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LIBERTY

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From The Editor

[A while ago I asked one of my favorite writers, Richard Utt, to do an article on the Geoscience Research Institute's efforts to validate scientific creationism. A few weeks later I received the following response.—R.R.H.]

Dear R.R.H.:

I thought you were my friend. After you left, it began to sink in what you had done to me, and what I had agreed to me.

Intelligent readers, such as those of *Liberty*, consider creationism outmoded and irrelevant. They don't have time to waste reading what interests them let alone what doesn't. To them, creationists are people who fight science, pound pulpits with Bibles, and send offerings to Jimmy Swaggart and Oral Roberts.

If I write with a lot of precise jargon, I myself will fall asleep and be unable to finish the writing. If I should finish it, the reader, if any, will go to sleep.

If I write interestingly, sensationally, with liberal use of terms like "Monkey Trial," and call evolutionists infidels, and predict that when they die they will go somewhere hotter than Loma Linda in September, you will refuse to print the article.

So I have decided to go against my lifelong practice of keeping my word, and I am refusing to write what I promised to write.

However, I am enclosing a copy of my *attempt* to write it, so you can see that I tried. Being more able in chemistry than journalism, I have prepared a glass of potassium cyanide solution. If you don't print the article I will drink the potion because of my heartache over wasted effort. If you do print it, I'll take my drink because I can't stand the



Richard H. Utt

humiliation of having anyone read it.

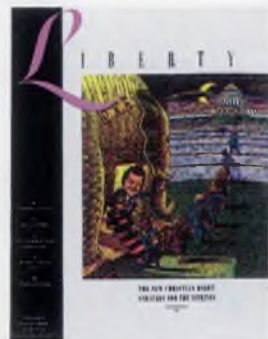
RICHARD H. UTT
Loma Linda, California

[Shall Richard drink up? Since I'm printing his article, your vote on the merits of his humiliation may be definitive. Let me know.—R.R.H.]

From Our Readers

"The New Christian Right: Strategy for the Nineties"

After reading this article by Clifford Goldstein (November-December 1992), I was left with the distinct impression that the author believes evangelicals have no right to participate in the democratic



process or to press their points of view in the public square.

The Constitution gives citizens, no matter what their political or religious persuasion, the freedom to participate in the public life of America. That same freedom to address issues and to organize people to influence public policy extends to everyone including evangelicals like Ron Sider, Jim Wallis, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson.

No, Mr. Goldstein, evangelicals are not more dangerous in the 1990s. We're a diverse group with a lot of divergent viewpoints on a variety of issues. We don't march in lockstep with Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson or anyone else. We're like most other Americans who believe they have the right to organize and articulate their viewpoints in the public square of American life. ROBERT J. MAYER, Editor *Advent Christian Witness* Charlotte, North Carolina

[Of course evangelicals can be involved in the democratic process. But so can I. And

part of my involvement, for now at least (I haven't received word from the Lord to run for public office—yet), is to point out dangers to religious liberty.

The problem with the evangelicals (I mean the New Right politicized brand) is not so much their methods—though they have been at times, shall we say, hardly Christlike—but their overt hostility to the wall of separation of church and state. They show no understanding of the principles of the nonestablishment of religion. They continually mislabel every attempt to keep church and state separate as “hostility” toward religion. And what's even worse, is that they do all this in the name of Christ, which, however egregious, is their First Amendment right (guaranteed and protected by the perfidious wall of separation).

I agree, too, that not all evangelicals “march in lockstep” to Robertson and Falwell, at least not now. But Robertson doesn't need them all. He needs just enough to vote in his agenda, which—despite whatever good it possesses—is ruined by the unrepentant hostility to church-state separation. And that is dangerous.—C.G.]

“Verbal Toxic Waste”

More years ago than I care to admit it was my good fortune to be the college roommate of Roland Hegstad.

I cherish the memory. There is another thing that I remember. Roland was a Democrat on a campus largely Republican.

As I read his editorial (November-December 1992), I wondered whether a little Democratic bias was not mixed in. I am concerned about the tone of the editorial. Is it possible that the sentence “such defamatory hyperbole is nothing less than toxic waste” is just a little too acerbic? Will Pat Buchanan be able to discern a concern for his soul's salvation in this message? It also seems to me that Dr. Richard V. Pierard errs on the side of judging motives when he declares “Probably never had a president so consciously exploited public religiosity to rally a divided nation behind him as was done during the

Gulf war” (see November-December, page 6).

DONALD E. CASEBOLT,
M.D.

Farmington, New Mexico

I must register an objection to your editorial “Verbal Toxic Waste.” Characterizing the statement of the Clinton agenda by Patrick Buchanan as “charges” and asking if “anyone in his right mind” believes them is tendentious in the extreme.

Let us examine the points in the editorial as it quotes Buchanan: “the ‘agenda Clinton and Clinton would impose on America—abortion on demand, a litmus test for the Supreme Court, homosexual rights, discrimination against religious schools women in combat...” Mr. Clinton supports current legislation that guarantees

every woman an abortion (taxpayer-funded if necessary). This is abortion on demand by any definition.

Mr. Clinton has further promised that he will not appoint a Supreme Court justice unless that person is firmly supportive of “a woman's right to choose.” Is this not a litmus test?

Mr. Clinton publicly supports a gay rights agenda on the city, state, and federal level. He proposes to make those choosing the gay lifestyle a protected class under the civil rights laws of this nation.

Mr. Clinton is on record as opposing tuition money for parents who rebel against the philosophical humanism, New Age “paganism” and sexual liberalism currently infiltrating many public schools. This is discrimination against the children of religious parents who wish to teach their own values to their children without having the schools undermine their efforts.

I am a strong partisan of accuracy and fair play. To conflate Mr. Buchanan's justifiable and correct observations with the “defamatory hyperbole” quoted from Mr. Gingrich appears to be a disservice to the truth and to your readers.
EARL M. J. AAGAARD
Angwin, California

Insightful

I found the articles on Christopher Columbus in your September-October

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The God-given right of religious liberty is best exercised when church and state are separate.

Government is God's agency to protect individual rights and to conduct civil affairs; in exercising these responsibilities, officials are entitled to respect and cooperation.

Religious liberty entails freedom of conscience: to worship or not to worship; to profess, practice and promulgate religious beliefs or to change them. In exercising these rights, however, one must respect the equivalent rights of all others.

Attempts to unite church and state are opposed to the interests of each, subversive of human rights and potentially persecuting in character; to oppose union, lawfully and honorably, is not only the citizen's duty but the essence of the Golden rule—to treat others as one wishes to be treated.

issue to be especially insightful and uniformly worth my time to read.

Rev. GEORGE S. RIGBY
Stroudsburg United Methodist Church
Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

"The Earth Is Our Mother"

[In the September-October 1992 *Liberty* we published this article attributed to Chief Seattle, a famous Native American orator in the 1800s. Following are samples of letters we received from readers correcting our mistake. Following the letters is an excerpt from *Newsweek*.—Ed.]

On page 31 of your September-October issue you printed an article which claims to be a speech by Chief Seattle. I am enclosing an article from the May 4, 1992, *Newsweek*, page 68. The speech you printed was actually written by a Hollywood screenwriter named Ted Perry in a 1972 film about ecology.
ARNOLD L. BRACY, Pastor
Calvary Bible Church
Lapeer, Michigan

I have always enjoyed the balance and truthfulness in *Liberty's* articles. For that reason, I am appalled that your editorial staff fell for the old Chief Seattle scam.

If you had checked, you would have discovered that this alleged speech has been exposed as a fraud by scholars many times. That it persists at

all is due to a failure by editorial boards such as yours to diligently examine what is presented to you for publication.

WILLIAM D. CRAMER,
Attorney
Burns, Oregon

I am grateful to see your journal giving attention to matters of Native American dignity. I would, however, point out that the text you attribute to Chief Seattle is not a true ancient document. I would refer you to *Newsweek*, May 4, 1992.

I am surprised that *Native Life Ministries* from which you took this material did not know this by 1991.
JOHN H. YODER, Professor
Department of Theology
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

"Just Too Good To Be True: Another Reason To Beware Of False Eco-Prophets"

"Michael Her Many Horses remembers the first time he doubted Chief Seattle's famous speech about caring for the planet. It was a TV program about the Northwest rain forest. The narrator quoted the nineteenth-century Suquamish Native American's plea for living in harmony with nature. 'My reaction was that here's a guy that understood what the environment could provide for his people,' recalls Her Many Horses, executive

director of the Oglala Sioux tribe on the Pine Ridge, South Dakota Reservation. But somehow the chief's words didn't ring true. 'It made me feel good, but it seemed too perfect.'

"It is too perfect. Chief Seattle did give a speech in 1854, but he never said 'The earth is our mother.' He never said 'I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train.' The chief lived in the Pacific Northwest. He never saw a buffalo.

"Those oh-so-quotable quotes were written by a screenwriter named Ted Perry for *Home*, a 1972 film about ecology. Perry wanted Native American testimony on environmental problems, so he made up some eco-homilies and stuck them in Chief Seattle's mouth. Since then, the so-called Fifth Gospel speech has been widely quoted in books, on TV, and from the pulpit."—*Newsweek*, May 4, 1992, page 68.

On the News

An Alphabet Of Espionage And Exposure—The KGB, the WCC, and the RD

Did the KGB have "a plan to penetrate and manipulate the WCC (World Council of Churches)," as alleged in the February *Reader's Digest*?

Of course.

Were some "Orthodox priests who were WCC delegates . . . KGB agents

acting on Communist Party orders"?

