spirit with which it is engaged, for the spirit of God is always seeking and creating new forms.*

There are so many ideas that I could quote. My copy of the book is dog-eared, and underlinings abound. This summer reading trip has refreshed me immensely, and as always, also influenced my understanding of what I am reading to prepare the current issue of *Spectrum*.

It was the poet Billy Collins whom I first heard call poetry "travel literature"—a journey from the first word of the poem to the last. The essence of the trip is how the poet gets you there.

This travel issue of the journal, with its amazing reports from Machu Picchu, North Korea, and Afghanistan, also contains poetry, so you can travel with Adventist university students and alumni and observe their turn of a phrase. As usual, we begin in the Bible, this time examining the texts that infuse the Adventist doctrine of the Investigative Judgment, and our changing understanding of them. Ronald Lawson takes us on a trip around the world with his research on the growth of Adventism, comparing it to the other indigenous American religions—Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. His comparisons changed my understanding of Adventists abroad.

At the end of his book, Wiman declares, "So much of faith has so little to do with belief, and so much to do with acceptance. Acceptance of all the gifts that God, even in the midst of death, grants us. Acceptance of the fact that we are, as Paul Tillich says, accepted. Acceptance of grace."

The contingency plan for this issue is for it to be a summer vacation that changes some of your thoughts and leaves you amazed with our authors at the trip we have made. ■

Bonnie Dwyer is editor of *Spectrum*.

Correction: In the Spring 2013 issue of *Spectrum*, on page 23, in the article "Toward Oneness and Freedom: The Road from Babylon to General Conference Organization," the date for the gathering of the Seventh-day Adventists was incorrectly stated as May 22, 1863. The meeting actually took place on May 20 and May 21, 1863.

The Heresy Trap | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

If it weren't for actual Adventist congregations and the gifts they bestow, I might drown my sorrows—and myself—in a vat of chocolate. It would be time, let me tell you, for a truly diverting indulgence.

Right now what I will call the Heresy Trap is gravely damaging our church. This trap has fear as a consequence and truth for a victim, and it is driving the love out of Adventism. Especially for employees and laypersons engaged in the church's conversation, we are fractured. We have become a low-trust, adversarial community.

But congregations! Here and there such embodiments of welcome, generosity, and hope! They all proclaim impossible ideals and take in the fallible and fallen, with results not always easy to appreciate. But I have repeatedly felt in them the wonder of shared life, and of Sabbath rest that comes like the "caress" of which Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke, assuaging sorrow and sowing joy.[1]

I am so grateful. I will mention three such congregations in a moment. But now a truth less sunny.

In early July, a man long employed by the church for his writing and editing skills posted on *Spectrum*'s website an essay called "Top Ten Things I Wish I Could Change About the Adventist Church."[2] But it began as follows: "Up front, let me say that this isn't something I'd ever have risked writing while on the church payroll!"

The remark distracted from the substance, at least at the beginning. Adventist websites attract not a few participants with no investment in the church's life except to tear it down, and some of them weighed in: What sort of church would be so intolerant of honest conversation, or put such fear into the hearts of its employees?

Then a reader expressed surprise that the author was dismayed over the church's discord, its "increasing polarity." After all, the "shaking" is on the way, and discord is "to be expected." Another reader chimed in. We should look to becoming "more polarized," he said; as we edge toward "the conclusion of human history," it's "unavoidable."

At this, those who speak disdain and little else were no doubt feeling vindicated. A church fear-ridden and divided, and *people OK with it*—what could be more futile?

But if mutual respect would improve on mutual disdain, why are so many of our leaders and outspoken members determined to enforce doctrinal uniformity when that effort is bound to be divisive? It's true that disagreement hurts. But isn't there a more peaceable way of dealing with it than the attempt to coerce? The price of *insisting on one's own* way is low-trust, adversarial relationships—why does it seem worth paying?

The answer is the Heresy Trap. In the New Testament period and for years after, doctrinal disagreement led to conversation—strong words, too!—but not to a congealing of thought decreed by a clerical elite. The familiar concept of "heresy" was unknown. There was no creed, no determination to impose uniformity of belief, no punishable deviance from hierarchically established orthodoxy. Instead there was confidence that God's Spirit, present in the intimacy of shared life, would assist in the living out of agreements and working through of disagreements. Despite the complexity and messiness of human interaction, God's Spirit would somehow assure a direction consonant with the divine will.

But when Constantine began to preside over

If bickering is futile, what could be more fruitful than life and peace? Who *doesn't* want life and peace?

discussions of doctrine (he hosted and hovered over the Council of Nicaea), an imperial mindset infected not only the church's institutional life, but also its theology. As deviance from policy preoccupies emperors, deviance from orthodoxy now preoccupies church leaders. Now hierarchical authority would compel (or try to compel) doctrinal uniformity.

Thus heresy—deviance from *official* doctrine—came to be. The ideal of addressing difference through conversation among equals (equals in status if not influence) drifted out of sight. Nonclerical, or low-status, members mattered less. Nor did truth itself do well. With leaders that were heresy obsessed and lay people less engaged, no one noticed that Constantine had become an idol, or that festering anti-Semitism was a betrayal of Christ.

These developments hardened into a replacement for the New Testament ethos, and the replacement became dominant. Although our pioneers resisted it (see the first paragraph of the 1872 Statement of Adventist Beliefs), the dominance of the imperial twist on church life remains overwhelming, and today most Adventist members and church leaders seem unaware of the heresy story and forgetful of our own pioneers.[3]

So the price of doctrinal uniformity—low-trust, adversarial relationships—seems worth paying because we're feeding off, and bewitched by, a story not our own. It's the story of the Constantinianization, or Romanization, of the church. The result is that we're now *trapped* by the concept of heresy—trapped, that is, into an ethos of top-down control and distrust. If you are reading these remarks you know, from one angle or another, how this feels.

Still, the best of congregations continue to heal and inspire.

When I visited the Church of the Advent Hope in New York City a few months ago, remarks of welcome from a young Asian woman nearly brought me to my feet like one of those overwhelmed talent show judges on TV: so winsome she was, and so full of thankfulness *for her congregation*. Then a layperson, a brilliant young attorney, gave one of the most arresting sermons I have ever heard. (My wife and I loved the potluck, and became guests for a Sabbath afternoon visit to the Bronx Zoo.)

In early May, I spent a weekend with Adventkirken Betel in downtown Oslo, Norway. The prayer and song and conversation—and friendships new and renewed—were as bracing as the scent of the sea. Questions bespoke a life-affirming curiosity. There was again shared food, and in the body of Christ there was joy and purpose. I felt myself made whole by the good company.

At the end of June, I spoke for Communion at the Los Angeles Chinese Seventh-day Adventist Church. My hands washed a brother's feet and his washed mine. I received the bread and Communion wine from one of many participating young people. The potluck was a whole-church affair, Asian, healthy, and good. The pastor's school-age son sat across from me, making me laugh.

Earlier that day, a Sabbath School class had discussed the book of Malachi, and the phrase I fastened onto was "covenant of life and peace." I thought: If bickering is futile, what could be more fruitful than life and peace? Who *doesn't* want life and peace? And if these are the core of God's intention, why shouldn't they be the core of ours?

Statements about a church's beliefs are a record of current understanding. But the Heresy Trap really is—a *trap*. So perhaps no one should be blamed for forgetting the suggestion in our 1872 document that God-fearing leaders may act on our behalf, but may *not* close off conversation through top-down control. Once we remember that document, however, and once we remember that the story of heresy itself is deeply heartbreaking, we have no excuse.

It would be a course-changing strategy if we *empowered* congregations and other near-to-the-issue bodies, like conferences and boards, to work through their disagreements—with help from other leaders, but without authoritarian provocation. Christ is present in small groups (Matt. 18), and through the Father and the Spirit, Christ protects our fundamental unity (John 14–17). If we could trust again, and if the jaws of the Heresy Trap could fall away, life and peace would have a better chance in Adventism. ■

Charles Scriven chairs Adventist Forum.

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Media Moves and Mergers

"The Minds of Men Differ":
Adventism and the Temptation of Consolidation

BY TOMPAUL WHEELER

In 1984, the Adventist Church merged two of its outreach magazines, *Signs of the Times* and *These Times*. *These Times* magazine had a loyal and fervent readership (a reader survey a year before its end received tens of thousands of responses) and a distinctive editorial flavor, but church leaders believed that merging the two periodicals would reach twice as many people for half the cost. Instead, within a year, the merged version of *Signs of the Times* had no more subscribers than either magazine had previously enjoyed on its own. The mash-up of the two magazines' styles had pleased neither periodical's readers.

I'm reminded of that attempted shortcut to evangelism success by news of the merger of Adventism's two North American publishing houses, the Review and Herald Publishing Association (in Hagerstown, Maryland), and the Pacific Press Publishing Association (in Boise, Idaho). It seems to be the same story, umpteenth verse. As Adventist Church co-founder Ellen White wrote when people urged that the two houses be merged 120 years ago, "In cooperation they can exert a healthful influence upon each other, but not in consolidation. These institutions are not to become merged into one…the light that I have had for years is that these institutions must stand separate, each preserving its own individuality. A nearer relation than this will tend to the injury of both."[1]

In the 1970s, under the leadership of Neal Wilson (father of current General Conference president, Ted N. C. Wilson), the Adventist Church in North America experienced a round of "merger mania." Conferences consolidated. The Central and Northern Unions merged into the Mid-America Union. And in 1980, North America's then-third publishing house, Nashville-based Southern Publishing Association (*These Times*' initial publisher), was merged into the Review and Herald Publishing Association. All was done under the name of costs and effectiveness.

Perhaps the most ambitious consolidation, however, was the Adventist Media Center. Though each ministry was to continue to operate independently, the AMC brought together such disparate programs as *It Is Written*,

Recent Media Announcements About the Church's Media

Merger Talks Cancelled

The taskforce studying a possible consolidation of the Pacific Press and Review and Herald publishing associations has been asked to cease its work, the General Conference and North American Division announced on July 31, 2013.

Publishing House Boards Asked to Consider Merger

On June 19, 2013, the General Conference and North American Division administrations forwarded to the boards of the Pacific Press and Review and Herald publishing associations a request for the two organizations to consider a merger in the near future.

Media Center Recommends Its Own Closure

The board of the Simi Valley Adventist Media Center, which is operated by the North American Division, decided on April 29, 2013, that it would recommend a proposal to the division that includes a call for its six media ministries to relocate and a sale of the property. Still unclear, according to the report by the Adventist News Network, is what the division's future plans are regarding media.

Breath of Life, and the once-independent radio ministry *Voice of Prophecy*. The original Thousand Oaks, California, location proved too costly to maintain, so in 1995 the AMC moved to Simi Valley, California. Now, among renewed concerns over cost and effectiveness, the Adventist Media Center's various ministries are considering splitting off.

Will we ever learn the lesson of Battle Creek?

As Ellen White kept busy in Australia in the 1890s, the church "back home" was getting comfortable—much too comfortable, in White's opinion. It concerned her that, instead of spreading out to establish the church in new places, more and more Adventists were flocking to the bustling Michigan city, home to the church's headquarters and top college, publishing house, and hospital. At the same time, critical decisions were being made by fewer and fewer people. Ellen White decried such "kingly power." She wrote: "Our people are in constant danger of centering too many interests in one locality; but it is not in the Lord's order that this should be."[2] When "propositions which appeared to their authors to be very wise" were made to "enable the office of publication there to swallow up everything in the publishing line among us," she counseled, "This is not God's wisdom, but human wisdom. Those matters have been coming up again and again in different aspects, but this policy of consolidation would, if adopted, result in marring the work. God would have His work move firmly and solidly, but no one branch is to interfere with or absorb other branches of the same great work….At times it has been urged that the interests of the cause would be furthered by a consolidation of our publishing houses, bringing them virtually under one management. But this, the Lord has shown, should not be. It is not His plan to centralize power in the hands of a few persons or to bring one institution under the control of another."[3]

It wasn't just the temptation to the power-hungry that bothered Ellen White, but the intellectual stagnation that results when too few people have input. Centralization stifles innovation. She wrote, "The work of publication is to be developed in new lines."[4] God likes variety, she insisted, and it takes a variety of approaches to reach many kinds of people. Such diversity, she noted, was right there in the Bible. "Why do we need," she wrote, "a Matthew, a Mark, a John, a Paul, and all the writers who have borne testimony in regard to the life and ministry of the Savior? Why could not one of the disciples have written a complete record and thus have given us a connected account of Christ's early life? Why does one writer bring in points that another does not mention? Why, if these points are essential, did not all these writers mention them? It is because the minds of men differ. Not all comprehend things in exactly the same way."[5]

It took two all-consuming fires in 1902—one at the publishing house, the other at the hospital—to convince the Adventist Church to break up the Battle Creek monopoly. Battle Creek College moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, and is today Andrews University. The church headquarters and publishing house moved to Takoma Park, Maryland, and the church founded what is today Washington Adventist University. And though the soon-to-be-disfellowshipped John Harvey Kellogg rebuilt the Battle Creek Sanitarium, it was no longer under church control. Instead, while the sanitarium went bankrupt in the 1930s, Adventists had already founded a new hospital and medical school in Loma Linda, California, in 1905.

Of course, the world of media today is vastly different than that of a hundred years ago, or even than in 1984, when *These Times* was cannibalized. When I started as a student worker at the *Review and Herald* in 1990, a long row of offices served its publications' typographic needs. Within roughly fifteen years, the office space was empty, as desktop publishing made it possible for a single designer to quickly lay out an entire magazine on a single computer.

Still, I do not believe that Ellen White would have viewed the challenges that publishing faces in the world of websites and digital downloads as justification for consolidation. While she may have seen the wisdom in consolidating manufacturing processes (we are, after all, all using the same Internet), it is clear that she would have

found in today's push-button publishing an opportunity for a greater number of independent editorial entities, not less. I think she would have been thrilled that more energy could go to developing content rather than maintaining infrastructure.

With over 150 years of history, book and magazine publishing has been somewhat slower to adapt. We still need gatekeepers and editorial quality control, yet Adventist publishing is as perplexed as anyone as to how to best respond to the changing world of websites, e-books, and infinite entertainment choices.

Though there is a need to coordinate the various media in our church, we must keep the system open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to new perspectives and approaches. Today's challenges demand fresh voices, energy, and innovation to develop new products and revitalize old ones. That just doesn't come from a top-down, centralized system, dominated by a limited number of viewpoints. It requires a wide variety of media providers—just like the much smaller, much less complicated world Ellen White addressed. ■

Tompaul Wheeler is an author, photographer, and filmmaker in Nashville, Tennessee. He directed the feature-length documentary *Leap of Faith: The Ultimate Workout Story*, and served as editor for the 2007 edition of *Bible Readings*, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. He is the author of *GodSpace* and *Things They Never Taught Me*.

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Note: This article was originally published June 25, 2013, on *Spectrum*'s website, and has been updated. The original article can be found at http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2013/06/25/"-minds-men-differ"-adventism-and-temptation-consolidation.

BIBLE

PHOTO BY LAURA LAMAR

Adventist Doctrines

Hope Deferred Makes the Heart Sick | BY GOTTFRIED OOSTERWAL

On March 21, 2013, the *Adventist Review* published an article by Andy Nash titled "Beyond Belief."[1] Based on a study carried out by Southern Adventist University's School of Business in 2011, it explores the reasons why so many Seventh-day Adventists are leaving their community of faith and what—if anything—could be done about it.

Striking are two aspects of the issue: (1) the huge numbers of people actually leaving the church or giving up their involvement in and commitment to its fellowship and message, and (2) the reasons why people do so.

The number of people leaving the church has been high for quite some time, according to the General Conference Statistical Bulletin, ranging from thirty-five to forty for every one hundred souls brought in.[2] In "Beyond Belief," the figure is given as one hundred souls leaving for every two hundred brought into the fellowship of faith, or 50 percent.[3] New, however, compared to previous studies on why Adventists are leaving their church, are the reasons why. Whereas in the past a (vast) majority of believers gave social and personal reasons for leaving (disappointments, social conflicts, broken relationships), this newer study indicates that "more and more church members are leaving the Adventist church primarily because they've changed their beliefs."[4] Increasingly, it seems that Adventist believers are having doubts about the core doctrines of the church and are suffering from a loss of faith.

For example:

1. Seventy-one percent of those contacted indicated that they had lost faith in the notion of the Adventist Church being the remnant church with its particular mission.
2. Sixty-three percent indicated that they could no longer believe in the gift of prophecy.
3. Nearly 60 percent doubted the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.
4. Fifty percent or more questioned Adventist teaching on the law of God, the Sabbath, the Great Controversy and the millennium.[5]

The article also points out that this is not only the case with those who actually leave. It is also greatly affecting people who statistically remain connected with the Adventist community of faith, leading to a high rate of nominalism in the church, low attendance, and lack of missionary zeal and involvement.

More and more church members are leaving the Adventist Church primarily because they've changed their beliefs.

Is the Return of Christ Delayed?

No doubt, the same factors of secularization that are affecting religious communities in general are also exerting their influence on Adventist believers. One factor, however, that seems to have the greatest influence on Adventists losing their faith and making the church "sick" is what is generally known as the "delay in the Second Coming of Christ." Clearly stated in Proverbs 13:12 (NIV), "Hope deferred makes the heart sick." One cannot for some 160 years keep on asserting that the coming of Christ is "near, very near, tomorrow, at hand, even at the door,"[6] without expecting peo-

ple to develop some doubt, when for those same last 160 years, nothing has changed. A gap has developed, so it seems, between the assertions of Adventist leaders who keep on "encouraging" the believers to hold onto this statement of belief in the immediacy of Christ's return, while many believers are no longer convinced of it. And the gap then widens to other issues of faith and behavior as well, including those of the sanctuary, the Spirit of Prophecy, the Great Controversy, the remnant and its mission, and trust in Adventist leadership. That gap shows itself in many aspects of church life, administration, and mission.

The issue of the delay of the Second Coming of Christ is not new in Adventist thinking. Ellen White had already mentioned it frequently, asserting that it is the lack of readiness on the part of the church and its unsanctified behavior that are responsible.[7] In 1980, in preparation for the General Conference Session in Indianapolis, Indiana, the ministerial department invited Adventist scholars and ministers to reflect on the issue during a conference presession. Four answers to the challenge of the "delay" emerged:

1. Many prophecies in scripture are conditional; their fulfillment depends on certain conditions in human history and behavior, society and religious commitment.
2. We ought to remember that God's notion of time is not the same as our earthly concept. As scripture tells us, "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day" (2 Pet. 3:8).
3. We all meet Jesus and our judgment at the time of our death (Heb. 9:27).
4. The early Christian church, too, faced this problem of the delay. Then it was solved by the realization that many of the prophecies had already been fulfilled in Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, where he is now seated at the right hand of God, ministering to his people and the world (realized eschatology). Our emphasis as a church, therefore, should be more on what Christ has already accomplished: the arrival of his kingdom, the resurrection of the believers in Christ, and the forgiveness of our sins with its corollary, the Judgment.

Thirty-three years later, we are still challenged by the same issue, only more powerfully so. And the longer our hope will remain unfulfilled, the sicker our hearts will become, personally, and collectively as a church. The church will continue to suffer; the gaps between leaders and clergy on the one hand, and members on the other, will become more obvious and even wider, and our mission will remain unfulfilled.

What to Think of the Reasons for an "Apparent" Delay?

What to make of these four or five interpretations of the delay?

