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Loma Linda University Center for Christian Bioethics

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Loma Linda University Center for Christian Bioethics

Update

Volume 18, Number 3 (January 2003)

Editorial

In the fall of each year the Center for Christian Bioethics hosts a special gathering for our contributors. Since the Center is completely dependent on the donations of our supporters, we are particularly concerned that they know we appreciate them and that we provide an interesting and stimulating meeting at our yearly reunion.

In November of 2002 we met at the Miramonte Resort in Palm Springs. We were detlighted to welcome our special guests. Pam Rathbun provided a sacred concert to begin our day and set the mood for our speakers. Charles Teel Jr. spent time reflecting with us about the book titled *Remnant and Republic: Adventist Themes for Personal and Social Ethics*. The Center published this collection of essays in 1995. Dr. Teel's thoughts are included in this issue and prompt us to continue active engagement in the sociopolitical realm.

Robert Gardner is a scholar among us who does indeed take such a call seriously. Dr. Gardner took the lead in shaping a combined degree program in social policy with our masters program in biomedical and clinical ethics. This combined program is truly unique and will surely affect the way Seventh-day Adventists relate to broader societies around the world.

The emphasis of Charles Scriven's article relates to the question of character in how we imagine moral life. For many years Dr. Scriven has urged the church to pay attention to sociopolitical issues. Of particular interest are his published works regarding the Seventh-day Adventist position toward involvement in war. Given the current state of world affairs it is good that we focus on these matters. Immediately following Dr. Scriven's article is a statement issued by the executive committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in April of 2002. General Conference President Jan Paulsen is to be applauded for his leadership in shaping this statement and for his regular attention to the issue of Seventh-day Adventist involvement in our world's societies. We publish this "Call for Peace" with the idea that it may help many of our readers determine to actively call for peace in our volatile world.

Finally, it is a pleasure to list the names of those who financially support the Center. Our year-end fund drive is a good indicator that your support is extraordinary. Despite the difficulties the financial markets are experiencing, you gave more this past year than years. For that we are most grateful!

Sincerely,

Mark F. Carr, PhD, MDiv

Theological co-director, Center for Christian Bioethics

Of One Piece of Cloth: A Journey Discovering Personal and Social Ethics

Charles Teel Jr., PhD
Professor of religion and society
La Sierra University

Center for Christian Bioethics director Mark Carr dug through the earliest editions of the Center's journal, noted an editorial with a title similar to the above with my byline introducing the Center's lecture series volume *Remnant and Republic: Adventist Themes for Personal and Social Ethics*. In turn, he invited me to present a "personal pilgrimage piece" at the 2002 Contributor's Convocation. He asked me to probe the manner in which a boy raised in the parochial town of 1950s Loma Linda, and imbued with a strict personal ethics code, came to be nudged toward social ethics and public policy issues. Dr. Carr indicated that the rationale prompting this invitation was that of offering a backdrop against which to understand the birthing of the book, and to invite suggestions on how this effort in mining Adventist themes for social ethics might merit future development.

Loma Linda of the 1950s was an unincorporated, one-company town. The College of Medical Evangelists (forerunner of Loma Linda University) was built around the basic science course offerings of a four-year school of medicine curriculum. These "basic" years were undertaken in the orange groves affectionately known as "The Patch," with the clinical years offered in "The City" of Los Angeles. Populated exclusively by members of the Seventh-day Adventist faith community, Loma Linda of the 1950s had virtually no voting booths, no mail delivery on Saturday, no freeways, no minorities—and no known sin.

In this setting children were raised with a strict personal ethics code. Nurtured in the home of a God-fearing preacher father and a nurse-cum-homemaker mother, I was taught early on to work hard, study diligently, and to be charitable toward "deserving" others. These parents—in tandem with the town's elementary school teachers, high school teachers, youth group leaders, and gymnastics coaches (all rooted in the same faith tradition)—did right well by me, I think. They instilled in me a personal ethics code which, with but a few key reservations, I hope I passed on to my own children. I was created by God (on the sixth day of creation week), I was special (saved by a personal Savior), I carried my share of life's load (work hard), I recognized that others who carry heavier loads than I may merit my help (I gave to deserving charities and invested muscle power to help the deserving poor), I used time wisely (did my chores, practiced the piano, and studied hard), I was frugal (saved my money), and I planned for the long term (invested my money to cover college tuition).

Our youth group leaders further instilled an individualist ethic as we each week repeated such vows as: "I will do my honest part, I will keep the morning watch, I will walk softly in the sanctuary, I will go on God's errands…"

Then bursting into the "Brady Bunch" 1950s of this quiet came reports of Montgomery and Little Rock, to be followed by Selma, Birmingham, and the Mississippi burnings. The crooning of Pat Boone morphed into Elvis and the Beatles, followed by the protest songs of old warrior Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and

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Bob Dillon, among others. As the placid Eisenhower years gave way to election debates in the mid 1960s between Protestant Richard Nixon and Catholic John F. Kennedy, Loma Linda residents flocked to the polls. Their candidate lost.