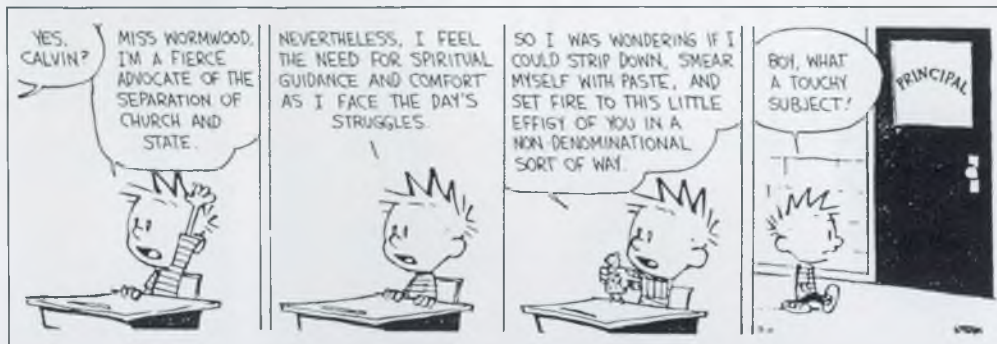
Yes. And also one layman, Alexei Sergeyevich Buevsky, of the church's Moscow Patriarchate Foreign Relations Department, who is a member of the council's central committee. Author of the *Digest's* article, senior editor Joseph A. Harriss, attributed Buevsky's identification to Gleb Yakunin, a well-known Orthodox dissident during Communist years, who now serves as deputy of the Russian Supreme Soviet's Commission on Freedom of Religion.

Also identified in the newsletter of the Institute for Freedom and Democracy (IFD) as KGB agents were such high-ranking members of the Russian Orthodox Church as Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Metropolitan Pitrim of Volokolamsky, whose respective code names were allegedly "Antonov" and "Abbat."

The IFD article, co-authored by the institute's Russian affairs expert Kent R. Hill, also cites KGB archives as its source but adds a significant caveat: "Agent can mean anything from a paid operative to a reluctant informer." The article adds that the label "does not necessarily give the final word on the level of compromise or cooperation of individuals in question."

Hill's caveat should have

CALVIN AND HOBBS BILL WATTERSON



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been featured in Harriss' article. An incident at the February, 1987 Moscow International Forum for a Nuclear Free World illustrates why. Neal Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, delivered papers to U.S.S.R. President Mikhail Gorbachev and Council on Religious Affairs President Konstantin Kharchev. In the papers and in a public speech Wilson called for release of all prisoners of conscience, legalization of the believer's right to witness, and respect for holy days. He was immediately rebutted by Orthodox church spokesmen who insisted that they and other believers had religious freedom.

But at a banquet the next day, a prominent Orthodox leader quietly thanked the Adventist leader for his appeal. "We had to say what we did," Wilson said.

Russian churchmen permitted to visit the West did often carry out assignments for the KGB. Such as getting the World Council to adopt "public statements, . . . which

corresponded to the political course of socialist countries." The World Council's Central Committee has admitted its "mistaken judgment" in failing to speak out against the brutal Ceausescu regime in Romania. And that its association with official church leaders limited its contacts with and support of dissidents who were the leading advocates of human rights reforms under Communist rule.

Reader's Digest does no disservice in revealing these facts. But it might well have noted that all religious leaders and laymen permitted to visit the West had to report on their contacts, just as they had to report on their conversations with Western visitors to the Soviet Union. Their colleagues in the West knew this fact of life under Communism, their Russian brothers knew they knew it. And in most cases, the Soviet churchmen put their loyalty to the church first. Had they spoken candidly in the West about their circumstances,

they would not have traveled again—unless to a prison camp. And their usefulness to the church would have ended.

Liberty will soon publish a candid account of the travails of a Soviet Christian leader forced to report to the KGB. And will reveal an unreported "two-way street"—Soviet churchmen, characterized by the *Reader's Digest* as "KGB agents acting on Communist Party orders," were "used" by Western colleagues to pass so-called "confidential" information to the KGB. Yes, many Soviet religious leaders preserved a higher allegiance than to the state, a significant bit of information not reported by *Reader's Digest* senior editor Joseph A. Harriss.

A No-Show for the Pope

The Pope called a prayer meeting in Assisi, Italy, and guess who didn't come? Though the prayers and fasting were for peace in the Balkans, representatives of Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe, including Serbia, declined to attend January meeting.

Thirty-five of the 128 officials attending were Muslims—suffering heavily at the hands of the "Christian" Serbs. Two factors likely were behind refusal by the Serbs to attend (1) memories of the massacre of a hundred thousand Serb Orthodox by Croatian Catholics during the early days of World War II, and (2) religious and political differences.

A sad postscript: Because traditional Catholics had criticized the Vatican for "syncretism" in the common prayers of a 1986 meeting, each religious group present prayed in a different place.

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THE HIALEAH ANIMAL SACRIFICE CASE

November 4, 1992; downtown Washington, D.C. Newspaper headlines visible at 50 feet declare Bill Clinton president-elect. Rushing past them, I jaunt along the wet, leafy sidewalks toward the United States Supreme Court, to cover a crucial free exercise trial—the *Hialeah* animal sacrifices of the Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye.

Lukumi Babalu Aye is, definitely, not mainline Protestant. Its members, called Santeros, practice an ancient Afro-Caribbean faith known as Santería. Santeros celebrate birth, death, and marriage with animal sacrifices. In their rituals they decapitate goats, chickens, doves, and turtles—often 20 animals at a time—usually in private homes. In one ceremony a priest slices the throat of a chicken, chops off its head, bites into the headless bird's breast, and rips the animal open with his teeth before stuffing the open chest with herbs, tobacco, and bits of dried fish—all in an attempt to please Babalu Aye, a Santería god. The city of Hialeah wants the practice stopped.

Thinking that this case is not going to present the usual courtroom dialogue, I enter the side entrance off Maryland Avenue. Having cleared security, I pick up a press pass—a little orange card with my seat number, G-5. Because of the publicity associated with this case, the press section is filled, and G-5 puts me directly behind a massive pillar cloaked in a heavy red drape. I gape over the cowlick of a reporter to my left and glimpse the corner of a justice's robe. Straightening up, I stare at the pillar, notebook and pen on my lap. How am I supposed to cover this story?

Then it hits me: If cases are decided without the judges seeing all the parties involved, I should be able to cover this case seeing only a red drape and the dandruff on the obtrusive reporter.

BY CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN

The Supreme

Court

Must Decide

If A City

Law Banning

Animal

Sacrifices Is

Constitutional

*Clifford Goldstein is
associate editor of
LIBERTY.*

One of the first voices I hear is Douglas Laycock's, arguing for the Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye, which is petitioning the High Court to strike down four ordinances that ban animal sacrifices—rituals central to the church's faith.

"This is a case," Laycock declares, "about open discrimination of a minority religion." This discrimination is unconstitutional, and therefore the laws should be struck down as an infringement of the free exercise of the Santeros.

More than 50,000 Santeros live in south Florida, where many fled from Castro's suppression of their religion. In 1987 the Santería church, wanting to open a public place of worship, bought land in Hialeah, a Miami suburb. In anticipation of an animal-sacrificing church, complaints about paganism, and decapitated goats and chickens found in parks, under trees, and on courthouse steps, Hialeah passed four ordinances making animal sacrifices for religious purposes a first-degree misdemeanor punishable by a \$500 fine and/or 60 days in jail. The Santería church sued the city, claiming that the laws violated its free exercise rights. When the United States district court in south Florida upheld the laws, the Santeros appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court (whose acceptance of the case brought the litigants to the courtroom, and me to my seat behind the pillar).

As Laycock speaks, other voices interrupt. They belong to the Supreme Court justices, and when a woman speaks, I know it is Justice O'Connor.

Laycock proposes that the only way to prove animal sacrifices illegal is to show that Santería is false, and that would constitute "a heresy trial."

A justice asks: Merely because one of the Santeros' gods tells them that something is right, is it then legally protected?

Laycock argues that because one can kill ani-



mals in Hialeah for any reason but religious sacrifice, the ordinances are not neutral, but aimed at a specific religious practice. For that reason, he asserts, they are unconstitutional.

Laycock's point here deals with an issue of fundamental importance—not only in this case but for religious freedom in general. *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah* is the first free exercise case to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court since its 1990 *Smith* decision. In *Smith*, the Court (5-4) largely abandoned previous jurisprudence in dealing with the free exercise clause. For decades prior to *Smith*, the Court usually placed a "strict scrutiny" on any governmental action that restricted the free exercise of religious practices. Government must show (1) a compelling public interest for laws restricting free exercise, and (2) the lack of a less burdensome means of protecting the

*In essence, the
government
needed a
persuasive
reason to
restrict free
exercise.*

state's interests. In essence, the government needed a persuasive reason to restrict free exercise.

With *Smith*, however, the Court renounced this "strict scrutiny" concept, except in certain instances. Instead, it said that the free exercise clause never relieves an individual of the obligation to comply with a "valid and neutral law of general applicability" simply because that law interferes with his or her religious practice. As long as a law is religiously neutral and equitably applied, it is constitutional, regardless of any incidental burden on religion.

Voices from the bench question whether the Hialeah ordinances were directed at the Santeria religion itself, or were merely a neutral ban. Even *Smith* said that though incidental restrictions on free exercise were constitutional, laws "specifically directed at religious practice" were not, unless the state could show a compelling state interest in

upholding them.

Another justice queries whether the ordinances were intended to suppress not the religion but only certain acts thereof. If so, the ordinances were uniform, neutral laws that simply prohibit animal sacrifice by anyone. Why would they be considered unconstitutional?

Laycock argues: In order for the ban to be constitutional, it would have to include all animals killed in the city. He says that the bans were “underinclusive with a vengeance” against Santeria, and therefore should be struck down.

I remember reading earlier the story from the Santeros’ perspective. They complained that one can boil lobsters alive, feed rats to snakes, butcher animals in a slaughterhouse, hunt them with a bow and arrow, and kill unwanted pets publicly—as long as none of this is done for religious reasons. As an amicus brief filed on behalf of the Santeros said: “One may get Chicken McNuggets in Hialeah, but one may not partake of chicken roasted at a religious service of the Santeria faith.”

Smith also said that the state would be violating the free exercise clause “if it sought to ban such acts or force abstention when they are engaged in for religious reasons, or only because of the religious belief that they display. It would doubtless be unconstitutional, for example, to ban the casting of ‘statues that are used for worship purposes’ or to prohibit the bowing down [to] a golden calf.”

Hialeah city officials, however, believe the city does have compelling reasons to prohibit the practice. A new voice that I identify as belonging to defense counsel Richard Garrett argues for the city of Hialeah. I lean over as far as I can, hoping to see what he looks like, but he’s well hidden behind the pillar. The reporter to my left sneezes, and I get a momentary glimpse of David Souter sitting quietly, listening to Garrett.