It is a fact that many of the Old Testament and even New Testament prophecies are conditional. The *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* gives ample evidence of the conditionality of prophecies, and quoting Ellen G. White, states that "the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional." "The Old Testament prophecies were a declaration of God's purpose for literal Israel, and their fulfillment…was strictly *conditional* upon Israel's cooperation with the divine purpose" (italics in the original).[8] And what applies to the Old Testament prophecies applies with equal strength to those in the New Testament.[9]

However, no conditions are spelled out for the prophecies of the 1,260 years and the 2,300 evenings and mornings (see Dan. 7–9, 12; Rev. 12–14, 17). God himself set these times aside for his purpose, independent of the status and beliefs of the people concerned. These are fixed dates, as their partial fulfillment already indicates, such as the birth and death of the Messiah during the last week of the seventy weeks! This calls for a renewed study of the events taking place after 1798 and 1844!

The second explanation given for the "apparent delay" does not apply here, as the prophecies refer to actual earthly times and events, where actual days and years count.

Nowhere in the New Testament is the *eschaton*, such as the return of Christ, individualized or personalized. Nowhere do we find a person's death equated with the arrival of the eschaton. 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 give us the assurance that the living will not have an advantage over the dead when Christ returns.

As for reason number four, that of the realized eschatology: hope has a human and a divine dimension, as well as a horizontal and a vertical one. Unlike the human dimension of hope, built on human needs, desires, and dreams, the divine and vertical dimensions of hope are anchored and rooted in divine promises that have already been fulfilled, such as the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf, his resurrection as a guarantee of our own, and his ascension

into heaven, where he is seated at the right hand of God, ministering on our behalf and that of the whole world (Eph. 1:20–21; Heb. 6:19–20; Rom. 4:25). Our hope is not a pious wish, a futuristic dream, but a confidence anchored in events that have already been fulfilled in our personal life, in history, and in the guarantee of our salvation. Jesus Christ as revealed in scripture and experienced by the saints is our hope, and we should rejoice in it, live in it, and trust in it until Christ appears on the clouds of heaven. It does not disappoint (Rom. 5:2,5, 8:24–25; Eph. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:1; 1 Cor. 13:13).

With this hope in mind, we would do well to consider once more the time after the fixed dates of 1798 and 1844. What is the meaning of that period of history? What events show us the purpose of this time between the fixed dates and the actual return of Christ? It was in this time that Communism arose, the two world wars took place, and numerous deaths in concentration camps occurred; as did the attacks of September 11, 2011; secularization affecting the faith of many; new messianic movements arising everywhere; religious awakenings; and a rapid increase in science and technology.

The Meaning of Time After the End of Prophetic Time

When Christ entered into the heavenly sanctuary, there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on earth that led to a rapid expansion of the gospel throughout the entire inhabited world at that time. Tens of thousands (myriads) of people were baptized and added to the community of faith, the fellowship of believers (see Acts of the Apostles in the Bible). Luke was the first to recognize that the newly founded community of faith built on the life and work of Jesus Christ and the testimony of his apostles was destined to have its own history, a history that must be related to the history of the world (Luke 3:1–2). He found that the life of the church is not to be a short, frenzied proclamation, because the time is short, but a steady missionary expansion throughout the whole world, yet with an unfailing sense of urgency because the Lord, who is coming soon, wants all men to be saved, come to a knowledge of the truth, and find a new meaning, freedom, and assurance in accepting the gospel (1 Tim. 2:4). This made the first church a genuinely missionary church in which every member was a witness. By the end of the third century, there was no area in the Roman Empire that had not been to some extent penetrated by the gospel—and that not as a result of many gifted evangelists swaying masses of people, but through the faithful testimony of ordinary believers in their everyday life and work (Acts 8:4, a.o.). When the apostle Paul came to Rome, he was welcomed by believers; how they had gotten there we are not told. The same is true for the other two centers of the faith, Antioch and Alexandria.[10] While waiting for their Lord to return, the believers at that time continued to do what the Lord had started and commanded them to do (Matt. 28:19–20). This gave meaning to the history between Christ's first and second coming. The same is true for the period between 1798 and 1844 and the return of Christ, our own time. It was God-willed and part of his divine plan for the world and for his chosen people. Time did not come to an end. Rather, Christ's second phase of ministry in the heavenly sanctuary opened the door to a new epoch in world history.

The Meaning of the New Epoch in History

When Christ commenced his second phase of ministry in 1844, something similar happened as in the beginning of his heavenly ministry: there was another outpouring of God's Spirit, resulting in a new missionary consciousness and expansion of the gospel to the whole inhabited world. Something radically new took place in the Christian world at the time. In the midst of a rather nominal Christendom, greatly influenced by Rationalism, the Modernism of the Enlightenment, and a rather fossilized structure of an ecclesiastical orthodoxy, suddenly a revival occurred with an emphasis on personal conver-

Hope has a human and a divine dimension, as well as a horizontal and a vertical one.

sion and rebirth, an enthusiasm to bear witness to the redeeming love of Christ, and a pastoral compassion for souls' social needs. As a result of this revival, a new consciousness developed in the churches, which gave rise to a new lay movement for mission and the rise of scores of missionary societies and boards of mission, as well as Bible societies, aimed at spreading the word of God in people's own language, everywhere. The main motive for this new consciousness and missionary activities was a worldwide expectation—from the Philippines and other parts of Asia to Europe and North and South America—of the soon arrival of Christ.[11]

It was this radically new development that made the time after 1798–1844, in the words of historian Kenneth Scott Latourette, the "Great Century." The Reveil in Europe (Revival, Evangelical Awakening) led in England, Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and other areas to the beginning of mission in "foreign lands." John R. Mott formulated the working goal and expectation of the newly founded missionary societies and boards of missions as "The Gospel to the World in this Generation." And like in the first century AD, some sixty years after the founding of these missionary societies and boards, the gospel indeed had reached the ends of the world. For a host of reasons, the official Protestant Churches in Christian Europe had been unable or unwilling themselves to take up the cause of missions. This was left to the initiative of dedicated individual laymen who volunteered to cooperate in these newly established missionary societies and boards, which relied for their financial support on the voluntary gifts of committed Christians. Particularly in the years from 1795 to 1815, an astonishing number of societies was formed for an extraordinary range of purposes, first of which was to evangelize the world in this generation, but also for the abolition of slavery, the promotion of education, the spread of Bibles and the distribution of literature, and many other concerns of human welfare.

The first of these new missionary societies exclusively directed toward the evangelization of non-Christians was the English's Baptist Missionary Society, founded in 1792 through the vision, faith, and determination of cobbler William Carey (1761–1834). This was followed by the London Missionary Society (1795), which started with the aim of "preaching the eternal gospel to the heathen" without being tied to any particular form of church order or government, and the Church Missionary Society (1799). As a whole, these missionary societies were not only voluntary societies, but also ecumenically oriented, not tied to one confession or another (until later), but interconfessional. They aimed at planting churches in the whole world that were colonies of Christ's heavenly mission, rather than just copies of Western models. The Dutch Missionary Society was founded as a sister institution of the London Missionary Society in 1797, which also inspired many other missionary societies in Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia (including Finland), such as the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (1815), the Berlin Missionary Society (1824), and the Rhenish Missionary Society of Barmen (1828). These and others formed a model for later missionary societies established in Asia (India, China), Australia, Canada, and South Africa.

Soon after political independence from Great Britain, missionary societies and boards also began to appear in the United States, chiefly for the spread of the faith on the expanding frontier and to Native Americans. The earliest major organization was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, organized in Bradford, Massachusetts, on June 28, 1810, by the Massachusetts General Association (Congregational), in response to a petition of four Andover Seminary students who were pledged to missionary service. In a courageous act of faith, the ABCFM allowed its first five missionaries to sail for India in February 1812, barely able to purchase passage and provide a year's support. Mightily inspired by the new spirit of missions in the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches, the board was able to open work in Ceylon (1816), among the Cherokee Indians (1817), Hawaii (1820), Turkey and the Near East (1820–1821), China (1830), and Africa (1834).

By the end of the century, there were hardly any boundaries to this radically new missionary enterprise. It stretched from China to Peru, and was at work both beyond the Arctic Circle and in the desolate and hostile regions of Tierra del Fuego. Of course, there were people groups in each great landmass that had not been touched. But with each year, these were becoming fewer and fewer. The Christian faith was becoming the largest and most widespread of all the world religions, and would greatly shape people's lives and customs, thinking and behavior.

The radically new missionary zeal to reach the whole world in this generation with the gospel went hand in hand with endeavors in education, medicine, and health care; agricultural and economic developments; technical growth;

and new ways of thinking and ethics, reflected in people's art, social structures, and even ways of governing and doing business. Yes, the missionary expansion of the nineteenth century went hand in hand with Western colonialism and imperialism, with all the negative effects experienced later. But the "Great Century," with its great educational successes, medical accomplishments, and economic and technological developments all around the globe, was the result of a radically new development within the Christian community of faith.

Compared to earlier and later centuries, the nineteenth century was also characterized by relative peace, a result of the "Pax Christiana" from which the whole world profited and which later allowed the development of new and independent nations, led by men and women who were products of Christian missions. All this was the result of the outpouring of God's Spirit when Christ entered his second phase of ministry in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of all people on earth. It created a whole new era in the economy of God's salvation. A new epoch in world history had begun, God-willed, and part of his plan to evangelize the whole world in this generation. These events had to happen, and gave meaning to history after the end of the prophetic time. And when the gospel of his kingdom will have been proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, then the end will come (Matt. 24:14). We see it happening before our own eyes!

The Rise of the Adventist Church and Mission

In light of all this, the statement in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* that the beginning of the second half of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary resulted on earth in the founding and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church[12] comes across as rather limited, sectarian, ecclesiocentric, and self-serving. No wonder that over 70 percent of the people who left the church did not or no longer believe in it, while many who statistically belong to our communion of faith have rejected the notion as well. Yes, to be sure, we may indeed see the rise and growth of the Adventist Church also as an outcome of the outpouring of God's Spirit at the beginning of Christ's second phase of ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, but in the context and as part of the worldwide millennial expectations and the new consciousness of or zeal for mission in other churches. For the rise and growth of the Adventist Church was dependent on this new missionary movement in all the world!

The Adventist Church arose as a reform movement within the churches of Christendom. Its message and mission presuppose the existence of a worldwide Christian community. Its first "foreign missionaries" therefore went to Switzerland, Germany, and France, at the time the bulwark of Christendom. And when later missionaries entered the territories of Fiji and Papua, Japan and China, Argentina and Brazil, they went to work with already existing Christian communities there, and not further inland to work with people groups that had never been reached with the gospel before. Our missionary message and methods, including our literature, were shaped by understanding ourselves first of all as a movement within Christianity, and secondly by the belief that in essence the whole world was already a Christian world, with a few pockets of heathenism. Not until the 1960s did our church consciously begin to work with people of other religions, but still only as a second-tier mission. As a result of this intra-Christian mission, in many areas we became known as "sheep stealers," a derogatory name we don't really deserve in view of our particular intrachurch understanding of mission.

No wonder, therefore, that our eschatology also still heavily depends on the status, beliefs, and development of Christian churches: from the call to obedience to the divine Law of God, the issuing of a Sunday law, the power of the papacy, and the relationship between church and state within the Christian community.[13] That community today, however, only makes up about 30 to 35 percent of the world population, actually a tiny fraction of the current world population of

The rise and growth of the Adventist Church was dependent on this new missionary movement in all the world!

over seven billion people and growing.

In light of the meaning of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, Adventists need to reflect again on the full meaning of that work in order to understand the meaning and purpose of the era after 1798–1844: not as a time of "waiting and watching" only, resulting in disappointment after disappointment and the rise of all kinds of speculations about certain "signs of the times" and theories of conspiracy, but as a God-willed and divinely planned time of worldwide mission activities reflecting the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, until he returns.

The view of the time between the end of the prophetic times listed in the books of Daniel and Revelation and the return of Christ also demands a clear understanding of how to view and relate to the work of these Christian agencies and their work of mission around the world. That view is beautifully and clearly expressed in the General Conference Working Policy, O75: "We recognize every agency that lifts up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for the evangelization of the world, and we hold in high esteem the Christian men and women in other communities who are engaged in winning souls to Christ."[14]

"Part of the divine plan for the evangelization of the world." This is our theological understanding of our time after 1708–1844. As in Acts of the Apostles, where Luke revealed to the early Christian church God's plan of salvation history, which would shape the meaning of all human history through the evangelization of the whole inhabited world (*oecumene*), so also does the divinely ordained evangelization of our present inhabited world shape the goal and meaning of all human history, which began when Christ entered into his second phase of ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. This should powerfully inform our concepts of church and mission. The evangelization of the world in this generation, which is not the same as the growth of churches in all the world, should also inform our understanding of what it means to be the church in the world today, our literature and preaching, our methodology, and our relationships with other Christian agencies. The times are in God's hands. The epoch of history in which we now live has its own specific goal and meaning, both set by God when Christ entered into the second phase of his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Every epoch in history, in the words of that great historian Leopold von Ranke, is directly unto God.[15]

A Work of Grace and Judgment

Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, as also reflected in the earthly tabernacle services, rests on two pillars: the pillar of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation, and the pillar of obedience, justice, and judgment. The two aspects belong together as the two sides of the proverbial single coin. On the Day of Atonement, the people who had repented were forgiven and brought into a new relationship with God. The goat Azazel took their sins away into the desert, there to be forgotten. The judgment was for those who had not repented and accepted the divine offer of grace resulting in forgiveness (Lev. 16). Christ's sacrifice for all humanity resulted in the same: grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation for those who have accepted his sacrifice, and the judgment for those who have not (John 3:16-18; Heb. 8–10).

The understanding of Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary will forever be a great Adventist contribution to Christian theology and mission. What we Adventists need to learn again is that our emphasis on the second part of Christ's mission, namely the judgment, is intimately and inextricably connected to the pillar of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In mission, the two pillars go hand in hand; they belong together and form one unified message. And it is that twofold ministry of Christ and his followers on earth that gives meaning to the time after 1798-1844, and forms the basis of our hope. That hope is based on nothing else but what Christ has already accomplished on our behalf, on what he is doing now, and on his own promise of returning soon (Heb. 7:19, 6:18; 1 Pet. 1:3, 3:15). And what God promises, for sure he will do!

Of course, the new emphasis on salvation historical facts in our time bears in it the danger of historicizing our message and mission. When that happens, the belief in the soon return of Christ becomes de-emphasized. We already see it happening in our own community of faith. With great joy, fanfare, and holy pride, we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of our church name and of our church's organization.

This process of historization often leads to a de-eschatonization. That danger is not imaginary. Elder Ted Wilson, the president of the General Conference, therefore, according to the Adventist News Network, in his sermon to the delegates assembled for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the church's organization in Battle Creek, pleaded with these leaders not to continue these anniversary celebrations.[16] For from church history, we learn that the process of historization leads to a further de-emphasizing, even doubt and loss of faith in the immediacy of the return of Christ.

We learn from the New Testament, however, that the process of historization of gospel work, as shown in particular in the book of Acts, need not lead to a loss of faith in the soon arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, a tension does exist. But it is a creative tension in which every anniversary celebration becomes another witness to the hope we share in the soon return of Christ, telling us that we are now closer to the return of Christ than when we first believed (Rom. 13:11), and challenging us to ask ourselves, where would we be if Christ would have returned yesterday?

To help believers abide in Christ as their only hope, and to win others to the faith, every local church needs to reflect and implement the two pillars of Christ's ministry in heaven: to help people experience God's abiding grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation, and to challenge everyone to obey God's word (the law) and prepare for his coming work of justice and judgment. When a person is sick, and especially in the case of a sickness unto death, it is the causes of the disease that must be understood, and then the process of healing can begin. It starts with the recognition that our sickness is rooted in a too-limited understanding of Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary and its consequences here on earth. This has led to disappointment after disappointment, and to an all-too-narrow understanding of the meaning of history after the end of the prophetic time of 1798–1844, which continues to give rise to the notion of a delay, albeit only an apparent delay. Healing comes from the experience of a renewed hope, a hope that is rooted in what Christ has already done and continues to do for all of us. As the Bible puts it, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes it is a tree of life" (Prov. 12:12). ■

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12. *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 406: "As the initiation of Christ's heavenly ministry coincided with the outpouring of the Spirit on the fledgling church (Acts 2:33), so the beginning of the antitypical day of atonement coincided with the birth of the Seventh-day Adventist church."

13. See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2002), ch. 35–40.

14. *General Conference Working Policy*, 1980 revised edition, Section O75.

15. Leopold von Ranke, "jede Epoche unmittelbar zu Gott" in *Weltgeschichte*, vol. 9 (Leipzig, 1888), 5.

16. See also, *Adventist Review*, May 9, 2013, 8–9. In his sermon, Elder Wilson stated, "We should have been home by now. The Lord has wanted to come long before this. Why celebrate any more anniversaries when we could be in heaven?" 8. As to why Christ has not yet fulfilled his promise to return to earth "ere this," Elder Wilson stated, "How long will we, like ancient Israel, keep breaking our promises to the Lord and following our own counsel and not his?" 9.

Healing comes from the experience of a renewed hope.

The Investigative Judgment: *Adventism's Life Raft*

| BY DON BARTON

To truly understand the vast importance of the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment in the development of Seventh-day Adventism, it is necessary to review its origins in the context of the Millerite movement.

October 22, 1844, is a definitive date in early Adventist history, and came about from the study of the books of Daniel and Revelation. Christ was to come back to the earth that day to redeem the righteous, but as midnight came, there was no reappearing. This has been called the Great Disappointment. Seventh-day Adventists believe this date still has cosmic significance. Even though Christ did not return to earth, a judgment in heaven, called the Investigative Judgment, began on that day and continues even now.

This is a simplistic understanding of a doctrine whose origin evolved from a series of events contrasting unyielding faith and naïve presumption, undying hope and fanatical denial.

The books of Daniel and Revelation have spurred prophetic interpretations for centuries. The physicist Isaac Newton was also a student of scripture, and wrote the book *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel & the Apocalypse of St. John* in 1733, even stating the year 2060 was the soonest Christ would come back to the earth.[1] Charles Wesley predicted the world would end in 1794, based on his study of Daniel and Revelation.[2] Even in the last few decades, there have been other Adventist offshoot groups who have prophesized the end of the world and the return of Christ; David Koresh and the Branch Davidians, and Michael Travesser (Wayne Bent) and the Lord Our Righteousness Church as recently as October 31, 2007.[3] There have been many other predictions made throughout history as well.[4]

The First Great Disappointment

Contrary to what has traditionally been taught, William Miller did not set the date of October 22, 1844, for the Second Coming of Christ. He did set a year—March 21, 1843, to March 21, 1844—coinciding with the vernal equinoxes and the Jewish Feast of Jubilee for the fulfillment of his prophecy. When March 21, 1844, passed, there were many wondering what happened, and most of all, what to do next. On March 25, 1844, Miller was still confident about his prophetic interpretation: "The time, as I have calculated it, is now filled up; and I expect every moment to see the Savior descend from heaven."[5]

But soon the naysayers began their diatribes and ridicule against Miller and his followers. He responded by saying:

> *Surely, we have fallen on strange times. I expected of course the doctrine of Christ's speedy coming would be opposed by infidels, blasphemers, drunkards, gamblers and the like; but I did not expect the ministers of the gospel and professors of religion would unite with characters of the above description, at stores and public places, in ridiculing the solemn doctrine of the Second Advent.*[6]

Since all other churches were considered "Babylon" by most of his followers, it is not surprising the churches were quick to point out Miller's failed fulfillment of his prophecies. While Miller writes that he did not support the labeling of the Protestant churches as "Babylon," he admits that he did not foresee how these accusations by his followers would turn out. To his credit, Miller believed he would not be on earth at this time, and therefore these matters were of no real consequence.

