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OPINION

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notes

from the editor

Adventist Spirituality

John McLarty

Spirituality is a slippery concept, but here's a quick and workable definition: Spirituality is people's perception of the divine or supernatural, their connection with the divine and the way they live out that perception or connection. So what is Adventist spirituality? A few snapshots:

"We know, don't we, that there are more of God's people in the Catholic church than in the Adventist church? And that in the final crisis they will come and join us, right? Now here's the scary part, half of us will leave to make room for them. Take a look at the person beside you. Either you or that person will be gone in the next couple of years unless we stay close to Jesus. That's what the guest speaker said. And from the nods, I could tell that many in the congregation recognized their own convictions in his words.

"Relationship is the only thing that matters." Broad smiles of agreement around the circle of the Sabbath School class affirmed the woman's words. We were a group of middle-aged Adventists discussing the role of law in the Christian life. Relationship with God and with other people was the only thing that mattered. Rules, principles, obligations, laws—these kinds of things belonged to our childhood. Or so thought most of the group.

"We get together at a coffee shop every Sabbath morning for a Bible study. Someday I'll get back to church. Right now were studying Romans. I'm learning so much." All three women we're members of an Adventist congregation. None of them attended. But Sabbath morning and Bible study mattered.

Jeff pastors an Adventist church. He is not strongly convicted about anything distinctly Adventist or distinctly Christian for that matter. He believes in honesty, tolerance, and self-control and in the importance of life-long marriage. He believes people need to hear his exhortations about how to live well; that's why he is still a preacher. And Adventism is the place of his roots,

his friends, his paycheck, his culture. So he's still an Adventist.

Bill and Janet have three rambunctious boys in Adventist schools. High achievers academically. Gifted musically. Vegetarians. Pious. Almost Victorian in their restraint when it comes to movies. The parents volunteer at their son's schools and at church. They provide a second home for an endless stream of teenagers. On Sabbath, they scrupulously avoid secular work and give themselves freely to worship and play. They are rather cynical about school administrators and clergy, but uncritical in their embrace of the life and beliefs of traditional Adventism.

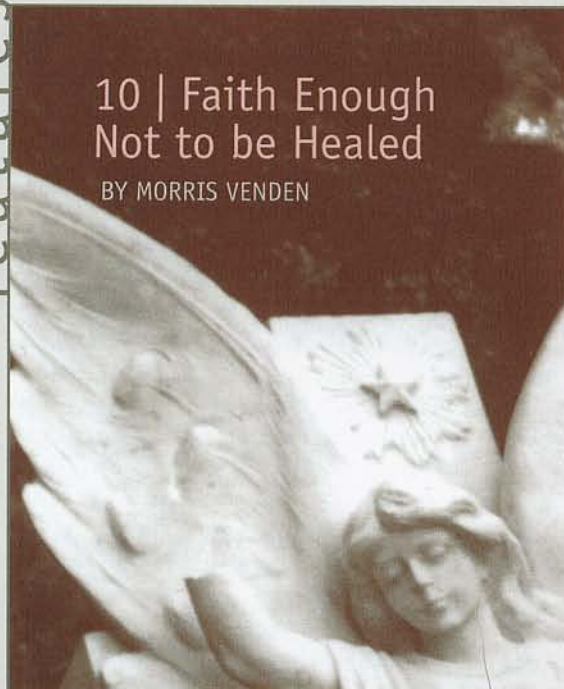
Each of these vignettes (or should I say caricatures?) pictures a very different way of being Adventist. And this is a very meager sample. Some Adventists have a lively sense of God, but this awareness is permeated with fear. For others God is scarcely more than a heavenly teddy bear. For still others the sense of the divine is nearly obscured behind the tangible reality of the institutions and culture of Adventism.

I hope the articles in this magazine will prompt you to examine your own spiritual life. Is it healthy? Is it something you can explain to friends who are looking for help in getting to know God? Are you connected with God or merely with a religious institution? What changes of habit could you make to help yourself be more attentive to God?

I do not believe that every form of spirituality is equally healthy. Not every perception of God is equally valid. By giving attention to some of the variety within Adventism, perhaps we will discern a divine call to change, to grow. Perhaps we will be led to deeper compassion for our brothers and sisters in the church who seem so incomprehensible.

Above all, I hope that these pieces will spur you to seek God, because in the Bible God declares "you will seek me and find me when you seek with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13. ■





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Solutions for Gays

I was shocked and horrified by Rodney Mill's callous recommendation (AT March/April, 1999, Letters to the Editor) of surgical or chemical castration as Jesus' solution for gays and lesbians, as if they were animals to be spayed or neutered. I don't claim to be a medical expert, but in talking to a doctor friend about this I was told that surgical castration as an adult would not completely remove sexual desire because testosterone is still manufactured in other organs. Castration before puberty would more closely accomplish what Mr. Mill suggests, but surely even he would not advocate that. As for chemical castration, such as that used for sex offenders in prison, there is a whole range of unpleasant and possibly dangerous side effects, especially with long-term use, that may accompany such treatment. While he may not have experienced these in the three months he was treated, would Mr. Mill want to subject hundreds of thousands of young men to a lifetime of such side effects and the possibility of early death from complications? No, I do not believe this is Jesus' solution.

I do appreciate and applaud Mr. Mill's understanding of the tragedy of gay/straight marriages and of the fact that homosexual orientation is not a choice. Regarding the New Testament texts Mr. Mill quoted in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy, it is my understanding that the word translated as "homosexual" in the NIV and "effeminate" in the KJV, actually has a connotation of "softness" that more likely refers to the young male slaves who served their masters as sex objects, a form of pedophilia common in the Roman culture.

Carrol Grady | Via the Internet

Dream for Adventist Education

Just today I came across Steve Dailey hopes for Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) education (AT Jan/Feb 2000). I applaud his hopes and desires and your publication for printing the article. How often do we find SDA schools, at any level, with faculty and staff who have a burn-

ing desire for Jesus Christ and an equal desire to walk the walk and be a role model for students? I only wish it was every faculty, staff member and administrator at every institution. I fear it is not.

Too often the very problems attributed to public schools are equally prevalent on our church school campuses. Satan is having a field day and enjoying every minute of it. How long are parents going to stand by and permit him to continue? How long will parents permit educational departmental leaders to be apathetic? One of our Savior's most precious gifts is at stake—the lives and future of our children. And, it was our children, His gifts, that He rebuked His disciples over by insisting they be allowed to "come unto me."

C. Eugene Schneider
Scottsdale, Arizona | Via the Internet

The Gentiles

In his article "Thank God for the Gentiles" (March/April, 2000) James Coffin states, "Nearly ten years ago I was a delegate to the General Conference Session in Indianapolis. So that Adventists wouldn't have to buy food on Sabbath, session organizers had arranged with various eating establishments for us to prepay for our meals. Those prepaying received a receipt that would entitle them to a meal on Sabbath." I know this has been a practice around some SDA institutions and campmeetings for many years. Another example was cited to me about a year ago. A friend of mine told me that he had overheard a church member suggest to their church pastor that the young people of the church might appreciate being able to get soft drinks at the church between Sabbath School and the eleven o'clock worship service. His response was that something like that might be arranged, but, of course, they would need to issue scrip that could be purchased during the week and then exchanged for the soft drink on the Sabbath.

Those who engage or encourage this practice, it seems to me, are self-deceived; they do not understand the meaning and function of money. One of the major functions of money is to serve as a medium of exchange. Therefore,

anything that can be used in exchange for a product is serving the role of money. That would include the receipt or scrip that might be sold for one form of money; that receipt or scrip would in turn then be a form of money when used in exchange for goods or services on the Sabbath. In reality the individual is indeed buying the goods or services on the Sabbath. The form of the money used in exchange is irrelevant.

Many things have served as money: seashells, beads, fur, cigarettes, to cite but a few. We generally use coins or paper money that have been issued by the government, but privately issued tokens and scrip have also been widely used, even in our society. I must applaud Coffin for the issues he raises and would like to add the above explanation to suggest that we rethink the practice as used at the General Conference Session in Indianapolis. I wonder what perception of Adventists the owners of the restaurants in Indianapolis received when they were asked to participate in this way of selling meals on the Sabbath.

D. Ordell Calkins
Professor Emeritus of Finance
California State University, Sacramento

Science Without Induction

AT (May/June 2000) Book Review, "Can Science be Science Without Induction," [by Dennis Hokama was]... a response to Mike Mennard's article in the same issue entitled "A Destructive Work," in which he discusses Berkeley professor Phillip Johnson's challenge to the theory of evolution. I... was disappointed with Hokama's failure to address Mennard's main argument: the lack of hard, verifiable scientific evidence in support of Darwin's theory. We need to remember that the bedrock of science is scientific evidence. Induction is a powerful tool for the interpretation of said evidence, but if the evidence is nonexistent, then induction has nothing to offer us except "philosophical speculations," to quote Dr. Ervin Taylor's comments about Phillip Johnson's book "The Blind Watchmaker," which prompted Phillip Johnson to write his critique of the evolutionary theory in the first place. In my long drawn debate over this topic last year, I repeatedly

challenged Hokama and the Schumann Pavilion SS Class to produce the evidence supporting the main concept of Darwin's theory, and I am still waiting.

Nic Samojluk | Via the Internet

Back to Mother

If we go back to mother (AT May/June 2000) some of us will be homeless.

Walter L. Buchholz | Punta Gorda, Florida

"Adventist" or "Christian"?