Garrett asserts: The city is concerned about the thousands of animals being sacrificed within its limits, the carcasses left to rot in public places, animals being tortured, and the health hazards caused by dozens of animals killed daily in private homes.

In an earlier defense of the ordinances, I read that Garrett claimed that the city had no interest in suppressing the Santeria faith; rather it wanted to avoid the “specter of thousands, indeed tens of thousands, of animals being killed in homes and in the streets throughout south Florida, with the attendant problems of keeping and feeding animals and later disposing of the remains.” He said that the flies and rats attracted to the remains of animals found at “intersections, [in] backyards, [along] railroad tracks, [in] homes, rivers, and by the sides

*In the lower
court hearing,
the Humane
Society
testified that
the Santeria
method of
slaughter—
jabbing a
knife through
the animal’s
throat—
causes more
suffering to
the animals
than either
the Jewish or
the Muslim
method.*

of roads” constituted enough of a health hazard to warrant a compelling interest in banning the sacrifices. Garrett mentioned cruelty to animals as another sufficient reason to ban the rituals. He said that the city’s legitimate concern about animal sacrifices encompassed everything about the act, from the beginning of the process to the disposal of the remains.

O’Connor interrupts Garrett, asking why the city couldn’t adopt ordinances regulating the manner in which animals are killed as well as disposed of.

Garrett answers that such ordinances would be too difficult to regulate because the killing happens in private homes. The city would be forced, for example, to tell the priests how to hold the knife when slaughtering the animals, and this could lead to entanglement problems. The Santeros could say that the city regulations are not in conformity with how their gods tell them to do it, and they would be back in court with another free exercise appeal.

More voices from the bench ask why the killing of animals in the city for reasons other than sacrifice is not covered in the ordinances.

Garrett replies that the ban was limited only to animal sacrifices because the other types of killing, such as hunting and slaughterhouse carnage, were not causing problems.

The questions then revolve around cruelty to animals. In the lower court hearing, the Humane Society testified that the Santeria method of slaughter—jabbing a knife through the animal’s throat—causes more suffering to the animals than either the Jewish or the Muslim method, which cuts cleanly through the carotid arteries. Therefore, the city had a reason to ban sacrifices. (I wonder whether Hialeah’s wish to spare chickens a few extra seconds of pain warrants restricting a fundamental constitutional right.) A voice from the bench asks if it would be lawful in Hialeah to kill one’s cat in order to “put it out of its misery.”

Garrett answers yes.

The voice then asks whether it would be lawful to drown the cat in the bathtub.

No, Garrett answers. It would be cruelty to the animal, and Hialeah has laws against that.

O’Connor asks about boiling lobsters alive or killing mice and rats. Another voice incredulously asks: “You can’t eat lobster in Hialeah?” Another helps Garrett along by saying that killing mice and rats does not constitute sacrifice, and therefore is not included in the ordinances.

The justices then ask about slaughterhouses. If animal sacrifices were conducted in a properly zoned slaughterhouse with rules to ensure that the animals were not treated cruelly (though how can


you slice an animal's throat in a manner that's not cruel), the conditions were sanitary, and the disposal problem taken care of in an adequate manner, would Hialeah still prohibit sacrifices?

Yes, says Garrett, an answer that seems to weaken his two major arguments.

First, his answer asserts that the ordinances prohibit any animal sacrifice, even in a regulated slaughterhouse, but not other animal killings (which include slaughterhouse killing for nonreligious reasons). This response enhances Laycock's position that the Hialeah ordinances were aimed specifically at a religious practice (the concept of animal sacrifice itself implies a religious dimension). Second, if the Court rules that the ordinances are not neutral, and then applies the "strict scrutiny" test to them, Hialeah's compelling state interest strategy should be invalidated as well. If the city's concerns about health, cruelty to animals, and sanitation are relieved by relegating the sacrifices to slaughterhouses, its reasons to stop the sacrifices would be nullified. Citizens would sleep well, knowing that they wouldn't find decapitated goats under park benches and that chicken throats were being cut in a kind way.

Soon after this exchange, the oral arguments end, and I exit with the other reporters. On the courthouse steps, crowds of journalists with microphones, tape recorders, and TV cameras gather around Laycock. This case has garnered publicity not only because of its gory circumstances but also because of the chance that it could mitigate or even reverse *Smith*. The great hope is that Hialeah will do to *Smith* what *Barnette* did to *Gobitis*.

In *Gobitis*, using some of the same jurisprudence that reappeared 50 years later in *Smith* (indeed, Scalia quoted *Gobitis* in *Smith*), the Supreme Court upheld a neutral and generally applicable law that pressured Jehovah's Witnesses children to salute the flag despite religious objections. It resulted in a severe wave of persecution against the Jehovah's Witnesses. Three years later, in *Barnette*, the Court reversed. Could Hialeah do the same to *Smith*? It's not likely. More likely, a majority of justices will strike down the four ordinances as being neither neutral nor generally applicable, thus leaving *Smith* not only in place but affirmed.

Of course, it is difficult to predict how a Court that could go from *Smith* (which decimated religious freedom) to *Wiseman* (which upheld it) within two years will rule on any religious liberty appeal. What we can hope for, however, is that the justices will see their way in adjudicating *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah* much better than I, lodged behind my pillar, could see in reporting the case. 

JOHN LOCKE ON ANIMAL SACRIFICES

While deciding *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah*, the justices ought to consider the writing of John Locke. Though John Locke published his famous *Essay on Toleration* in 1689, he addressed principles involved in today's American church-state jurisprudence.

For example, Locke dealt with those who would, for religious purposes, sacrifice infants or "lustfully pollute themselves in promiscuous uncleanness." Would these acts be tolerated because "they are committed in a religious assembly"?

No, Locke answered. These "things are not lawful in the ordinary course of life, nor in any private home; and, therefore, neither are they so in the worship of God, or in a religious meeting."

"But," he wrote, "if any people congregated upon account of religion should be desirous to sacrifice a calf, I deny that that ought to be prohibited."

Why? Because, as Douglas Laycock argued, if animal killing isn't illegal for secular reasons, why should it be for religious ones?

"Meliboeus," wrote Locke, "whose calf it is, may lawfully kill his calf at home, and burn any part that he thinks fit: for no injury is thereby done to anyone, no prejudice to another man's goods. And for the same reason he may kill his calf also in a religious meeting."

Though a compelling "civil magistrate" interest prohibits child sacrifice, none prevents the slaughter of an animal for religious purposes, especially if slaughter is allowed for secular reasons.

What would happen if "the interest of the commonwealth required that all slaughter of beasts should be forborn [halted] for some while, in order to increase the stock of cattle, that had been destroyed by some extraordinary murrain." In other words, if there were a compelling state interest to stop animal sacrifice, should the state do it?

Yes, said Locke, but the magistrate would "forbid *all his subjects to kill any calves for any use whatsoever*. . . . In this case the law is not made about a religion, but a political matter: nor is the sacrifice, but the slaughter of calves thereby prohibited." In other words, it should be a "neutral and generally applicable law" that bans all killing of animals.

Thus, Laycock argued before the High Court, as John Locke would have, that unless all animal killing is banned, Hialeah's prohibition of animal sacrifice is wrong.

The city fathers of Hialeah have not caught up to John Locke. Let's hope the High Court has.—C.G.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACT

C

hances are that not many

Americans have made the Religious Freedom Restoration Act the subject of conversation over coffee and doughnuts. Few realize that anything has been lost.

But 50 organizations, as diverse as the National Association of Evangelicals and the American Civil Liberties Union, know better. That's why, after two years of disappointment, they're still seeking its passage in Congress.

Liberty asked Gary M. Ross, congressional liaison for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, to explain its importance and assess its chances in the 103rd Congress.



“What our American forefathers once deemed an “inalienable right,” a right given by God to His creation and thus not subject to executive veto or legislative surgery, is lost.”

First, Dr. Ross, without the coffee and doughnuts, tell us what was lost.

A legal standard vital to the exercise of religious freedom. For a century prior to the Smith decision of 1990 (see *Liberty*, July-August and September-October 1990), the Supreme Court had wrestled with the question of when, for the good of the community, a religious practice could and should be forbidden. Their answer, progressively developed: “Only the gravest abuses, endangering paramount interests, give occasion for permissible limitation.” Again: “Only those interests of the highest order and those not otherwise served can overbalance legitimate claims to the free exercise of religion.”

Government, to put it simply, had to prove “compelling state interest.” In *Smith* the Court decided that government no longer need exercise such prudence, such care. Rather, if a law applied to everyone equally, a person’s or a group’s religious faith no longer enjoyed constitutional protection.

Does that mean what it sounds like? Take, for example, the case of the Amish, who, in keeping with their religious convictions, remove their children from school at the age of 13 or when they have finished the eighth grade. Liberty raised thousands of dollars to defend this Amish conviction and the case (Yoder v. Wisconsin, 1972) was won before the Supreme Court. Are you saying that today, because laws mandate schooling for all children until the age of 16, this Amish article of faith would not be sustained by the Court?

Yes. Of course, the state legislature may accommodate the Amish if it chooses, but this is not likely for an unpopular religious minority. What our American forefathers once deemed an “inalienable right,” a right given by God to His creation and thus not subject to executive veto or legislative surgery, is lost. Of more than 50 cases involving free exercise of religion decided since *Smith*, the overwhelming majority of which would have been won before the Court changed the ground rules of religious freedom, only a handful have been won.

That’s why 50 groups have backed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), introduced by former Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) into the 102nd Congress.

What rights are involved in the 50-or-so cases you say have been lost?

Individuals have been subjected to medical practices in violation of their religious beliefs. Autopsies have been performed contrary to the faith-based convictions of a family. Churches have been barred from meeting even in commercial areas.

Since for two years the bill has failed even to get to a vote, are you optimistic concerning its passage in the 103rd Congress?

Yes. First, because President Bill Clinton has said he would sign the bill. His support could be decisive in the early days of the new Congress, when members are most inclined to cooperate with the White House.

Also, at this time the bill’s supporters believe Congressman Jack Brooks (D-Tex.) will introduce it on the House side. Brooks is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, to which the bill would be referred.