While I did not know the term in those teenage days, this hometown boy began to experience cognitive dissonance. Not once during these tumultuous years did those role models who schooled me in such personal ethics issues raise the social ethics imperative of fostering civil rights for all citizens in the public square. Not once—and this in spite of the repeated civil rights images of marching hopefuls, eloquent preachments, moral pronouncements, and congressional debates which filled the print and electronic media. Rather, as the nation's fabric was being stretched, rent, and rewoven, my role models fell short of moving from personal ethics concerns to wrestling with the social ethics of public policy.

Any quarrel I have with these parochial mentors is in fact a lover's quarrel between a loyal son and the community of faith that birthed him, nurtured him, and immersed him in the waters of baptism.

Yet our children and our children's children are not likely to be so patient. The world in which they live is no longer that of parochial Loma Linda of the 1950s. In their twenty-first century world—whether they reside in Capetown, Prague, Hong Kong, Lima, London, or Loma Linda—they know that this is not enough.

The Center's volume, *Remnant and Republic: Adventist Themes for Personal and Social Ethics*, mined themes from the Adventist heritage by way of arguing for this new generation that social ethics and public policy issues constitute legitimate areas of inquiry and action for this community of faith. Indeed, the closing paragraph of the book's Preface identified the target audience to be that generation born "en route"—a generation far removed from the forbears who founded our town of Loma Linda and yet some distance short of arriving at the Promised Land: "…those contributing to the ongoing discussion of what it means to be a faith community very much en route—a faith community whose children will care enough to ask, 'What mean these stones?'" (p. xi)

Our children and our children's children each day face the tearing issues of social ethics and public policy no less than issues relating to personal ethics and individual response. And these issues range from how one views the individual's relation to the social whole to economics to politics to fostering development in the shrinking world, which has become a village.

Key broad stroke questions ever swirl about the issue of individual and community: How might we best create a community/tribe/polis/nation which at once encourages individual initiative while inviting that creativity to be channeled into fostering the common good. Ought the query, "Who is my neighbor?" be pondered only at the personal level by individuals who elect to voluntarily support worthy charities? Or are there social ethics and public policy implications to be derived from the Samaritan's experience on the Jericho road? How ought one—and one's nation—operationalize the biblical adage, "Unto whom much is given, much is required?" Ought the implications of this biblical admonition hold implications for such public policy issues as tax plans? Foreign aid? Domestic initiatives?

> *"Our children and our children's children each day face the tugging—indeed tearing—issues of social ethics and public policy no less than issues relating to personal ethics and individual response."*

Or with regard to related economic issues: What lessons do we learn from laissez-faire and non-holds-barred capitalism in this nation's early years? Is the phrase "distribution of wealth" merely a tired phrase that was buried with the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? To what extent ought wealth to be distributed at the local, national, and global levels? Are there more perils than promise in the moving force of globalization? How may sustainable development become a reality in the "two-thirds world?"

Or in terms of health and/or medicine: Is health care a privilege? A fight? Or other? The questions here multiply exponentially—questions which the Center is effectively probing. What ought our response be in the face of those knotty questions surrounding such issues as stem cell research, voluntary euthanasia, human cloning, and abortion?

The town of Loma Linda of the 1950s—that town virtually void of voting booths, freeways, minorities, and sin—is no more. Freeway traffic abounds. The town has incorporated and includes an impressive city hall with council members having taken their seats through the voting process. Orange groves

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have given way to the various components that comprise Loma Linda University and health sciences complex, including the Center. Annual conferences, many initiated by the Center, have wrestled with global issues ranging from portfolio divestment policies to the new genetics to ethics at the edges of life.

Further, the town of Loma Linda begins the twenty-first century being one of the most nationally and ethnically diverse communities of professionals in Southern California. We no longer look alike—nor do we necessarily vote alike. Congregations which have sprouted up within or near the city limits cater to first and second generation ethnic and national groupings, including Hispanics, African Americans, Indonesians, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, and Romanians. The town's official borders now also include St. Joseph the Worker Church, the Christian community that produced that Irish son of Massachusetts who won the presidency in the 1960 election. (At least one holdover from the 1950s does remain, however; the mail continues to be delivered on Sunday rather than Saturday.)

Where to go from here? That question was both posed and answered by distinguished professor of history of American religions Martin Marty in his introduction to the volume under consideration.

> "[A] non-Adventist reader coming upon these interpretations is reasonably tempted to say that the case is so well made that an 'Introduction' allows for some projection into future explorations. For me, the proposal would be on these lines: in this volume, Adventists have mingled their heritage to unearth the basics of an ethos that effectively melds personal and social concern. Now, it's time to move further. Next on the agenda might be the question, 'How does Adventist personal-social ethical thought relate to life in a *republic* and how to live in the larger church?'" (p. xiii)

In short, Dr. Marty invites the Center to build upon papers being presented in various center-supported conferences to publish volume two: What are the implications of these themes as the Adventist faith community sees itself in relation to other faith traditions functioning as the salt of the earth in the structures of the world which God so loved that he sent His Son to save?