[McLarty's] article in the May/June of A.T. was indeed thought provoking. The suggestion of abandoning our identity as "Christian" with the replacement of "Adventist" is reminiscent of years ago when we had precisely this suggested scenario. The word Adventist was found in most of our literature rather than Christian. To revert to this may be advantageous in some respect but, in reality, may not be in our favor. For those living in predominately Adventist country ... the Adventist label is the way to go. Many have their economy so intertwined with Adventism that going counter to anything ... Adventist ... is indeed counter productive to them. A not insignificant portion of the Christian world look upon us as quasi-Christian at best, and some even align us with the cults: e.g. Christian Scientists, JW's, and Mormons. Many Adventists believe it is incumbent upon us to dispel this mistaken conclusion, and must be accomplished if we are ever to help other Christians to at least look into our distinguishable doctrines that we hold as being based in holy scriptures. Erasing our identity with the name Christian would not be helpful in this regard ... If this idea is pursued, as you suggested, how far shall we be willing to disenfranchise our church from the body of Christ? ... Is there evidence our pioneers suggested we follow what you have recommended? ... I do indeed hope the editorial staff of AT will not go along with this ill-conceived idea.

Paul W. Jackson, MD | Wallingford, Pennsylvania

Brinsmead's Journey

Mr. Paulson's comments in letters to

the editors in the last Jan/Feb issue concerning "Brinsmead's Journey" is arrogant Adventism at its best.

Saying that after historic Adventism there is nothing that can "quench the soul's thirst" is presumptive unawareness. I personally know of many who have silently faded away from the SDA scene, also for Biblical reasons, that simply are fed up with denominationalism, any denomination, but who eventually do find themselves involved in other churches because of a longing and need for fellowship with other Christians. But I also know of more people living on the fringes of the church who have become uncomfortable with the 27 fundamental beliefs simply because they are more uncomfortable culturally any other place and/or because of the family discord it would cause if they came out of the closet with their true beliefs. I for one think that Adventists should leave it up to the Lord to judge Robert Brinsmead and also others no longer in the SDA church. It is difficult for someone embracing Adventism to objectively judge those who no longer see the importance of it. I for one will always be grateful for Brinsmead's book *Judged by the Gospel*.
Dale Collins | Port St. Lucie, Florida

Adventist Golden Parachutes?

This letter is a response to the article entitled, "Adventist Hospitals: An Ailing System?" by Rene Alexanko Evans, which was published in the July/August 2000 issue of Adventist Today. The article was comprehensive and very informative, but the defense by the Columbia Union of the compensation termination packages of hospital executives raises questions that have never been addressed.

The article states that, "Also as part of the \$4.7 million package, the document itemizes \$648,769 in unused vacation and sick leave Breckenridge accumulated over his 25-year career with AHC, and more than \$1.5 million in cash, benefits and deferred retirement benefits because Breckenridge retired with an evergreen contract that gave him three years of severance pay and benefits if he didn't accept a job with a competing

organization."

That is an astounding revelation. Does Adventist HealthCare (AHC) standard policy provide all executives with reimbursement for "unused vacation and sick leave" accumulated over the entire term of their service? Are all hospital employees accorded the same benefit? Does the "evergreen" contract that automatically renews every day, so "at any point three years still remain on contract," mean that there is no end to the post termination severance pay?

Another statement, "The Columbia Union document defends the Breckenridge compensation and severance agreement by saying it was recommended by compensation consultants and voted by the compensation committee of the AHC board of directors."

None of the published reports on Shady Grove Hospital executive compensation have listed the members of the "compensation committee." Was Breckenridge a member of the "compensation committee?"

Stewart W. Shankel, M.D.

George M. Grames, M.D.

Richard Sheldon, M.D.

Redlands, California

Exploring Sociology

Thanks for Jack Stenger's article "Its the Sociological Thing, Stupid" (Jul/Aug, 2000). Its harder to be critical of people or happenings in the church, whether you're conservative or "progressive" when you have a sociological perspective on the dynamics involved. I suspect we'd have more understanding and consensus if we took off our theological and political glasses and peered at "hot button" issues through the lenses of the sociologist. *Adventist Today* is in a perfect position to serve the church by exploring the sociology of American and international Adventism in its pages. More such articles would be enlightening and edifying.

David Grellmann | Berrien Springs, Michigan

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a Response

to the GC decision on marriage and divorce

Gerald Winslow

I have been invited by personnel from *Adventist Today* to give my perspective on recent developments at the General Conference Session 2000 regarding divorce and remarriage. While the topic deserves much fuller attention than is possible in this format, I venture this brief statement in the hope that it might foster a greater sense of common purpose and mutual understanding.

First, a word about my scholarly interest in the subject: In 1967, while a graduate student at Andrews University, I elected to write a major paper on the history of how Seventh-day Adventists have developed official positions on divorce and remarriage. I wanted to know how our church had come to its position at that time.

My work then, and subsequent investigation, indicated that Adventists had confronted the difficult issues of divorce from our earliest days. We resisted, however, the development of a formal policy until 1932, when our first Church Manual appeared. The pattern established at that time, and hardened in 1942, has continued to supply the basic framework within which all subsequent changes have occurred. The policy was stern. Persons who had been disfellowshipped for reasons of divorce and remarriage, for example, could never be readmitted to membership so long as the second marriage continued and the previous spouse was alive.

Perhaps the most significant change, prior to the 2000 session, occurred in 1950. At that time, provision was made for repentant persons, who had been removed from Adventist membership because of remarriage, to return to the church. While remaining in the second marriage, such a "repentant offender"

could be rebaptized and readmitted to membership if faced with "apparently insuperable problems" in seeking to bring her or his "marital status into line with the divine ideal." (The way for this revision was paved by a paper written by Elder A. V. Olsen, an Adventist leader who questioned both the biblical and logical grounds for the church's earlier position. In light of recent discussions, it is fascinating to re-read Olsen's work and see the extent to which he anticipated today's questions.)

It appears that the cycle for reconsidering our policy on divorce and remarriage has a period of roughly twenty years. The next revisions, for example, were enacted in the 1970s, and included a recognition that *porneia*, the biblical word usually translated

The gospel of grace is always countercultural. And the measure of truth in these matters is not one or another culture, but Scripture.

"unchastity" or "fornication" in Matthew 5 and 19, means more than "adultery."

The topic arose again in the 1995 General Conference Session. At that time, I moved that the General Conference appoint a worldwide commission to give comprehensive study to our position on divorce and remarriage. The motion passed. My hope was that we would conduct a thorough reconsideration of the relevant teachings of the Bible and of the works of Ellen White. I believe this was accomplished.

The General Conference Divorce and Remarriage Study Commission was appointed and did its work

from 1997 to 1999. To the extent possible in a group of limited size, the leadership and membership of the Commission represented the rich diversity of our church, with participants from many parts of the world. (A list of the Commission's members is available in Appendix A of the report.) I confess to being surprised that I was asked to serve as one of the nineteen members. I also confess that I wondered about the likelihood of being able to produce a coherent report, given the diversity of our cultures and the apparent divergence of our initial views. While no one would claim perfection for the report that was eventually produced, I consider it to be a miracle of the Spirit's power that we were able to come to the understanding of divine principles represented in the report. This occurred through much prayer and study and with the aid of some of our church's finest biblical scholars. (A list of the papers presented to the Commission is presented in Appendix B of the report.)

To some extent, the work of this Commission was the basis for the revisions of the Church Manual that were proposed and passed at our session in Toronto. However, anyone who compares the Commission's report to the most recent revisions of the Church Manual will see that the report's influence was far from complete.

I was personally pleased that the Commission's report was provided to the delegates in Toronto. And I applaud the fact that *Adventist Today's* Web site has made this available electronically. I would encourage all Adventists who are interested in this topic to read the Commission's report, compare it with the current Church Manual, and conduct their own study of the biblical material. [Editorial note: See the *Adventist Today* web site at: www.atoday.com].

Now that the passage of time is providing opportunity to reflect on what happened at the General Conference Session in Toronto, how can we best direct our efforts if our goal is to help our church be faithful to the gospel and effective in its mission? I want to conclude with a few personal suggestions:

1. We should acknowledge honestly that God is not finished with us yet. In all humility, we should continue to learn from his Word and from each other. I have met no one who thinks that our Church Manual statement, as recently revised, is flawless. I have no way of predicting whether our divorce and remarriage policies will resurface if or when we meet at the next General Conference Session. But I am confident that God will lead us to better understandings if we are willing.

2. There is much to be lost in our witness as a church if we seek to cast the matters of divorce and remarriage simply in terms of conflicts between various cultures of the world. Of course, we understand

that our distinctive cultural perspectives affect all of us. But, so far as I can tell, the damage done by divorce and remarriage is not limited to one part of the globe. So we should engage each other in consideration of the issues without seeking to score points on the basis of our cultural affiliations and without rhetoric calculated to inflame partisanship. The gospel of grace is always countercultural. And the measure of truth in these matters is not one or

We should acknowledge honestly that God is not finished with us yet. In all humility, we should continue to learn from his Word and from each other.

another culture, but Scripture.

3. We should question the assertion that the delegates at a General Conference Session are somehow incapable, in the midst of debate, of taking appropriate action on difficult issues. What is the suggested alternative? Regardless of the quality of any smaller group's work, their recommendations would, by our current organizational rules, still need to be subject to thorough deliberation by the appointed delegates. We should remember that, from the beginning, the church has occasionally found it necessary to meet in councils where there was "much debate." (see, e.g., Acts 15:6,7) There is nothing to fear in such debate so long as it can be conducted in an orderly fashion and with mutual respect.