Another favorable factor: The coalition supporting the bill has been assured by House and Senate leaders that it will not face further time-consuming hearings.

Much opposition to the bill has focused on the abortion issue, the fear that RFRA could become a loophole for abortion if the Court weakened or overturned Roe v. Wade. Since the Court has recently upheld abortion rights, doesn’t that argument become moot?

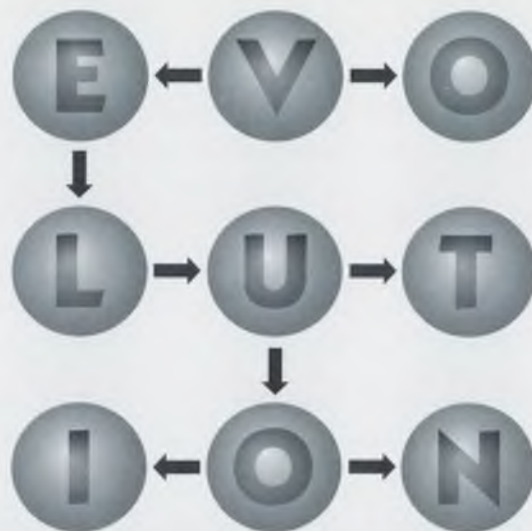
Of course. *Roe* is settled law. As *Smith* itself demonstrated, settled law can be overturned, but this is rare. If Clinton gets the Freedom of Choice Act passed, there would be even less reason to consider abortion a factor in passage of RFRA. But these matters aside, RFRA would not have benefited pro-choice in the first place.

A troubling question: Doesn’t the separation of powers inherent in our government prohibit Congress from interfering with a decision of the High Court?

A number of legal scholars believe that Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment empowers Congress to enforce that amendment, and the rights subsequently incorporated into it, by appropriate legislation. Admittedly, that legislative prerogative remains controversial.

Assuming passage of RFRA, will we then be confronted with the entertaining spectacle of the very justices who created the necessity of its passage being asked to rule on its constitutionality?

If a person or institution with standing challenges RFRA and the Supreme Court chooses to hear the case, it would have the last word—and it probably wouldn’t be favorable. Unless, of course, a couple of *Smith*-oriented justices retire quickly, and President Clinton succeeds in getting a majority on the Court who are sensitized to inalienable rights and thus willing to endorse RFRA. Or if RFRA were to fail of passage, a majority who would overturn *Smith* and return to the “compelling state interest” standard. R



THE WORKING MODEL DOESN'T WORK

*An Interview With Ariel Roth, Ph.D.,
Director, Geoscience Research Institute
Loma Linda, California*

Only hours after Mikhail Gorbachev and his family ended their now-famous Crimea holiday and rejoined their friends in Moscow, two Americans landed in the same city on a less-heralded mission that must be a first in the Soviet republics. At the invitation of 15 Russian scientists, Ariel Roth, zoologist, and Ben Clausen, nuclear physicist, had come from California for a 10-day conference on origins—from a creationist viewpoint. The organizers were mostly theoretical physicists from Moscow, Novosibirsk, and as far away as Vladivostok in Russia's far east. The meetings, with attendance swelling to 40, were held in the hamlet of Zaokski, some 100 miles from Moscow.

No two of the Russians believed exactly the same. The one thing that united them was a deep dissatisfaction with atheism and materialistic philosophy. Lifetimes of Communist indoctrination had not stripped them of their resolve to explore beyond the limits of material science for ultimate truth and meaning. Somehow these scientists had found one another, corresponded, and formed an informal brotherhood.

Now, as interpreters and interrupters strove to breach the language barrier, Russians and Americans talked about theories of the origin of the

BY RICHARD H. UTT

universe, the age of the earth, the beginnings of life, and the mathematical probabilities of cell formation from inert matter. They exchanged views on fossils, geologic columns, formation of coal, frozen mammoths, and ice ages.

But in the evening all science talk ceased. The conference hall was thrown open to the community and to five busloads of people from farther away. Now the Russians recited poetry, played balalaikas and accordions, and performed in small choirs.

Back home in California, Roth was still glowing from his contacts in Russia, from the openness and acceptance of these scientists.

Roth is a man of average height, in his early 60s. His geosphere is shiny smooth in the polar region, with a meridian of sandy hair circumscribing it around the sides and back. He smiled easily and often as we talked in his office. The walls, I noticed, were lined with bookcases containing hundreds of volumes on science and philosophy. If this man is a crusader or a zealot, I thought, he doesn't act like one. He speaks calmly, thoughtfully, and seems not to have a hostile chip in his mental computer toward those members of the scientific community who treat creationists with less than admiration.

Roth's foray into the former stronghold of Bolshevikism was only one of many by this busy scien-

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tist. A native of Geneva, Switzerland, he pursued a biology major in college and earned a Ph.D. in zoology at the University of Michigan. He has taken additional training in geology, mathematics, and radiation biology at various campuses of the University of California. He has done research on living and fossil coral reefs. In the Bahamas he lived on the floor of the ocean for one week in the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Hydro-Lab while investigating the effects of light and pigment on the growth rate of coral reef. His research was funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Atomic Energy Commission, and other entities.

For much of his adult life Roth has been active in the evolution-creation controversy. He served as a witness or consultant in litigation involving creationism and the schools in California, Oregon, and Arkansas, and conducted geology field trips in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and America. He has published several scores of articles in scientific and popular journals. He edits a magazine called *Origins* and directs the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI), with headquarters in Loma Linda, California.

GRI, founded in 1958 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, currently employs five scientists, three of whom also teach in the Department of Natural Sciences of the denomination's Loma Linda University. The institute sees its function as "counterbalancing traditional naturalistic interpretations of origins with analyses based upon broader data. Thus information from sacred history [the Bible], science, and other pertinent information related to origins is given due consideration. . . . The institute believes that truth can bear careful investigation, but that such investigation must be comprehensive in both its factual basis and its explanatory value."

More than 30 scientists have received GRI research grants, Roth told me, for projects such as a study of tree rings and earth history, Paleozoic sediments in the Grand Canyon, how bird eggs become fossils, and "angiospermous palynomorphs in the Knoxville formation."

Clearly, I was in over my head, but he continued pouring out the information: "Robert Brown, a physicist, has studied profiles of the distribution of carbon 14 in peat bogs and sediments as they relate to trends in carbon 14 dates related to real time. Harold Coffin, paleontologist, has been studying the paleoecology of petrified fossil trees, especially successive fossil forests that imply longtime deposits. Clyde Webster, chemist, studies the mode of ejection of present and past volcanic activity by using trace-element characterization of volcanic



Ariel Roth

"In 1982 the Gallup people found that 44 percent (at least one-fourth of them college graduates) believe God created man within the past 10,000 years."

rocks . . ."

I agreed that the research sounded impressive. "But don't scientists speak of the 'fact of evolution' and the 'truth of evolution'?" I asked. "Are you fighting truth?"

"They use the terms fact and truth, all right."

"Don't they have most of the facts on their side, and aren't you as a creationist simply denying those facts? Isn't creationism a dead issue? Wouldn't most informed people agree that creationism gave its final gasp in 1925 at the Scopes trial, when Darrow and Bryan had it out in Dayton, Tennessee? And if it's a dead issue, why try to spread it here or in Russia or anywhere else?"

Roth smiled indulgently. He had heard all this before.

"It isn't quite like that. As for its being a dead issue, it isn't. In 1982 the Gallup people surveyed the adult public in the U.S. and found that 44 percent (at least one-fourth of them college graduates) believe God created man within the past 10,000 years. Since 1960 there has been a resurgence of interest worldwide. We know of at least 80 different creation societies."

I persisted. "Polls and believers aside, don't the scientists who endorse evolution have most of the hard evidence?"

"On the contrary, science has not been kind to evolutionary theory in the past 20 years. Biochemistry has turned out to be extremely complex—much more so than biologists used to think. If scientists could come up with a workable, plausible model of origins, it would help a lot. If they had enough supporting evidence, it would not be so hard for them to construct a workable model, and the theory of evolution would not be in so much trouble intellectually."

"What do you mean by 'in trouble'?"

"The Darwinian model, based on the survival of the fittest, is accepted by practically no one. Evolutionists themselves seem to take pleasure in shooting it down. The best scientists admit their failure to produce a workable model for the origin of life. The problem has grown especially acute in the past two decades, when the complexities of even the simplest organisms turned out to be so immense that organization of life by itself could not be reconciled with our knowledge of chemistry and probability."

"If their model won't work, why do people have so much faith in the theory?"

"I believe it is because evolution, which doesn't work, is riding the success of empirical science, which does work."

"So how are the evolutionists shooting down their own theory?"

"Well, here's one example: In *Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature* (1981), Francis Crick, the English Nobel laureate who pioneered the study of DNA, theorizes that the problems of life originating here on earth are so great that it must have come from elsewhere in the universe.

"Australian scientist Michael Denton, in his *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (1985), dismisses creation as a myth; yet he states: 'I believe that one day the Darwinian myth will be ranked the greatest deceit in the history of science. When this happens many people will pose the question: How did this ever happen? . . . There will be a lot of work to do for coming generations of historians of geology' (p. 22).

"Swedish embryologist Soren Lovtrup, in *Darwinism: The Refutation of a Myth* (1987), says: 'Ultimately the Darwinian theory of evolution is no more nor less than the great cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century. Like the Genesis-based cosmology which it replaced, and like the creation myths of ancient man, it satisfies the same deep psychological need for an all embracing explanation for the origin of the world which has motivated all the cosmogenic mythmakers of the past, from the shamans of primitive peoples to the ideologues of the medieval church.'"

"You might say, 'They're playing our song.'"

"Here's another commentary I like. Writing in *Harper's Magazine* some years ago (February 1976), Tom Bethell, a scholar at Oxford, recalls the Darwin centennial celebrations at the University of Chicago in 1959, when, he says, 'Darwin was triumphant.' At that meeting Sir Julian Huxley, grandson of Thomas Huxley, proclaimed, 'The evolution of life is no longer a theory; it is a fact!'

"Bethell then traces the decline of the theory in the following years: 'Darwin's idea of natural selection was quietly abandoned, even by his most ardent supporters, some years ago.' He continues: 'The machinery of evolution that he [Darwin] supposedly discovered has been challenged, and it is beginning to look as though what he really discovered was nothing more than the Victorian propensity to believe in progress.'