Venerable Harvard Divinity School ethicist James Luther Adams could only agree with Dr. Marty's invitation that Adventist ethicists now go beyond theological themes and work on knotty contemporary issues of social ethics and public policy. For as Dr. Adams guided generations of seminarians and would-be religious studies scholars while introducing them to such pioneering thinkers as Troeltsch, Weber, Durkheim, the Niebuhrs, Otto, Lehman and their intellectual offspring, he would tug at the two sides of his vest and declare with some vigor: "Personal ethics and social ethics are indeed of one piece of cloth." ■

***Charles W. Teel Jr., PhD,** is professor of religion and society at La Sierra University, Riverside. Dr. Teel is a well published author with research interests in religion, society, and Christian ethics. He also serves as director of the Stahl Center for World Service located on the campus of La Sierra University.*

Seventh-day Adventists, Social Policy, and Social Ethics

Robert W. Gardner, PhD

Professor and chair, social policy and social research

Graduate School, Loma Linda University

In 1995 the Center for Christian Bioethics at Loma Linda University published a small book of essays titled *Remnant and Republic: Adventist Themes for Personal and Social Ethics*. In the Preface Charles Teel Jr. writes that for these Seventh-day Adventist scholars "the traditional 'landmarks' of remnant, creation, covenant, sanctuary, Sabbath, law, salvation, wholeness, millennium, and second coming" are intended to make a difference "not only in the realm of personal piety, but also in the arena of public policy;

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not only in the life of the remnant, but also in the life of the republic" (p. x).

The publication of this book marks an important transition in the relationship of sectarian Adventism to the "world." Thoughtful Adventists should read and discuss these essays. Current major Adventist thinkers are joining the larger public conversation about how we should live, and they seem to be ready to do so more openly and fully than Adventist intellectuals have usually been willing to do. These Adventist teachers are helping to bring the Adventist church into a fuller integration with American society that, until recently, church leadership had not been entirely happy about. Traditional Adventist theology should no longer foster a "lifeboat" ethic of social abandonment but should be used as a statement of value and purpose for a social ethic of civic engagement and social transformation. Church leadership has recognized these same needs and is also changing.

In an address to church leaders titled "The Theological Landscape," Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, spoke clearly about the remnant and republic. Civic involvement in matters of the common good is part of the Adventist mission in the world. In the section titled "Involvement with Society," Dr. Paulsen describes the Adventist mission in new ways.

> "It has been noted that on occasion I have spoken publicly about the need for our members and our church as an organization to seek to make an impact on society in matters of social care, welfare, health, education—and yes, even government and politics. In some countries we are a community of such a size that public officials and leaders of government (as well as the media) are open and even eager to know what we as a church stand for on a spread of issues, such as liberties, protection of personal rights and freedom, a nonviolent peaceful environment, law and order have high value to any society of human beings.
>
> "I have made and continue to make it a point to affirm in public that as a church we have a responsibility to become engaged in the public agenda and to speak out on these matters that shape the life of the local community. And I have repeatedly asked of our people, 'Is your village, your town, your country better because you are there?' I see it as a failure if the answer is that our presence makes no difference.
>
> "And so I am asked, and it is a fair question, 'Are we detecting in you a shift in vision and focus away from the straight preaching of the Word to some kind of "social gospel?'
>
> "The answer is no. Our understanding of the Word and of our doctrines, particularly as formulated in all 27 fundamental beliefs is clear, and our obligation to preach them is equally clear. There is no shift away from anything in this respect, but it is an underscoring of an additional responsibility that we have as a community, the reality of which is in direct relationship to the increase in the size of our church."

We have a responsibility to God and our fellow human beings to make a better town, a better city, a better county, a better world out of the one in which we are now living! This has to do with the environment. It has to do with peace and security. It has to do with education and health. It has to do with the future of our children. It has to do with ethics and morality. For this is also God's kingdom, and it is the arena in which all of our lives are currently being shaped. In my view, it is a failure of Christian citizenship for the church not to become involved as a factor for good in its local environment" (pp. 36-37).

More than ever, Adventists are now encouraging each other to participate in public conversations about social and political issues which impact the world in which we live. Winds of change are blowing across the Adventist church, and they provide encouragement to the ethicists, social scientists, attorneys and others who are involved in the social and political issues of our society.

Four years after the publication of *Remnant and Republic*, the Loma Linda University Board approved a new PhD program in social policy and social research. For the first time, an Adventist university would provide doctoral preparation for individuals to carry out social policy analysis. Up until now, Adventist higher education has displayed limited interest in social science and social policy, and there is no established Adventist tradition of social involvement to build upon.

Loma Linda University offered a master's degree in sociology and anthropology for about twenty years, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, but that degree was discontinued. Economics and political science received even less attention in Adventist higher education. From this tradition of minimal interest in the social sciences, then, several questions arise: How can LLU offer doctoral level study with such limited social science resources? How will LLU students and faculty study social policy? How will LLU distinguish itself as a center for social policy analysis? What policy issues will LLU scholars address?

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Adventists, social ethics and social policy, continued…

The new social policy program at LLU is designed to prepare individuals who will be knowledgeable in the ethical and political nature of social institutions and how to change them. The theoretical framework guiding the program is described by Robert Bellah and his colleagues in their book *The Good Society*. In the appendix is an appeal for a new and different approach to policy studies than is generally provided in higher education, and the LLU program intends to do just that.

Four objectives guide the study of public philosophy, social policy, and social research in the LLU program:

1. The study of social policy will focus on understanding institutions, not individuals.

2. Social institutions are normative or moral structures, and the study of social policy requires ethical analysis and moral evaluation.