4. We should seek better avenues for exchanging the results of careful study of the Bible and accompanying theological and ethical reflection within our church. Many of the questions that have been raised about the biblical basis for the revisions voted in Toronto would benefit from continued study. It would also be beneficial if more members of our church had access to work that has already been done, such as the papers that were presented to the General Conference's Study Commission. But where, in our church, may the biblical and theological issues of divorce and remarriage best be discussed in a responsible and accessible manner? At present, the channels for such communication seem to be too limited. Perhaps Web sites, like this one, will continue to emerge as useful "venues." But I am still old-fashioned enough to prefer traditional peer review and am thus reluctant to pursue in cyberspace the more scholarly issues.

Again, let me thank *Adventist Today* for this opportunity to express a personal perspective. ■

Gerald Winslow writes from Loma Linda, CA

Dennis Hokama

Not religious enough?

Columbia Union College wins its case against Maryland

In a 40-page opinion issued on Thursday, August 17, U.S. District Judge Marvin J. Garbis in Baltimore, declared Columbia Union College eligible to receive state funds. This reverses a decision he made earlier. The latest decision will require Maryland to begin providing direct subsidies to CUC over the objections of state officials. Maryland had argued that such an action would violate the Constitution's ban against state-established religion. This decision is simply the latest skirmish in a battle that CUC has been waging against the State of Maryland ever since it applied for the Seller Program in 1990 and was ruled ineligible. The lawsuit was initiated in 1996. Maryland is considering an appeal. Brooke A. Masters, a *Washington Post* staff writer, posted the story on August 19, 2000.

Maryland's Seller Program provides \$40 million a year to more than a dozen private colleges and universities in the state. CUC is now eligible for about \$800,000 annually, equivalent to about 5 percent of its budget. Although several Catholic institutions have participated, state officials ruled

that CUC's program was much more "pervasively sectarian" and therefore did not qualify. The "pervasively sectarian" test is based on a 1976 Supreme Court decision.

CUC's position has been that, despite the 1976 Supreme Court decision, it shouldn't matter how religious a school's curriculum is, since equal protection un-

der the law is guaranteed by the First Amendment's "free exercise of religion" clause. This freedom, CUC argues, should not be nullified by the Amendment's ban on the "establishment of religion" (See *Adventist Today*, Vol 7, No. 5). U.S. District Judge Marvin J. Garbis in Baltimore had ruled initially that CUC was not eligible for state funds because it is "pervasively sectarian," or too religiously focused, the key test under a 1976 U.S. Supreme Court decision. When CUC appealed the Garbis ruling, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the burden of proof lay with Garbis, and thus ordered him to reconsider by doing an actual analysis of CUC's program content.

While Garbis' investigation was in progress, the legal climate changed this June with the Supreme Court's 6 to 3 ruling that Louisiana parochial schools were eligible for federal education funds for purchasing computers. In that decision, four justices advocated scrapping the 1976 "sectarian" test, thus making most aid to religious schools legal so long as it has non religious content and is also available to non-religious schools. But Sandra Day O'Connor and Stephen G. Breyer, who made up the rest of the majority, did not go that far. They also said they would view direct payments differently than in-kind aid.

The Maryland case is therefore legally significant, because it involves direct payments to a college rather than funds for equipment, and if appealed, might force the Supreme Court to draw yet another line in the sand. This has obvious implications for other conservative religious schools seeking government aid, and the school voucher movement, legal analysts from both camps concede. In his opinion, Garbis said he decided to abide by the "pervasively sectarian" test because there were not five votes to overrule it, but interpreted it in a way that

was favorable to CUC. Garbis noted that only 90 of the 535 courses outside of religion had explicit religious statements in their syllabi, and despite many religious references, concluded that they "do not, in context, show that religious inculcation is the primary goal."

While conceding that CUC "... is controlled by the Seventh Day Adventist Church with a faculty and student body selected so as to give preferences to church members," Garbis wrote, "... the evidence does not ... establish that it is pervasively sectarian. The primary goal and function of Columbia Union College is to provide a secular education even though it has a definite and strong secondary goal to teach with a 'Christian vision.'"

New CUC President Randal R. Wisby, appeared anxious to reassure the faithful that no compromise with secularism or mission dilution was implied by the Garbis decision. "What's encouraging," said Wisby, "is that the judge recognized our faith commitment but said we should be treated equally with other Maryland colleges."

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Maryland sees it differently. "This is a very troublesome opinion. It's going to open doors that have never been opened," said Stuart Newberger, who filed a brief in the case on behalf of the ACLU. "Now a school this religious is not religious enough... This opinion allows the mingling of religious and nonreligious that the Supreme Court has never allowed."

Maryland officials said they are considering an appeal. "The state is in no position to give direct state aid to an institution... that exists solely to promote the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," said Assistant Attorney General Pace McCokie. "That's a violation of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause." ■



The Wisdom of the Solomon Islands

Adventists represent both sides as well as the middle in conflict

Dennis Hokama

It may take something like the wisdom of Solomon to resolve the turmoil in the Solomon Islands. Like the two women fighting over one baby who were brought before Solomon, the Malaitans and the Guadalcanalans are arguing over the same piece of land. The Malaitans, according to two delegates from the Solomon Islands that I spoke with, have been evicted from Guadalcanal on the basis that the land which they had purchased from native Guadalcanalans many years ago was not for sale after all. The theory under which this was done is that all the land of Guadalcanal belongs to the tribe as a whole and cannot be sold by individuals. The Malaitans who paid good money for it think otherwise. This disagreement has generated much unrest in the region, and atrocities appear to have been committed by both sides. This much is generally known by the public.

What is not so well known is that the spokesmen for each side, as well as the acting intermediary, are all Seventh-day Adventists in good standing. On early Sunday morning, July 9, I spoke with Lawrence Tanabose, Secretary of the Western Pacific Union Mission, who is acting as an intermediary in the conflict, and a physics teacher for Betikama High School (SDA) in the Solomon Islands,

who were both staying at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto during General Conference. (The schoolteacher said his name, but when I later checked it against the delegate list, I could not match it.)

Andrew Nori, an SDA lawyer, is representing Malaita. Henry Tobani, an SDA schoolteacher, represents Guadalcanal. The church is not eager to publicize this, says Tanabose, because they are concerned that the church may get blamed for the violence that both sides may commit against each other. They emphasize that these two men are just spokesmen, and not the actual leaders of either side. Tanabose and the schoolteacher assure me that both men exert a moderating influence on the actions of both sides.

The reason why both sides happen to be represented by Adventists, say the two men, is hardly a lucky coincidence. Adventist schools, they say, are virtually the only educational institutions of higher learning other than the government schools in many areas. Thus, most of the educated natives are Adventists. According to the mission reports from the South Pacific Division we have heard at this session, the ratio of SDAs to the local population in certain parts of the Solomon Islands is as high as one out of four (1:4) people, and 1:15 in the overall population. ■

In addition to saying thank you, we would like to share information that can help assure the maximum benefits from your gifts. After a few minutes of careful consideration, you may find that you can have an even greater impact now and in the future of *Adventist Today*.

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faith enough NOT TO BE healed

Morris Venden

Some people don't have enough faith to not be healed so all God can do is heal them!

I have tried to say it better, but I don't know how to say it better because I want to shock you into attention on a major point. A major point that has escaped us.

We have thought for a long time that if we have enough faith, we can be healed. No. No. If we have enough faith, we may NOT be healed! It takes a lot of faith to not be healed.

Some of us grew up with some gross misunderstandings. We listened to bedtime stories and got the impression that if you are good, everything is going to go good, and if you are bad, everything is going to go bad. But like the teenagers would say: NOT!!!

We forget that all of the disciples, except one, died martyrs' deaths, and that one was banished to a lonely island. We forget that the Apostle Paul, who wrote 14 books of the New Testament, was refused his request for healing, and that God finally told him not to pray about it anymore. We forget that John the Baptist perished alone in a dungeon, and people have wondered about that one. John the Baptist!—about whom Jesus declared, "there was never one born greater." And Elisha, who received a double portion of Elijah's spirit, did not go to heaven in two chariots. He died after a long, lingering illness, maybe cancer.

We forget the last few verses of Hebrews 11. After a list of miraculous events, the account changes. "and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and

mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise. (Hebrews 11:35b-39).

Notice, these mighty giants of faith received NOT the promise. What was going on? Is there something we have missed?

I would like to remind you of a significant "honor guard" that is important in God's system.

Peter says it best of all. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials,...as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice, in as much as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings that, when his glory may be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

1 Peter 4:12,13

People can prove that they are not "rice Christians," that they do not serve God because of what they can get out of Him. They serve Him regardless of what happens. And this is what real faith is all about.

As we look at the Bible record, and the history of godly people through the ages, we do not find God intervening to overrule the bumps and bruises of life. He walks with us, He stays with us, but in most cases he does not work miracles to change the situation.

We have failed to look at this as we should, and that is why today we need to take a long look at a statement in The Desire of Ages about John the Baptist. "Not Enoch who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. 'For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Philippians 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor" (Desire of Ages 224-225).

It is not God's will that people suffer. But it is

God's will to have an honor guard who will continue to love Him and trust Him, regardless. In fact, in most cases he needs them to endure and does not usually intervene with miracles. This is my major premise. It takes a lot of faith to not be healed. It takes a lot of faith to not be delivered, to not have your prayers answered the way you would like.

