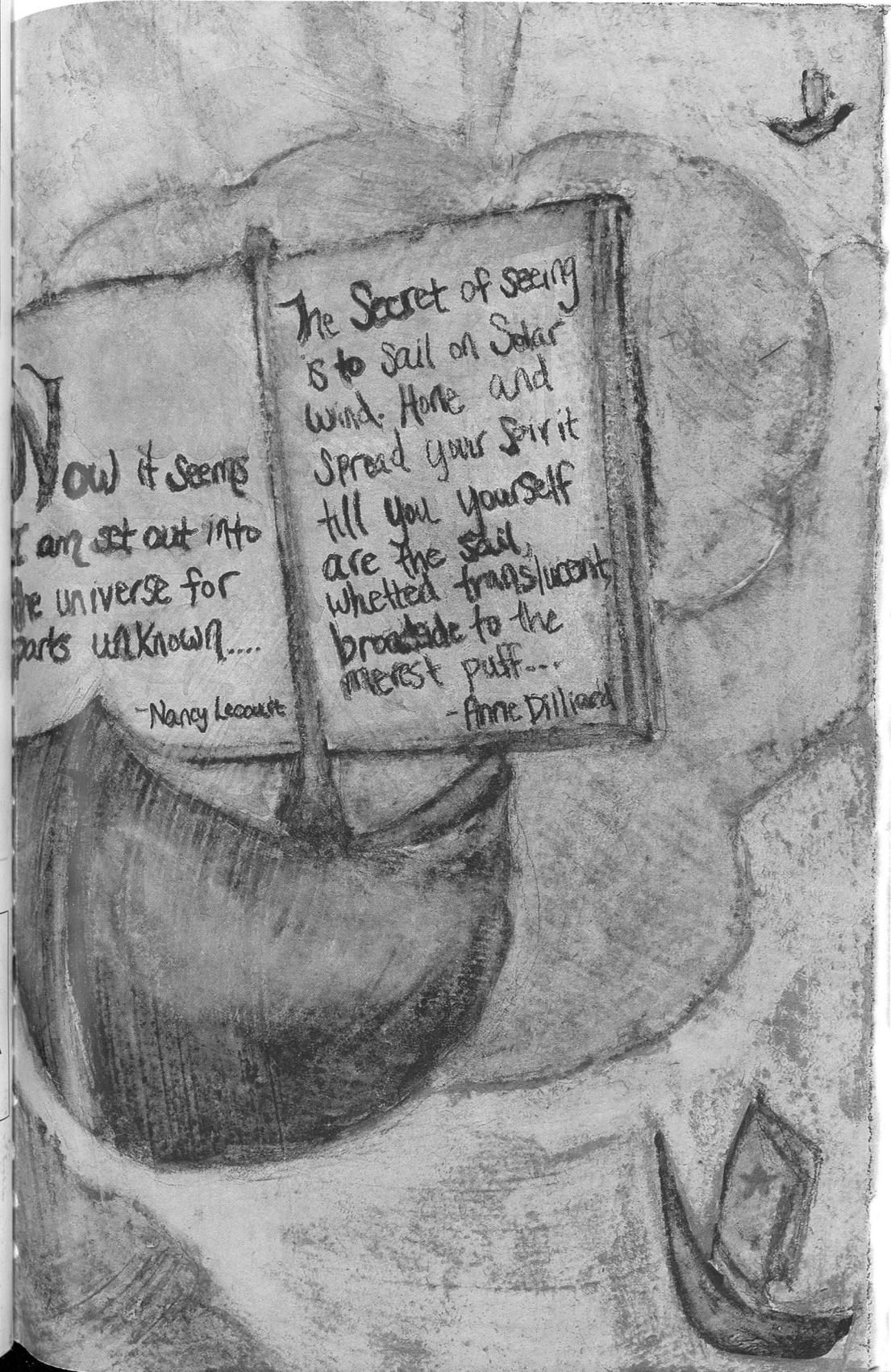


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SPECTRUM

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A Celebration
of Reading

Sailing on
Solar Wind

Debating the
CUC Case

Gifts of the Spirit
vs. the IBMTE

Why I Remain
a Seventh-day
Adventist



www.spectrummagazine.org

SPECTRUM

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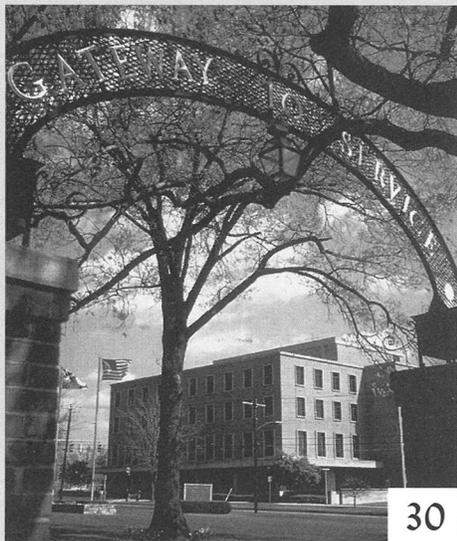
About the Cover