3. Moral evaluation results in recommendation for significant reform of institutions seen as flawed or damaged.

4. The study of social policy includes preparation for public conversation, democratic decision-making, and social action.

Being guided by these four objectives requires considerable reorientation of our thinking. The social and behavioral sciences have well-developed research methods for studying individuals, but institutions are hard to see and understand. Even though several exemplary studies of institutions exist, they are not the norm. Different methods of inquiry and analysis are needed, and LLU faculty and doctoral students will participate in a revival of the study of institutions using these new methods.

This direction also requires a stronger commitment to an understanding of theology, law, history, and philosophy, and therefore, social research at LLU will not be satisfied with the common survey design and statistical analysis of the results. Even qualitative research using in-depth interviews and observations does not necessarily provide for institutional analysis. Bellah et al. suggest that the

> "intensive study of an institution may begin with formal codes but requires one to immerse oneself in how an institution works, to read widely both scholarly studies and the writings of practitioners in the area, and to interact with the participants. It almost certainly also involves a deep concern with the moral meaning of the institution and a willingness to make judgements about the justice and injustice of institutional arrangements." (p. 303)

"More than ever, Adventists are now encouraging each other to participate in public conversations about social and political issues which impact the world in which we live."

The study of social policy at LLU will be descriptive and normative and include careful observation, ethical analysis, and moral evaluation. This commitment examines the laws, policies, and regulations of our public and private organizations. It seeks to understand the history and development of traditional patterns of behavior. It also includes the informal patterns or mores that regulate most of a citizen's daily life. In addition, such study of social policy includes an understanding of the core problems of institutions. This kind of analysis requires critical reflection on the current state of affairs and a willingness to recommend significant reform for institutions that are dysfunctional or morally flawed.

Finally, the study of social policy recognizes that institutional problems are fundamentally moral and political in nature. Scientific and technical policy analysis cannot replace public conversation and democratic decision making and social action. Christian citizenship and leadership are stressed as important characteristics of the LLU graduate. As a result of their focused study on institutions and social policy, LLU graduates will find themselves engaged in community activities and legislative discussions of the common good.

Although the program is just three years old, the work of two students illustrates what we intend to do at LLU. Christiane Schubert came to the program with a background in microbiology and biochemistry and a master's degree in criminal justice. She did original research and analysis of the use of DNA evidence in courts. At LLU she is developing a framework utilizing the biblical and civic traditions for restorative justice to analyze civil case law. She is immersing herself in the institutions of law and medicine to understand how we think about and act on medical errors. Clearly the institutional patterns surrounding the way we resolve these tragedies are flawed. Good

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descriptive analysis and moral evaluation of this dilemma are needed at this critical juncture.

George Dzimiri, a student from Zimbabwe, has a background in business management and economic development programs. He holds an MBA and did research on food security as part of the work for another master's degree in international development. His work at LLU focuses on developing a framework which articulates the biblical roots of global and developmental ethics. The economics and politics of development are primarily normative structures, and he proposes to evaluate the value-orientations of international development programs. He will observe the way development agents work with recipients and evaluate the ethics of their decisions and actions. The enormous economic disparity between the market economies of donor countries such as the United States and the subsistence economies of Third World countries sets up tensions that challenge our biblical and ethical traditions. How can principles of respect and justice be implemented in the complex dynamics of an increasingly interdependent, multicultural world? Can Christians respond to HIV/AIDS, hunger, violence, and hatred in ways that are consistent with the teachings of Jesus?

These are just two examples of a growing number of policy research projects being developed at LLU. The university now has approved a combined degree in which students pursue

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The Dream, the Way, and the Self

Charles Scriven, PhD

President

Kettering College of Medical Arts

You have heard, perhaps, about the fellow who was traveling in the Ozarks and came to a general store. On the porch a hound dog was howling its head off. The traveler asked the man at the store why the dog was howling, and the man said, "Because he's sitting on a thistle."

The traveler said, "Why doesn't the dog sit somewhere else?"

The reply came back: "Because he'd rather howl."

Before Abraham, human beings thought nothing new—nothing really new—could ever happen. Their stories were long complaints about a fate that was written in the stars and could not be changed. You might say they howled—and never got off the thistle.

That would be unfair—they were inventive and resourceful—but what's true is that before Abraham human beings felt they could not make a truly important difference. They were trapped by the whims of the gods. The legendary hero of Sumer, the world's first civilization, was Gilgamesh, and he in the end doubted whether there was any point in exerting yourself. "You only fill your flesh," he said, "with grief."

Abraham lived under the sway of Sumerian culture. It was centuries after Gilgamesh, but the sense of life's basic pointlessness was still commonplace. Nevertheless, Abraham (first simply Abram) heard a voice telling him it was time to get off the thistle. God came to him, according to Genesis 12, and said: "'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing…; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went…"

For the first time a dream of something new—something radically new—took hold of a man and his family. Given the context, no words could have been bolder than these: "So Abram went…" He embraced the idea that he could escape his fate and make a journey to a new world. He began to think not only that he could expect blessings, but that he could, himself, be a blessing. He would establish a people who would be a blessing for…everyone: in him, God had said, "All the families of the earth shall be blessed."