Let me share with you a story. It happened last year near Seattle.

Travis Allen was diagnosed with leukemia ten months before Thanksgiving. They did the usual, but there was little hope. His classmates at Auburn Adventist Academy began praying for healing. Area churches prayed. Travis was anointed. But nothing changed.

Travis became concerned about his eternal destiny. Our son, Lee, who is the pastor at the Academy church shared, with Travis the good news that our eternal destiny is based not on our behavior but on what Jesus has done and our continuing acceptance of him. Travis thrilled to this good news and stopped looking at himself. He looked to Jesus instead and rejoiced. But his health continued to decline.

Our grandson, Chris, was best friends with Travis. On one of his visits, Travis said to him, "Chris, we've been best friends ever since fifth grade. I want you to promise me something. Promise that you'll meet me in heaven, because I want to hang out with you up there." A stronger "call" than Chris's grandpa ever gave! Chris promised.

Several weeks later while visiting Travis, Lee asked him, "Have your thoughts changed much since you've been sick?"

"Yes," Travis answered. "I used to think it was most important to have fun, to get things and to be cool. Now I'm convinced there is only one thing that is important—to know Jesus."

However, in spite of having peace about his eternal destiny, he would still sometimes awaken his mother at night, overcome with fear. "Mom, I am scared, I don't want to die at 18."

More than once she said to him, "Son, if you go to sleep, you will wake up right away and look into Jesus' face. Can you visualize that? Just think about that moment, when you look into His face and He looks into your face."

"OK Mom, I feel better."

Another thing happened as time passed. Travis would wake up at night wondering "Why me?" It was like a voice pushing him toward discouragement and darkness. One night the Holy Spirit got through to Him with another perspective. Travis found himself thinking, "If God needs someone to go through an experience like this and still trust Him, why not me?" From then on, whenever the big "Why me?" question would come up in his mind, he would counter with "Why not me?"

One day, very late in the illness, Travis said to Lee, "Pastor, I'd like to be anointed again." Lee froze. They'd done this already and nothing had changed. What was the use of doing it again? But Travis continued, "No, no, I don't want another anointing to be healed. I'd like another anointing service to celebrate the peace that God has given me."

Scheduling the service was tricky because by now Travis was having times of great pain and unconsciousness. On the appointed day, two hundred friends were at the church praying while Travis's parents, Lee and the academy Bible teacher went to the hospital for the anointing.

We have thought for a long time that if we have enough faith, we can be healed. No. No. If we have enough faith we may NOT be healed! It takes a lot of faith to not be healed.

Travis was in a coma, but when they began to pray, he sat up, his mind perfectly clear. As they prayed he put his hand on his father's neck and Lee's neck and rejoiced over the peace and even joy that God had given him.

Five doctors came by to share with him what the remaining options were. None were any good. He said, "Don't do anything special. I am going to go to sleep, but I'm going to wake up right away, and I'm going to see Jesus."

One of the doctors said, "I'm glad that concept brings you comfort."

Travis answered, "Doctor, it's not just a concept, it's in your Bible." An oncology social worker came by to help the family face the inevitable. The doctor told her, "You're not needed here." I kind of like that part. There were stronger forces at work.

Some began praying that as Travis approached the end, God would do something special, would give him a moment of comfort. Sort of like Stephen looking up and seeing Jesus standing up on His behalf (Acts 7:56).

Not long before Thanksgiving, Travis was able to leave the hospital for several days. On Sunday Chris, with Travis in a wheelchair, did the mall!

Monday morning Travis woke up and said, "I'm not doing good, Dad. You'd better get me back to the hospital." They put him in the car and started for the hospital. They didn't know that he was bleeding to death internally. This process made him feel like he had to stop at a restroom. They

faith enough NOT TO BE healed

stopped at Denny's, and his parents helped him walk in.

The receptionist asked if they wanted a table, then, "Are you OK?" She showed them to the restroom. It had two stalls; both doors were open; nobody was in there. Travis' mother stayed outside the door while his father took Travis into the handicapped stall. While Tom was trying to help his son he noticed under the partition, dress shoes and the trousers of a dark blue suit. It sort of irritated him because he'd have preferred to be alone with his sick son.

Travis said, "I am not doing good, I can hardly breathe."

Right then a voice came from the other side of the partition, calling him by name. "Travis, it's all right. You're going to be OK."

Travis said, "Dad you'd better call 911, I can't breathe." His mother came in, trying to help him. Again, the voice came from the other stall, "Travis, it's all right. I am here. You're going to be OK."

Again, the voice came from the other stall, Travis, it's all right. I am here. You're going to be OK."

The paramedics arrived within minutes and placed him on a stretcher. At this point the stranger came out of the other stall, went to the head of the stretcher and looked into Travis' face. Travis, who had been looking at his mother, was suddenly riveted on the face of the stranger. The paramedics asked, "Are you his father?"

"No, I am his friend." He continued to lean over Travis, reassuring him as they wheeled him out. When they got to the ambulance, Travis was unconscious, and then the stranger was gone.

(When they compared notes later, none of them—parents nor paramedics—had seen the stranger's face. They went and asked the receptionist if she had seen someone in a dark blue silk suit. The receptionist replied, "People in silk suits don't come into Denny's.")

Travis died in his mother's arms in the hospital at 10 o'clock that morning.

Travis had asked that they have the service on a Friday and he wanted it to end at sundown. The church was packed. There were classmates from other years, some from Walla Walla College and even from Southern College in Tennessee. Thirty-four doctors and nurses came from Children's Hospital. Travis classmates, the Auburn Academy seniors, came down the aisle and filled the choir loft, leaving one chair in the center vacant with a rose on it.

The pastor, who had taken notes for months, tried to share with the people what Travis had said in answer to his questions, including how his thinking had changed. Through Lee, Travis delivered a message to his friends: "I want to see you all in heaven, and if any of you are not there, I am really going to be bummed."

They had hoped and prayed for a revival on campus. They did not know it would come that way. There has been a revival on the campus, because someone had enough faith to not be healed.

"There is a peace that cometh after sorrow,
Of hope surrendered, not hope fulfilled,
Peace that looks not on tomorrow But
calmly on the tempest that is not stilled.
In unfailing strength the heart possesses,
While learning to endure. A life subdued,
From will and passion free,
Is not the peace that over Eden brooded,
But that which triumphed in Gethsemane.
Thy will be done."

Thy will be done is the truth that triumphed in Gethsemane.

Is there pain or hurt in your life that seems to say that God doesn't like you? Have people around you, good people, suggested that if only you had more faith, if only you were more obedient, then you wouldn't have this trouble? You would not be sick any longer? Have you wondered if God has abandoned you?

Listen, neighbor, Jesus is looking for an honor guard of Christians who will trust him regardless. Your hurt and pain are not a sign of God's disapproval or neglect. Just maybe they are evidence of God's confidence that you have faith enough not to be healed. God has a special place for you in his kingdom.

No matter who you are, whether life for you is tranquil or hard, God wants to hang out with you in heaven, to use Travis's words. If you're not there, he will be really bummed. Won't you join Travis and make knowing Jesus your No. 1 priority? It's the only thing that really matters. ■

BOOK REVIEW

Fits, & Trances, visions

experiencing religion and explaining experience from

Wesley to James; by Anne Taves, Princeton University Press

Michael Zbaraschuk

This might not be a volume you'd pick up at first glance. Why would a scholarly work on the history of religious experience in America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries be of interest to twenty-first-century Adventists? For those of you with an interest in your Adventist roots, however, this book will be a fascinating read that may lead you to radically change the way you view your heritage.

Simply put, this is the most comprehensive work to date dealing with the context and worldview of the early Adventists. Taves takes as her subject involuntary bodily experiences in religious settings, and through an analysis of the ways in which various people attempted to either explain away or find a place for such phenomena in their religious worldviews, she brings nineteenth-century religious America to life. From John Wesley's and Jonathan Edwards's differing understandings of the place of the "immediate witness of the Spirit of God;" through the battles over mesmerism, animal magnetism, and Spiritualism in the mid-nineteenth century; to the beginnings of a comparative psychology of religion by William James, this richly-textured account of the differing narratives of explanation and counter-explanation is deeply engaging.

With regard to Adventist history, Taves details the earliest visions and experiences of Ellen White (still Harmon at the time) and thoroughly situates them in their contexts of the "shouting Methodist" and camp meeting (nineteenth century, not contemporary) traditions. She shows how White's visions were in the idiom of her contemporaries, and also how both White and her detractors used the various languages of the times to bolster their claims to authenticity and authority. For example, White had to con-

tend with both charges of "fanaticism" and "mesmerism." These charges suggested that her experiences were better explained as natural processes rather than the signs of God's presence. White's struggle with the implication of "mesmerism" is especially illuminating. She came to see mesmerism, with its "naturalizing" explanation of visions and bodily exercises, as a demonic temptation. Given mesmerism's evolution into hypnotism and early psychiatry's interest in hypnotism, historic Adventism's negative view of the mental health field comes into clearer historical and philosophical focus.