"He closes the article by saying: 'Darwin, I suggest, is in the process of being discarded, but perhaps in deference to the venerable old gentleman, resting comfortably in Westminster Abbey next to Sir Isaac Newton, it is being done as discreetly and gently as possible, with a minimum of publicity.'

"Of course," Roth continued, "these scientists and writers and many more like them believe in the general theory of evolution. But no one has produced a workable model of evolution to take the place of the discredited origin-of-species scheme.

**"We're
willing to
look at the
Bible,
history,
psychology,
as well as
science.
Science
doesn't need
to live in a
narrow, self-
contained
compartment
isolated from
other sources
of truth."**

We must candidly recognize the element of *faith* in trying to explain the past. This is as true for evolutionists as for creationists."

"So both sides have their problems, and both depend largely on faith," I persisted. "But if I'm not mistaken, creationists believe in a relatively young earth. Is there any evidence for a young earth from geology or other sciences? Or is your evidence just from the Bible?"

"Let me give you an example. If this earth is 3.5 billion years old, then at present rates of sedimentation, all the oceans would have filled up with sediments 19 times over. At current rates of erosion the continents would have eroded away several hundreds of times!"

"What other evidences do you consider stronger for creation?"


"As I already mentioned, there's the problem of accounting for the beginnings of life without intelligent design and effort—which creationists identify with God. Also, there are serious gaps in the fossil record, and missing strata in the earth's crust, that have proved most difficult for the evolutionary model."

"What difference does it make? Why belabor the question as to whether God made the world with or without evolution? Does it really matter whether the world originated a few thousand years ago or a few million?"

"All of us have to answer the question 'What is truth' for ourselves. I believe it is important to know what truth is. We are probing that very basic question 'Where did it all come from?' We're looking at this from a broader base than science alone. Science would not be in such a difficult position as it is in now if it had a broader perspective. We're willing to look at the Bible, history, psychology, as well as science. Science doesn't need to live in a narrow, self-contained compartment isolated from other sources of truth."

"One final question. You call for science to open up, to face the implications of the failed model of evolution, to use a broader perspective. You work for a church-sponsored institute. Are you open-minded?"

"I try to be, but not so open-minded that I can never draw conclusions. I am comfortable as a scientist with the concept of creation and a Creator. I believe the best evidence shows there must be a Designer behind the extremely complex creation I see around me.

"The closer we are to truth, I believe, the more likely we are to be useful and helpful here on this planet. I don't like the idea of clinging to error. The more we are in touch with reality, I believe, the more moral and responsible we can be." 



THE PUZZLE OF THE PETRIFIED GIANTS

How can creationists explain, within a short chronology, 50 superimposed layers of petrified trees in apparent position of growth?

Like sentinels of time forgotten, they stand battalion-strong on the hillside, flanks rust-hued against the lambent sky. Eons ago, some say, here near Yellowstone Park's Specimen Creek, a great forest grew, its towering warriors a half millennium old. Over thousands of years, in a series of battles, the forces of primeval nature attacked and shattered the proud giants. From the steeped slopes of volcanic ash their armored trunks protrude, one lifetime above another, totaling, say geologists, some 20,000 to 40,000 years of measurable geologic activity.

There is another scenario, more controversial, accepted by fewer geologists, but equally respectful of the heroic giants. Their battle was fought

at another site over a relatively short period, it is said. The enemy—water, battering them in titanic waves, tearing at roots, sweeping away limbs, and propelling them hundreds of miles across a denuded landscape. Tens of thousands sank, waterlogged and prostrate, to be encased by mud and debris.

However, a defiant few, even as they disappeared beneath the turbulent sea, stood erect, their shattered trunks seeking roothold. Over a short period of time their sap-blood was replaced by minerals that hardened their arteries and petrified their tissue. On the ragged slopes revealed by the receding waters—each level contoured and recontoured by tsunami and volcanic eruptions—their ironlike trunks

Introduction by Roland R. Hegstad

remain. According to this scenario, the catastrophic events that created the Specimen Creek Petrified Forest could have occurred within the century following the Noachian flood.

The petrified forests of Yellowstone have been known for only a little more than 100 years, roughly the epoch of modern—that is to say, evolutionary—geology. It was with these forests—and the challenge they mount to belief in a young earth—that 43 creationists, scientists, theologians, college presidents, and church administrators began a recent field trip through four Western states. For 11 days, at the invitation of Loma Linda University's Geoscience Research Institute, I traveled with them. In this and subsequent issues of *Liberty* I'll report on what we learned—and unlearned.

Included in our field work: the nature and limitations of science, change in species, biological continuity, geochronology, and flood geology. Under each heading lurked unfamiliar terms, each with its own subchallenge. Biological continuity, for example, had two subheads, molecular phylogeny and fossils and evolution. Under the latter were further perplexities: punctuated equilibriums, fossils, and continuity; archaeopteryx, transitions, intermediates, cynodonts, etc. The "etc." I understood.

So the list of subjects studied is impressive, but can one expect creationists to do good science when

they entertain scriptural presuppositions in geology-related fields? I'll submit some of the group's most significant conclusions for your evaluation—and answer. And do keep in mind the question creationists might rightly ask of evolutionary scientists: Can one actually expect evolutionists to do good science when they not only operate from naturalistic presuppositions but also abuse their own definition of science in arriving at their concepts of beginnings?*

For one example: The evolutionary theory of mankind's origin cannot be scientifically validated; the evolutionist does not qualify as a "neutral, methodical observer" of what took place.

The geoscientists leading our field expedition demonstrated both empiricism and faith. Enough faith to invite a scientist holding views contrary to theirs to present his conclusions on the half-dozen major issues we were to study during our days together. And you might as well know now: The Geoscience Research staff offered no sweeping denunciations of the views of evolutionary geologists; in many cases they simply offered field evidence that supported a contrary hypothesis. On other issues they had no ready answers, suggesting instead the direction additional research might take. But, frankly, I was impressed by the solid nature of their research and conclusions.

*Defined on page 287, *Dictionary of History of Science*.

Right: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills (Psalm 121:1). Forty-three creationists head for Yellowstone's Specimen Creek area to view evidence alleged to challenge their confidence in the Genesis Flood.



Right: Robert S. Folkenberg, President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, found some aspects of the geological column hard to swallow.



Below: From the steep slopes of shale the armored trunks of the giants protrude, one lifetime above another, totaling, say geologists, some 20,000 to 40,000 years of measurable geologic activity.





Dr. Harold G. Coffin: The trees were carried many miles by flood waters. Hundreds were deposited, within a few months, in a vertical position. For laboratory evidence, see page 18.

Their answer to the up-to-40,000-year period indicated by the Specimen Creek Petrified Forest is one example. So let's get to "The Puzzle of the Petrified Giants."

The question: How can creation scientists explain, within a short biblical chronology, 50 superimposed layers of petrified trees in apparent position of growth?

You've read my introduction. Examine the pictures and then climb aboard our 1989 MCI bus, get comfortable (or uncomfortable, if you anticipate answers incompatible with your hypothesis), and listen as Harold G. Coffin picks up the microphone. Coffin has his Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. He has

taught biology in Canadian and U.S. colleges and served as senior scientist at the Geoscience Research Institute in Loma Linda, California. He is the author of scores of articles and several books, including *Creation: Accident or Design?* (1969), *Earth Story* (1979), and *Origin by Design* (1983).

You'll note that, even in his 60s, he is trim. You'll not wonder why when you learn that he has spent weeks exploring on foot hundreds of square miles of petrified forests not only in Yellowstone National Park but around the world. That his mind is equally trim and well exercised becomes evident as you consider the puzzle of the petrified giants.

For years geologists and paleontologists have made certain assumptions that on the surface seemed remarkable but that later have been shown to be erroneous or flawed. Included among these is the assumption that all erect petrified trees are in position of growth (autochthonous). Because evidences of upright trees in the fossil record have strongly influenced the development of the geological time scale, creationists who believe in a universal flood and a short chronology for life on earth need to study this phenomenon carefully.

Historical Review

During the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, deluge geologists, who accepted the biblical narrative of a worldwide flood, found their colleagues deserting them philosophically because of perceived evidences of long ages in the geologic record, especially as suggested by vertical tree stumps in the Carboniferous deposits of Europe and Canada.¹ Coal beds could not have been deposited by the biblical flood if trees grew in place within or between the coal seams.

Charles Lyell saw erect petrified trees as strong evidence for significant time in the history of earth, a major consideration that he successfully promoted in his famous *Principles of Geology*.² This conclusion, that erect trees in coal beds were in a growth position, became dominant during the latter half of the nineteenth century. However, in 1886 Henry Fayol, a French geologist, challenged it on the basis of his research on the flotation of plants and trees, which he had carried out in coal-washing ponds.³ More recent studies, limited to the horsetail (equisetum), gave similar results.⁴

During most of the twentieth century, uniformitarian thinking has dominated geology, and little consideration has been given to the allochthonous (transported) origin of coal or petrified trees.

Characteristics of a Living Forest

Is it possible to determine whether the trees found in a petrified forest are in a position of growth or were transported—whether they are autochthonous or allochthonous? The answer to

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A LAB REPORT

Ah, those creationists! Hypothesizing that the Yellowstone petrified trees were carried to their sites by floodwaters! And landed upright! All in a few years time—rather than the 20,000-40,000 year-period of growth indicated. Rather than “Ah, those evolutionists!” let’s look at what happened to trees and forests when Mount St. Helens erupted on May 18, 1980.



A massive log raft covers more than half of Spirit Lake.



Left: Scuba divers found the stumps to be either lightly grounded in shallow water or floating freely.

Above: Upright floating stumps are clearly visible.

this question is best reached by first noting certain features of living forests.

1. A growing forest produces a soil cover unless the ground is too steep and subject to erosion. A soil profile usually consists of coarse, dark, poorly decayed humus at the top, which grades downward into light-colored, finely decayed organic matter.

2. When trees are mature, leaves, needles, flowers, pollen, cones, and seeds are scattered by wind, water, and insects. Usually there will be an inverse relationship between the abundance of plant parts in the soil and the distance from the tree that produced them.