John Lennon sang, "Imagine all the people / Living life in peace." He added, "You may say I'm a dreamer / But I'm not the only one." He wasn't the only one. He was intoning a legacy that reaches back to Abraham. The dream of universal blessing—universal peace—exploded into life with his response to a summons that from then on has crackled like lightning across night.

The prophets who followed Abraham expanded on the dream. God's promise, Ezekiel said, was a "covenant of peace." The blessing would mean food, freedom and safety—general well-being—for all. God's people, it is true, would bear undeserved hard-

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ship and pain, but even their wounds, said the author of Isaiah's servant songs, would have healing effect. The covenant of peace would remain, and in the end the people would bring ruin to repair—"raise up the former devastations," restore the "ruined cities."

Jesus was a dreamer, too. At his home synagogue on the Sabbath, he rolled out his own mission with words taken from the prophets. "My work," he said, is "to bring good news to the poor…release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind;" it is "to let the oppressed go free."

What Jesus said recalled the angel song "and on earth peace." And when he had gathered followers and begun teaching them, he summoned them to share his ministry and mission—his dream of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers," he said, "for they will be called children of God."

The dream of peace—blessing for all nations; well-being for all people—has always irritated kings and despots and those who, by luck and labor, and often by violence, acquire the most wealth and power. Some of Jesus' own townspeople seized him that Sabbath day and tried, so Luke tells us, to throw him off a cliff.

The dream energizes some, drives some to distraction. But it is still the dream—the dream of Abraham, the prophets and Jesus. It is the dream, too, of those who follow Jesus.

Roy Branson says, in words published in *Update*, that the dream's broad sweep touches the world of bioethics. Inspired by the Apocalypse of John, he tells us the dream invites special interest in "the vulnerable and oppressed," those who lack the peace that is meant for all. Then he says that, besides the longstanding focus on virtues and quandaries associated with the caregiver-patient relationship, Christian bioethics should look for the larger threats to human health. It should examine the health impact of blindness and greed in companies and governments and other groups or institutions, and it should call these bodies to account. Besides this, Christian bioethics should look for—should imagine and recommend—the larger solutions to systemic dysfunction. The challenge is meeting human need and enhancing human health. The dream, meant to ignite our passion even as it seems beyond our reach, is for what he calls "a luminous city of health and harmony…"

This dream makes the mission large. What is the way to achieve it?

The Bible gives no easy answer. But it is a fairly simple one.

You get off the thistle. You establish a community that is responsive to the God of Abraham and Jesus. You instill God's vision of universal blessing, universal peace. You shape minds and hearts for peacemaking. Though you have questions and bear wounds and put up with disappointments, and though your goal seems impossibly far in front of you, you do the work, you trust God for success.

All that is the way. All that comes through in the stories of Abraham and his descendants.

Among the achievements of these descendants was the invention of sympathy for underdogs, and of institutions, including the hospital itself, to care for the poor and the sick. The persons in these stories were remarkable in attitude and habit. In 390 A.D., Fabiola, a woman convert to Christianity founded a hospital for the sick poor of Rome. Her teacher, St. Jerome, said that he often saw her "washing wounds which others—even men [!]—could hardly bear to look at…." She gathered in her hospital, he went on, "the sufferers from the streets" and often "carried home, on her own shoulders, the dirty and poor who were plagued by epilepsy!"

In *The New Yorker* I saw a cartoon of a man lounging on a beach chair, watching the surf. He was rich and smart and fully convinced, it appeared, of his own importance. Just beyond the breakers, a woman was thrashing about in a panic, on the verge of going under. The man was muttering to himself: "She's so high maintenance."

I saw another cartoon with rich old men in their exclusive downtown club sitting across from each other in leather chairs. Both were jowly and cheerless, and one said to the other: "I, too, tried to find a cause larger than myself. Fortunately, I never did." Both cartoons mock the me-first-I-can't-be-bothered frame of mind and both assume readers have seen it often. Not everyone is remarkable in habit and attitude the way Fabiola was. Not everyone will take the extra pains.

When Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, shouted for help as Jesus was passing out of Jericho, many of his followers brushed the poor man off. They could not be bothered, and didn't want Jesus to be bothered. And when Galen, the most famous physician in ancient Rome, learned that an epidemic had broken out in his city and was killing its inhabitants, he left for a country estate in Asia Minor, and stayed there until the epidemic was over and the danger passed.

The dream that began with Abraham—the dream of universal blessing, universal peace—calls for men and women remarkable in attitude and habit. They must know the goal. What is more difficult yet, they must have hearts and minds shaped for peacemaking, shaped for the long march to the goal. They must be willing to take extra pains, and ready to press on in spite of hardship, risk, and setback.

This need for remarkable persons is easy to forget, or play down. The Ronald Munson bioethics text called *Intervention and Reflection*, sold widely enough, as of the year 2000, to be in its sixth edition, provides what is a distressing example.