The account of Ellen White and her visions occupies only half a chapter. What makes the book so engaging and valuable for Adventists is its evocation of the wider cultural world out of which Adventists came (and in which they continue to be). For example, the other half of the chapter dealing with White's visions is the story of La Roy Sunderland, a Methodist revival preacher and abolitionist who, like White, came out of Methodism in 1842. Although having many of the same experiences in the same contexts as White, he became convinced of the radically different explanatory framework of mesmerism. Their stories, viewed side by side, are paradigmatic of the strength of the book: bringing to life, in lively detail, the struggles over how to evaluate religious experience, a question that is still with us today. ■

Michael Zbaraschuk is earning a PhD in Philosophy of Religion and Theology from Claremont Graduate University and has studied under the direction of Ann Taves. He writes from Seattle, Washington.

touched by the supernatural:

One man's experience: AT interviews
Dr. Thomas an SDA pastor

Diana Fisher

AT: Tell us about yourself and your ministry.

I was born and raised in Los Angeles, California, where I accepted the Lord and was baptized. In 1978 I attended a crusade and was baptized in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Shortly after my baptism, I sustained a severe knee injury while a freshman at Lynwood Academy. It was during this convalescence that I received a call to ministry. I graduated from Oakwood College and Andrews University and received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Claremont School of Theology in 1999. Prior to receiving my doctorate, I felt a spiritual emptiness, which propelled me into a powerful prayer journey that would cause me to have a very profound encounter with the Divine.

Up until this point, I really didn't know how to pray how to make a supernatural connection with the God of the universe. I had been taught that training, talent and skill alone would suffice to "get the job of ministry done." I had essentially undertaken the spiritual task of ministry without a knowledge of how to access the spiritual power to "get the job done." Prayer just didn't seem to be the priority, which was evident in the dearth of ministry models of prayer warriors and intercessors, available to me.

As I continued to seek God's presence and study prayer, I discovered that prayer was the most essential aspect of my life and ministry. Prayer gave me power and authority over the enemy. Through prayer I interceded for my family, friends, members and the unsaved. Through prayer I was able to access power to perform miracles. Through prayer I developed the fruit and giftings of the Spirit and began to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit with incredible clarity.

In 1994, the African American Ministries Department decided to begin a church in Rancho Cucamonga and make me the pastor. Since the church's inception we have baptized over 150 people and have conducted community health fairs, clothes give-aways,

conferences, retreats and revivals.

In 1997, the Spirit deeply impressed me to begin preaching, teaching and demonstrating the priority and power of prayer. This spawned a new urgency in the members. Shortly, our prayer meetings and church services experienced great growth and we soon became known for our special emphasis on prayer, healing and the Holy Spirit.

AT: Explain your church's relationship to the SDA church at large.

I am an ordained pastor in the California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, where I have ministered for the last eight years. Rainbow Community Praise Center was established as an Affiliate Group in November of 1995. As a church, we have enjoyed the progressiveness, creativity and diversity of Southeastern Conference. We are aware that this conference leads the world church in innovation and ingenuity.

AT: Tell us specifically about the faith and healing ministries in your church. How do they work?

As I sought God earnestly in prayer, I began to inquire of the Lord that He give me the gift of healing. However, prior to receiving that gift, I was given the gift of intercession, which is foundational for healing and many other ministry gifts. Through intercession, the Holy Spirit taught me unquestionable obedience to Him and genuine unconditional love for people. With obedience and love one learns how to use the gifts "for" people and not "on" people. After I had successfully operated as an intercessor, God gave me the gift of healing.

The way healing works at Rainbow is that someone will call or attend a midweek or Sabbath service and indicate their desire for healing. Most months on the first Sabbath we have healing and deliverance (casting out demons) service immediately following the regular service. On rare occasions, the Holy Spirit will give me a word of knowledge—this means that it is revealed to me by the Holy Spirit what aches, pains, and infirmities persons are experiencing, through my own body. When I feel what the person feels (word of knowledge), I am certain that God wants to heal that person immediately. After infirm persons are identified, we stand facing one another and an intercessor lays hands and prays behind me, and another does likewise for the other. Then I anoint, lay hands, quote Scripture and pray prayers of healing and deliverance for the person. Many have been healed instantly, and others are healed at later times. However, to date, God has used me to heal migraines, lumps on breasts, back problems, a rare form of cancer, narcolepsy, hypertension, crack and nicotine addiction, neck pain, rolling eyes, fibroids, urinary infection, anxiety disorder, kidney problems, infertility, AIDS, sugar diabetes, and other infirmities.

Healing is a miracle. A miracle is a supernatural interruption and a divine intervention that defies natural law, scientific explanation and logical reasoning. God performs miracles to 1) glorify Himself; 2) signify to unbelievers; 3) increase faith; 4) evidence His presence; 5) fulfill prophecy; 6) identify the



anointing in/on a man/woman of God; 7) vindicate God. It is safe to say that one or more of the above must be met for a person to be healed. Based on the Word (3 John 2), God wants His people to be healed. But not every person is healed. It is not always because God doesn't choose to heal. However, it could be due to a lack of faith, disobedience, demons and/or other curses holding infirmities in place. For this reason, the gift of healing is often accompanied by the gifts of discernment of spirits, deliverance, faith, miracles, word of wisdom and knowledge.

AT: You are respected and considered a man of great faith/healing in your church community. What does faith mean to you?

I believe the equation for healing is simple—God's will and power mixed with my obedience and faith. Certainly, there are other components such as knowledge, skill, environment and the infirmed person's faith and obedience. My faith has increased as I have sought the Lord for greater faith and have experienced trial, challenge and success. The Word teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), so it is my desire to daily seek the presence of God to establish my faith through exercise, praise, prayer and reading of the Word. Like intercession, faith is both a Christian attribute and a spiritual gift. Hence, when the Spirit of God calls upon me to minister, my faith must believe in the miraculous. God uses ordinary people with extraordinary faith to do impossible.

AT: Do you see any blind spots in the SDA church, and if so, how can they be removed?

For the last twenty-two years, I have found that Adventist tend to fear anything "charismatic" or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There are certain biblical terms that Adventist have intentionally not used, i.e., "baptism of the Holy Spirit," "praying in the Holy Spirit," "the anointing," "laying on of hands," "rebuking," "binding," and "loosing." These terms are not employed within the Adventist community for fear of being associated with Pentecostals or Charismatics.

Furthermore, of the twenty-seven spiritual gifts, Adventists tend to embrace only those gifts that are less supernatural and phenomenal. However, the gifts of prophecy (Ellen G. White serves as the single, modern-day exception), word of wisdom, word of knowledge, healing, miracles, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues, apostle and deliverance are generally not taught or embraced.

There are two reasons why I feel we have not embraced the above biblical concepts and practices—ignorance and fear.

IGNORANCE

As Adventists, we tend to reject, neglect or be unaware that prior to 1865 many of the above biblical giftings and practices were embraced by early church pioneers. The SDA Bible Commentary supports the position of tongues as a prayer language rather than just a missionary or evangelist language that can be taught and learned (1 Cor. 14). At Salem Adventist Camp Meeting in 1842, worshipers shouted, lost strength and fell prostrate (*Adventism in America*, 23). Prophetess Ellen G. White says that she praised God with shouting, weeping and singing, which "often drove out the enemy [and] beat him back...giv[ing] us the victory (spiritual warfare). I saw there was too little glorifying God in Israel..."

(Ronald Graybill, "Enthusiasm in Early Adventist Worship," Ministry, Oct. 1991). On another occasion, Prophetess White wrote "the Spirit caused Clarissa to laugh aloud...and the slaying power of God was in our midst" (Ron Graybill).

It appears that if a practice is not Adventist-originated, members and clergy without critical or biblical investigation will more often than not shun it. Some feel that if a practice is not biblical, then it is unreasonable or unnecessary. Many Adventists have not read for themselves to know the truth regarding these practices. Adventists who witness these gifts and practices (healing, prophecy, visions, tongues, laying on of hands, miracles, etc.) view them with suspicion, disdain and thought to be satanic manifestations rather than divine.

FEAR

We tend to fear the supernatural. The miracles, signs and wonders of the Bible are generally not threatening, as they are confined to antiquity. However, Jesus experienced those who feared his giftings (see Luke 8:37 and Matt. 12:22-28). God desires that we do the miraculous, but often we are "spooked out" by the miraculous and thereby abort our blessings.

Many of us reject the manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit because we are so afraid of the devil. We think that since some manifestations might possibly be of the devil, we will therefore have nothing to do with any kind of supernatural manifestation just to be safe. But the truth of the matter is that the Spirit of God will never cause anyone to operate in spiritual gifts via demonic influence. If we are not careful, however, fear of the spiritual gifts can result in us unknowingly creating an enemy to the Initiator (Holy Spirit) of spiritual gifts. How can we ever experience the supernatural power of God if we are too afraid to receive the supernatural workings of God?

AT: What do you see as the future of the SDA church and the future of your church?

I believe there is a "fresh wind of the Spirit" blowing across the world that is setting ordinary people ablaze with the power of the Holy Spirit. More than ever before pastors and members are interested in the workings of the Holy Spirit as we approach the Second Coming of Christ. We are right at the beginning of a major revival wherein we shall see enormous numbers of people saved, praying, studying the Word and witnessing like never before. I believe the next move of God will be a post-denomination and Sabbath-restoration revival. God wants the Adventist church to be at the forefront of this movement, if we would once again begin to sincerely pray and look with anticipation toward the Latter Rain of the Spirit. When this happens, denominational affiliation, race, culture and class will become unimportant. The priority will be God's Spirit moving in the Body of Christ to prepare the saints and the world for Christ's Second Coming. ■

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miracle workers

John McLarty

It took me about a year to figure out who “the Boss” was. From the two or three times I had heard Charlie mention the Boss in conversation or in Sabbath School class I could tell that for Charlie, the Boss knew everything, was absolutely reliable and was not to be argued with. But the references were too cryptic. I couldn’t quite figure out who the Boss was.