The impact of this apocalyptic prophecy going unfulfilled must have created a tremendous sense of loss in his followers. One need only ask, how many businesses were sold or closed down? How many fields or orchards were left

fallow, unplanted, or unharvested? How many families were divided and relationships severed? The toll on the emotional state and social structure of the believers must have been very great. Due to this, and the failure of the prophecy, many people, not surprisingly, left the movement:

> *Time passed on, and the 21st of March, 1844, went by without our witnessing the appearing of the Lord. Our disappointment was great, and many walked no more with us.*[7]

This was to be the first Great Disappointment, and unfortunately not the last.

The Second Great Disappointment

After March 1844 passed, Miller still hoped for Christ's immediate return, but soon realized that this was not about to happen, at least not as he imagined, and contemplated what he should do. Miller's thoughts were thus: "Whether God designs for me to warn the people of this earth any more, or not, I am at a loss to know"[8]

During this time, there was an associated movement, coinciding approximately with Miller's prophecy, called the Seventh Month Movement, which did two things: predicted a later time for Christ's coming, and placed an exact date for the prophecy to be fulfilled—October 22, 1844. This prophecy was not generally received with favor by those who sympathized with Miller.[9] It wasn't until October 6, just sixteen days before the cosmic event was to take place, that Miller supported this view.

So why did Miller decide to embrace this reinterpretation of his prophecy? The answer seems to have to do with the momentum the movement had acquired. Miller wrote on October 11, 1844:

> *I think I have never seen among our brethren such faith as is manifested in the seventh month. "He will come," is the common expression. "He will not tarry the second time," is their general reply. There is a forsaking of the world, an unconcern for the wants of life, a general searching of heart, confession of sin, and a deep feeling in prayer for Christ to come. A preparation of heart to meet him seems to be the labor of their agonizing spirits. There is something in this present waking up different from anything I have ever before seen.*[10]

But October 22, 1844, came and went without any fulfillment of the prophecy. We don't hear from Miller until November 10, 1844, when he states his feelings:

> *Although I have been twice disappointed, I am not yet cast down or discouraged. God has been with me in Spirit, and has comforted me.*[11]

It is estimated that there were up to fifty thousand followers in the fall of 1844. After the failure on October 22—the Second Great Disappointment—most of the followers left the movement, while a few reorganized into other groups. Miller, ever confident of his message, was still sure that he couldn't be too far off in his reckoning of the time of Christ's second coming and continued to hold fast to his view, exhorting the few who still remained.

The Shut Door

The biggest question looming for the small group of believers was, what did happen on October 22, 1844? There are two responses to this question, which helped precipitate the eventual split in the relationship between Miller and the group that would go on to form the Seventh-day Adventist Church which, by 1846, amounted to only about fifty people.[12] There were other factors that contributed to the split as well; the issue of the state of the dead, and the seventh-day Sabbath, which Miller did not believe in.[13]

The first response to this question was the reinterpretation of what actually happened on that day. On October 23, 1844, the day after the Second Great Disappointment, Hiram Edson had a vision in a cornfield that Jesus went into the most holy place in the Heavenly Sanctuary to cleanse it (i.e., judge the righteous of the world).

This second response follows from a critical assumption of the first: if Christ cleansed the sanctuary in heaven on October 22, then judgment was completed, finished, and probation closed—the individual was now either sealed or

Daniel and Revelation have spurred prophetic interpretations for centuries.

not; saved or lost. This became known as the "shut door" belief. Implicit to the shut door belief is a cessation of outreach. And the conclusion shared among the believers was that since probation had closed, there would be no further need of warning the world of the end of time.

Miller did believe this second response initially, as we find him saying on November 18, 1844: "We have done our work in warning sinners, and in trying to awake a formal church. God, in his providence, has shut the door."[14]

Later, he changed his mind and personally felt there was no all-concluding judgment. On March 10, 1845, he favors a non-shut door belief—that probation did not close on October 22: "whether, in my judgment, the time of probation came to an end on the 22d of October or not…But to say my judgment was fully convinced that it was closed, I must say, No."[15]

The Seventh-day Adventist church… by 1846, amounted to only about fifty people.

Also pivotal to the shut door theory was the *measure* of the judgment; what constituted the difference between the saved and the unsaved? The criterion for being "sealed" was a belief in the Advent prophecies. If you did believe in them, you were saved; if you didn't—you were lost. This would also provide a rebuff to the contempt and ridicule from the "Babylon" churches essentially saying to them, we were right, and you were wrong; we have been saved and, because you didn't believe us, you are not.

One would think this view of the shut door would be short lived, as the inherent self-righteousness, isolationism, and in-reach would eventually contribute to the group's demise. Surprisingly, the shut door belief wasn't rescinded until 1852—around seven years later.

When the group of Advent believers realized that holding to a shut door belief was no longer tenable for their long-term survival, they revised their current shut door interpretation, which was attributed to much Bible study and prayer. This I would call the Third Great Disappointment, for they realized that their most desired goal was no longer within their understanding and the primary interpretation of the prophecies was, admittedly, unrealized.

William Miller and the Advent group eventually went their separate ways, and Miller died on December 20, 1849.

What happened next is of extreme importance in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as we know it today. As the shut door interpretation was abandoned, a revised interpretation was embraced. The shut door view transitioned from a past-tense completed event to a present progressive tense; from a belief that judgment was complete to a belief in an active, ongoing judgment—from a shut door to a *shutting* door. It is this shutting door that is the basis of the current doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. Had the early Adventists not changed this belief, the movement would have surely died. The shutting door belief became a historical and functional necessity, and a categorical imperative to the group's existence.

And what did this new interpretation offer the group of early Advent believers?

1. It provided a tremendous amount of psychological resolution. On a personal level, the believers could now bridge the gulf of dissonance between what they believed, and what the everyday reality around them gave evidence of. Christ didn't have to come right now or at a predefined time. It was also no longer necessary to have a finished act in heaven that had already sealed their destinies.
2. It renewed their relationship with the community, fellow churchgoers, and nonbelievers, in essence allowing them to partake of and contribute to society once again.
3. Most of all, it renewed their journey of faith. This revised belief opened the way for evangelism: seeking new members, redeeming the sinner, and helping the poor and homeless. It gave reason for building new churches, and sending missionaries out to the far reaches of the world. This doctrine alone changed that small group's inward, self-centered focus to an outward focus that now had a mission directed to all of humanity. Their task in warning sinners had not ended, but was now just beginning anew.

Yet, the only message they had to share at this time was a reinterpretation of Miller's prophecies, in which a defined date of Christ's second coming was removed, and the events that did supposedly occur happened in a celestial sanctuary, and were still ongoing.

One would also have to speculate that this message alone would not have been enough to bring the church to where it is today. Credibility certainly would have also been an issue at this time.

Enter Ellen G. White

Here we must give credit to Ellen G. White and her gift of forth-telling. Moving forward with the small group of Advent believers, she steered the emphasis to include not just a heavenly, but also an earthly ministry that purposed to help and bless humanity. In having this vision for redeeming mankind through the added ministries of education, health, and healing, and preparing a people not just for heaven, but also for an earthly existence, Ellen White's greatest contributions to Seventh-day Adventism could be summed up. One only need to ask where Seventh-day Adventism would be today if not for these two tangible pillars of education and health.

Therefore, we should be thankful for the preaching of William Miller. He brought together a group that although beset by trials and loss, confusion, condemnation, and agonizing denial, was eventually able to develop the insight and vision for a church that, nearly 170 years later, is growing and thriving in most of the world.

And the Investigative Judgment, though unique to Seventh-day Adventists, should be seen for what it really was—a life raft. It kept the crew of a tiny capsized and lost ship alive, and gave them time and direction to reassess their bearings and purpose. It also enabled them to establish the religion in society as a leader in faith, education, health, and healing in a world that is still today waiting for their Lord's return. ■

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14. Ibid., 307.

15. Ibid., 335.

Had the early Adventists not changed this belief [in the shut door], the movement would have surely died.

SUMMER TRAVEL

DISCUSSED | North Korea, Ultimate, Frisbee, schoolchildren, Kim Il-sung Square, Arirang Festival (Mass Games), Juche Tower

The Ultimate Trip | BY RONALD OSBORN

In August 2012, I had the opportunity to travel to North Korea for the second annual Ultimate Frisbee[1] "Peace Tournament." The event was conceived and developed by a friend of mine, Andray Abrahamian, from college days at Newbold College of Higher Education, working in partnership with Koryo Tours, a Beijing-based travel company that has led trips to North Korea for the past twenty years. Andray is an avid Ultimate[2] player and executive director of the Choson Exchange, a nongovernmental organization that supports economic development in North Korea. Approximately twenty of us, mostly from the United States but also from Britain and Australia, spent one week in Pyongyang, with daytrips into the countryside and to North Korea's border with South Korea.

We introduced North Korean schoolchildren and others to the game of Frisbee, which is completely unknown in the country, and visited a wide variety of cultural and historical sites. Although our movements were heavily restricted, the North Korea I experienced was far more relaxed than I imagined it would be. We were at full liberty to take photos, provided only that they were not of military things and that we asked permission from people first. At the risk of sounding like a fellow traveler with Dennis Rodman, the North Koreans I met defied widespread stereotypes with their friendliness, warmth, hospitality, and generosity. There were countless visual reminders that the country is a totalitarian Communist state.

Left: Playing Frisbee in Kim Il-sung Square.

However, in my photos I tried to capture not only this aspect of North Korea, but also the common humanity of the people who live there.[3] ■

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1. The game is a noncontact team sport whose object "is to score points by passing the disc to a player in the opposing end zone, similar to an end zone in American football or rugby." Disc Ace, "Ultimate Frisbee Information." Ultimate Frisbee, http://ultimatefrisbeeinfo.com/index, June 11, 2013.

2. Note: while the sport was originally named "Ultimate Frisbee," it is now referred to as "Ultimate," as "Frisbee" is a registered trademarked name. Disc Ace, "Ultimate Frisbee Information."

3. For *Spectrum* readers interested in learning more about North Korea, I recommend Bruce Cumings's excellent and provocative book, *North Korea: Another Country*. New York: The New Press, 2004.

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the author of *Anarchy and Apocalypse: Essays on Faith, Violence, and Theodicy* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010).

Right: View of Pyongyang from Yanggakdo Hotel. Visitors are not permitted to leave the island on which the hotel sits unless accompanied by North Korean guides.

Above: North Korean men enjoying a barbecue in a Pyongyang park on Liberation Day, a holiday which celebrates the defeat of the Japanese in 1945. One man is preoccupied with texting on his cell phone. A majority of adults in Pyongyang reportedly now have cell phones with services provided by the Egyptian company Orascom. No calls can be made either in or out of the country with mobile devices. Similarly, North Koreans have access to the national "intranet," but not the Internet.

Left: Guide in the Grand People's Study House, the North Korean equivalent of the US Library of Congress.

Above: Soldiers pay their respects at the birthplace of Kim Il-sung just outside Pyongyang.

Right: Family at Pyongyang Golden Lane Bowling Alley.

Below: North Korean woman.

Right: Schoolchildren in Pyongyang learning how to play Frisbee. Not a single person we spoke with on our trip had seen or thrown a Frisbee before our arrival.

Below: North Korean man in uniform. All adult North Koreans wear pins of Kim Jong-il and/or Kim Il-sung. Foreigners are forbidden to wear pins of the two leaders, but may wear pins of the North Korean flag.

Left: College students at Pyongyang Golden Lane Bowling Alley. These students and others at Golden Lane represent North Korea's tiny "middle class." They are neither the scions of the political and military elite, nor the children of the masses of rural poor. Simply living inside Pyongyang, North Korea's model city, is itself a great privilege, and people from outside the capital cannot enter it without special authorization.

"With a Little Help from My Friends" | BY LINDA K. OLSON

These guys wanted to put me in *their* wheelchair, the one they *made* for me.

There's supposed to be someone meeting us here. Can you see our name anywhere?" We slowly pushed through the crowd at the airport in Cusco, Peru, reading and then rereading each handheld sign before sighing with relief when we finally spotted our names on a sign held by a young man. Upon reaching him, he politely, yet firmly, muscled our luggage cart away from my husband Dave and out into the parking lot.

"¿Como está?" asked Dave in his newly minted Spanish.

"Uh, good…muy bien," he mumbled. We wove through the crowd as he steered us to a new-looking Sprinter. The door to the tall, sleek minibus gaped open, with three steep steps between the curb and interior. Our large, waterproof duffle bags seemed to jump into the van. One more large black suitcase and our carry-on backpacks completed the baggage of our small group.


"Their" wheelchair

The group consisted of Dave, myself, and our friend Yvonne. Friends from Montana, Carla and Roger, arrived later that afternoon, after hiking in Ecuador and visiting the Amazon, increasing our group to five people during this spring 2013 trip. What made Dave and I a little different from the other travelers was the fact that I am a triple amputee, having lost both my legs above the knee and my right arm at the shoulder more than thirty years ago. In Germany, our car had stalled on a railroad track and was hit by a train in 1979, two years after we were married. I was hospitalized in Salzburg, Austria. Since the accident, I have used bilateral above-knee prostheses with a quad cane to assist me, but now I also use a wheelchair much of the time. Despite all this, we raised a family, had successful careers, traveled the world, and spent extensive time roughing it in the wilderness, learning to be nearly totally self-sufficient. We figured we pretty much knew what we were doing.

Two men stood near the van to welcome us, smiling, but also intermittently betraying concern on their tanned, outdoorsy-looking faces. Jose appeared to be the older of the two. He hunched ever so slightly with his arms partly

Benjamin and Linda coming into Machu Picchu

crossed over his chest, his right hand absentmindedly stroking his chin. Dark hair hid under a faded black baseball cap. With one knee akimbo, he appeared contemplative but slightly worried. Benjamin was lanky and taller, with curly black hair. His English was somewhat more halting than Jose's, and he tended to let Jose be the spokesperson. He was jauntier and seemed to be perpetually on the verge of laughing for no particular reason. They introduced our cart pusher, Claudio, to us as the driver.

A wheelchair suddenly appeared in front of us. I glanced at the wheelchair and then back to the three men, speechless.

Benjamin grinned at me, "We decided to make a wheelchair for you." The front wheels were medium-sized solid rubber, pink, blue, and yellow. "We replaced the front wheels with these that we took off a little kid's bicycle."

I stared at the wheelchair. The back tires were fat and sturdy. My jaw dropped when I saw the hand brakes, which they had parasitized from another bike and mounted on the handles of the wheelchair. They turned the wheelchair around and sheepishly pointed to the seat belt they'd installed in it for "just in case…"

Still unsure how to react, I blurted out, "Are you kidding me? You put brakes on it? What made you think of that? That's a fabulous idea! I've been trying to figure out how to do that to my wheelchair!"

I should have known right then that this would be no ordinary trip. These guys wanted to put me in *their* wheelchair, the one they *made* for me. I was a little taken aback. I was already in my own wheelchair, and after using wheelchairs for thirty-four years, I considered myself to be an expert, unlike these guys, whom I suspected had never before dealt with a client in a wheelchair. At the very least, they had probably never seen a one-arm drive, manual wheelchair, like the one I use to propel myself independently.

We figured we pretty much knew what we were doing.


Into the labyrinth at Q'inqu

I snuck a surreptitious glance at these men, sensing a bond had already developed between us. If they had put this much effort into making a wheelchair, I wanted them to see the payoff. I wanted them to have a good time in return for their work.

So we had our first test of wills. Even though I was impressed with their invention, I was intent on maintaining my independence and not imposing on them.

"Dave can just carry me up the steps," I said, flashing a big smile to show that it was no problem.

I assumed Dave would do the typical "sling me up into the van." To show off, I often jokingly push my index finger into his chest, pretending to be pushing an elevator "Up" button, while at the same time asking an innocent bystander where *their* elevator is located. Meanwhile, I put my left arm around his neck while he hauls me up the stairs with me hanging in front of him. As he swings me up, my heels clunk down, and he levers me into an upright position. Our routine is so slick that it's done before anyone realizes what has happened.

But as I was getting ready to stand up, my three new best friends whipped out a new pair of short, expandable ramps, and laid them on the curb and up into the van doorway, making it quite clear that we would be using them to ascend into the van.

"When we knew you were coming, we removed the middle two rows of seats so we could put the wheelchair right here."

I saw that they had installed a wheelchair tie-down right next to the window, so I had the best view in the van. I smiled to hide my grimace while the three of them strained to push and pull me up the steep incline into the van. We started to careen off the ramps a couple of times, but with grunts and groans they righted me. They locked my wheelchair in place, but put "their" wheelchair right next to mine, and off we went. With a sidewise glance at the empty wheelchair, I found myself worrying that this might be a very long week if it was this much work to get around.

"Come on, let's do a little sightseeing before dinner," suggested Jose and Benjamin.

A late-afternoon sun shone between gigantic white life-like clouds and patches of brilliant, vivid blue sky. At an elevation of 11,200 feet, the hilly and narrow cobblestone streets present a challenge for everyone. Pedestrians walk slowly and rest often, breathing heavily to get as much air as possible into their oxygen-deprived lungs. Cars and tourist vans squeeze precariously through ancient, narrow cobblestone streets, no more than ten feet wide and occasionally flanked by skinny, two-foot-wide sidewalks.

"I think you should use *our* wheelchair this afternoon," Benjamin said.

"Hmm…why not just use mine? It's easier to get it in and out of the van, and I can push myself around in it," I spoke in my sweetest, leave-me-alone voice.

It wasn't their problem that I'm disabled. Dave and I choose to make these trips and give serious thought ahead of time as to how we are going to maneuver in tricky, usually wheelchair-unfriendly terrain and cities. We are a team, a well-oiled machine, and have practiced all over the world.

"Well, the places we are going this afternoon are pretty rough and I think we will need the bigger, fatter tires to make it safe and easier," said Benjamin.

"OK," I replied, agreeing to change wheelchairs. Over the next two hours, they proved time and time again to be right, as they hauled me up old stone steps and over bumpy, uneven cobblestones that had never seen the inside of an Americans with Disabilities Act rulebook, and never would.

As the equatorial sun slid behind the mountaintops, we knew that it was time to head back to the hotel. It was only four blocks away, but those four blocks were uphill and still at 11,200 feet elevation. Dave began hyperventi-

lating as he pushed the wheelchair. Benjamin appeared in front of us out of nowhere, unraveling a tangle of blue straps. Grateful for the excuse to stop, Dave watched in amazement as he realized that the blue straps unfolded into a harness that Benjamin attached to both sides of the front of the wheelchair. Unexpectedly, Benjamin started *pulling* my wheelchair with the homemade wheelchair harness. He looked back with a huge grin on his face and Dave immediately took the cue to start pushing again. We fairly flew up the bumpy, cobblestone street, which was so narrow that all the cars crept up the hill behind us till we reached our hotel.

Monday afternoon the van stopped near a large sign proclaiming our arrival at Q'inqu, an amazing labyrinth of steps, rooms, caves, seats, and designs carved out of a gigantic stone on a hillside. Impossibly narrow paths wound over, around, and under large stones. Jose was postulating that a large, flat rock slab was naturally cold enough to have probably been used in mummification ceremonies when Benjamin began wheeling me downhill under a narrow entry into an underground passage.

"Why don't you let me sit right here; I have a book with me," I mumbled, instinctively drawing my shoulders in and ducking my head.