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The Dream, the Way and the Self, continued…

In Dr. Munson's book you choose between a principle-centered way of thinking about healthcare, and a virtue-centered way. The former helps you know what decisions to make in the face of bioethical dilemmas; the latter helps you know the kind of person you should try to become. But because, as Dr. Munson claims, "virtue ethics does not supply any clear way to resolve moral conflicts," the question of virtue has small relevance to him. After spending three pages (out of almost 900) describing and criticizing virtue ethics, Dr. Munson loses interest in it. Attention to what sort of person you should be simply fades from view.

Moral dilemmas—in bioethics, the familiar questions about medical futility, informed consent, genetic intervention and the like—are real; they are difficult and they require attention. But if you never make the point that it is persons who decide, that decisions about moral quandaries are themselves an expression of character, you put the people who need health care at risk. You can't count on a person of bad or mediocre character to take the action that best meets human need. Someone with the me-first-I-can't-be-bothered frame of mind will do little or nothing for the dream of universal blessing and peace. What if Abraham had been a coward, or lazy, or resigned to his fate? What if he had been greedy to the core, or seething with ethnic hatred? He would never have run a great risk. He would never have gone out from his father's house expecting blessings and expecting to be a blessing. He would never, in the phrase from John Lennon, have imagined "all the people / Living life in peace."

> *The dream that began with Abraham—the dream of universal blessing, universal peace—calls for men and women remarkable in attitude and habit.*

Imagine a white man with no sympathy or kindness deciding whether to work on syphilis research that will involve lying to black males. Imagine a man of privilege and no compassion deciding whether a society should bear the cost of health care for the poorest of the poor. If it's persons who make decisions, then the kind of persons they are—the minds and hearts they have—is surely fundamental. But even though it's fundamental, it's easy to forget.

In the same *Update* article I mentioned before, Roy Branson reviews the beginnings of bioethics. Andre Hellegers, who coined the term "bioethics" in the late 1960s, focused his attention on the virtues—the capacity for care—of the individual physician. Dr. Branson's point is that bioethics should attend not only to the caregiver-patient relationship but also to problems and solutions that may, in the healthcare arena, advance the dream of universal peace. His account shows that even though questions about the quality of the self may easily slip out of view, they nevertheless have played a role in the development of bioethics.

But Dr. Branson does not ask how the wider vision he espouses may call us to new interest in the person, in the quality of selfhood, the ethics of virtue. If you attend to the larger threats to human health, and to the larger solutions, you end up wondering not only what steps to take but also how far to extend your reach. According to the dream of universal peace, your reach should extend to all the families of the earth. Who is likely to think and act in this way?

Not the self-satisfied rich guy at the beach. Not the jowly man at the club. Not the disciples outside of Jericho. Not Galen in his safe retreat from epidemic.

Then who? It would have to be a certain kind of person, someone who knows and feels the universal vision. H. Richard Niebuhr said that under the God of Abraham moral responsibility means fully acknowledging the presence of other selves; it means letting their lives, words and deeds address and challenge us. If you are responsible, you attend to the full significance of what is going on. You proceed in a manner befitting the "total interaction." And you find your integrity in devotion to the God who values all.

Ellen White said the best people are those who cast their lives, like seed, into the "furrow" of human need. She said that everyone belongs to "the great web of humanity," and that a deed of mercy done to any is a deed of mercy done to Christ. For her, Christ was universal. She would have embraced, I think, the lovely words of Kathleen Norris, who said that when she meets a person in need she is "looking into the face of Christ. And Christ is looking back at me."

These writers identify with human feeling. Their hearts tremble, or so it seems, with sympathy for others, a sympathy that aims to be inclusive, and connects the dream of univer-

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sal peace with their own feelings and their own desires.

It is inclusive sympathy that the beach guy, the jowly man, the stunted disciples and the retreating Galen seem wholly to lack. And their lack makes the point. If you don't attend to the self, don't focus on virtue as well as vision, you won't have any people to follow the way. And of course, if you don't have the people to follow the way—the people with minds and hearts for peacemaking—you put the dream itself at risk.

Education of the heart is critical in bioethics. This may seem obvious, but as the Dr. Munson text reveals, it is not obvious to all. So it must be said repeatedly that the education of the heart is critical for the care of patients and critical for resolving the dilemmas of the caregiver-patient relationship in ways that meet human need. Exactly to the point, it is critical for finding the large-scale healthcare solutions that can bring universal blessing and universal peace.

But if I say the education of the heart is important, I do not say it is easy. In a moving passage from Mitch Albom's bestselling *Tuesdays with Morrie*, the author listens to his dying teacher explain why he still reads the paper, still cares what happens in the world.

"Maybe I shouldn't care. After all, I won't be around to see how it all turns out.

"But it's hard to explain, Mitch. Now that I'm suffering, I feel closer to people who suffer than I ever did before. The other night, on TV, I saw people in Bosnia running across the street, getting fired upon, killed, innocent victims…and I just started to cry. I feel their anguish as if it were my own.'"

A few lines later Mitch Albom wonders whether death isn't "the one big thing that can finally make strangers shed a tear for one another." He thus reminds us—reminds me, at least—that, according to Scripture, Jesus himself "learned obedience through what he suffered."

Education of the heart takes a long, long time, far longer than any course or curriculum. But then, if you are a descendant of Abraham you do the work even when the goal seems impossibly far in front of you.