3. Trees that experience similar climatic and environmental conditions tend to have similar growth responses. Drought is usually reflected in the production of narrow growth rings; plenty of moisture usually causes the formation of broad rings. This is especially evident in trees growing under stress.⁵

4. In a mature forest growing on a flat surface, dead trees in varying stages of decay lie scattered around on the ground. Piles of bark accumulate at

the bases of dead snags. The roots of standing living trees are intact and unbroken.

5. Most forests in temperate regions are dominated by a few species of trees. Ecological constraints such as temperature, seasons, and precipitation favor certain tree species and inhibit the growth of others.

The Yellowstone Petrified Forests

The most striking feature of the petrified trees found in Yellowstone National Park is the erect position of many of the stumps. Without doubt, this is the strongest argument for the trees having grown there. At least 48 superimposed forests have been counted. Growth of this many successive forests one above another would require a minimum of 15,000 years. This estimate is based on 300 rings as an average size of the oldest tree for each level, a conservative figure derived from the Specimen Creek Petrified Forest at Yellowstone Park. Dorf allowed 200 years for the commencement of reforestation and 500 years as average largest tree size for each level.⁶ For 27 levels in the fossil forest area, he gave an approximate figure of 20,000 years.



Above: How many stumps were sitting upright? Side-scan sonar of a 3,600 square meter area showed 154 vertical stumps. Extrapolating from this sample indicates some 19,500 erect trees! Thus there is a transported, submerged forest on the bottom of Spirit Lake. A debris flow carried additional thousands of trees into the upper North Toulte River Valley.



Left: Some stumps sit upright, their roots torn away, as shown in this lake-bottom picture.



Left: You have been viewing a laboratory where processes such as hardening of sediments, cutting of canyons, and floating of logs can be studied. Based on the "experiment" provided by the eruption of Mount St. Helens, the successive layers seen in some petrified forests could have been dropped into place over a comparatively short time, such as that projected in the Genesis Flood.

years. Using these calculations, the Specimen Creek Petrified Forest, with more than twice as many tree levels, would require more than 40,000 years. The cliffs and slopes where the petrified trees are exposed represent erosion of more than 1,200 vertical meters (3,900 feet). By normal geological processes, this much erosion could actually represent a more severe time problem than the growth of the trees.

If the trees were washed out of a growing forest and transported to their present locations, some of the roots, especially the large roots, would be broken. Trees bulldozed out of the ground in forest-clearing operations usually have intact smaller roots; the larger roots are often broken. I have found several examples of abruptly terminating "broken" roots among the upright petrified trees in Yellowstone. Many other examples suggest sudden root terminations, but a positive field identification of this feature is often difficult because of post-petrification breakage and the difficulty of digging into the hardened rock in order to expose the roots. Digging around the petrified trees is forbidden in the national park.

Successive levels of upright stumps are sometimes only a foot apart vertically. On occasion, a stump arising from a lower level extends through or into the "forest" level above it. In such a case the top of the stump would be exposed during the growth of the trees in the upper level. Had the trees been in a position of growth, one would expect to see decay in the top of the "overlapping" stump, but such decay has not been observed.

Recent studies of fossil pollens in the Yellowstone petrified forests have identified more than 200 species of plants.⁷ The ecological diversity represented by the species is unexpected if the trees are in position of growth. Species range from temperate (pines, redwoods, willows) to tropical and exotic (figs, laurels, breadfruit, catsura), and from semidesert to rainforest types. This diversity may be an indication that the fossil forests are an artificial assemblage of stumps, leaves, and pollen transported from several ecological zones.

If the growth rings of petrified stumps on the same level match, they could have grown contemporaneously where they now are exposed, or they could have grown elsewhere at the same time and

then been transported to their present positions. On the other hand, if stumps on different levels have matching ring patterns, they must have grown contemporaneously elsewhere and later been transported to their current locations.

A few trees have signatures (patterns of ring characteristics) that match.⁸ Some of these trees are on the same levels, while others are on different levels. These results complement the data that strongly suggest a transported (allochthonous) origin of the petrified forests of Yellowstone.

Characteristically, neither bark nor limbs are preserved on the trees. Some of the large prostrate logs originally had limbs a foot or more in diameter, but now only scoured knots are left. If subaerial volcanic mud slides were sufficiently strong to

break off the limbs and strip away the bark from rooted trees, why were the small trees not bent or broken? In some locations one finds small upright trees of only three centimeters in diameter. The boulders in the surrounding conglomerate are sometimes much larger in diameter than are the trees against which they rest. However, of the hundreds of petrified trees examined over the years, only two have been found with a greenstick fracture (evidence of having been broken by horizontal shear).

If the trees were transported, that is, if they were moved with the mud or were floated in and dropped onto the mud and rocks in which they are buried, they would not have been subjected to horizontal shear.

The Organic Levels

Up to this point, we have considered only the stumps in the petrified forests of Yellowstone. Associated with the erect stumps at root level are bands of organic matter consisting of leaves, needles, and plant debris that have been interpreted as the forest floors on which the trees grew. However, study of these levels indicates in almost every specific detail that they are atypical of true growth levels.

There is a total absence of differential decay from top to bottom in these organic zones in the

petrified forests of Yellowstone. Most of the Yellowstone organic levels have no clear soil profile. That is, organic matter is mixed into the sediments with no prevailing order of density or with the greatest accumulations of organic matter at the bottom, in contrast to modern soils.⁹

Nearly 200 thin-section slides of organic horizons have been examined. The evidences of water action are striking. Normal grading (from coarse to fine soil matter upward) is obvious in nearly half of the slides. Reverse grading (fine to coarse soil matter upward) is not uncommon. There also is size sorting of organic material in some levels, showing a relationship between the size of the ash sediment and the size of the organic material—fine sediment, fine organic matter; coarse sediment, coarse organic matter. There is even size sorting of the inorganic particles between leaves, needles, and plant debris. Only the simultaneous settling of ash and leaves from a fluid suspension could achieve this phenomenon.

Taxonomic agreement is lacking between the fossils preserved in the organic levels and the dominant trees arising from the same levels. One would expect to find many sequoia needles and some cones, since most of the upright trees are sequoias. However, large numbers of broad leaves and only a few needles (mostly not sequoia) are seen in the organic levels. Cones of any type are rare.

Fisk's palynological study (analysis of pollen and spores) found little pollen of sycamore, although sycamore is well represented by fossil leaves.¹⁰ Wind-transported pollen such as sycamore should have left a rich pollen record in the forest floor. In another palynological study DeBord studied four levels intensively.¹¹ He found no positive correlation between fossil pollen abundance and the proximity of possible source trees. Pine pollen, for example, was underrepresented in three of the four levels analyzed. The same lack of a positive correlation has been shown for wood fragments.¹²

Trace element studies of the individual beds of volcanic ash and conglomerate indicate similarity of beds. Four distinct trace elements repeat and alternate along the 73 levels of petrified trees and organic zones of Specimen Creek Fossil Forest. If hundreds or thousands of years transpired between one bed and the laying down of the next, each bed should have a different trace element signature. This research, conducted by Clyde Webster of the Geoscience Research Institute, continues.

Despite their appearance, the Yellowstone petrified forests are probably not in position of

Despite their appearance, the Yellowstone petrified forests are probably not in position of growth. When all the facts are considered, a catastrophe involving much water and many floating trees is a more satisfactory explanation.

trophe involving much water and many floating trees is a more satisfactory explanation.

Model

At present, I propose the following model as the best accounting for all the data gathered. Volcanic activity in the Yellowstone region occurred while the area was at least partially under water. Trees, some vertical, floated in the water along with organic debris. As trees and vegetable matter became water saturated, they settled onto the bottom. Within a relatively short time (days or weeks), a series of slides buried the trees and organic debris. Before each succeeding flow, more trees and organic matter settled to the bottom. Thus layer upon layer, trees and organic zones were built up.

After the burial of the trees and organic debris, the water receded and/or the land was uplifted. Petrification occurred quickly before decay became pronounced. As the water drained, erosion on a large scale sculptured the landscape and exposed the petrified trees. In the course of time, glaciation also left its mark on this mountainous region.


Other fossil forests, less well studied, also suggest an allochthonous, or transported, origin. The petrified forest of North Dakota is atypically devoid of prostrate trees. Roots are absent from the upright stumps. The giant fossil trees of Florsissant, Colorado, are located in lake muds. There is no typical soil level, and some roots appear to terminate abruptly. Giant lycopods in the coal deposits of Nova Scotia, Canada, sometimes sit on sterile shale, containing marine fossils. Undecayed fossils are located under some stumps. The general orientation of plant parts clearly suggests water transport.¹³ Two forests of Patagonia, Argentina (Sarmiento and Jaramillo), exhibit abruptly terminated roots, water-transported twigs, and parallel orientation of horizontal logs.

The Case of Mount St. Helens

When Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980, a giant log raft was created on the surface of adjacent Spirit Lake. Many of the logs floating in the lake, especially those with root systems, turned upright. Eventually most of these upright floating stumps settled to the bottom of the lake, where they now sit upright. Sediments brought down by streams are even now slowly burying these stumps. Another eruption could greatly hasten the process. Based on side-scan sonar search of the bottom, as many as 20,000 erect stumps may now be located on the lake bottom.¹⁴

This modern example of the transport and deposition of trees in an upright position is useful in

evaluating the history of petrified trees. Any catastrophe (such as a volcanic eruption, major flooding, or tsunami) that eroded trees from their growth positions and transported them by or into water could be the mechanism for creating a standing fossil forest that is not in position of growth.

It is unwarranted to assume *a priori*, as in the past, that all upright petrified trees grew where they are now found. The transport of trees and their deposition in an erect stance is not as unlikely or as rare as might be expected. Upright fossil trees within the geological column are compatible with a Flood model. When all factors are considered, a catastrophe involving water and many floating trees is a more satisfactory explanation for their origin. 

FOOTNOTES

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² Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833), 11th ed. (New York: D. Appleton, 1892).

³ Henry Fayol, "Etudes sur le Terrain Bouiller de Commeny," *Bull. de la Soc. de L'industrie Minérale*, Livre premier; lithologie et stratigraphie, 2e série, 153-4 (1886).