Charlie had great, bushy eyebrows and a conspiratorial smile which suggested he was positive that you understood what he was talking about, and they made me feel it would be impolite to ask What do you mean? His most famous “Boss” story had to do with rain. I heard it twice before I finally caught on. Here’s the way I remember it:

There was this wedding. A couple of the kids in the church were getting married. It was a spring wedding and between the service at the church and the reception at a hall they were going to a local park for pictures.

When Charlie got to the church early to open up it was pouring rain. Some time later the preacher showed up. He was busy, but Charlie finally managed to get him off to one side. “This weather is pretty crummy for a wedding. These kids should have better for their wedding day.”

The preacher kind of sputtered. “Well, Charlie, I agree it’s lousy weather, but what can you do? They’re forecasting nonstop rain for the next two days.”

The preacher wasn’t going to be any help, so Charlie stepped into one of the classrooms. Coming back out a little later he went looking for the preacher. “I talked to the Boss,” he told the preacher. “Everything’s going to be all right.”

The preacher didn’t have any idea what he was talking about. (Charlie found that amusing.) The rain

continued. Other members of the wedding party began arriving.

At ten minutes before the scheduled start of the ceremony, the rain stopped. The sun came out. When the wedding was over, the sun was still shining. The wedding party drove to the park. They got their pictures. They loaded back into their cars and headed for the reception hall. Ten minutes after they arrived at the hall it began to pour again. And it rained the rest of the afternoon and evening.

As he finished telling the story, Charlie grinned, wriggled his eyebrows and pointed a stubby finger heavenward. “To think that preacher didn’t believe HE was interested in those kids’ wedding! Oh, I tell you what. He’s lot more interested than most people know.”

Charlie had other stories. When he had a problem, he talked to the Boss. At work when there was a problem he talked to his supervisor or his supervisor’s supervisor. He understood the role of bosses, their privileges, their responsibilities, their power. And God was simply the Boss of all bosses. He had a business to run. He cared about his workers. And he had resources. If you needed something, you told him about it.

I’ve known other people with this kind of direct, immediate connection with God. Lana was a single mom in New York City. I remember her telling us in prayer meeting that she needed a new dress coat for winter and that God was going to provide one for her. The next week she reported how God did it. He sent her to a particular shop. Directed her to a particular rack and there was the coat. Since it had a rip the store owner sold to her for almost nothing. But the rip was on a seam. After mending, it was impossible to detect any blemish. The coat was stylish and

warm. It was perfect.

Some months later Lana told us she was praying for an apartment in our neighborhood. She had been living in the church, but the caretaker's apartment was too small for her and her three children. Besides, she really wanted a place of her own. She wanted us to pray with her. I did so as a courtesy, but I was thinking, How on the earth can this woman afford an apartment in this neighborhood? Studio apartments rent for more than her monthly income, and she wants a two bedroom! It was such an outlandish notion it was all I could do to keep a straight face while praying.

A month later, I heard about a new luxury highrise going up a few blocks away. They were required by the city to provide one floor of subsidized housing units. Lana would qualify for one of these apartments. But there were thousands of applicants for the twenty apartments. Lana never doubted, never worried. God had told her he was going to provide her an apartment. When she called me to tell me she had been assigned one of the apartments she was excited, but not surprised.

So what do we make of stories like this?

Some people argue that we could all see frequent miracles and have regular personal guidance if we would just practice the disciplines of prayer. Perhaps, but I doubt it. I believe Charlie and Lana were specially gifted. In some way they were specially fitted for spiritual life.

This spiritual giftedness is something like being gifted musically. If a person is not musically gifted, all the practice in the world will not turn that person into a musician. You can learn to play the right notes on the piano. You can learn to count and to play louder and softer. You can learn music theory, but all of these things put together cannot make you a musician if you don't have the gift. It is the intersection of giftedness and the disciplines of practice that make a musician. And so with a miracle worker.

Charlie came from a "gifted" family. He was Irish, and he told me of visitations to his family by "the little people." Charlie never engaged these beings in conversation. They were intrusions rather than friends. But they had visited his ancestors and on occasion had made themselves known to Charlie and even the next generation.

I think of a couple of other people with dramatic spiritual histories—the late Roger Morneau, author of *Incredible Answers to Prayer*, and Hyveth Williams, senior pastor of the Campus Hill SDA Church in Loma Linda. Both tell stories of fantastic intervention by God. But both of them had extraordinary spiritual experiences *before* they became Christians. They were gifted quite apart from their personal loyalty to God. When they devoted themselves to God, this gift led to extraordinarily powerful ministry.

If this theory is correct we should not feel "guilty" if our own prayer life is not characterized by dramatic

divine interventions. Every Christian should pray, but we should not expect that prayer will make all of us miracle workers or rapturous mystics.

On the other hand, it is crucial that we do not use our own experience (or the experiences of our circle of friends) as the touchstone of reality in the area of spirituality. Just because we have *not* experienced something does not mean it cannot happen. Just because our prayers do not have the effects we think they should does not mean that the prayers of others are ineffectual. Especially among those who are edu-

This spiritual giftedness is something like being gifted musically. If a person is not musically gifted, all the practice in the world will not turn that person into a musician.

cated, the miraculous can be almost embarrassing.

I think the reason we are embarrassed by the miraculous is that we can't plan it. Not all of Charlie's requests are granted. Lana has to live with unsatisfied longings. But even though they don't have a one hundred percent track record they are still far more effective in prayer regarding specific needs than I am. And I must acknowledge that.

I have no illusions about matching Charlie's prayer power, but I know that on occasion God answers the prayers even of skeptical me. Within the past year three people who had asked me to pray for them reported significant changes in their lives—changes they attributed to the power of God. Did God answer my prayers? Did he respond to their faith? Was he simply expressing his father's heart? I don't know. I do know we prayed. And I can see the smiles on my friends, faces.

Maybe the best way to respond to stories like Charlie's and Lana's is to act like kids after a gymnastic show. They race out on the mats and turn somersaults. They try to stand on their heads. They bounce on the mini tramp. They dream of flying through the air and balancing high above the floor. They find nothing strange in being so inept in the presence of the masters. They delight in dreaming of joining the masters in their art.

Our response to gifted spiritual people should be something like that. Cultivate their friendship. Listen to their stories. Then spend some time praying. You may not turn the world upside down, but perhaps you'll have a story or two of your own to wonder about. ■

John McLarty is the editor of Adventist Today.

killing the spirit

race, racism and church bureaucracy.

Lessons from the British Experience

William Ackah

Greetings from the British Union, home to 20,000 Seventh-day Adventist Christians. Of those 20,000 approximately 70 percent are people of color, while the remaining 30 percent are white.

This is in contrast to the population of the country as a whole, six percent of whom are people of color and 94 percent—nearly 52 million people—are white. Seventh Day Adventists in Britain are a community going against the societal grain. We are a minority faith that is virtually unknown. To compound that, the majority of the membership is comprised of people who are also a minority in a nation that is still not entirely comfortable with the modern global reality of multiculturalism. This, however, should not really be a matter of serious concern, because SDAs across the globe are used to going against the grain. We are prepared to be different, because our history and beliefs affirm for us that we are not led by social conventions but by the Spirit and the Word.

Recent events however, in Britain and around the world, have led me to question that we as a church are led by the Spirit and that our movement is spirit-filled. Rather as a passionate observer of church trends it appears to me that bureaucracy, petty politics, racism, bigotry and rigid organization are crushing the very spirit and life of faith that the church seeks to promote. Rather than being people of the Spirit, we are becoming more and more people of letters and numbers. As the Bible says the letter kills, but the spirit gives life

(2nd Corinthians 3:6). I would like to explore where I think the letter is killing us as an Adventist community and suggest how we might begin to revive the Spirit among us.

The year 2000 will be remembered as an unfortunate in the history of the Adventist church in the British Isles. At the sessions of the North and South England Conferences, both held this year, two new positions were created with special responsibility to co-ordinate efforts to reach the indigenous people. On the surface it appeared to be logical, with white membership of the church in Britain decreasing. However, at both conference sessions the leadership tried to force the new policy on the membership without much discussion. Reading between the lines, the new initiative was an attempt to sanction and legitimate a white-to-white only policy within the church. Rather than challenging the whole church to strive harder to win underrepresented groups to the message, rather than look towards the spirit to draw people of all races to the beauty of the gospel, the leadership, with a stroke of a pen and a few votes, put a legitimate stamp on separatism between black and white. The long-term repercussions could do untold damage to the work of the gospel in Britain. You can be sure that the

letter and racial separatism kills.

As a lecturer in community and race relations, I spend my life analyzing race-related situations around the globe. To me it is a source of deep embarrassment that the church I belong to, one that claims to be led by the spirit, has in the United States, in South Africa, and now in Britain legislated and legitimated separation and racism even on a scale that goes beyond the norms and conventions of the societies that they reside in. As Adventists we frequently say we need to test the spirits to discern whether they are of God. There is a spirit working among us, but it is not holy when it comes to the vexed question of race.

It is not only in the area of race relations that process, procedure and petty politics are killing the spirit in our churches. At the GC session in Toronto, where the world church met to rejoice at the achievements of the past five years and plan for the future, one could be impressed that the letter and legislature of the church was in danger of killing its spirit.