You trust God—and you do the work. You ponder and teach the ethics of virtue in order to shape a community that will follow the way. And you shape a community that follows the way so that the dream—of all the people living life in peace—has, by God's grace, a chance. ■

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A Seventh-day Adventist call for peace

This statement was voted during the spring meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee on April 18, 2002 in Silver Spring, Maryland.

We are living in an increasingly unstable and dangerous world. Recent events have resulted in a heightened sense of vulnerability and personal or corporate fear of violence. Throughout the world, countless millions are haunted by war and apprehension and are oppressed by hate and intimidation.

Total war

Humanity has, since the middle of the last century, been living in an age of total war. Total war implies the theoretical possibility that, except for the providence of God, earth's inhabitants could wipe out their entire civilization. Nuclear weapons and biochemical arms of mass destruction are aimed at centers of population. Whole nations and societies are mobilized or targeted for war, and when such war erupts it is carried on with the greatest violence and destruction. The justification of war has become more complex, even though advances in technology make possible greater precision in destroying targets with a minimum of civilian casualties.

A new dimension

While both the United Nations and various religious bodies have proclaimed the first decade of the 21st century as a decade for the promotion of peace and security in the place of violence in its various forms, a new and insidious dimension of violence has emerged: organized international terrorism. Terrorism itself is not new, but worldwide terrorist networks are. Another new factor is the appeal to so-called divine mandates as the rationale for terrorist activity under the guise of culture war, or even "religious" war.

The rise of international terrorism makes it clear that it is not only a nation or state that makes war, but human beings in various combinations. As one of the leading founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church pointed out a century ago, "The inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin."[1] Indeed, human nature is prone to violence. From a Christian perspective, all this inhumanity is really part of a cosmic war, the great controversy between good and evil.

Terrorism exploits the concept of God

Terrorists, in particular those having motivations based on religion, claim that their cause is absolute and that taking lives indiscriminately is fully justified. While they claim to be representing the justice of God, they wholly fail to represent the great love of God.

Furthermore, such international terrorism is totally at odds with the concept of religious liberty. The former is based on political and/or religious extremism and fundamentalistic fanaticism which arrogate the right to impose a certain religious conviction or worldview and to destroy those who oppose their convictions. Imposing one's religious views on other people, by means of inquisition and terror, involves an endeavor to exploit and manipulate God by turning Him into an idol of evil and violence. The result is a disregard for the dignity of human beings created in the image of God.

While it is inevitable that nations and people will try to defend themselves by responding in a military way to violence and terror—which sometimes results in short-term success—lasting answers to deep problems of division in society cannot be achieved by using violent means.

The pillars of peace

From both a Christian and practical perspective, any lasting peace involves at least four ingredients: dialogue, justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

- ***Dialogue***—There needs to be dialogue and discussion in place of diatribe and the cry for war. Lasting peace does not result from violent means, but is achieved by negotiation, dialogue, and, inevitably, political compromise. In the long run, reasoned discourse has superior authority over military force. In particular, Christians should always be ready to "reason together," as the Bible says.
- ***Justice***—Unfortunately, the world is rampant with injustice and a fallout of injustice is strife. Justice and peace join hands, as do injustice and war. Poverty and exploitation breed discontent and hopelessness, which lead to desperation and violence. On the other hand, "God's word sanctions no policy that will enrich one class by the oppression and suffering of another."[2]

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Justice requires respect for human rights, in particular religious liberty which deals with the profoundest human aspirations and undergirds all human rights. Justice requires nondiscrimination, respect for human dignity and equality, and a more equitable distribution of the necessities of life. Economic and social policies will either produce peace or discontent. Seventh-day Adventist concern for social justice is expressed through the support and promotion of religious liberty, and through organizations and departments of the Church which work to relieve poverty and conditions of marginalization. Such efforts on the part of the Church can, over time, reduce resentment and terrorism.

- ***Forgiveness***—Forgiveness is usually thought of as necessary to heal broken interpersonal relationships. It is highlighted in the prayer Jesus asked His followers to pray (Matt. 6:12). However, we must not overlook the corporate, societal, and even international dimensions. If there is to be peace, it is vital to drop the burdens of the past, to move beyond well-worn battle grounds, and to work toward reconciliation. At a minimum, this requires overlooking past injustices and violence; and, at its best, it involves forgiveness which absorbs the pain without retaliating. Because of sinful human nature and the resulting violence, some form of forgiveness is necessary in order to break the vicious cycle of resentment, hate, and revenge on all levels. Forgiveness goes against the grain of human nature. It is natural for human beings to deal in terms of revenge and the return of evil for evil. There is, therefore, first of all the need to foster a culture of forgiveness in the Church. As Christians and church leaders, it is our duty to help individuals and nations to liberate themselves from the shackles of past violence and refuse to reenact year after year, and even generation after generation, the hatred and violence generated by past experiences.
- ***Reconciliation***—Forgiveness provides a foundation for reconciliation and the accompanying restoration of relationships that have become estranged and hostile. Reconciliation is the only way to success on the road to cooperation, harmony, and peace. We call upon Christian churches and leaders to exercise a ministry of reconciliation and act as ambassadors of goodwill, openness, and forgiveness. (See 2 Cor. 5:17-19.) This will always be a difficult, sensitive task. While trying to avoid the many political pitfalls along the way, we must nevertheless proclaim liberty in the land—liberty from persecution, discrimination, abject poverty, and other forms of injustice. It is a Christian responsibility to endeavor to provide protection for those who are in danger of being violated, exploited, and terrorized.