The cover artwork was created using watercolors and gesso on a 300 pound cold-press paper. When painting, the artist enjoys experimenting with texture and color. The result is a rich and often moody interpretation, but always in the celebration of creation. The cover artwork is a piece about the celebration of reading as well as creation, having gathered inspiration from the inside article by Nancy Lecourt, "Sailing on Solar Wind."

About the Artist

Shelley Utt, twenty-one, is a first-year graphic design student at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Washington. Her interest in painting began in 1997 on a trip to France as a nanny with her teacher, Kim Howard, a professional artist and illustrator and kindred spirit. After finishing the four-year graphic design program at Cornish, Shelley looks forward to starting a career in the graphic arts in a firm, or as an in-house graphic designer at a magazine. Shelley will also continue painting commissions as her passion.

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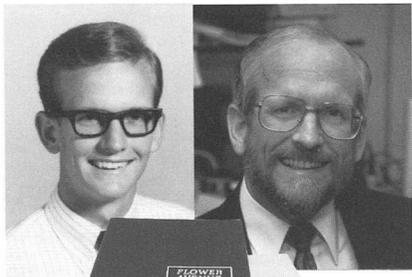
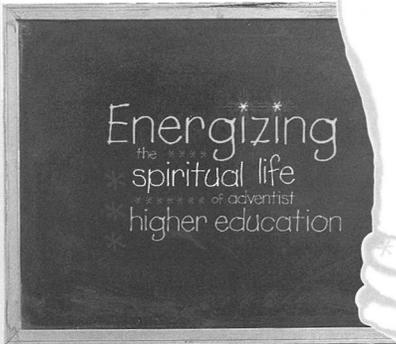
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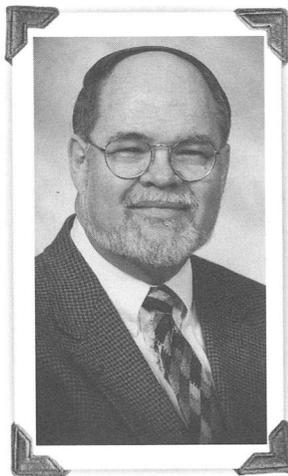
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Praying for Civility

It was a prayer from the heart: “Lord, please help us to know how to behave when we disagree.” With the regional conferences retirement system on the agenda at the year end meetings there was the possibility of racial disagreements, so the newly elected president of the North American Division, Don Schneider, opened the meeting with that prayer in 2000. It is a prayer that deserves frequent repetition.

In this issue we have the concluding chapter in the story of the regional conferences retirement system now in place and decisions made to pay for the old system from which they exited.

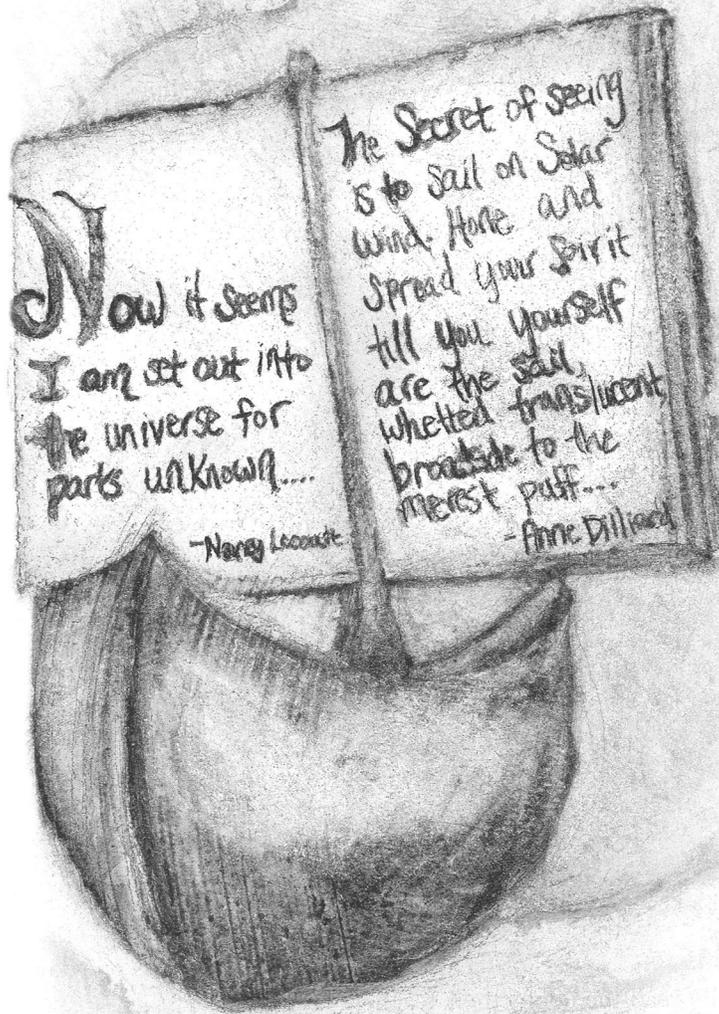
However, there are other issues at hand that also call for Schneider’s prayer. Columbia Union College has now won its eleven-year battle with the state of Maryland for Sellinger funds, but not without raising the ire of the religious liberty community in the process. We are pleased to have two attorneys make arguments about the case and thus shed light on why it seems to be a bellwether case in North America.