Toronto was my first GC session, and many aspects of it thrilled my soul. The wonderful music, the profusion of color and diversity and the variety of ministries at work around the globe were all a testament to the many dedicated people in our movement looking forward to the coming of the Savior. People were engaged in innovative and energizing projects, bringing them under the umbrella of God's grace and the church. Those aspects were on occasion truly inspirational.

On the other hand, the business sessions and the elections of various leaders were a confirmation that indeed the letter kills. Day after day, delegates listened to and discussed revisions to the church manual, line by line, rule by rule. I got the distinct impression the church was codifying, clarifying and revising in order to keep control. Put things down on paper in order to kill innovation, interpretation and spirit-guided but uncontrolled decision making. After previous sessions being controversial, it was perhaps understandable that this showcase event should adopt a "safety first" mentality. Is the church a business looking to protect its assets, or are we a movement? An over-regimented, over-organized, over-regulated structure will indeed kill by letter and boredom.

It was also interesting to note at the session that although Adventist young people were actively witnessing on the streets of Toronto and involved in special items of the GC session programming, there was notable absence of young people among the delegates and leadership of the church.

In most organizations what happens at the top is replicated at the bottom. The line-by-line "safety first" mentality witnessed at GC Session is also prevalent at the local congregational level in many of our churches. In the developed world and in places with a long history of Adventism, like Western Europe, we are experiencing church growth problems. A cursory glance at board and business meeting minutes across a range of

churches would probably reveal discussions revolving around money, church discipline, filling vacant positions, theological disputes, the maintenance of buildings and arrangements for future meetings! Sound familiar? It is hardly the kind of stuff that is going get hearts racing. I think meetings upon meetings kill, but action and activity brings life.

I do believe that God has plans for this church, despite our best efforts to organize the Holy Spirit out of our experience. If, however, we continue to restrict opportunities for the Spirit to speak to us individually

I do believe that God has plans for this church, despite our best efforts to organize the Holy Spirit out of our experience. If, however, we continue to restrict opportunities for the Spirit to speak to us individually and corporately we will wither on the vine.

and corporately we will wither on the vine. Some parts of that vine are already looking sickly.

There are two spirit-killing tendencies that are present in North America and Europe. Both are equally restrictive and damaging to the future of the movement. First there is the deep-seated conservatism that resists change, innovation and dynamism. The second danger is anemic liberalism, a desire on the part of some to rationalize away all our beliefs and continually question who and what we are, while offering no powerful life-affirming, life-changing alternative.

As Seventh-day Adventists seeking to be a movement of global significance, we have to move beyond the letter of the law and engaged with its spirit. I am baffled as to why on our baptismal certificates we can find room to forbid tea and coffee, yet racism, sexism and the plight of the poor are ignored. Are we comfortable producing health-conscious racists? As a church we need to reach back and remember that we have both consciences and consciousness. Our conscience is what the spirit pricks in order to move us forward. We need a renewed Christ-like consciousness to tell us we are here to make a difference in the world. Our neighborhoods, our homes, our churches should be better places because we are in them. At the dawn of this new century we must be relevant. We need to bring back passion, power and the Spirit into our Adventist experience. For indeed the letter kills, but praise God, the Spirit can still bring life. ■

William Ackah is a lecturer in Community and Race Relations at Edge Hill College of Higher Education in the United Kingdom. He is the recent author of Pan-Africanism: Exploring the Contradictions (Ashgate Press, 1999).

A CRITIQUE

of charismatic movements

Summary of a talk by Desmond Ford on "Adventism and the Holy Spirit," given at the San Diego chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums, July 12, 2000.

James Stirling

Dr. Desmond Ford has been an observer of trends in theology and practice in the Adventist church for many decades. He has been associated with the "Good News Unlimited" in Auburn, California, but is moving to his home country of Australia. At this meeting he was introduced by Ray Cottrell, a long-time colleague, who commented that in his opinion the biggest mistake made by the church in the twentieth century was its censuring of Ford at Glacier View in 1980.

The charismatics, Ford said, are the fastest-growing segment of the Christian world. Where Christianity is expanding in the Third World countries, 80 percent of the new converts are charismatics; one person in 11 in the world is a charismatic Christian. People, especially youth, are drawn to the Pentecostal or charismatic faith because of its emphasis on joyful religion. Jesus had expressed the wish to his followers "that your joy may be full," and the inevitable fruit of a loving relationship with the Savior is joy. Even the future of the Adventist church may lie in their coming to grips with the heart of the charismatic movement.

Ford cited other characteristics of charismatics—their willingness to witness to others about their rela-

tionship with the Lord, and their conviction that every believer was privileged to serve the Lord, with no distinction between clergy and laity. Their chief distinction is that they believe the Holy Spirit is with each person every day, an abiding presence in everything they do or every problem they face. They are never alone.

But there are problems with charismatics, mostly arising from their taking the good things to extremes. They live on a high level of spiritual euphoria. If the Holy Spirit is the power of God, and God can work miracles, then they should expect miracles. Thus some look for miracles almost "behind every bush." Such people don't like drudgery; they want instant relief. If they are sick they expect healing; lacking that they begin to question their faith and feel guilty. They have a low tolerance for illness. They expect to be "slain in the Spirit" and fall to the floor unconscious after contact with a healer. Ford regards this as a natural event, not supernatural—akin to a faint, or trance, or "dissociation," as a psychologist would say.

Pentecostal charismatics engage in "speaking in tongues." Taking their cue from passages in the

Apostle Paul's letters, they feel that when they achieve the ability to make ecstatic utterances they have experienced full conversion—the "second blessing" as some call it. Those who have it are first-class; those who don't are not. In their insistence on this manifestation, Ford says, Pentecostals may come to hold the Holy Spirit as more important than Jesus himself. Some have thought the "tongues" were foreign languages, intelligible to people of other lands, but linguistic studies have shown this is not so. People who have trusted this phenomena to enable them to go to other countries as missionaries without language study have usually been disappointed. However, this practice of "tongues" can be learned, Ford says. It is not necessarily supernatural. Glossolalia is practiced by people in many cultures and religions. The Apostle Paul said he would rather speak five words with understanding than ten thousand in unintelligible tongues (1 Cor. 14:19). Akin to this is the idea of "holy laughter," supposedly another mark of Spirit possession. Ford says this is blasphemous.

Ford commented on the quest some Pentecostals have for the power of the Holy Spirit as evidenced in the signs and wonders. It is important to distinguish between the power of love and the love of power. There were people in Christ's day who would not believe unless they saw miracles, but he tried to teach them that the love of God has more power than any such signs. Even faith healing may be a problem, for people who think that their faith in a healer is what saves them. If faith healers have such power, Ford asks, why don't they go to intensive care units in hospitals? The claim of some faith healers that you can "name it and claim it" is contrary to the New Testament.

Ford did not really disparage the enthusiasm of the charismatics, but pointed out that the craving for excitement and miracles has a way of wearing thin. "Ecstasy has a short shelf life," he said. There is a tendency for Pentecostal churches to lose interest over time in miracles. The older the denomination, the less concerned it is with the signs and wonders. Some of their best scholars today disclaim the supernaturalism of tongues and deny that they are languages. Rather, they emphasize the prime need for a relationship with Jesus.

Of course, the early pioneers of the Adventist church also went through a period of holiness/Pentecostal-like experience. In some of the early camp meetings people would be slain in the spirit and would talk in tongues, a common happening in many Christian churches. As the Adventist church matured, however, the leadership, including Ellen White, began to insist on doing things "decently and in order."

Was God with the charismatic movement, and is he now? Ford says Yes. God was in the movement at the outset, using the uninhibited joyful expressions as a wake-up call to churches that had been focusing too long on doctrine and law. As the book of Psalms is full of songs of rejoicing, so the Christian church needed to

be reminded that in Christ's presence there is "fullness of joy." As movements become sects and denominations they tend to overdo the ritual and overlook the spiritual presence of Christ. Before his departure Jesus said he would come to the people, and that they should pray to Father for someone like him, the Holy Spirit. He said the Father was more willing to give the Holy Spirit to his people than parents were to give food to their children. Christ is available to us as more than a historical figure but a living reality; only, however, through the aid of the Spirit.

But there are problems with charismatics, mostly arising from their taking the good things to extremes. They live on a high level of spiritual euphoria. If the Holy Spirit is the power of God, and God can work miracles, then they should expect miracles.

The charismatic movement, Ford said, started out well, but like a pendulum swung too far in the direction of emotionalism. It came to focus too much on power and the Spirit, and not enough on Christ. History has shown that God can be with imperfect movements. Has the pendulum swung too far the other way for more formal churches? Are Adventists making use of the potential to recognize God as close to us in every breath we breathe, available for every need? Do we really "practice the presence" of Christ? If we are to survive in a materialistic world, we must come to feel much more than we do now the reality of God in our life. Though we continue to face problems, we can draw on the strength of God's Spirit to deal with them. If anyone thirsts, Jesus said, he can find rivers of living water through the aid of the Spirit. But the Spirit leads us to love God, and not to seek power.

Does the Adventist church have something yet to learn about the Holy Spirit's ministry? Ellen White once wrote that we have much to learn about God and also much to unlearn. She pointed out that while we can trust in God's providences and seek his help, we still must learn patience in dealing with life, accepting drudgery where that seems God's plan, and bearing illness and pain when no form of treatment brings relief. He can and will sustain us, but he is not a cosmic butler to be summoned whenever we have a wish. And in accepting his love, we can show a similar love to others around us. The basic evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life will be the love we manifest to them—"the greatest of these is love." ■

James Stirling is Assistant Editor of Adventist Today. He is also a retired professor at La Sierra University.