Support of quality of life

Silent efforts of religious bodies and individuals behind the scenes are invaluable. But this is not enough: "We are not just creatures of a spiritual environment. We are actively interested in everything that shapes the way we live and we are concerned about the well-being of our planet." The Christian ministry of reconciliation will and must "contribute to the restoration of human dignity, equality, and unity through the grace of God in which human beings see each other as members of the family of God."[3]

Churches should not only be known for spiritual contributions—though these are foundational—but also for their support of quality of life, and in this connection peacemaking is essential. We need to repent from expressions or deeds of violence that Christians and churches, throughout history and even more recently, have either been involved in as actors, have tolerated, or have tried to justify. We appeal to Christians and people of goodwill all around the world to take an active role in making and sustaining peace, thus being part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Peacemakers

The Seventh-day Adventist Church wishes to stand for the uncoercive harmony of God's coming kingdom. This requires bridge-building to promote reconciliation between the various sides in a conflict. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, "You will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell" (Is. 58:12). Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, wants His followers to be peacemakers in society and hence calls them blessed (Matt. 5:9).

Culture of peace through education

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates what may be the second largest worldwide parochial school system. Each of its more than 6,000 schools, colleges, and universities is being asked to set aside one week each school year to emphasize and highlight, through various programs, respect, cultural awareness, nonviolence, peacemaking, conflict resolution, and reconciliation as a way of making a specifically "Adventist" contribution to a culture of social harmony and peace. With this in mind, the Church's education department is preparing curricula and other materials to help in implementing this peace program.

The education of the church member in the pew, for non-

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A Seventh-day Adventist call for peace, continued…

violence, peace, and reconciliation, needs to be an ongoing process. Pastors are being asked to use their pulpits to proclaim the gospel of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation which dissolves barriers created by race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and religion, and promotes peaceful human relations between individuals, groups, and nations.

The Christian hope

While peacemaking may seem to be a forbidding task, there is the promise and possibility of transformation through renewal. All violence and terrorism are really one aspect of the ongoing controversy, in theological terms, between Christ and Satan. The Christian has hope because of the assurance that evil—the mystery of iniquity—will run its course and be conquered by the Prince of Peace and the world will be made new. This is our hope.

The Old Testament, despite the record of wars and violence, looks forward to the new creation and promises, like the New Testament, the end of the vicious cycle of war and terror, when arms will disappear and become agricultural implements, and peace and knowledge of God and His love will cover the whole world like the waters cover the oceans. (See Is. 2:4, 11:9.)

In the meantime, we need, in all relationships, to follow the golden rule, which asks us to do unto others as we would wish them to do unto us (see Matt. 7:12), and not only love God, but love as God loves. (See 1 John 3:14, 15; 4:11, 20, 21.)

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1. Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 163
2. Ibid, p. 187
3. Quote from Pastor Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist

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Adventists, social ethics and social policy, continued…

both an MA in bioethics and the PhD in social policy. The curriculum is integrated so that students are able to complete the combined degree more efficiently than if they did the degrees independently. Graduates of this combined degree program will have an even stronger background in ethical studies.

With the addition of these programs in social policy and research, LLU is entering a new phase of its tradition of purposeful education. Consistent with its mission to make man and nature whole is a renewed sense of global responsibility for God's broken world. Students, graduates, and faculty will increasingly participate in the public conversations and democratic decisions that create our shared institutions. Vigorous Christian citizens committed to our Adventist traditions and a life of civic involvement and public discourse will make a difference, as President Jan Paulsen has urged us to do. Adventist biblical themes provide substance for an important voice that needs to be heard as we grapple with the challenges facing our communities. These Adventist themes are a constant reminder that our mission lies beyond our own sectarian boundaries. They are a call to do all we can to create a "good society."

We find ourselves in a complex, confusing, and dangerous world. We cannot live together responsibly if we cannot trust each other, and we can not trust those we do not know. Can Jews trust Christians after the holocaust? Can Muslims trust Jews after the establishment of the state of Israel? Can Adventists trust Catholics? Can blacks and hispanics trust whites? Can the poor trust the rich and powerful? Can the sick trust the doctors and nurses? Can the creatures of the field trust the owners of the field?

Bellah and his colleagues put it this way. "When we care only about what Tocqueville called 'the little circle of our family and friends' or only about people with skin the same color as ours, we are certainly not acting responsibly to create a good national society. When we care only about our own nation, we do not contribute much to a good world society. When we care only about human beings, we do not treat the natural world with the respect it deserves" (p. 285).

Now is the time to discover and emphasize our place in a larger family of God and our connections to all people and all of God's creation. As we sense the tension, anger and distrust between its global members, we realize that trust and peace, like faith, are gifts from God. Adventism at its best will provide us with a setting of thankfulness and celebration for these gifts from the God we are called to follow and to serve. ■

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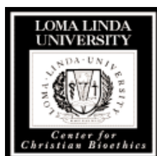

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