⁴ Harold G. Coffin, "Vertical Flotation of Horsetails (*Equisetum*): Geological Implications," *Geol. Soc. of Am. Bull.* 82 (1971): 2019-2022.

⁵ W. S. Glock, "Growth Rings and Climate," *Botanical Review* 7 (1941): 649-713; W. S. Glock, R. A. Studhalter, and S. R. Agerter, "Classification and Multiplicity of Growth Layers in the Branches of Trees at the Extreme Lower Forest Border," *Smithsonian Misc. Col.* 140, No. 1 (1960).

⁶ E. Dorf, "Tertiary Fossil Forests of Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming," *Billings Geological Society*, 11th Annual Field Conference, 1960, pp. 253-260.

⁷ Lanny H. Fisk, "The Gallatin 'Petrified Forest': a Review," *Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, Special Pub. 73, Tobacco Root Geol. Soc. 1976 Guidebook*, pp. 53-72.

⁸ Richard Ammons, et al., "Cross-identification of Ring Signatures in Eocene Trees (*Sequoia magnifica*) from the Specimen Ridge Locality of the Yellowstone Fossil Forests," *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 60 (1987): 97-108; M. J. Arct, "Dendroecology in the Fossil Forests of the Specimen Creek Area, Yellowstone National Park" (Ph.D. diss., Loma Linda University, Ca., 1991).

⁹ Harold G. Coffin, "The Organic Levels of the Yellowstone Petrified Forests," *Origins* 6, No. 2 (1979): 71-82.

¹⁰ Lanny H. Fisk, "Palynology of the Amethyst Mountain 'Fossil Forest': Yellowstone National Park" (Ph.D. diss., Loma Linda University, Ca., 1976).

¹¹ Philip L. DeBord, "Gallatin Mountain Petrified Forest: A Palynological Investigation of the *in situ* Model" (Ph.D. diss., Loma Linda University, Ca., 1977).

¹² Arthur Chadwick and Tetsuya Yamamoto, "A Paleoeological Analysis of the Petrified Trees in the Specimen Creek Area of Yellowstone National Park, Montana, U.S.A.," *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 45 (1983): 39-48.

¹³ Harold G. Coffin, "Research on the Classic Joggins Petrified Trees," *Creation Res. Soc. Ann.*, June 1969, pp. 35-44; 70.

¹⁴ Harold G. Coffin, "Erect Flotating Stumps in Spirit Lake, Washington," *Geology* 11 (1983): 298, 299; "Sonar and Scuba Survey of a Submerged Allochthonous 'Forest' in Spirit Lake, Washington," *Palaos* 2 (1987): 179, 180.

A recent Gallup Poll has affirmed significant acceptance of creation. Conducted in 1991, the survey of more than 1000 representative adults in the United States also showed that the general "scientific" evolutionary model does not have strong preference. Individuals were given four choices:

1. Man has developed over millions of years from less advanced forms. God had no part in the process.

2. Man has developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided the process, including man's creation.

3. God created man pretty much in his present form at one time within the last 10,000 years.

4. I don't know.

Results indicate that only 9 percent believe in the

for evolution, 38 percent for a combination of creation and evolution, 44 percent for man's recent creation, and 9 percent did not know. It does not appear that there is any significant change in this nine-year period. The 3 percent increase in 1991 noted for a recent creation of man (choice 3) may not be statistically significant.

One interesting result of the 1991 survey is the effect of education on beliefs about origins: 16 percent of college graduates believed in the evolutionary view (choice 1), while for those below a high school diploma level, only 5 percent did. Only 25 percent of college graduates believed in a recent creation (choice 3), while 65 percent of those below the high school diploma level did. One might be tempted to suggest that knowledge steers one away from myths such as creations. On the other hand, the effect of a basically secular education may just as well be the reason for this. One cannot be exposed to years of evolutionary teaching without its having some effect. Creation, which is sometimes defined as a religion, is not often promulgated or even allowed in many public schools. Both the contemporary secular philosophy in academia and the rejection of religious concepts in public education favor evolution.

One may wonder why more than five times (47 percent versus 9 percent) as many believe in some form of recent creation as in naturalistic evolution, or why more college graduates (25 percent versus 16 percent) favor the recent-creation-of-man model. Such questions are difficult to answer, but I would suggest the following:


1. It is difficult for us to think that the working universe, including an earth that accommodates delicate life, just happened.

2. It is even more difficult for us to think that life, which even in its simplest independent form has hundreds of thousands of nucleotide bases in its genetic repertoire, just came about by itself.

3. How could advanced integrated physiological systems that have complex feedback systems, such as the nervous or endocrine systems, develop without some kind of design?

4. If evolution ever occurred, why are there such pronounced gaps (missing links) in the fossil record? These missing representatives are especially conspicuous between the major group of plants and animals.

5. How did the phenomena of mind ever develop? Our consciousness, sense of purpose, love, and meaning all speak of a reality above mechanistic evolutionary concepts.

Until these questions can be answered by the evolutionary community, we should not expect overwhelming support for their model. 

CREATION

HOLDING ITS OWN

BY ARIEL A. ROTH

purely evolutionary model (choice 1); 40 percent believed that God was active in a combination of creation and evolution (choice 2); 47 percent believed that God created man in the last 10,000 years, as believed by creationists (choice 3); and 4 percent did not know.

It is surprising that 143 years after the publication of the *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin and persistent efforts on the part of evolutionists to promote their views, only 9 percent of the general population believe them. This is all the more surprising in view of the very broad endorsement of evolution by the powerful scientific community. Unfortunately, choice 3 about man's recent creation, which was selected by 47 percent, did not involve a statement about the rest of creation and may not fully represent the standard biblical creation stance, but it is the closest choice to it.

A very similar Gallup Poll conducted nine years earlier gave about the same percentages: 9 percent

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ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES WALLER



WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT

*One family's ordeal in
the world's only
officially atheist state*

BY RAY DABROWSKI

Flora Lewis will never forget the arrest in 1950. Forty-three years does not erase the memory or the pain. Time only numbs it.

Flora; her husband, Daniel; their two preschool children, Jony and Esther; and Kristac and Lazar, two men with whom Daniel had studied the Bible, attempted to flee Communist Albania. Heading for Greece, they walked eight hours along a wooded mountain trail. At midnight, exhausted, they stopped in the middle of the blackened forest to pray and to rest. Later, in an open area along the trail, they saw lights in the distance. "Look," Daniel said, "you can see Greece from here."

They never reached those lights. Kristac and Lazar, claiming they had forgotten something in town, left. Flora believes they betrayed them. Near the border, police jumped out of the darkness and aimed their weapons at Daniel's head. They pulled the parents from the children, and then separated Flora and Daniel. Never again were the Lewises united as a family.

For Albanians of any faith, the hardships of World War II were followed by the hardships of Enver Hoxha's Communist regime, which sought to eradicate religious faith. The result was the most severe religious persecution of modern times.



An economic
wonder of Enver
Hoxha's
Albania: A
cobblestone
street in Korce.

Beginning in 1946, the lights went out in Albania. Thousands of churches, mosques, and synagogues were either razed or converted into cinemas, warehouses, or stadiums. Bibles, Korans, and other religious materials were confiscated and burned, often publicly. Thousands of clergy and laypeople disappeared into prisons and labor camps or were exiled to distant parts of the country, their fate unknown even to their families.

Nevertheless, despite Hoxha's all-out anti-religious war, faith survived, even in the self-proclaimed "first atheist state in the world." And now that Albania's 40-year religious hell is over, those who lived through it, like Flora Sabatino Lewis, 77, are telling their stories.

Flora met Daniel Lewis in her native Italy. Lewis, born Dionis Katundi in Albania in 1894, emigrated with his family to the United States in 1901, where they Americanized their names. After becoming a pharmacist in Boston, the five-foot-six-inch, dark-haired Daniel responded to a call by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to return to Albania in the 1930s as a missionary. During a quick trip to Italy, he married Flora Sabatino, a slim young woman of 20 with neatly brushed-back black hair, and then returned to Korce, a town of 45,000 people 110 miles south of Tirana.

For all faiths, life in Communist Albania was hell. Witnessing was outlawed. Parents who gave their children religious names found their own names on "thunder sheets," posters placed in factories, schools, and public squares. To be listed meant ridicule, harassment, and loss of privileges. Worse, believers faced arrest, executions, prison, torture, labor camps, confiscation of property, and a ceaseless barrage of anti-religious propaganda.

In 1949 the government ordered that all religious denominations be registered. Knowing that this step meant state control of church funds, buildings, and activities, Daniel decided to flee with his family to Greece. Caught on April 17, 1950, they went to prison instead. Their property was confiscated, and they lost all rights as citizens.

Daniel Lewis was sentenced to 20 years, later reduced to 10, and Flora served two and one-half years. The last time the two saw each other was during the trial in Korce. In the local prison they were unable even to exchange notes. For his first year and a half, Daniel was cramped into filthy, crowded quarters with 25 other prisoners. They

slept on beds only two feet wide. Because he refused to work on Saturdays, he was denied privileges, threatened, and beaten.

"The moment they were arrested," says Meropi Gjika, 87, a small, frail, white-haired woman who was one of Daniel's early converts, "the news spread throughout Korce. After two months I got a letter from Daniel pleading with me to help him and his wife. They were suffering much. So I went to the jail month after month to do what I could. They were in separate cell blocks. I washed Daniel's clothes. Flora washed her own. I brought them whatever food I could. I could see that the prison was slowly killing them."

Eventually Daniel was transferred to a prison in Elbasan and then to the Camp of Forced Labor in Valausk, central Albania. There he and other prisoners were daily taken to work on building sites. Despite the beatings, the lack of good food, and the hard labor, Daniel maintained his faith.

"He was always preaching, always associating with other Christians," says William Neki Bergas, who was sent to prison at 17 for criticizing Enver Hoxha. Today Bergas, balding, wrinkled, and with a deep scar under his left eye, says, "We all observed the trouble he faced for his refusal to work on Saturdays. He was considered a religious hero. He would preach to the prisoners every night. His kindness caused him to be loved by almost all the inmates."

Though Daniel's faith remained strong, his body didn't. After more than four years of beating,



Flora Lewis today:
Despite loss of her son
and husband, her faith
has remained firm.