In defense of *The Clear Word*

Jim Miller

Let me start off by saying that I am not a fan of *The Clear Word*, Jack J. Blanco's expanded paraphrase of the Bible. I might admire the fortitude and writing skills of an individual who undertook to write a version of the entire Bible, but that is not why I feel compelled to write a defense of this version. *The Clear Word* and its Evangelical counterpart *The Message* are two modern examples of an ancient Jewish tradition, the tradition of the Targums. And I am a scholar who has developed a taste for Targums. What is a Targum? A Targum is a Jewish expanded translation of the Scriptures.

Some Targums are paraphrased, but most are Type A Targums, where the translation and expansion can be separated easily. Targums have a long history. The kingdom of Judah was exiled to Babylon in 598 and the exiles learned the common language of the Babylonian Empire, Aramaic. With time many exiles lost their command of Hebrew. When they returned from exile few still knew the Hebrew of the Bible. Nehemiah 8:8 tells how Ezra read the law to the people with helpers who "gave understanding" of the Scriptures being read. The rabbis understand this as the beginning of the Targum tradition. In the synagogues where the Torah is read, a Targum to the Torah may be recited along with the Scripture reading.

These Targums are not unlike Blanco's work. The oldest Targum texts are in the Dead Sea Scrolls, most notably the Targum to Job. The Targums most similar to Blanco's expanded paraphrase are Targums Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan, which translate Genesis through Deuteronomy. These Targums are medieval, though they contain some ancient interpretations. In the tradition of the Targums Blanco frequently tries to smooth over difficult or embarrassing passages of Scripture. Ecclesiastes 1:5 implies that the sun circles the earth for, "The sun rises and the sun sets, then it hurries to its rising place." Blanco's paraphrase of this verse is not true to the Hebrew, and he adds to the previous verse,

"the earth simply keeps spinning in space. . ." Some readers may be offended by this alteration of Scripture, but the rabbis have done more extensive alterations in the Targums.

For instance, the rabbis were troubled by Abraham's incestuous marriage to his half-sister (Gen 20:12) and Amram's marriage to his paternal aunt Jochebed (Ex 6:20). They made Sarah the daughter of Abraham's father's sister and Jochebed the daughter of Amram's aunt. In the law of Moses marriage to cousins was permitted.

The rabbis liked to expand the text with interesting tidbits, again like *The Clear Word*. When God expels Adam and Eve from the garden *The Clear Word* expands on the sacrificial implications of the animal skin clothing which God makes for the couple. However, the Targums expand on the cherubim with the Shekinah (glory of God) between them, or how the dust to which man will return was taken from Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount). Both find the sacrificial system prefigured in these verses, but at different points.

Sometimes the Targums incorporate legends, which grew up around detailed interpretation. A Targum to Genesis 18:21 speaks of the cry of Peletith. Who was Peletith? She was the one whose "cry came up before" God. If God heard her cry, she must have been one of the righteous ones in Sodom. As only the family of Lot was saved from Sodom she must have come from his family. In 19:15 the angels speak of the daughters which are left to Lot, implying at least one who was not. So the cry which came up before God must be from Lot's other daughter. Why did she die? It must be because she gave bread to the poor, for the rabbis believed that Sodom executed those who helped the poor (cf Ezekiel 16:49). All of this is built into a legend mentioned in this verse of the Targum. We might compare this to Blanco's explanation in Deuteronomy 34:6 of why Moses' burial place has not been found—because soon after, "the Lord came down and raised him from the dead and took him to heaven." Behind this

simple statement is a great deal of Adventist Bible study on death, Jude 9 and the transfiguration on the mount (Mark 9:4).

One area where Blanco is dangerous is on the topic of marriage. Currently the Adventist church is debating this topic, and irresponsible alteration of Scripture certainly does not help the situation. For instance, the last of the incest laws in Leviticus 18 forbids marriage to a pair of sisters, such as Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel (Lev 18:18). Blanco has transformed the verse into a law forbidding polygamy, something never forbidden in the Old Testament. Though the New Testament texts do take a stand against polygamy, none outright forbid polygamists in the church, and some texts imply polygamists may take part in church life, though not as leaders.

On divorce, it is important that the Gospel of Matthew has two texts against divorce, one specific to the divorced wife (5:31-32) and the other specific to the divorcing husband (19:3-12). The first text implies that the divorced wife would remarry, thus placing her in adultery, but Blanco alters this to prostitution. Then Jesus states that a man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery, but Blanco has reversed this to remarriage of the divorcing husband. In chapter 19 Blanco is less invasive, merely trying to explain away Moses in 19:8 after the classic manner of Jewish Targums.

Blanco warns against using his version as a study Bible, but that will not stop many readers from concluding that his expansions and alterations are true to some hidden meaning in the Greek or Hebrew. And this misinformation could impact church policy on marriage or other issues. If I read Blanco's *The Clear Word* as an Adventist Targum I can enjoy and respect this expansion on Scripture. And the popularity of *The Clear Word* compels me to learn to accept its use in church. But we should follow the example of the rabbis in one thing, and not let our Targum receive much use without the company of the unexpanded Scriptures. ■

Prove All Things

Carol Mayes

A Response to *Women in Ministry*

I recently received a copy of the new book, *Prove All Things*, from the publishers of the magazine *Adventists Affirm*. This treatise is a response to the book *Women in Ministry*, published last year by the ad hoc committee which was appointed after the 1995 General Conference session to make a comprehensive study of the issue of the ordination of women.

Those who had opposed the ordination of women had charged that to open the way for female leadership was anti-scriptural and almost equal to accepting Sunday as the Sabbath. They felt that *Women in Ministry* only affirmed the ministry of women and did not present the opposing side of the issue; hence

their book, *Prove All Things*. Those who favored the ordination of women were reading the same Bible, yet came up with opposite conclusions.

The editor is Mercedes H. Dyer, and primary authors are Samuele Bacchiocchi, R. Gerard Damsteegt, C. Raymond Holmes, Mervyn and Lawrence Maxwell, and Samuel Koranteng-Pipim. *Prove All Things* basically uses the following texts to support and substantiate the prohibition against women in ministry: 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6, 1 Timothy 2:11-15, 1 Corinthians 14:34,35.

The authors hold that no man or church has the right to reinterpret the Bible. They say this even though there are many biblical admonitions we do not follow today because they do not apply to our times, as well as prohibitions we currently follow which are not mentioned in the Bible because they were then unknown. We haven't learned how to distinguish between the rules,

which change according to circumstances, and the principles, which are unchanging.

Reading *Prove All Things* along with *Women in Ministry* only reaffirms my conviction that this issue cannot be legislated by the world church, since all of us interpret the Bible according to the context of our own life's experiences. Whether we are male or female, if

We haven't learned how to distinguish between the rules, which change according to circumstances, and the principles, which are unchanging.

the women in our frame of reference are emotional and dependent, we are inclined to believe that all women are like that

and thus not capable of a leadership role. On the other hand, if we have had fathers and brothers who were gentle and nurturing, and mothers and sisters who were decisive leaders, we begin to see how futile it is to expect our Christian brothers and sisters to fit into our personal concept of who should be the leader. How can we presume to force "headship" on all men and "submission" on all women when personalities and gifts are so variable? That's why local churches should not be condemned for following their collective conscience on this issue. Let's not forget the words of Jesus: "Neither do I condemn you." So are we at an impasse in our efforts to be "united" on this issue? Not if we have a sense of humor! My answer to this question I have written in the following poem:

Who's The Boss?

When I was young it seemed to me my father had no say,

My mother's will was stronger and she mostly got her way.

So after I had married me a wise and strong-willed man, to leave decisions up to him seemed quite an ideal plan.

But then when I grew older, I noticed that my brother had wed an able woman who was much like our dear mother.

It's clear that good relationships are constant give and take. Who may win and who may lose—what difference does it make?

So now that I am wiser, I see things in new light: My dad was glad to bow to mom 'cause she was mostly right!

Carol Mayes lives and writes from Chatsworth, California. Her poetry and hymn writing have been published in the such things as *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* and *Kay Kuzma's In Praise of Children*. She hopes to publish her own book of poems someday.

a return to The Holocaust Museum With Gail Saxby: death and resurrection

Auburn hair lies scattered among holocaust shoes!
 The museum, now, folds her memory into clothes
 Emptied of their bodies,
 Her green suit crumpled with the drab.
 Everywhere, the look of death
 Peering from sunken brown-eyed sockets!
 Gone the dark reflecting pools,
 The empathetic glance so touched by suffering.
 I look into a burial pit; she gazes back.
 I lift my eyes to smokestacks spewing ash,
 Search dim chambers filled with gas.
 She passes through each scripted scene,
 A wisp of smoke surrendered to the furnace draft.
 At lunch we talk across a table sharing thoughts:
 The shoes, she murmurs, all those shoes, the smell!
 I listen while she fades away, her soft voice
 Muffled by the dust.
 I still pick up her information pattern
 Diffusing through the universe,
 The chair and table where she sat that day,
 The audio weak, video blurred.
 I bring her faintly back into my inner space,
 Lost at times to cosmic static.
 My scanner searches for her frequency,
 Failed by finite limitations.
 I call out to One,
 An infinitely powerful receiver,
 Fine tuned,
 To bring the signal in.

A. Josef Greig

Josef Greig is a professor in the Religion Department at Andrews University. He is a published poet. His latest work appeared in Sky-lark, a publication of Purdue University. He is working on a religious anthology of select SDA poets.