"Uh, it's really no problem, we can do it," said Benjamin. My don't-let-me-be-a-problem instinct reared up.

"No, you don't understand," I retorted. "We do this all the time. I just sit in the shade and read my book and I'm really very happy. The last thing I want is for you guys to hurt yourselves trying to get me into all these places."

Jose interrupted his lecture to turn and grin at us. "It's really no problem. You see, we came out here last week and put one of the guys in the wheelchair to make sure it would fit and that we could get you through here. You're not nearly as heavy as he was, so today this was a piece of cake."

Unbelievable, yet true. They had spent the last month inventing things and doing dry runs to ensure the success of our trip. I was beginning to realize that these were not your ordinary tour guides. They had been world-class kayakers/river guides/outdoor adventure guides for the past twenty years, and they were ready for a new challenge. We happened to come along at the right time. With the impetus of my impending visit, they had put themselves in someone else's shoes, in my case, a wheelchair, and tried to see how they could better this part of the world for disabled people. Their enthusiasm and creativity began to allow Dave and me to relinquish some of our tightly held control. I sensed this might be a win-win situation for all of us.

As Dave prepared for the four-day hike up the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu that evening, we unloaded the pack frame we've used for many years, the one that Dave carries me in when we go hiking. It has a twelve-by-twelve-inch canvas shelf that folds down from a backpack frame. I sit on the seat without prostheses, my chest up against Dave's back, and my body secured by wide straps over my shoulders. While it's a very efficient way to carry me, it is not easy to do because I weigh almost ninety pounds.


Wheelchair harness

These were not your ordinary tour guides.

Coincidentally, Benjamin happened by our room and asked if he could see how we used the pack frame. Dave obliged him by setting me on the top of the dresser, slipping the pack over his shoulders, and leaning down slightly so I could "butt-walk" onto the seat. I gripped the frame tightly while he leaned forward to get the heavy load balanced on his back. He paced around the room a few times while explaining how he uses trekking poles and how he balances the load. Benjamin's eyes got big. Finally, he couldn't resist asking a question.

"Can I try that? That looks like it might work better than what we made."

"Of course. Here, let me take it off."

Dave set the pack on the dresser with me still in it, slipped out of the straps, and held it while Benjamin squatted slightly and shouldered the straps. As he hesitantly leaned forward, I slipped sideways, but hung on tightly so he wouldn't notice our precariousness. He straightened up and took a few steps, jiggling the pack on his back to get more comfortable. He flashed another one of his now famous grins. "Wow," he said, "this is great!"

Reunion after Dave's four-day hike

Dave, Carla, and Roger departed early the next day with Jose for their four-day hike, leaving Yvonne and me to tour the Sacred Valley and spend time in Cusco until Friday, when we took the train to Machu Picchu. Washington, a new guide joined us. "Washi," an indigenous Peruvian, brought a new element to the crew; part tour guide, part shaman, part entrepreneur and law student.

"Hi, I'm Washi," he said. I looked up at him from my wheelchair.

"Can you show me how to walk with you, and then can you show me how your wheelchair works? I'd like to practice with you before the van picks us up at 10 a.m.," he continued.

With that introduction, Washi cycloned his way into our lives. Within minutes I'd shown him how to flex his elbow ninety degrees and hold his arm tightly against his waist so I could hold his forearm and wrist to walk with him. We walked up the gentle slope of a curving sidewalk. His pace was fast; I reined him in so I wouldn't fall. Three or four minutes were enough. I sat down in my wheelchair and he took off at a breakneck speed, careening partway off the edge of the first curve. Sensing the wild abandon of his approach to movement, I was glad I'd been hanging on tightly to my wheelchair. Once we slowed down, he wanted to experience curbs and steps.

"Whoa! You can't go straight down a curb! Stop for a minute! Wait!" I screamed. We jerked to an abrupt stop just in the nick of time. "Tip me waaa-y back on the back wheels and let gravity take us down," I advised.

"Now, how do you go up?" Washi asked, after bumping us down the curb.

"Well, that's a little harder. You lean me back again and depending on how high the curb is, you go up either forward or backward. It takes some practice."

The first stop of the day was the ancient ruins of Moray. Washi took one look at the pack frame, strapped it on, and grinning, said, "Let's go." With Yvonne's help, I sat down on the floor of the van and pulled off my legs. While the guides turned their backs, we rummaged through my daypack to see if I could find a pair of shorts to wear. I gingerly butt-walked onto the seat of the pack frame and off we went. I looked back imploringly at Yvonne, hoping she would keep me safe.

"These huge, terraced amphitheaters were very important agricultural sites, kind of like greenhouses or experimental

Washi, Linda, and Yvonne at Machu Picchu

biological stations. There is often a twenty-five degree Farenheit difference from the top terrace to the bottom one. Because of this, the Incas were able to grow and experiment with crops," Washi stated in his best tour-guide voice.

As we got closer, we could see an enormous, deep structure below us. But then, my view became just a little *too* good as Washi walked right up to the edge and leaned over, pointing out the site below.

"Washi! Don't! We are way too close to the edge!" I yelled. I was hanging partly in space on the back of someone who had never carried me before, and as I far as I knew, might have no sense of balance. Yvonne hustled to get her camera, saying this was too good to miss. Who knew whether I'd still be hanging on or at the bottom of the pit in the next few seconds?

"Come on, let's pretend we are condors!" Washi yelled, stretching out his arms and leaning even farther over the edge of the precipice. At that point I realized I was going wherever he went, so I stretched my arm out as far as possible, whooped and hollered along with him, and hoped for the best.

After a short rest, Washi started down into an adjacent crater, one without a trail. He tackled the steep hill at a semi-gallop. It wasn't long before he slipped and slid down several feet as I hung on for dear life. Thankfully, it was steep enough that he was able to push himself up quickly with his hands and we continued to the bottom of the excavation without another mishap.

"We've got our wheelchair. Where is your pack frame?" Benjamin asked the next morning as we met at 6:30 in the hotel lobby for our trip to Machu Picchu.

I knew this would be another test of wills and ability within the first one hundred yards. Even in their home-built wheelchair, the going was

My don't-let-me-be-a-problem instinct reared up.

pretty rough. According to *The Rough Guide To Peru*, "More than a hundred flights of steep stone steps interconnect its palaces, temples, storehouses and terraces, and the outstanding views command not only the valleys below in both directions, but also extend to the snowy peaks around Salcantay. Wherever you stand in the ruins, spectacular terraces can be seen slicing across ridiculously steep cliffs, transforming mountains into suspended gardens."[1]

It was time for me to get out my book and watch the world go by, or so I thought, but for one last time our guides were going to pull out all the stops and take me through all the ruins. This time I'd be on their backs. I now knew better than to protest when they parked the wheelchair and suggested that I take my legs off so I could get in the pack frame and start our tour.

I had been pushed, pulled, and carried by strangers.

As he climbed ancient rock-hewn steps, Washi carried me on his back, aided by two trekking poles. Every few steps, he shifted the pack weight a little, did some deep breathing, and leaned a little farther forward. It sounded like he was chanting Quechua prayers, too. I scanned the hillside looking for hip-high, large flat resting rocks, pointing out the good ones, suggesting that they would be places we could rest. Benjamin traded off with him periodically and although I worried about them getting hurt, I soon realized that nothing I said would alter their plan for getting me to the prime viewing sites.

Late that afternoon, there was an unusual amount of chatter among our guides. Benjamin seemed to fade out of sight frequently and was attached to his cell phone more than normal. Seemingly on cue, we started uphill toward the Sun Gate. It dawned on me that Dave, Roger, and Carla must be finishing their four-day trek and should be heading down the trail into Machu Picchu. I got a little misty-eyed thinking about it. Looking around, it seemed that Yvonne and the guides were getting a little emotional too. And then suddenly Dave was coming around a corner twenty feet ahead of us. Now there were real tears…and this time it wasn't just Linda.

For the past few days, we had overcome the typical limits of modern society's "invasion of privacy." I had been pushed, pulled, and carried by strangers. Likewise, they had been grabbed, held, and hugged by a stranger. When Dave volunteered to take his turn with the pack that afternoon, Benjamin said to him, "Don't take this privilege away from me. I may never get to do this again in my life."

We began to realize that as we get older, our travel will benefit more and more from the goodwill and camaraderie between us and strangers, strangers who become friends because of the opportunity to help each other. All nine of us felt a sense of accomplishment and an indescribable bond. We had given and taken from each other. Our worlds had become closer. And they had never "let me sit and read my book." ■

Note: The title is taken from the song "With a Little Help from My Friends," written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, and featured on the Beatles 1967 album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Linda K. Olson is an emeritus professor of radiology at University of California San Diego School of Medicine. She graduated from Loma Linda University School of Medicine in the class of 1976-A with her husband, David Hodgens. She and David, who recently retired from the radiation oncology center at Scripps Memorial Hospital, have lived in San Diego for the past thirty-seven years. They have two grown children, Tiffany and Brian, and are proud grandparents to Sierra Johnson.

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DISCUSSED | Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Soviet Union, Taliban, Pashtuns, the Great Game

An Afghanistan the News Clips Miss | BY GILBERT BURNHAM

Kabul is surrounded by mountains. Although Afghanistan lies on major earthquake fault lines, there are few building codes, particularly for housing.

Afghanistan has a long and rich history. Branches of the Silk Road passed through its valleys. On his march to India, Alexander the Great married a local king's daughter, Roxanne, and on Afghanistan's northern borders, founded Greek cities, which were to last for several centuries. Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire, grew up in Kabul, and went on to rule much of northern India. His last wish was for his body to be carried from Delhi, India, to Kabul, Afghanistan, for burial under the open sky. Arnold Toynbee called Afghanistan the "Roundabout of History." Travel writers from Marco Polo to Bruce Chatwin, Eric Newby, and Wilfred Thesiger were enchanted by the country.

As a modern state, Afghanistan came into existence in the eighteenth century as a buffer between an expanding Russia, seeking an outlet to the Indian Ocean, and British India, anxious that they not succeed. The shadowy intrigue between the two states played out in Afghanistan, and became known as the Great Game. It was repeated during the Cold War, with the Soviets and the Americans competing for influence. One of the casualties was the killing of the American ambassador, Adolph Dubs, under mysterious circumstances. A Soviet proxy government came to power, but soon stumbled. Rather than see the prize slip away, Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the Soviet Union after Nikita Khrushchev, ordered the Soviet

Left: Access to households on mountainsides is difficult. Yet for its residents, the city offers a brighter economic future, and security from the Taliban-driven conflict in rural areas.

Below: A truck stop four hours out of Herat in western Afghanistan. On the left is the Johns Hopkins project manager, Ayan. Her mother frequently telephoned her, begging her to leave Afghanistan for the security and safety back home, which was in Somalia.

From left: The death rate of children under age five has now dropped from 257 deaths per 1,000 births by age five, during the time of the Soviet occupation, to under 100 deaths. This has been achieved largely since 2002.

Arnold Toynbee called Afghanistan the "Roundabout of History."

occupation to bolster the socialist factions. Seizing an opportunity to harass the Reds, US President Ronald Reagan aggressively armed traditional leaders, the Mujahedeen, to harry the Soviet forces, and in doing so, sowed the seeds of the Taliban as a religious-military force. When Mikhail Gorbachev, as Soviet president, finally recalled Soviet forces, American interests walked away, creating a power vacuum and a decade of internal conflict. Eventually the Taliban gained the upper hand, creating a missionary state for their brand of primitive Islam. Osama bin Laden and his followers flourished in this environment.

The Taliban have their roots among the Pashtuns, Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, though not a majority. The unsettled Pakistan-Afghanistan border bisects the Pashtun tribal territory, following the Durand Line, a sphere-of-influence limit that is an artifact of colonial India. The rise of the Taliban (from *talib*, or "religious student") caused some five million Afghans to flee to neighboring countries, where two million still remain. Following the September 11 attack, the US-led forces reinforced the Northern Alliance, the remaining opposition force, causing the Taliban government to collapse almost overnight, in November 2001.

With the Berlin Conference of 2001, many countries pledged assistance to transform Afghanistan into a modern state. Hamid Karzai was a Pashtun leader acceptable to the non-Pashtun Afghans. In the intervening years, billions of

Left: The massive construction in Kabul creates a great demand for building supplies. Here, two sons are helping their father manage his hardware store.

Below: In good weather, laundry is everywhere. Houses on the mountains can overlook the courtyards of others. This is not acceptable in Afghan culture, so barriers are often erected to maintain privacy for women (upper right).

dollars in military and nonmilitary assistance have poured into Afghanistan. Twelve new universities have been founded, education is widely available to both boys and girls, and there are currently some twenty-seven television stations broadcasting. The health services have dramatically improved, one of the factors behind a dramatic drop in child and infant mortality. The city of Kabul has grown from 500,000 to some five million, and is a thriving entrepreneurial metropolis. These changes have occurred against the background of a corrupt government, which is increasingly losing the support of conservative rural populations. A fertile ground has been created for the Taliban, reinforced from Pakistan, and funded by religious conservatives throughout the Muslim world. Their goal is to reinstate their vision of primitive Islam, free of secular government and all traces of what they see as alien cultural influences—which also includes centuries of Islamic jurisprudence. This then would be a people living in harmony with the wishes of Allah, and scrupulously following the instructions of the Prophet, as they interpret these.

All this is taking place in a sea of complex and dangerous political and cultural currents. Pakistan sees a natural hegemony over Afghanistan, and has its Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence agents throughout the country.[1] India has powerful cultural, historical, and intellectual connections, which it leverages for maximum benefit. Bollywood movies are a national Afghan

Bollywood movies are a national Afghan addiction.

Above: Afghanistan is defined by mountains that cover much of the country; dry and dusty in summer and snow covered in winter. Melting snow in spring and summer supports abundant agriculture on arable land, which composes only 10 percent of the country.

Below: These girls are watching the few tourists who visit the sites of the Bamiyan Buddhas, as well as thousands of cells carved into the rocks where monks lived while studying the teachings of the sage of Sarnath.

Above: In the grounds of the Gazar Gah, a shrine to a Sufi poet of a thousand years ago, are many graves of notables, including the son of Alexander the Great and an Afghan who constructed the Taj Mahal.

Below: The Kochis, Afghan Pashtun nomads, account for 10 percent of Afghanistan's population. Here, a household is loading up to move on, probably for better pasturage for their animals. Camels are very common, especially in northern Afghanistan.

Below: This man of Wardak is passing through a small town on his way to discuss legal affairs with the district government. Like many Afghans in this very insecure part of the country, he is carrying an ancient rifle as his travel insurance policy.

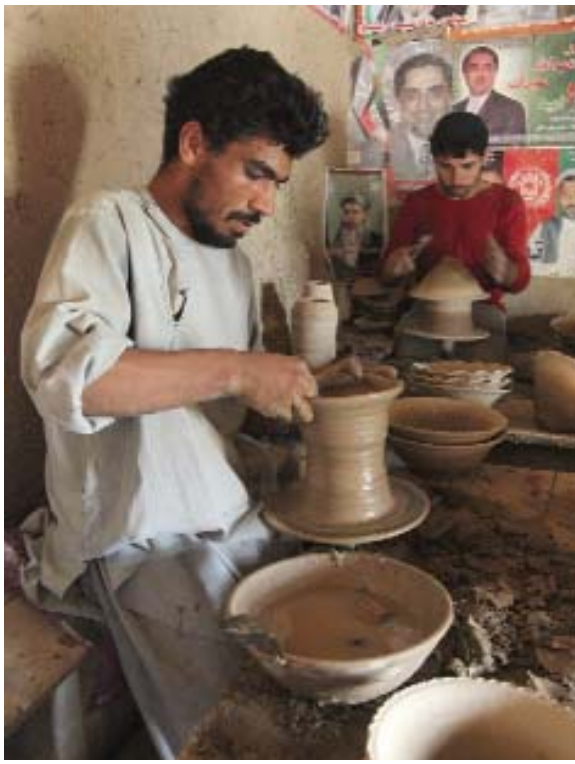
It is easy to sense the spell that the country and its people cast.

addiction. Militant mullahs have tried unsuccessfully to ban the televising of exposed Indian midriffs. When it seems the mullahs might be successful, there is a rush for satellite dishes to continue, uninterrupted, the national fix.

Clearly the appetite among Americans and their allies for continuing war is all but gone. How Afghanistan will manage when US troops leave in 2014 is the open question. Considerable bilateral assistance will continue to flow, although the United States Agency for International Development has little investments in aid planned beyond that date. What will happen then will be further innings in the Great Game.

I have had the opportunity to work almost continuously on public health projects in Afghanistan, starting immediately after the fall of the Taliban. This has been an opportunity to see much of Afghanistan when foreigners could still travel quite freely in the country and sleep in rural villages. It is easy to sense the spell that the country and its people cast. The landscape is largely barren and hostile. Agriculture is confined to narrow, fertile riverine valleys, which are fed by snowmelt from the jagged Hindu Kush, that great range of mountains dividing southern Afghanistan and the Indus Valley from Central Asia. Lush crops of wheat, abundant fruits, and, of course, opium poppies are watered through elaborate irrigation systems. Many channels run underground, and some stretch a considerable distance back in time. Afghans

Below: Pottery is important in everyday household life. Two potters are making tableware in the town of Istalif, close to a good supply of clay.



have a hospitality toward strangers that is a feature of many Islamic societies, until sadly overwhelmed by ideological violence. A history of migration, war and peace, toil and dignity is present in the faces of its people.

In this group of photos, taken over the course of ten years, I have tried to convey the many and often conflicted feelings that the country conveys. My hope is that these will provide a glimpse of the Afghanistan missed in the headlines and the news clips. ■

References

1. The Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence is the Pakistan intelligence agency linked to bombings and covert activities in Afghanistan and India.

Gilbert Burnham is a professor of international health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He established the university's Center for Refugee and Disaster Response, focused on improving the public health response in disasters. The center conducts research worldwide, assists organizations with prevention and response, and offers an extensive academic humanitarian assistance graduate curriculum. Prior to joining Johns Hopkins, he was the medical director of Malamulo Hospital in Malawi for fourteen years. He holds an MD from Loma Linda University School of Medicine, an MSc and a PhD from the University of London, and is certified in internal medicine.

Benghazi, Libya, 2013

Lush crops… are watered through elaborate irrigation systems.

ART AND POETRY

From Adventist Universities

Portrait of Enoch, oil on canvas, by Bijoy Attey (Canadian University College, alum, art/behavioural science). A portrait of the artist's brother.

Catch You | *By Lisa Cunningham*

I couldn't have been much older than five
when I stood in the hay loft, anxiously
gazing down through the chute
to where my father stood.

Peering over, I inched forward
until my toes gripped the edge.
Dust from the tasseled hay was
now beginning to settle on

the sweat that spotted my forehead.
He stood on the truck-bed, arms stretched
toward me. Reluctantly, my small
feet left the floor boards and

there. As quickly as I had leapt
I was in his grasp. It was clear
that the gap which had separated
us was hardly a gap at all.

Lisa Cunningham graduated from Andrews University with a bachelor of arts degree in English in December 2012.

Eh Po, oil painting, by Leila Celestin (Andrews University senior, fine arts [painting emphasis] and French studies majors). This painting is part of a series of fifty portraits highlighting Karen refugees from Celestin's hometown of Albany, New York. The Karens have been victims of ethnic cleansing by the Burmese government for the past sixty-five years, gone almost unnoticed. Celestin wishes not to victimize them, but to highlight them as a strong, resilient, and beautiful people. For more information, visit leilannette.tumblr.com.