William Niki Bergas: Daniel Lewis died in his arms after only four years in prison.

torture, and overwork, Daniel Lewis died.

Says Bergas, "He just keeled over one day and died in my arms. It was probably a heart attack. He was gone in a minute."

Lewis's body was dumped into an unmarked grave alongside six other prisoners in the woods outside the labor camp.

Even harder on Flora than the conditions of her imprisonment was her separation from her children. Two days after their parents' arrest, Jony and Esther were placed in a Korce orphanage. When Flora was released, she was reunited with Esther, but permitted to see Jony only once. She had no rights, no home, nothing of her own except a few clothes. For many years she lived with Meropi.

Jony, a quiet, sensitive boy with bright-blue eyes and a happy grin, never got over the trauma of the arrest, imprisonment, and death of his father, as well as his isolation in the orphanage. His grin soon turned into a frown that never left. He died in a mental hospital in his 20s.

Today the 43-year nightmare is over. Religion is slowly resurfacing after a generation underground. A new generation will be raised without the haunting specter of Communist repression. Churches, synagogues, and mosques are being reclaimed and rebuilt.

In this new atmosphere Flora, now 77, short, stout, and white-haired, thrives in Korce. Her small Mediterranean-style house with red-tiled roof resembles the other houses on street Rruga Quemal Stafa. The terraces are covered with creeping vines that provide cool, tranquil shade in the summers. Inside, the walls of her home are covered with family photographs—Daniel, Jony, and Esther, along with Esther's husband and children. Nothing hints of the tragic story behind the faces looking serenely at visitors and family.

Flora points to the old browning pictures of Daniel and Jony, and tears roll into her wrinkles when she speaks of them. But her faith is as strong as when the police arrested them near the Greek border a generation ago.

Flora, her daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren witness to their hope of Christ's soon return. They speak without the fear of persecution that hung over the nation for 40 years. The hell that separated the Lewis family has burned out.

"Sometimes," says Flora, "I remember that night when we looked across the border and saw the lights of Greece.

"We never reached them.

"But someday soon I'll look across the border to a better land, and there will be lights. And there will be Daniel. And there will be Jony. And this time I'll make it—all the way home."



THE ATHEIST GENERATION

BY FATOS TARIFA AND ELIRA CELA

Despite 40 years of trying, the Communists were never able to cure Albania's "opium" addiction completely

When the Communists took power after World War II, Albania was a nation divided into three main religions: Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Muslim. Because each faith was taught in a language not native to Albania (Latin, Greek, Arabic), religious faith and morals never became deeply rooted among most adherents. Instead, faith remained somewhat of a mystery, preserved mostly in rites and customs mixed with popular traditions. Perhaps, for this reason, the Communists thought that they could easily uproot all religion from Albania.

They were wrong. Albanians didn't surrender their "opium" addiction easily.

A survey conducted in the early 1990s of 346 students from the University of Tirana revealed surprising results from Dictator Enver Hoxha's 40-year unrelenting struggle against religion. "In which religion, if any," the survey asked, "do you consider yourself to be a member?" The response: 23 percent Muslim, 13 percent Orthodox, and 9 percent Catholic. Four percent didn't know, and 51 percent claimed no religion.

Another question was "How devout do you consider yourself to be?" The answer: 6 percent very devout, 14 percent somewhat religious, 3 percent didn't know, and 77 percent were not at all devout.

Even after living their whole lives under the most stringent anti-religious government in modern history, 45 percent of the students claimed a religious faith. These figures are a powerful testimony to the failure of Hoxha's dream of an atheistic Albania. That a large percentage of the students didn't consider themselves devout may be attributed to their ignorance of what the concept means. Reared and educated as atheists, they were never given the opportunity to learn. Seventy percent of Albanians have never entered a mosque or a church, nor ever read either the Bible or the Koran. Nevertheless, almost half the students at the University of Tirana still identify with a religious organization.

Though faith in God was not destroyed, even in the younger generation, the means to express it certainly were. The new democratic government's task will be to ensure that this surviving belief is allowed free expression.

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Hostility toward religion in Communist Albania climaxed in the mid-1960s when a government-orchestrated revolutionary movement brought the almost total collapse of official religion. According to government propaganda (including history books and museum guides), in January 1967 students of the secondary school in the city of Durrës proclaimed war on religion and decided to uproot faith from the Albanian people. The 1946 constitutional guarantees of "freedom of conscience and religion" proved worthless. Besides attacking the economic base of the clergy and expropriating all religious institutions, the state determined that freedom of conscience would be complete only when man freed himself from the enslaving opium of religion.

In a 1967 report to the Fifth Congress of the Party of Labor, Dictator Enver Hoxha said: "Religion is the opium of the people. We should do our best to make everyone realize this great truth and to cure those who have been poisoned (and they are not a few). This job is not easy; neither is it impossible. We should not leave this struggle to spontaneity or please ourselves by saying that new generations will abandon this opium. Our struggle against religion must be spearheaded both against religious dogma, its philosophical idealist and mystical viewpoints, and [against] the religious customs that have penetrated the daily behavior of those who believe and even of those who do not believe."

Though the ability to train clergy and spread religious books has been uprooted, Hoxha continued, churches and mosques are still keeping faith alive. Therefore, he said, "we must continue this struggle until we have erased them from the face of the earth."

By 1975 the anti-religious thrust was stipulated in Article 37 of the Albanian constitution: "The


state recognizes no religion whatever and supports atheist propaganda for the purpose of inculcating the scientific materialist world outlook in people." Article 55 read: "The creation of any type of organization of a fascist, anti-democratic, religious, and antisocialist character is prohibited. Fascist, anti-democratic, religious, warmongering, and anti-socialist activities and propaganda, as well as the incitement of national and racial hatred, are prohibited."

With the 1976 constitution, Marxist-Leninism was officially accepted as the "ruling ideology," the basis of all socialism. Consequently, atheism and Marxism became a legal obligation for all Albanians.

In the late 1980s Albania began to feel the vibrations of one Communist regime after another falling. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, even isolated Albania could not develop except on the terms of modern European civilization. The age of the one-party Communist dictatorship in Europe seemed over. A number of years after Hoxha's death in 1985,

a multiparty democracy replaced the proletarian dictatorship.

Today freedom of conscience and religion is a reality. In October of 1992 the Albanian Council of Ministers approved a draft of a religious freedom law. It asserts that religion is to be separate from the state and that all beliefs are to be treated equally before the law. The draft says that Albania is a secular nation that recognizes freedom of conscience, religion, and belief. It promises

that all citizens are free to exercise or not to exercise religious beliefs, to belong to religious organizations, and to propagate their beliefs publicly and privately. Though the draft has flaws (it grants special status to four major traditional faiths—Muslim, Bektashi, Orthodox, and Catholic—and gives the president of the Republic the power to approve leaders of religious communities), it signals the end of Hoxha's repressive measures. Albanian Communists are likely to be erased "from the face of the earth" a lot sooner than believers. 

THE MAKING AND DOMINANCE OF AN ATHEIST STATE

BY FATOS TARIFA AND ELIRA CELA



Buildings constructed during Italy's occupation of Albania house government agencies in downtown Tirana.

Some 300,000 bunkers built under the dictatorship of Envar Hoxa are prominent features across the Albanian landscape. Built of concrete and steel, they are reminders of an oppressive and xenophobic past.



Meropi Gjika, who used to visit Daniel Lewis in jail, has her own story. She and the few other local Adventists, as well as her children, called themselves “crypto (secret)-Christians.” In an environment in which profession of religion could have meant loss of everything, they adhered to their faith, witnessed for Christ, and even kept the Sabbath.

“Times were hard,” she says. “You feared that they would take away your home because you were not one of them. Our faith was tested. That is why it remains strong today.”

Despite the ban on witnessing, Meropi used to distribute pieces of paper with Bible verses printed on them to almost everyone she knew. She would also write down spiritual notes and comments in a notebook. Because they were considered religious propaganda, Meropi could have been arrested.

Her son Thanas recalls: “She used to stop me before I left for work and ask whether I had read my Bible text for the day. Only when I read it could I go to work.”

Meropi’s evangelism didn’t stop with her family.

Her granddaughter Esther says, “She used to give those pieces of paper with the verses to everyone she met. And whenever she would see me, the first thing she would ask was, ‘Have you read the verse for today?’”

Another son, Victor, secretly translated parts of

the Bible from Russian, French, and English versions he had smuggled into the country.

“Every Sabbath I would translate one chapter by hand,” he says, “and then later would have it typewritten.”

Meropi’s zeal used to worry the family. She was not afraid to witness or talk about God to everyone.

“Hold your tongue, mother,” Thanas used to plead. “Don’t talk about religion. You are going to destroy us as a family.”

Her typical response: “You are a coward and nothing else. You must not be afraid, because God is protecting us.”

Meropi also had one special burden. She had been setting aside tithe and offerings, even during the 20 years when she lived on a pension of only \$4 a month. Because there were no church authorities to take the money, for 47 years she stored it in a “Nipiol” biscottini carton under her bed, praying that the Lord would open the way for her to send it to the church. Once the Communists fell and the country was opened, Adventist church leaders began to visit. When David Currie, an evangelist with the Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists, found Meropi, she pulled out from under her bed a yellow, torn box with a picture of a curly-haired child eating a biscuit on the top and said, “What must I do with my tithe, which I have saved all these years? Can you take it?”

The Lord answered her prayers. Currie took the tithe back to the Division headquarters.

The amount: \$533.89.



BY RAY DABROWSKI

*Crypto-Christian:
Despite living
in the
world's "first
atheist
state," Meropi
Gijka witnessed
daily for
her faith.*

*Inset: Meropi
Gijka's tithe and
the biscuit box
she hid it in for
almost half a
century. It
averaged \$13
per year.*



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“The possession of power over others is inherently destructive both to the possessor of the power and to those over whom it is exercised. And the great man of the future, in distinction from the great man of the past, is he who will seek to create power in the people, and not gain power over them. The great man of the future is he who will refuse to be great at all, in the historic sense; he is the man who will literally lose himself, who will altogether diffuse himself in the life of humanity.”

George D. Herron, American clergyman (1862-1925).

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