Land of Plenty | *By Delbee Dalton*

She pushes the double stroller past the gas station where I fill up my SUV. The cold wind bites my hands. A sturdy child of about eight walks with her. I wonder where she is going, whether it would be safe to offer her a ride and if the stroller would fit in the back of my truck. I leave and park at the grocery store next door. I review my list: organic lettuce, cage free eggs, Amish cheese. I'm glad that I wrote everything down; I have so much that I need to remember. I enter the store and see that she is also there. Our eyes meet next to the apples and I smile, glancing at her two babies, one holding a bottle. She gives me a wary glance. We both wander the fruit and vegetables, me filling up my cart quickly, her, pushing the stroller, hesitating to pick up anything. I add potatoes, bread and cereal. Down aisle five I see her again, this time pushing a grocery cart; the older child pushing the stroller. She has four items. I dread having to pass by her, and as I do, she stares.

I wish I could hide my overflowing cart.

Delbee Dalton is the administrative assistant for the department of English at Andrews University, and is working on an undergraduate degree in English.

Waking II, opaque acrylic, by Mayah Robinson (Pacific Union College sophomore, graphic design/fine art major).

Anorexia | *By Melissa Myers*

Bone mouth:
fill me

hunger
skims hips
marrow aches
curves wisp
count
down
vertebrae

flesh
quivers
spine
osteo-prone
collarbone

line
breaks
shift shape
kneecaps

nothing
matters
only numbers
scale down
pounds
drop
now
elbows

broken bone
cry

Melissa Myers is a senior English major at Canadian University College. This summer she plans to travel to Edinburgh to take courses in modernism and in creative writing.

Troubled, digital composite, by Nina Marie Rambo (Andrews University senior, photography major).

Kiss Softly As Moths | *By Melissa Myers*

Time drums spaces I did not know existed
imagined bodies dance
wings glide—*whoosh*—flutter, spasm, settle, my left collarbone
grows and expands towards an immortal atmosphere

"Moths belong in the dark," you murmur
as the automaton rhythm pulses
and beats *hub dub. dub hub. hub dub*.
rust-dark lepidoptera and amber-winged skimmers flit beneath
a sky that will be ash-grey by morning,
while now, naked stars expose your transitory words:

Love is a hot air grasp on an iron handle,
a burn in a staircase of sweet honey comb,
the burrowing between flesh and divine

Silently, unchanging the consecrated corona nears;
wings cling the back of my throat
and flicker around honey light
reflects our glide—*whoosh*—flutter, spasm, settle
into your nimbus, drawn to the glow of a translucent shell,
stubborn and beautiful frailty
spoiled by a golden ball of fire

"Didn't you know?" you pity
"the sky in all its zones is mortal"
hub dub. dub hub. hub dub.
moths flutter
unaware, breath whispers between
our lips
softly, we kiss.

Melissa Myers is a senior English major at Canadian University College. This summer she plans to travel to Edinburgh to take courses in modernism and in creative writing.

Note: The line "the sky in all its zones is mortal" is from Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*.

Fog | *By Natalie Romero*

The fog was deep with unshed tears,
A cloud upon my very fears.
It drew me in and broke my heart
A smoky, whitened work of art.

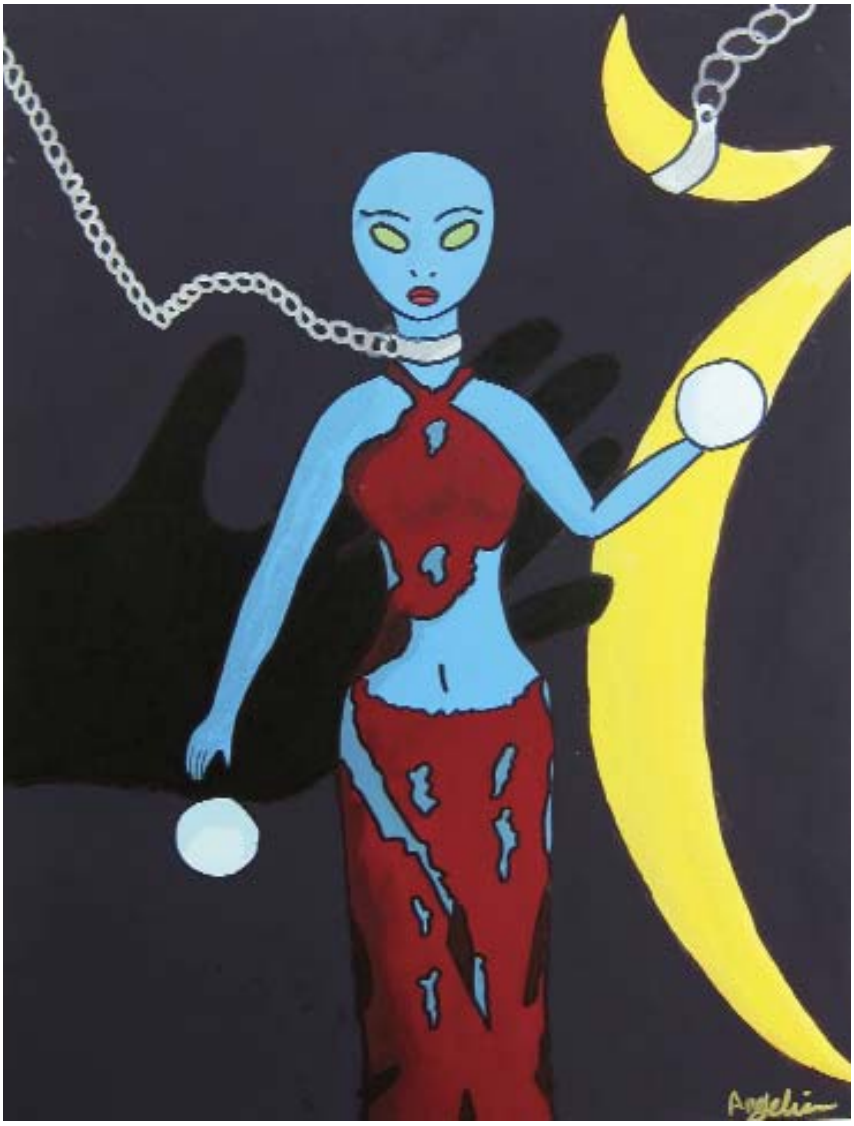
The water in the canal wept
As vines around my soul crept, crept.
The dewdrops on the trees were hung,
Crystalline notes still left unsung.

Red flowers on the graves were left
By mourners sad and so bereft.
Like drops of blood upon the ground
Poinsettias 'round the yard abound.

His tombstone's there, just 'round the bend.
As prayers to heaven my heart sends,
My knees sink down into the bog
And we're surrounded by the fog.

Natalie Romero is a second-year student in the English literature master of arts program at La Sierra University.

Air Feeders, etching, by Rebecca Hiebert (Walla Walla University 2013 graduate, history major and art minor).



Broken Moons, acrylic on canvas, by Angelina Logan (Canadian University College, junior, behavioral science major). A personal and highly symbolic exploration of the artist's psychological curriculum vitae.

In This Moment

By Ruthie Heavrin Orozco

In this moment
when my lungs
are extended and there's
still no air, when my heart
is wrenched
from its valves and slips
down each rib
like a bar of soap
on a wash board,
in this moment as
I lie in darkness
gripping my beloved's hand consoling
each chirp of the midnight cricket,
I recognize bliss in a mirror.
It reflects not pride, but self
admiration like a child
who recognizes art in crime
or prey that accepts death
to feed another.
In this moment, I've taken notice
that I'm alive.
Nay, I'm thriving
as the cattle in a slaughter house,
the elephant in the poacher's scope,
the prisoner in the electric chair.
Pain is inevitable, but in this moment
I'm alive. For this, praises to God
rest on my lips and my soul stills.

Ruthie Heavrin Orozco graduated from La Sierra University as an English writing and literature major in June 2013. She and her husband Gabriel just welcomed their first baby, Gabriel Elisha, into the world in May 2013.

***Deconstruction of a Dream**, acrylic, by Richard Hawkins (Pacific Union College senior, fine art major).*

High Fashion of Paper Dresses from Recycled Newspapers, recycled newspapers, by Adaiah Thompson (La Sierra University 2013 graduate, fine art major with a concentration in fabrics). A statement about reuse, recycle and care for the earth. Photograph by Michael Easley.

Circle of Breath | *By Emily Star Wilkens*

Let a breath leave your body for once.
Let it go without promise of repayment.
Do not expect it to return.
If you can, give up all of your reserves.
And when your lungs are as empty as rocks,
when you've trusted your body to go
through the valley of the shadow of exhaling,
you will be able to take everything in.
The circle of breath will come back around.

Emily Wilkens is currently working on her master of fine arts degree in creative nonfiction at Antioch University in Los Angeles, California, and is part of the poetry group that meets in Loma Linda, California. She is the author of *African Rice Heart*.

Genesis | *By Ramona L. Hyman*

dear God
in the beginning
was the middle: a passage
hues: brown of faces-stomachs-arms-legs
known unknown
commodity (betrayed.)
by countrymen wooed and wooing
(alien) words made them
be bound by chains holding them together
flesh—they are my memory, my mantra

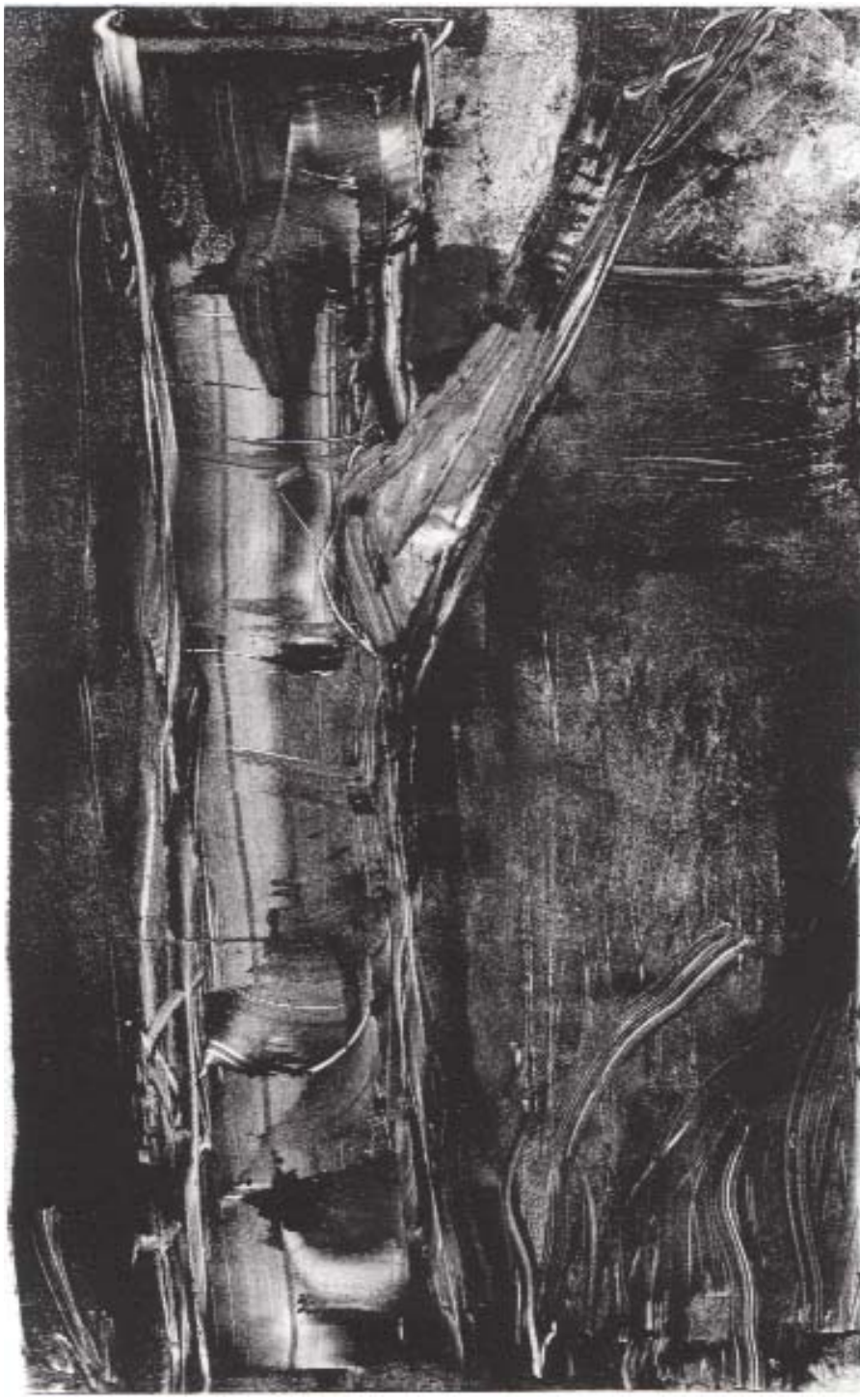
dear God everything does work together for the good

Dr. Ramona L. Hyman is a writer, speaker, and professor at Loma Linda University, and part of the poetry group that meets in Loma Linda, California. She is the author of the collection of poetry *In the Sanctuary of A South*. More information is available on her websites, ramonahyman.com and http:www.wespeakers.com/speaker.cfm?id=6512.

Librarian's Melancholy | *By J. E. Payne*

I step into another world filled with wordy silence
Rows of men
An occasional woman
Stand at attention over there
Echoes of a distant past
Hidden cities and
Ghost towns
Giving sly winks and trinkets
To dusty beggars with trowels and brushes
Leftover scraps of writing
Discarded in the chaos
Reverberations of empiric clashes
Nameless conquerors and named peons
Wait listlessly side-by-side
Dead hopes
Slumbering dreams
Pleading to be understood
This humble vault invaded by
Demanding interrogators
Asking the wrong questions
Milking the answers into summaries
Never seeing
Never wanting
Their forgotten realities

J. E. Payne graduated from Southern Adventist University in May 2013 with a major in biblical studies, and minors in biblical languages and English.



Night Forest, print, by Allison Berger (Walla Walla University 2013 graduate, art major).

Potential, spray paint and linoleum block print on wood, by Ben Jepson (Walla Walla University 2012 graduate, graphic design major with an art minor)

Nostalgia | *By J. E. Payne*

I often miss the things I've never seen
The windswept cliffs with caves along its face
Where sapphire waters 'neath the sunlight gleam
Or roaring waves and gray skies in its place
The rolling moorland dotted all in thistle
Or rocky land with heather bushes grown
The hopping hare or cheeky birdie's whistle
And herbs and ferns no farmer's seed has sown
I miss the sloping roof with sod on top
And curling smoke which from the chimney plumes
And window-views horizons never stop
And firesides in cozy cottage rooms
And though I've never been there nor have seen
These things live on inside my memory's dreams

J. E. Payne graduated from Southern Adventist University in May 2013 with a major in biblical studies, and minors in biblical languages and English.

Desert Credo | *By David Gustavsen*

I believe in bones
and the rocks buried
in red earth

I believe in cactus spines
and the spiders who spin
their webs between them

I have faith in the slick lizards
licking the air

and I believe in grass like marble
pines like pillars supporting
the periwinkle sky

I've sung hymns with a red wind
and the rough scent of sage
we sang like oxygen to the echoes
in the canyons

I've prayed for the thin
streams in their stone jackets

watched coyote's eye grow large
between the stars

I believe in goat heads and locusts
in the balding yucca and tarantula hair

I rest in the knowledge of that line of ants
carrying a millipede husk on their backs
like a god

And I believe in the naked branches
freckled with crows and
the pinprick song of sparrows

David Gustavsen graduated from Walla Walla University in 2011 with an English major.

Steampunk, watercolor, by Katie Pershing (La Sierra University 2013 graduate, fine arts major with painting and textiles emphases). Pershing is currently enrolled in a post baccalaureate program at Laguna College of Art and Design.

Blue | *By Emily Muthersbaugh*

After coaxing vagrant birds
into a single glass jar,
the story begins.
I turn a leaf over
in the center of a wood
with countless leaves surrounding.
Beneath this ripened covering
a hive of thought abounds.
I grasp one from the many
with no device,
a reckless task to undergo.
After all, corners do not announce
their worth for probing.
But the more I search,
the more I crush,
the less and less I find.
In the looming
of tale upon tale
through painted lenses,
what is beneath the leaves
I cannot know.
But call me a scholar of blue.

Emily Muthersbaugh is a senior majoring in environmental studies and minoring in sociology at Walla Walla University. Among other positions, she is editor-in-chief of *The Collegian* and the legislative liaison for Independent Colleges of Washington.

Blackbirds, opaque media painting color pencil gouache, by Kayla Eldenburg (Pacific Union College freshman, graphic design major).

Untitled, digital composite, by Lindsey Weigley (Andrews University senior, photography major).

THE MANY VARIETIES OF ADVENTISM

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAX SEABAUGH

Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses:

Three "American Originals" and How They've Grown

BY RONALD LAWSON AND RYAN T. CRAGUN, EDITED BY FRITZ GUY

Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses have all felt called to take their teachings to the world, and have all experienced significant growth. But they have varied considerably in their geographic spread and where they have been most numerically successful. The result is sharply differing profiles: Adventists are concentrated in the developing world, while Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons are stronger in the developed world, but in different parts of it. Within countries, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons are more urban; Adventists are more rural. Adventists also tend to be poorer than Jehovah's Witnesses and especially practicing Mormons. Exploring why these differing patterns developed, we employ our theory that religious growth depends (at least in part) on the synchronization of supply and demand and their corresponding components.

Recent theorizing in the history and sociology of religion in America points to the Constitutional separation of church and state in the United States as a source of religious innovation and competition among religious groups. Extant groups that developed as a result of this innovation have been dubbed "American originals." The three we focus on here—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Adventists), and Jehovah's Witnesses—are among the few that have spread beyond US borders and become truly international. All three continue to slowly grow in the United States, but their expansion is now concentrated in the developing world. While all three have globalized, their geographic profiles vary considerably.

Our Approach

We ask two questions: Why has their geographic spread varied so much? and, why has their growth diverged regionally and nationally? To provide answers, we will use an approach we developed, arguing that both supply and demand factors contribute to religious growth and decline. The histories of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses illustrate the importance of both kinds of factors.

In recent decades, Christianity has grown rapidly in the developing world while stagnating or declining in the developed world. Although Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses have maintained growth in the developed world longer than most of the mainline denominations, their experience generally reflects the same patterns.

Growth is the result of a combination of supply and demand. People are usually susceptible to joining a religious movement only if makes overtures to them (supply). Significant growth occurs, however, only if demand for spiritual understanding and connection is also present, and if the outreach strategies connect successfully with that demand. Thus, alignment of supply and demand is necessary for a religious group to grow in any location.

Supply and demand do not, however, simply exist; numerous factors influence them. Supply, for instance, is variable: one group may have

Jehovah's Witnesses use the most stringent criterion for membership [of the three groups].

greater supply than others, shaped by multiple factors that we will discuss. Demand for religion is also shaped by various factors that can increase or limit the demand, which we will also discuss. Demand may be high for one group, but simultaneously much lower for others in the same region. Synchronicity means that both supply and demand are present, resulting in rapid growth. If supply is not present when demand is high, or if demand is sparse when there is ample supply, or if the outreach strategies do not connect with the demand, growth is unlikely. If neither supply nor demand exists, the result is secularization.

Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses provide excellent illustrations of our theory of supply and demand: all are significant participants in the globalization of Christianity, although their regional presence and growth patterns vary markedly.

We obtained membership data for the past decade from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' *Church Almanac*,[1] the Seventh-day Adventist *Annual Statistical Report*,[2] and the Jehovah's Witnesses' *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*.[3] We obtained earlier data from the library of Brigham Young University; from the website of the Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research; and from earlier Jehovah's Witnesses' *Yearbooks*.

Table 1. Comparing world membership growth of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses over time, 1830–2009

	Mormons		Adventists		Jehovah's Witnesses	
Year	Membership	Increase (%)	Membership	Increase (%)	Publishers[a]	Increase (%)
1830	280					
1840	16,865	5,923.2				
1850	51,839	207.4				
1860	61,082	17.8				
1870	90,130	47.6	5,440[b]			
1880	133,628	48.3	15,570	186.2		
1890	188,263	40.9	29,711	90.8		
1900	283,765	50.7	75,767	155.0		
1910	398,478	40.4	104,526	38.0		
1920	525,987	32.0	185,450	77.4	3,868[c]	
1930	670,017	27.4	314,253	69.5	23,988	520.2
1940	862,664	28.8	504,752	60.6	96,418	301.9
1950	1,111,314	28.8	756,812	49.9	373,430	287.3
1960	1,693,180	52.4	1,245,125	64.5	911,332	144.0
1970	2,930,810	73.1	2,051,864	64.8	1,483,430	61.8
1980	4,639,822	58.3	3,480,518	69.6	2,272,278	53.2
1990	7,761,207	67.3	6,694,880	92.4	4,017,213	76.8
2000	11,068,861	42.6	11,687,229	74.6	6,035,564	50.2
2009[d]	13,824,854	28.6	16,307,880	49.1	7,313,173	23.7

Sources: Extracted from the Church of Jesus of Latter-day Saints' *Church Almanac*, 1972–2012 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book), Seventh-day Adventists' *General Conference Annual Statistical Report,* 1899–2012 (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists), and Jehovah's Witnesses' *Yearbook of the Jehovah's Witnesses*, 1927–2013 (Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society).

a. Jehovah's Witnesses list the peak number of active publishers, not total membership.
b. Although Adventists trace their origins back to 1844, they did not organize formally until 1863.
c. The Bible Students/Jehovah's Witnesses were formed in the 1870s, but did not list detailed data until 1940. We searched their other publications and were able to find earlier statistics published there.
d. The increases given on this line are for the period 1999–2009.

The membership data differ in noteworthy ways. Adventists count all baptized members, omitting unbaptized children. The age at which they baptize their children varies from a mean of 11.9 years old in America to the later teenage years in Europe. Adventists purge their rolls of members who no longer claim to be Adventist or cannot be located. Mormons count baptized members and also "children of record"—younger children blessed as infants in a church ceremony, who may make up as much as 15% of the religion's US membership. The age of baptism is set firmly at eight, and the names of children who reach the age of nine without being baptized are removed. But there is no attempt to remove missing or inactive members from their rolls; consequently, the whereabouts of many listed as members are unknown. Of the three groups, Jehovah's Witnesses use the most stringent criterion for membership, counting only

Table 2. Comparing the regional distribution of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses in 1960, 1990, and 2009

	Mormons			Jehovah's Witnesses			Adventists		
Region	**1960**	**1990**	**2009**	**1960**	**1990**	**2009**	**1960**	**1990**	**2009**
Europe	51,535	334,528	501,703	196,779	1,003,284	1,593,511	144,366	244,683	386,925
North America	1,454,645	4,395,702	6,261,847	271,262	946,770	1,242,283	332,364	760,148	1,119,567
Central America	20,487	865,849	1,928,064	26,664	354,518	807,503	13,577	541,516	1,582,595
South America	14,797	1,358,256	3,378,257	35,817	558,509	1,353,690	147,180	1,375,837	2,406,574
Caribbean	0	36,464	139,387	20,253	102,696	153,122	47,322	385,448	1,045,448
Asia	3,767	435,991	977,278	38,648	333,775	606,010	121,551	979,685	3,155,835
Middle East	0	363	1,134	666	2,825	4,884	458	275	1,493
East Africa	0	2,850	51,422	55,455	153,042	384,918	59,299	1,215,705	4,051,398
Middle Africa	0	2,400	30,155	7,387	83,745	262,516	16,689	173,923	1,002,278
North Africa	0	0	0	504	589	1,676	817	3,850	7,519
West Africa	0	25,633	170,799	39,639	183,634	429,166	2,720	262,603	722,236
Southern Africa	2,901	19,365	55,158	17,447	50,036	90,736	17,338	51,673	149,560
Oceania	28,408	251,442	432,582	16,789	68,503	86,773	40,678	239,893	421,078
"Other"[a]	0	0	0	123,283	196,509	19,004	0	0	0

a. Where Jehovah's Witnesses experience or fear persecution, they hide their membership numbers in an "Other" category. In 1960 and 1990, this was especially true of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states, and also of its relatively few members in China.

"publishers"—those reporting regular witnessing to nonmembers. They exclude baptized members who are not witnessing regularly, but include both children and converts entering the ranks of publishers shortly before baptism. The issues of the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* list both "peak" and "average" numbers of publishers; we use the latter because they are more representative. Tables 1–5 are based on the official statistics for each group.

Table 1 shows that earlier beginnings gave Mormons a head start over Adventists, and Adventists in turn over Jehovah's Witnesses. All three groups report strong growth over time, but in general the number of Adventists has grown the fastest, their official membership surpassing the Mormons in the late 1990s.

Contrary to expectations that Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses would experience exponential growth well into the twenty-first century, Mormons experienced a slowing of growth after 1990, and Jehovah's Witnesses an even sharper decline after 1995. Adventists showed a smaller decline in growth after 1990.

Factors of Supply

Differences among the geographic profiles of the groups are primarily a result of supply factors—that is, in outreach. Six factors influence the supply of religion:

1. The level of urgency regarding outreach
2. The number and training of missionaries, and the hours spent in outreach
3. The group's theology
4. The group's attitude toward other religions
5. Government regulations
6. The impact of wars and revolutions

We illustrate the variations in the regional distributions of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses from 1960 to 2009 in Table 2. The geographic concentrations of the three groups

For most of their history, all three groups focused their outreach efforts on Christian regions.

Table 3. Skewed distributions: countries with more than 200,000 members or 150,000 publishers, 2009

	Adventists		Jehovah's Witnesses		Mormons	
Number	**Country**	**Membership**	**Country**	**Publishers[a]**	**Country**	**Membership**
1	India	1,468,642	U.S.	1,096,502	U.S.	6,058,907
2	Brazil	1,065,485	Brazil	689,577	Mexico	1,197,573
3	U.S.	1,043,606	Mexico	668,876	Brazil	1,102,428
4	Philippines	674,816	Nigeria	291,179	Philippines	631,885
5	Zambia	659,336	Italy	240,262	Chile	561,904
6	Kenya	657,447	Japan	217,530	Peru	480,816
7	Mexico	647,484	Germany	162,890	Argentina	380,669
8	Zimbabwe	616,875	Philippines	162,647	Guatemala	220,896
9	Congo	504,708	Russia	154,387		
10	Rwanda	468,384				
11	Tanzania	452,199				
12	Peru	425,080				
13	China	382,039				
14	Angola	369,317				
15	Ghana	357,260				
16	Haiti	338,223				
17	Malawi	327,131				
18	Colombia	278,933				
19	Nigeria	276,936				
20	Dominican Republic	265,905				
21	Papua New Guinea	249,348				
22	Jamaica	247,448				
23	Mozambique	247,338				
24	Honduras	229,574				
25	Venezuela	217,538				
26	S. Korea	215,227				
27	Guatemala	214,976				
28	Indonesia	207,284				
29	Uganda	205,875				

Sources: Data from the Seventh-day Adventist *146th Annual Statistical Report—2008* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists), 8–38; Jehovah's Witnesses' *2009 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* (Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 2009), 32–9; and the Church of Latter-day Saints' *2010 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2010), 182–7.

a. Jehovah's Witnesses list average and peak number of active publishers, not total membership. The average number of publishers is used here. The cutoff for these was lowered to 150,000 because the rules concerning who is counted as a publisher are more demanding.

differed considerably by 1960, and these patterns changed further during the subsequent decades. Mormons became especially strong in North America; Jehovah's Witnesses in Europe; and Adventists in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. All, but especially Mormons, grew rapidly in Latin America. These concentrations, however, have been shifting: the growth rates of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses declined in North America and Europe, but increased in some developing countries; Adventists fell farther behind in much of the developed world, while bounding farther ahead in many parts of the developing world.

Table 3 further illustrates the extent to which the membership of the three groups is more or less concentrated in particular regions and countries. It lists the countries in which each group had more than 200,000 members in 2009 (150,000 for Jehovah's Witnesses, given their more stringent criterion for publishers). The Mormon membership is skewed, with only eight such countries, which collectively contain 76.9% of the total membership; the United States alone contains 43.8%. Adventists present a sharp contrast, with twenty-nine countries having more than 200,000 members and together containing 81.6% of the total membership; India, the country with the largest membership, has only 9.0% of the total. Jehovah's Witnesses fall between the other two groups: the country with the largest number of publishers, the United States, contains 15.8% of the total; six countries have more than 200,000 publishers, and eleven, with 56.4% of the total, have more than 150,000.

1. Urgency

All three groups see outreach as an urgent responsibility because they believe we are living in the "latter" or "last" days of earth's history, and have been entrusted with God's final message to humanity.

Mormons began their outreach in the United States and Canada in 1830, and soon established foreign missions, entering Britain in 1837 and then extending their program to northwestern Europe. By 1853 they were also active in Australia, New Zealand, Chile, China, India, South Africa, French Polynesia, and southern Europe. But in the 1850s, an abrupt change of policy encouraged all converts to immigrate to Utah. This "gathering" prevented Mormons from building a strong base in other countries. In Canada, for example, where 2,500 had joined by 1845, only seventy-four listed themselves as Mormons in the 1861 census. This policy slowed Mormons' outreach to foreign countries from 1870 to 1950, as they focused primarily on establishing Zion in America's Great Basin. As world wars and economic upheavals distracted church leaders and severely limited the availability of missionaries, Mormon supply was cut severely.

Adventists were slow to launch outreach efforts. Tracing their origins to the Great Disappointment of 1844, when Christ did not return as William Miller had predicted, they continued to see the Advent as imminent, and since they regarded only Millerites as eligible for salvation, further outreach was pointless. Eventually, they were persuaded that the door to salvation had not closed, and in 1874 they sent to Switzerland their first foreign missionary. During the next quarter-century, they expanded throughout Europe.

Once Adventists embraced missions, they expanded rapidly. They entered Australia and South Africa in 1885, and founded schools and health-care facilities. These locations became hubs from which they moved into the South Pacific islands and central Africa. Missions were also established in the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East. By 1900, Adventists had established beachheads on every continent, and 20% of their membership was outside North America. Expansion prompted Adventists to reshape their denominational structure in 1903, creating regional headquarters that could make decisions more efficiently. These launched missions in rapid succession, as they sought to blanket the world, and by 1921 more than 50% of Adventists were outside North America. Over time, they extended into poorer countries, where numerical growth remained relatively slow because demand in premodern societies was modest. But the services provided by their medical and educational institutions brought credibility and positioned them for rapid growth in subsequent decades, when religious demand increased during modernization.

Charles Taze Russell, founder of what became the International Bible Students Association and later the Jehovah's Witnesses, urged his followers to share their beliefs, and he prepared publications for this purpose. Since participation in outreach was not mandatory, he recruited full- and part-time colporteurs, who bore the brunt of the publishers' efforts from 1881 until the mid-1930s. This approach, however, proved relatively ineffective at building the organization abroad, for colporteurs were responsible for large tracts of territory, and having offered the publications, tended to move on rather than following up with the people's interest.

Joseph Franklin ("Judge") Rutherford, who succeeded Russell, introduced the expectation that all members engage in door-to-door witnessing. Congregations began to adopt this outreach as their central purpose in 1922, and the program got into full swing about 1933–1935, after Rutherford renamed the group Jehovah's Witnesses and further emphasized door-to-door publishing and reporting the numbers of hours worked. In 1935, publishers and pioneers witnessed in 113 countries, but in half of these there were fewer than ten active members. During World War II and the following years, Jehovah's Witnesses became better organized; in 1943, they revamped their outreach efforts to improve geographic expansion, opening the Gilead

Mormons have their highest concentration in the most prosperous countries.

School, a program to train missionaries for foreign service at the Watchtower Educational Center in Patterson, New York. Thus, they were preparing for truly global outreach.

2. Workforce

To staff their missionary endeavors, Mormons originally relied on married men, later replaced by younger men who volunteered for two years of service. But young men were in short supply during the wars and Great Depression of the first half of the twentieth century. During the 1960s, the number of full-time missionaries tripled as a result of a massive new proselytizing program. The number of missionaries continued to increase steeply, reaching a peak of 60,550 in 2001, but declining by 20% in the next eight years.

In 2009, Adventists employed 81,977 people in full-time pastoral and evangelistic roles, not including laypersons active in outreach. But it was their educational and medical institutions that set Adventists apart, with 134,814 employees.

In 1943, Jehovah's Witnesses reported 129,070 publishers in 54 countries; by 1992, these numbers soared to 4,472,787 in 229 countries. In 2009, publishers, "pioneers," and full-time international missionaries invested a total of 1,488,658,249 hours in witnessing. This workforce was thus several times larger than either the number of full-time Mormon missionaries or the salaried Adventists engaged in evangelistic activities.

Adventist converts [in the nineteenth century] were typically people who had autonomy over their work schedules.

3. Theology

A group's theology may determine which countries or peoples are targeted or excluded, and the impact on Mormons' outreach was notable. Early on, it motivated them to proselytize Native Americans, regarded as descendants of people described in the Book of Mormon; and it also caused them to neglect people of African descent, regarded as ineligible for the priesthood. Since priests must lead congregations, there seemed to be no point in engaging in outreach where no one was eligible to assume leadership responsibilities. This policy continued after other groups began to experience great success in both Africa and the Caribbean, following the dismantling of colonization in the 1960s. Mormon missionaries were sent to Africa and the Caribbean after 1978, when a divine revelation opened the priesthood to men of African descent.

4. Dominant Religion

For most of their history, all three groups focused their outreach efforts on Christian regions, for Christians were seen as the most likely converts. In non-Christian areas, evangelism often targeted the small Christian populations, following on the heels of missionaries from other Christian groups. Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses were especially slow to evangelize non-Christian populations. In Japan, Mormons made some headway among Shinto Buddhists, through work begun by American military personnel stationed there after World War II; Jehovah's Witnesses were much more successful. Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses to some extent, have yet to address Muslim and Hindu countries seriously. (We will discuss Adventist outreach to these religions later in this article.)

5. Government Regulations

Adventist institutions needed licenses in developed countries, but they were usually welcomed by colonial governments looking to skim off resources rather than expend them. Jehovah's Witnesses, who were seen as contributing nothing useful, were sometimes prohibited, but they persisted with underground evangelism, even though working illegally complicated their efforts. Since Mormons sought prior approval to enter a country, their outreach was delayed. In 2010, for example, Mormon leaders negotiated to enter mainland China, but to avoid offending the Chinese government, they offered to limit their work to foreigners.

6. Wars and Revolution

Military conflict slowed Mormons in particular because of their close identification with America and its foreign policy. Before the Bolshevik Revolution, they were not active in Russia and

the rest of what became the Soviet Union; they did not enter that territory until after the Soviet collapse in 1989–90. They also withdrew their missionaries from Nazi Germany and its allies during World War II.

Adventists, on the other hand, were established in Germany and in what became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics well before World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution. Their response to such developments was set in Germany during World War I, when, in order to protect their organization and institutions, they agreed to major compromises, including military service as active combatants without Sabbath privileges. They continued this policy in both the U.S.S.R. and Nazi Germany.

In contrast, Jehovah's Witnesses refused to participate in military forces or to honor national symbols, and were banned by several governments and often faced severe repression.

Factors of Demand

Demand, plus interaction between supply and demand, helps to account for geographic differences in growth. While supply is necessary, significant growth occurs only if there is demand for the religion being offered, and if that demand connects with the outreach strategies being employed. Like supply, demand is influenced by a variety of factors:

1. Modernization
2. Rapid growth, saturation, and reduced demand
3. Socioeconomic status
4. Cultural norms and values resulting in persecution.

Additional factors flow from interactions between supply and demand:

5. Outreach strategies and receptivity
6. Member fertility
7. Retention of children and converts

1. Modernization

The level of demand changes over time as societies pass through different phases of economic development, from premodern to modernizing to postmodern/secular. Following a trajectory akin to an inverted U, demand peaks during the modernizing phase. Around 1850, when Mormons attempted to establish missions in Chile, China, India, and French Polynesia, all of which were then premodern societies, they found so little demand that they eventually withdrew. And early Adventist missions in Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific between 1890 and World War II grew relatively slowly because of limited demand; but the fact that Adventist missions were often centered on institutions that offered education, healthcare, and employment opportunities enabled them to establish a presence in these premodern societies. Prior to 1943, Jehovah's Witnesses, without such institutions, were slow to put down roots in premodern societies.

Once colonization ended during the decades following World War II, these areas began to modernize, and demand increased rapidly. When Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses launched major mission programs, these grew much faster than had Adventist programs during the premodern period. But Adventist numerical growth was now even more rapid because of the foundations laid previously.

Earlier, in the years immediately following World War II, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons focused their outreach efforts on Western Europe and Japan, where demand for spiritual help rebounded after the devastation of the war. Jehovah's Witnesses were especially successful, building on their earlier work in both regions, and apparently benefiting in Europe from a halo effect associated with their persistent outreach while suffering persecution. Consequently, the number of Jehovah's Witnesses in Western Europe far surpassed Mormons and Adventists (see Table 2).

As economies in Western Europe recovered and prospered, becoming culturally postmodern and secular, established and mainline Christian denominations lost ground. The growth of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses also slowed, with declining membership in some countries. This accords with the finding that once the process of modernization raises the United Nations' Human Development Index past 0.85, there is a "secular transition" that causes the demand for religion to recede sharply. The main exceptions to this pattern occur in countries where there has been a heavy flow of immigrants who are already members or are receptive to outreach—in England, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and eventually the United States and South Korea.

Adventists in China provide an excellent example of changes in demand matching the phases of modernization. Adventists entered China in 1901 and quickly established a publishing house, schools, and hospitals. However, because China was still premodern, demand was weak, and membership reached just 19,000 by 1940.

Table 4. Mormon, Adventist, and Jehovah's Witnesses membership in the developed world,[a] 2009

Region	Country	Mormon	% World Membership[b]	Jehovah's Witnesses	% World Membership	Adventists	% World Membership
North America	U.S.	6,058,907	43.8	1,096,502	15.6	1,043,606	6.4
	Canada	179,801		110,467		60,825	
	Total	6,238,708	45.1	1,206,969	17.1	1,104,431	6.8
Western Europe	Austria	4,023		20,662		3,871	
	Belgium	5,980		23,764		2,022	
	Denmark	4,387		14,153		2,502	
	Finland	4,578		18,940		5,037	
	France	35,427		118,085		12,514	
	Germany	37,796		162,890		35,386	
	Greece	718		28,569		511	
	Iceland	247		340		560	
	Ireland	2,799		5,713		526	
	Italy	23,430		240,262		9,070	
	Luxembourg	291		1,955		*[c]	
	Netherlands	8,901		29,452		4,853	
	Norway	4,206		10,384		4,607	
	Portugal	38,509		48,610		9,322	
	Spain	45,729		105,558		15,254	
	Sweden	9,091		22,054		2,800	
	Switzerland	7,947		17,301		4,310	
	UK	186,082		128,435		30,002	
	Total	420,141	3.0	997,127	14.2	143,147	0.9
Asia	Japan	124,041		217,530		15,337	
	South Korea	82,472		96,620		216,093	
	Total	206,513	1.5	314,150	4.5	231,430	1.4
Antipodes	Australia	126,767		63,454		55,010	
	New Zealand	100,962		13,462		10,835	
	Total	227,729	1.6	76,916	1.1	65,845	0.4
Total		7,093,091	51.3	2,595,162	36.8	1,544,853	9.5

Source: Kevin Watkins et al., *Human Development Report 2005* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2005), 365.

a. The developed world is defined as the high-income members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as listed in the United Nations' *Human Development Report 2005*.
b. Proportion of world membership.
c. Included with Belgium.

Following the Communist victory in 1950, missionaries were expelled, church organization was dismantled, and institutions were confiscated. But many members remained active, meeting in homes and evangelizing privately. When Christian churches were legalized after the Cultural Revolution, all Protestants were required to join the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Adventists accepted this mandate, and many pastors were trained in the Protestant seminary, but because they used church buildings only on Saturdays, they were able to retain a separate identity. As China modernized rapidly, Adventist growth spurted at an average rate of 10% per year between 1986 and 2001, with membership climbing from an estimated 75,000 to 311,347. After 2002, growth slowed sharply to an average of 2.4%, as the Chinese economy matured and China began a secular transition.

This pattern is illustrated equally well by Jehovah's Witnesses in Italy and other countries in Western Europe, where initial rapid growth after World War II slowed sharply, and by Mormons in Guatemala and other Latin American countries, with a similar pattern of high growth when missionaries arrived during modernization.

2. Saturation

Demand also changes over time according to the degree to which an evangelizing group has saturated a population: initially high growth rates decline once those easiest to recruit have been harvested. However, disentangling saturation from other factors that influence demand, particularly modernization, is difficult because the resulting growth patterns can be quite similar. For instance, when Mormons entered Portugal in the 1970s they initially experienced rapid growth, but this slowed by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Had Portugal's level of development been constant during that time, the change in demand could be attributed to saturation. But Portugal modernized rapidly during that time, and membership growth slowed, with Portugal's secular transition at about 0.85 on the Human Development Index, apparently an effect of modernization rather than saturation.

For us to isolate the impact of saturation, a country's level of development has to remain relatively constant while a religious group experiences both growth and decline. This can be seen for Jehovah's Witnesses in the northern, heavily Muslim region of sub-Saharan Africa—especially Chad, Mali, Gambia, Liberia, and the Central African Republic. Although they had initially experienced high growth rates after entering these countries, these rates trailed off rapidly. Because the HDI of these countries changed little during the Jehovah's Witnesses' changing growth trajectory, the decline was probably due to saturation.

In most highly developed countries, conversion among indigenous populations has declined and is largely stagnant. But for Adventists in South Korea, Jehovah's Witnesses in Ireland, and Mormons in Singapore, growth continues to be high despite the countries having experienced the secular transition. This suggests that for these groups in these areas, saturation has not yet occurred.

3. Socioeconomic Status

The countries in Table 4 are all members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the contrasts among the groups are striking: 51.3% of Mormons and 36.8% of Jehovah's Witnesses are located in the developed world, but only 9.5% of Adventists.

Because Adventists were the first of the groups to enter several of these countries, in 1960 Adventist membership was still the largest of the groups in Australia, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Portugal, and Norway. But precisely because of its long presence there, Adventism's growth rate was already slowing in most of the countries, since it attracts less affluent people. By 2009, it was largest only in South Korea; Adventism has become the smallest of the three denominations in four of the other five remaining countries. In Japan, for example, its membership is aging, pastors are retiring, and few ministerial students are preparing to fill the vacancies.

Women form a majority of the active members of all three groups.

Table 5. Comparing changes in the distribution of Mormon, Adventist, and Jehovah's Witnesses members among countries categorized according to gross national income per capita, 1960–2006[a]

Income category	1960	1980	2000	2006
				Mormons
High[b]	94.3	84.4	55.8	53.2
Middle[c]	2.8	11.8	42.0	44.2
Low[d]	0.0	0.1	1.6	2.4
				Jehovah's Witnesses
High	57.6	59.2	42.5	39.2
Middle	15.3	20.5	42.6	44.5
Low	12.4	10.7	14.4	16.1
				Adventists
High	37.9	23.6	11.1	9.9
Middle	38.4	44.6	45.6	43.1
Low	22.7	30.0	42.5	47.0

Source: Kevin Watkins et al., *Human Development Report 2005*, (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2005), 365.

a. The nations belonging to the United Nations were categorized according to gross national income per capita in the Appendix to the United Nations' *Human Development Report 2005*. Geographic areas that are not UN members, usually because of colonial status, are excluded from this analysis.
b. Countries with a gross national income per capita of $9,386 or higher.
c. Countries with a gross national income per capita between $9,385 and $766.
d. Countries with a gross national income per capita of $765 or less.

Table 6. The percentage of religious groups' adherents falling in different income categories in Mexico, 2000

Income category	Mormons (%)	Jehovah's Witnesses (%)	Adventists (%)
Minimum wage or less	13.2	25.4	49.5
Between one and three times the minimum wage	45.6	50.3	32.4
Three times the minimum wage or more	35.2	19.6	14.0
Not specified	5.0	4.7	4.1

Source: Abstracted from David Clark Knowlton, "How many members are there really? Two censuses and the meaning of LDS membership in Mexico and Chile," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 2 (2005): 53–78.

Table 5 compares the changing distributions of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses between 1960 and 2006 among countries divided into three categories according to gross national income (GNI) per capita. In 2006, "high income" countries had a GNI per capita of $9,386 or more and "low income" countries had $765 or less, with the GNI of "middle income" countries between the two figures. Mormons were again strongest in the highest category, and Adventists weakest; yet in all three groups, the proportion of members in the highest category declined over time, as growth slowed there and modernization fostered growth in less developed countries. But distributions varied considerably: Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses grew mostly in middle-income countries, where Adventists were already well established by 1960, and Adventists grew in the poorest countries, where their concentration far exceeded those of the other two groups.

The low supply of Mormon missionaries in the poorest countries can be explained largely by their concentration in the United States and Latin America, and by the group's later entry into Africa and the Caribbean. Thus, Mormons have their highest concentration in the most prosperous countries.

International comparisons between countries also translate to the meso and micro levels within countries. All three groups have a strong presence in Mexico. Table 6, drawn from the Mexican census of 2000, shows that people identifying as Mormons were highly concentrated in the top two of three income categories, while half of Adventists fell into the lowest category, with Jehovah's Witnesses in between. This census also shows similar contrasts in educational levels: while 61.0% of Adventists received only primary education or less, 50.9% of Mormons had post-secondary education; Jehovah's Witnesses again fell in between. Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses were concentrated in Mexico City and the more developed northern states, though Jeho-

vah's Witnesses less so. Adventists, in contrast, were concentrated in the rural southern states.

Data from three other countries suggest that the differences found in Mexico among the active members of the three religious groups are not unique. The large number of people identifying as Adventists in the Papua New Guinea census (520,623 in 2000 compared with 20,723 Jehovah's Witnesses and 20,586 Mormons) is an example of the concentration of Adventists in poor countries in the developing world.[4] The population there is heavily rural, but the Adventists are more rural than either Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses.

Likewise, in 2001, 18.4% of Canada's population was foreign born. However, the percentage of foreign-born members was twice as high among Adventists, while Jehovah's Witnesses were at the national level and Mormons well below it. The contrast is stronger still in regard to members who immigrated during the previous decade: Jehovah's Witnesses fell below the national level, while Adventists and Mormons diverged even farther from each other; Adventist growth in Mexico continues to be mostly limited to immigrant populations.

In the United States, a Pew Forum survey in 2008 found that 26% of Mormons, 42% of Jehovah's Witnesses, and 46% of Adventists earned less than $30,000, and 47%, 65%, and 72%, respectively, less than $50,000.

4. Persecution of Converts

All three groups advocate norms that attract criticism from the press, public, and government, and in some instances the stigma becomes so strong that it results in persecution. This makes identifying with the groups more costly, reducing demand. Hostility engendered by the Mormons' practice of polygamy was a key reason for the martyrdom of their founder, Joseph Smith, and for their decision to uproot themselves several times, and eventually to flee from Illinois to Utah. In 1890, Mormons abandoned the practice to avoid further conflict with United States authorities.

Jehovah's Witnesses attracted negative publicity because of their insistence that publishers witness door-to-door, and their expectation that members refuse blood transfusions even when medically indicated. But it was their refusal to be conscripted into military forces and to participate in patriotic activities, such as the American Pledge of Allegiance or the Nazi "Heil Hitler" salute, that resulted in persecution. During World War I, leaders in the United States were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms; during World War II, many Jehovah's Witnesses faced imprisonment in Canada, Australia, and Greece, and death in Nazi concentration camps. They also experienced severe problems under military regimes in Spain and Portugal, behind the Iron Curtain, and in parts of Africa.

Several of the norms embraced by Adventists, involving food, dress, and medical treatment, initially brought ridicule—but their religious observance of Saturday, a normal work day during the nineteenth century, imposed especially heavy costs by excluding them from many occupations. Consequently, Adventist converts were typically people who had autonomy over their work schedules—housewives, independent artisans, and small farmers—but when Adventist farmers worked on Sundays, they were sometimes arrested and imprisoned for violating state "blue laws," created to impose religious standards. Adventists faced similar problems in many other countries, as well. When the five-day week became law in the United States and other industrialized countries, the situation improved.

5. Strategies and Receptivity

Both Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses use door-to-door approaches as their primary strategy for evangelism, with the goal of arranging lessons that will result in baptism. The Mormon plan is based on a format developed in the late 1950s, which employed a standard syllabus containing six lessons (later reduced to five). Missionaries are encouraged to invite prospects to be baptized soon after beginning the lessons. Jehovah's Witnesses also employ a standard syllabus,

All three groups advocate norms that attract criticism from the press, public, and government.

but because they teach all their beliefs before baptism, they expect the lessons to last six months or more.

In earlier decades, the main Adventist strategies were public evangelistic meetings and Bible studies that lasted several months in homes or classes. Adventists built schools and health facilities to meet people's needs, to teach Adventist beliefs and lifestyle, and to anchor the communities they formed. In the late 1930s, local leaders in the developing world initiated a shift in evangelistic focus—from biblical prophecies to family, personal, and social health benefits—and the number of baptisms doubled.

Adventists began regular radio broadcasts in the United States in 1930, television broadcasts shortly after World War II, and shortwave radio broadcasts in 1971. Meanwhile, public evangelism ranged from local meetings featuring pastors or laypersons as speakers, to international satellite transmissions with instantaneous translation of professional evangelists. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency, formed in 1956 and funded largely by governments, became a significant humanitarian presence in much of the developing world.

Although Adventists learned from the Millerite disappointment never again to set a date for the Second Coming of Jesus, Jehovah's Witnesses persisted in making predictions, stirring up excitement and spurring growth. Focusing successively on 1914, 1925, 1975, and the 1980s, each prediction caused a surge in the supply of publishers, and each nonfulfillment caused a falling off.

Since growth is greatly affected by the supply of human resources available for outreach, and women form a majority of the active members of all three groups, the openness of each group to women's input and activity has an important impact on their strategies and growth. The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses is exclusively male, and women cannot lead congregations or, since 1986, attend Gilead School classes unless their husbands are also enrolled; but women are prominent among door-to-door publishers.

The majority of Mormon missionaries are men, and women are absent from the highest levels of the Mormon hierarchy, but women play a major role in maintaining local congregations.

During the lifetime of the Adventist prophet, Ellen G. White, women frequently served as church officers, pastors, and evangelists. From her death in 1915, through 1970, women were increasingly marginalized, but since then they have been appointed as congregational elders, conducted evangelistic meetings (especially in the developing world), and served as pastors. Since 2012, Adventist women have been ordained as ministers in Europe and North America. This increasing involvement of women has facilitated Adventist growth.

The ability of the three groups to adapt their outreach strategies to non-Christians has varied. In Burma (Myanmar), Adventists originally recruited new members almost exclusively from minority tribes such as the Karens, who are Christian, rather than from Burmese Buddhists; and in India, they baptized Baptists and Anglicans rather than Hindus and Muslims. Over time, all three groups realized that Animists in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific were ready converts, but they experienced little success when they attempted outreach among Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists.

Mormons have yet to place missionaries in most of the countries of the "10/40 Window," a quadrant in the eastern hemisphere between the 10 and 40 northern lines of latitude, stretching from northern Africa through the Middle East, Southern Asia, and the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, and to China, where the dominant religions are Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Even in Africa, Mormon evangelism has been largely confined to Christian and Animist regions. In Nigeria, the African country with the highest Mormon membership, all five missions are in the predominantly Christian south; not one is in the Muslim north. Thus, Mormons have provided limited supply to most countries where non-Christian religions are dominant.

The training of Jehovah's Witness missionaries at the Gilead School lasts only five months, so they are inadequately prepared for outreach to adherents of non-Christian religions.

6. Fertility

Because religious groups have a special opportunity to shape the religious identities of children born to their members, variations in birthrates are likely to affect both growth and future outreach. Mormon birthrates are relatively high, dating back to the years of polygamy, as Mormon families continue to average about one child above the norm in the United States. Yet in the developed world, Mormon birthrates have declined in recent decades, part of a broad trend associated with modernization.

Families of Jehovah's Witnesses tend to be smaller than the norm, for they are encouraged to wait until after Armageddon to have their children, so that childrearing does not interfere with their publishing activities. For their part, Adventist families in the United States and other Western societies tend to reflect cultural norms when it comes to size, while their families are larger in the developing world, following the norms there.

The combination of immigration, polygamy, and extra-large families was the initial foundation of Mormon growth in the United States. In recent decades, as their birthrate has declined, the Mormon growth rate there has fallen behind that of Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, who have proved more effective in evangelizing immigrants.

7. Retention

What initially appears as strong demand may in fact be fleeting, resulting in poor membership retention. Loss of members is also related to ineffective socialization and failure to create strong bonds to the group. Loss of members in turn affects supply to the extent that it lowers internal support for a group's outreach programs.

Early Mormon converts tended to be drawn from the urban and rural working class. Their descendants in the United States, however, were upwardly mobile, and by the latter part of the twentieth century had become more prosperous and better educated. Nevertheless, most converts, especially in the developing world, continue to be poor, and the majority of these converts soon become inactive. This pattern is not visible in the official published data because of the Mormon practice of leaving the names of missing members on the rolls, but it becomes very clear when official data are compared with the much lower numbers of persons who identify themselves as Mormons in a national census, and in lower-than-expected numbers of congregations among large listed memberships in certain areas. The areas with the greatest membership increases—Latin America and the Philippines—have extremely low retention rates. This is likely due to the use of short-term foreign missionaries, a rush to baptism without sufficient preparation, and the low commitment of congregations to continued socialization and nurturing when the attention of missionaries shifts to other potential converts. As many as 50% of converts may disappear within six months, and the total exit rate may reach 75%. Mormons are more successful in retaining those who have already experienced some upward mobility. This finding helps to explain the data from the 2000 Mexican census we discussed earlier, showing that those who still identify as Mormons have relatively high incomes.

For Jehovah's Witnesses, a comparison of the number of baptisms with the number of publishers from 1999 through 2009 indicates that publishers expanded at a rate equivalent to 51.5% of total baptisms, suggesting that just over half their converts became active Jehovah's Witnesses. Evidence also suggests that the loss of children raised as Jehovah's Witnesses is high compared to Mormons and Adventists. The latter groups have education systems designed to socialize their children into the religion, while Jehovah's Witnesses lack such a system. Additionally, several interviews indicated that Jehovah's Witnesses teenagers often become deeply resentful of their peculiarity.

Among Adventists, the loss of converts from large evangelistic campaigns can be high. Pastors meeting in Kinshasa, Congo, two and three years after campaigns by visiting American evangelists had resulted in a total of 1,600 converts, reported that only fifty (3%) were still attending church. In the developed world, at least 50% of youth become inactive. In 2000, Adventists decided to audit membership rolls everywhere. As this project proceeded, Brazil and the Philippines, both of which had experienced rapid growth, reduced their membership figures by about 300,000. Other regions saw losses as well. A comparison of the total number of members dropped or missing,

All three groups have experienced a slowing of growth since 1990.

with the total added through baptism and profession of faith during the past decade, shows the impact of the audit during the second half of the decade: between 2000 and 2004, the mean number lost was 27.6% of the number added; between 2005 and 2009, this figure rose to 38.4%. These statistics suggest that the loss of Adventist converts, while substantial, is lower than that of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Asynchronous Supply and Demand

While most of the examples previously given illustrate synchronous relationships between supply and demand, these often do not align to or result in rapid growth. This was true until recently for all three groups in the Muslim countries of the Middle East and northern Africa.

Other examples come from Africa, where Mormons have had missions for nearly thirty years and have recently seen rapid growth, but have not yet gained momentum in twenty-seven countries—mostly those with Muslim majorities. The same is true of Jehovah's Witnesses in several African countries, even though their history there is longer. In each of these cases, demand for these two American original religions has been low or, at times, the supply limited. (Adventists have experienced much higher numerical growth in most of these countries.)

Examples of supply without demand are readily apparent; finding demand without supply is more difficult, but there are some clear examples. We have already mentioned one: self-started, would-be Mormon congregations in Nigeria in the 1970s that wanted supply at a time when, for theological reasons, Mormons did not send missionaries to Africa.

A second example is the Adventist experience in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, which has added nearly one million members since 1995, almost all of whom are Dalits. During this time, Adventists were frequently approached by representatives of the high Brahmin caste, who sought missionaries to work with them, too. Adventist leaders were eager to respond, but insisted that Brahmin converts become part of existing congregations and constituencies; they refused to supply missionaries who would deal with Brahmins separately. Since mixing with members of the lowest caste was unacceptable to the Brahmins, the demand evaporated.

A third example is the experience of Jehovah's Witnesses in Zambia, where their missionaries were banned. However, poorly educated migrant workers, returning from South Africa, where they had been converted, were able to respond to demand.

In short, when supply and demand coincide, growth is rapid. At times, demand is low while supply is high, and sometimes demand is high and supply is low. Either way, growth is either slow or nonexistent.

Summary and Conclusion

Wanting to explain the diverse geographic distributions of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses, we have developed our theory that successful geographic spread and growth depend on a confluence of supply and demand factors. For a group to spread and grow, it must have representatives present to make overtures to potential converts and employ outreach strategies that appeal effectively to the population of the targeted locations. Success also depends on the readiness of groups within the population being evangelized to positively respond to what is presented to them, and on the degree to which converts remain committed and are retained. Spread and growth depend on the alignment of these two groups of factors.

Demand over time is shaped like an inverted U: it is low prior to modernization, high during the modernizing process, and lower again once societies become postmodern, secular, and materialistic. When outreach occurs during a period of modernization, the result is rapid growth. The experiences of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses confirm this theory. Each group has grown rapidly in countries during periods of modernization, but more slowly in premodern and modernized countries. Differences in timing and strategies created significant variations in their geographic spread and in where members are concentrated. Additionally, the differing messages, strategies, and cultures of these three groups resulted in vastly different socioeconomic profiles and dissimilar membership-retention profiles.

All three groups have experienced a slowing of growth since 1990. This has been especially so for Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. The number of Mormon converts tumbled from a high of 330,877 in 1990 to a low of 241,239 in 2004. In spite of their impressive workforce, Jehovah's Witnesses' baptisms declined even more sharply, from a peak of 375,923 in 1997 to a low of 247,631 in 2005. Baptisms for both groups have increased only erratically since. The amount of effort required per baptism of a Jehovah's Witnesses member has increased globally, from

one thousand to two thousand hours per convert in 1970–76, to five thousand to six thousand hours per convert since 2004. Three key factors are at work with both groups:

1. The secularization of the developed world, where the groups were well represented
2. A slowing of growth in several countries in the developing world, including parts of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, because of saturation and spreading secularization
3. Poor retention

In contrast, Adventist baptisms have increased during these years, from 505,250 in 1988 to 1,022,399 in 2000, to more than 1,000,000 per year since 2004, with a peak of 1,074,938 in 2006. Nevertheless, the Adventist overall growth rate has declined gradually since 1990, though not as steeply as those of Mormons and Witnesses. Adventists are much less affected by the secularization of the developed world because their membership is much less concentrated there, and their retention is higher than that of the other two groups.

Our understanding of religious growth and decline combines three important elements: supply, demand, and secularization. When supply synchronizes with demand, growth occurs; otherwise, it does not. And all of this takes place along an ever-changing path toward secularization, when both supply and demand diminish, curtailing growth and resulting in eventual decline. ■

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For most of their history, all three groups focused their outreach efforts on Christian regions, for Christians were seen as the most likely converts.

DISCUSSED | bounded set, centered set, Western Adventists, relationships, categories, Greek culture, Hebrew culture

What's an Adventist, Anyway? *Bounded Sets Versus Centered Sets*

BY GIAMPIERO VASSALLO

There are a lot of Adventists around. We happen to be wandering on nearly every speck of soil that covers our planet. However, in Europe—especially in the Western part—we are not as well distributed as in other parts of the world.

But, with more than seventeen million of us, Adventists come in every shade—and I don't mean just of skin color, different social strata, different ages, or things like that.

There are—whether we believe it or not—different types of Adventists, although some try to categorize them and call them conservatives, progressives, traditionalists, liberals, moderates, or even offshoots.

When I was studying at Newbold College of Higher Education, some would differentiate between students and professors who study and teach at different schools. We had people from fifty-five nations at Newbold; I know because I worked in its student association. One could observe Adventists from Africa, South America, Western Europe, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, Australia, the Caribbean, India, China, Korea, and so on. Although they were all Adventists, they were different—and those who were *not* different somehow ceased to be, for example, fully African or Asian.

Early Problems

When the early church of the apostles was faced with the problem of plurality regarding Jewish Christians versus non-Jewish Christians, they had to settle the dispute somehow, as we read in Acts 15. They basically accepted variety, based on certain commonalities.

The apostle Paul wrote, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Cor. 12:14 NIV).

But don't differences in opinions, theological outlooks, behavioral patterns, make it difficult to come up

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with the categories of *Christian* or *Adventist*? What's an Adventist, anyway?[1]

Types of Categories

The first step is to take a closer look at how we form categories. Note that the way we think has a lot to do with the way that our ancestors thought. That is what determines the way we build categories such as *Christian* or *Adventist* in our mind.

Consider categories in relation to counting. For example, imagine that one, two, and three belong to a category, and four, five and six belong to another category. Set theory, which is related to categorization, helps us understand our basic question. I want to demonstrate this by discussing two ways to form categories.

One kind of category is called an intrinsic set, because it is formed on the basis of the essential nature of the members themselves. We will call it simply the bounded

set. As an example, consider an apple. What's an apple? An apple is a red, yellow, or green edible round fruit of a certain tree. We have just defined the category *apple* according to a bounded set.

The other kind of category is called an extrinsic set, or a centered set, because it is based on its members' relationships to each other or to a reference point. Examples include words like father, mother, son, and daughter. These are relational words. You become a father, a mother, a son, or a daughter, because you are in a certain relationship with another person.

Bounded Sets

A nineteenth-century mathematician defined a bounded set as a collection of objects that can be regarded as a single entity or as a whole if the objects share properties that define a whole. So, using the previous example, all apples share properties that make them apples in a bounded set.

Characteristics of Bounded Sets

I will show the characteristics of a certain set, point to a culture that has incorporated this kind of set thinking, show how an Adventist would be defined in that way, and then show how the Adventist Church and its mission would function in that particular way. In the end, I will propose which way is more biblical.

Bounded sets have five characteristics:

1. They create a category by listing the essential characteristics an object must have to belong to the set.
2. The category is defined by a clear boundary. Either a fruit is an apple or not. The central question here is whether an object is inside or outside the category.
3. Objects within a bounded set are uniform in their essential characteristics. All apples are 100 percent apple.
4. Bounded sets are static sets. An apple is an apple, no matter if it is ripe or rotten.
5. Bounded sets are built in terms of unchanging, universal, abstract categories. That leads to our abstract-analytical approach to logic.

Western Culture as a Bounded Set

We in the West are most familiar with bounded sets. A dog is a dog and that's that, because all dogs share certain characteristics. Bounded sets are so fundamental to our sense of order. We want uniform categories. For example, in the kitchen we put forks in the fork section, knives in the knife section, and spoons in the spoon section.

It is important to maintain boundaries in a bounded-set world; otherwise, categories begin to disintegrate and chaos sets in. In the West, we do this by using borders. For example, we have frames around pictures, windows, doors, and blackboards. Men wear ties to cover the joining of the fabric down the front of their dress shirts. We edge our sidewalks so that the grass does not creep onto the cement. We use curbs to mark the edges of the street. On our highways we have solid lines to separate traffic lanes and to differentiate between traffic lanes and highway shoulders.

Particularly in America, people tend to think in terms of opposites: good versus bad, rich versus poor, friends versus enemies.

Where does the idea of bounded sets come from? If you're familiar with the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," then you know: it comes from the ancient Greeks, and is based on a Greek worldview. Greek philosophers were interested in the intrinsic nature of things, and the ultimate, unchanging structure of reality, which they described in terms of sharply defined categories.

We have categories of plants, animals, diseases, kinship systems, personality types, and whatnot, as if these categories form universal types. We are also concerned about objectivity; subjectivity, a person's involvement in what is known, is seen as contamination. We cannot form categories with feelings, values, or drive, because they all have to do with relationships.

Another issue is our attitude to law. Law is something impersonal, a set of norms that applies equally to all humans. Lying is of course

There are—whether we believe it or not—different types of Adventists.

wrong, not because it undermines a relationship, but because it violates a universal principle. The offender is guilty of breaking the law and must be punished, even if the punishment destroys relationships and harms other innocent people.

We define justice and righteousness as living within the law, not as living in harmony with others.

Adventists as a Bounded Set

It's important to understand ourselves as Westerners, because that forms our understanding of what it means to be an Adventist in this cultural region.

How could we define an Adventist according to the bounded-set paradigm?

1. Since we cannot really look inside a person, we have to use external characteristics that we can see or hear, in order to call someone an Adventist. It would mean that a person has gone through a verbal affirmation of the 28 fundamental beliefs of Adventism—all of them. In addition, we need to see evidence of a changed life—no alcohol, no smoking, no pork, etc.
2. In a bounded set, we have to draw and maintain a sharp line between Adventists and non-Adventists, because it is critical to maintaining the category *Adventist*.
3. All Adventists would be the same, whether they are older, experienced Adventists or younger converts. Spiritual maturity is not essential, as someone is either 100 percent Adventist or not.
4. Conversion would be the one essential experience required in order to cross the boundary between non-Adventist and Adventist. We would expect all believers to enter by the same door, share the same basic theological doctrines, and behave in the same basic way.
5. An Adventist Christian would be seen as someone that has been declared as such. The intrinsic nature of the person as an Adventist is what counts.

In the kitchen, we put forks in the fork section, knives in the knife section, and spoons in the spoon section.

Church as a Bounded Set

Of course, a bounded-set mindset affects our view and organization of our church.

1. Church would be a gathering of Adventists, whereby its unity would be based on uniformity—all Adventists would think and act alike. Walls between Adventists and other denominations would be high, because boundaries define the ultimate nature of reality. Bounded-set churches act like clubs, which are voluntary associations of like-minded people who share a common interest: meeting specific personal needs. The church would view theology as ultimate, universal, unchanging truth, and would define it as a set of doctrines. It would divorce theology from the historical and cultural contexts in which it was originally formulated.
2. We would take care to maintain boundaries, meaning clear membership rolls and that only members of the congregation would be allowed in business meetings and church offices.
3. We would take a democratic approach to church membership. All members—no matter how mature—would have an equal say in running the church. Its formal organization would be mechanical. We would look for clearly defined roles, explicit rules, well-planned programs, management by objectives, and performance measured in quantitative terms and bottom lines.
4. We would stress evangelism as the major task of the church, which means getting people into our category. Discipling new converts would not be as essential to the central task of bringing people into the Adventist fold.
5. Building the church would be an end in itself. Gatherings are for maintaining the identity of the church and its organization. Because identity is intrinsic—part of the essential structure—the greatest danger would be the worship of the group, of the corporate self.

Missions and Bounded Sets

Bounded-set thinking also has repercussions for our view of missions.

1. We would, of course, seek to win the lost to Christ, but would be careful not to baptize them until they know all about our beliefs and behave in the right way.
2. We would look at other denominations and religions as also being bounded sets. Therefore, we would stress the differences and tend to see everything in all the others as fundamentally wrong or pagan. We would fear incorporating the ideas and practices of others into our Adventist system, because it could compromise our uniqueness.
3. Adventism would mean doing things in a certain way. Those we won over would also need to follow our Western way.
4. Because our theological positions would be carved in stone, prospective native leaders would need to first be thoroughly educated. Therefore, we would be slow to appoint native leaders to positions of authority.

Centered Sets

Centered sets are an alternative way of creating the category *Adventist*. A category in a centered set is not defined by intrinsic characteristics, but by extrinsic characteristics. This means that we group things on the basis of how they relate to other things, not what they are in and of themselves.

Characteristics of Centered Sets

A centered set is created by defining a center and the relationship of things to that center. Things related to that center belong to the set, and those that are unrelated do not.

Centered sets have sharp boundaries, but are not created by drawing boundaries. It all depends on how things are related or how they are moving toward or away from the center.

Two things are important in a centered set: membership, which is always full, and distance from the center. There is one type of change in a centered set: you either start heading toward the center or you start heading away from it.

Hebrew Culture as a Centered Set

In the Bible, we find that the Hebrew worldview of the prophets and of Christ was essentially extrinsic, based on relationships.

The Greeks, as I noted, viewed God in intrinsic terms, as supernatural, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

The Israelites, in contrast, knew God in relational terms, as Creator, Judge, and Lord. They also referred to him as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our forefathers." During the Exodus, people camped around the tabernacle where God dwelt. In Palestine, people came three times a year to the "house of the Lord."

The Israelites saw themselves as people in a covenant relationship with God, and therefore as people in community. They were to marry insiders, not outsiders. The blessings of the faithful, and the punishments of the unfaithful, were passed on to their descendants. The primary values were relational in character: justice, shalom (peace), love, and mercy.

The teachings of Christ and Paul also emphasize our relationships with God and to one another. Jesus said, "But you know him for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:17b). Paul wrote, "I want to know Christ" (Phil. 3:10).

They did not talk about an objective knowledge of God, but about knowing him intimately as one person knows another. The New Testament writers must be understood within that Hebrew relational worldview, rather than the Greek structural worldview.

Adventists as a Centered Set

It would be very interesting to see what happens when we look at being an Adventist within that centered-set view.

1. An Adventist would be defined as having Jesus Christ and the biblical teachings about him at the center of their lives. Private agreement with biblical facts would not be enough. There would be a personal relationship to Jesus, and all his teachings would be understood in terms of that relationship. An Adventist in this way lives in a

An Adventist is not a finished product the moment that he or she is converted.

FACE ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAX SEABAUGH | COLLAGE BY LAURA LAMAR

Every Adventist doctrine and every Adventist lifestyle has its ultimate purpose in Christ.

covenant relationship with Jesus and other Adventists. It is not just about a contract to join forces to accomplish a task.

2. Yes, there would be clear separation between Adventists and non-Adventists. The emphasis, however, would be on exhorting people to follow Christ according to Adventism's understanding, rather than on excluding others, in order to preserve the purity of the set. Salvation would be open to everyone, no matter who they are, what they know, or what baggage they brought with them, if they became followers of Jesus Christ.
3. There would be a recognition of variation among Adventists. Some are closer to Christ than others. Some understand the amazing things about salvation that Adventism has discovered. But we are all called to grow in the fullness of Christ.
4. There are two important types of change that can take place within this kind of understanding. The first is conversion—that means entering or leaving the set. That is the turning around, the turning away from evil and turning to righteousness, heading in a new direction: to Jesus and his teachings. The second change is the movement toward the center, or the growth in the relationship to Christ. An Adventist is not a finished product the moment that he or she is converted. Sanctification cannot be separated from justification. They go on throughout life. Evangelism and discipleship are connected

and are of equal importance. Every decision an Adventist makes in life moves him or her toward Christ or away from him.

Church as a Centered Set

How would church look in a centered set?

1. The church would be defined by its center: Jesus Christ and the Adventist understanding about him. It would be an Adventist church that in all its beliefs and practices had Jesus at its center. Every Adventist doctrine and Adventist lifestyle would have its ultimate purpose in Christ. A relationship to him would define membership. Doctrines and behavior would follow within that relationship. Church would be a real fellowship of the same Lord. We could not exclude from the congregation those who were true disciples but who differed from us in race, class, gender, or theological views. Because membership would not be at stake, differences in personality, language, culture, and worship style would be affirmed so long as they did not divide or discredit the family. The church would focus on people and relationships of love and mutual submission, more than on programs and the maintenance of order. In running the church, we would seek consensus and mediate conflicts. We would also encourage one another to use our spiritual gifts creatively, rather than demand conformity to dead tradition.
2. There would be a clear distinction between Adventists and non-Adventists, but also recognition of the priesthood of all believers. However, we would recognize differences in spiritual maturity—depending on one's closeness to the center. We would recognize spiritually mature persons as leaders, and hold them accountable, while on the other hand we would be more tolerant of young believers. Every voice would be heard, but not all voices would carry equal weight. Yes, there would be church discipline, but its goal would be restoration and not throwing out the sinner.
3. Evangelism would go hand in hand with discipling new believers, encouraging people not only to privately agree with the truth, but also to surrender to the truth.
4. The primary task of the church would be to uphold Christ, so that he might draw all people to him. Its second task would be to build a community of faith that incorporates new believers, and manifests Christ's reign on earth, awaiting the return of their Lord for the completion of his reign. Its third task would be to invite people to follow Christ according to the eternal gospel, and to join the Adventist Church as God's special people in the end time. Theology would be a task not just for specialists, but also for the whole worldwide community, and we would learn from the insights of each other.
5. The greatest danger to this kind of church would be worshipping other things or people that start to become the center, e.g., the leader.

Missions and Centered Sets

How would such a centered set approach work in missions?

1. We would affirm the uniqueness of Christ and his truth. Our primary aim would be to invite people to follow the truth, to follow Christ and the wonderful teachings about him as we as Adventists have the privilege to understand them, and not to prove that other beliefs are false. Personal testimony would be more important than arguing the superiority of Adventism.
2. We would baptize those who make a profession of faith and not wait until they show signs of perfection.
3. We would recognize that evangelism involves both a point of decision and a process of growth.
4. We would turn over leadership to national leaders from the beginning, and not wait until they received a doctorate in theology at an Adventist institution. We would choose natural leaders who demonstrate the power of God in their lives. For long-term direction we would, of course, train them as theologians and other leaders.

The Bible is primarily a book about the history of relationships.

Conclusion

We have seen two different ways of looking at the Adventist category in terms of the believer, the church, and its mission. These differences are based on specific ways of thinking which are prevalent in different cultures. Which way is the better way?

We must acknowledge that this set theory can help us understand how our cultures shape the way we interpret scripture and carry out our mission. But the question in the end is, what is reality according to divine revelation?

It is true that people have found Jesus and salvation in each of these two sets. Churches have been built in bounded-set cultures and in centered-set cultures. But these two different worldviews do not equally communicate the essential message of the gospel. Adventism was founded in a culture that was very strong in bounded-set thinking. It is important, however, to look at the Bible's worldview, because in the end it was the Bible that brought about Adventism; only a biblical worldview can prevent Adventism from a distorted theology that skews our lives of faith and weakens our mission to the lost. In knowing this, we can come to a few conclusions, as follow.

People have found Jesus and salvation in each of these two sets.

If we are not clear about our categories, we will often talk past each other, and our disagreements will arise from different subconscious presuppositions, rather than different theologies.

In studying the Bible with set theories in mind, we will find that scripture is primarily based on a centered-set approach to reality. Relationships are at the heart of its message, our relationship with God, and our relationships with one another. The Bible is primarily a book about the history of relationships, not a lecture on the intrinsic nature and operations of reality.

Having said that, there are two questions that arise.

First, how do we know in a centered-set approach when a person is really an Adventist? God looks at the heart, but we have only external criteria. It is a limitation of our human perception. It is true that we can see spiritual realities through God's revelation, but—as Paul said—only through a glass darkly. We do not see fully as he does. Somehow we must contend with this situation for now.

The second question is, how can we organize a church on centered-set principles? This is a problem for us, not just because we are in the West and emphasize institutional order and planning. As Adventists in a world church we are confined in an organizational structure that is built on bounded-set principles—it was founded in America!

It is not an easy thing to accomplish, but let me simply state it: we must make people more important than programs, give relationships priority over order and cleanliness, and spend more time in prayer than in planning. We can learn this from churches in relationally oriented societies.

When we have realized how our hidden worldview shapes our understanding of scripture and how this exercises a subtle control over our thoughts, we can try to look at scripture with new eyes and let it speak to us in new ways. Then we can begin to reshape our worldview and make it more biblical.

Amen! ■

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1. My discussion is based on the work of a missionary-anthropologist and professor emeritus of missions, Paul Hiebert. For more information, see Hiebert's book, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

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An Elegy for the Open Road: America 2013

For Jack Kerouac | by Mary McIntosh

Driving 730 tonight
I wonder what
Kerouac would think
of this broad stretch
of road and open
fields

Country western
tunes at the stations
jangle and the warmth
of a well-lit diner
beckons, like 1950

Out of darkness
trucks emerge, descend
slowly, then pass. My car
shudders. City lights are
faint on the horizon but
this isn't the city, no

No lights here. Irrigon,
Umatilla, Touchet, nearing
Walla Walla the sign says
but the road stretches on,
not even ranches here
and no radio

What expanse of mind
does it take to make
a field? A corral? An
irrigation ditch?
What imagination?
Cows

I see no art here,
sure. Only the beauty of
an occasional smile
or handshake and dirt
under the nails,
God's art it is

Farm people are tough
It takes thought to mix
love with life but
there's no room for beauty
and hardly for thought
in 2013

One rancher named
Riley ranted to his
boys how no one knew
how to work anymore
no responsibility anymore,
all out drinking. America's
gone to the dogs, he said

To me it appears
America's still alive
here in spite of the
Coke cans, neon and
new country rock. Earth
and sun remain

Maybe we need another
Kerouac to talk it up,
make it real. He'd
have time but only
God, spite of cows and
dogs, does the art

And that's what we need,
really

Mary McIntosh is a former professor of English who currently writes from Vancouver, Washington. She is a poet, freelance writer, and editor who conducts writing workshops for writers' groups in Oregon and Washington and appears at local poetry readings.