The International Board for Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) has prompted disagreement since its inception. It is a delight to report on some recent developments that show we may be learning how to behave when we disagree. At least some political actions have been taken that could improve the situation. Nonetheless, we have included an analysis of the IBMTE *Handbook* because it has been voted into the working policy of the Church.

It is with great delight that we introduce our readers to the prayer/poetry of Virginia Rickeman via the prayer on the back cover. Her book *The Well is Deep: Prayers to Draw Up Living Water* has been a major inspiration to me. She has a beautiful prayer for the church that closes: “Receive, O God, our spoken and unspoken gratitude, the upward rush of our hearts, the glad overflow of our minds, the high-arc’d flight of our souls’ intentions. Hem our thanks with the strong thread of courage and lay it as a mantle back upon us. Then we will know once again your grace with us as we bear the great and costly honor of embodying your love in this gathering called your church. Amen.”

Bonnie Sawyer
Editor





The Bible and a
Celebration of Reading

Illustration: Shelley Utt

Sailing on Solar Wind

By Nancy Lecourt

“Book” was the first word of my first child. Sebastian was about a year old, standing beside the sofa at the house of some friends and playing with the baby books I had brought along for the visit, stirring them back and forth over each other, almost singing, “book-a-book-a-book-a-book . . .”

“He’s saying ‘book!’” someone said.

“No he’s not,” I replied. But indeed, the evidence seemed incontrovertible, as he continued to caress the books and croon happily to them, “book-a-book-a-book . . .”

Now that he is in college, an English major with a room full of books, the importance of this moment is clear. Sebastian was a cautious child who didn’t walk until six months later; books provided both adventure and clues to the meaning of life’s mysteries—all from the safety of Mommy’s lap. He could step across oceans with Harold and his purple crayon, make mischief of one kind and another with Max and the Wild Things, enter a forbidden garden with Peter Rabbit, and be back for supper.

I, too, have followed the bread crumbs left by books as I stumble and saunter through life. I remember reading myself to sleep as a young teenager with *The Conflict of the Ages* series and *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Why did I read these conservative, old-fashioned books, instead of at least bringing home *The Outsiders* or *Harriet the Spy*?

My parents never tried to control my reading; I think perhaps these books made me feel safe in an Adventist environment (school, church, Pathfinders, Missionary Volunteers, summer camp), where I was constantly being reminded that the Time of Trouble would soon be upon us, that “the very elect” would be deceived, and that even one unconfessed sin could land me in the Lake of Fire. They guided me along what seemed to be a secure path.

But eventually even I began to feel ready for a riskier journey, to wonder what lay outside the Adventist garden wall. It was at that moment that my academy biology teacher told me I ought to read C. S. Lewis’s space trilogy. “It tells the story of the Great Controversy, without ever mentioning God!” he told me after class one day. How often do students actually read the books their teachers recommend?

I did, anyway, and then read through everything else by Lewis I could get my hands on. *Mere Christianity*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, *Surprised by Joy*—they all helped provide something I craved: intellectual backbone for my beliefs. I think now that C. S. Lewis made it possible for me to stay in the Seventh-day Adventist Church by making clear to me the meaning and logic behind theism and the central Christian narrative.

Perhaps more important, he made me realize that I was not simply a member of my church, but of the Church Invisible, “spread out through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners”—that far more united me with Baptists and Episcopalians and Catholics than divided me from them, despite what I had been led to believe.¹

Strangely enough, it wasn’t until years later that I discovered Lewis’s children’s books. I vividly remember attending a conference for writing teachers in Lexington, Kentucky, when I was about twenty-seven. I took along *The Lion, the Witch, and the*

Wardrobe, which a friend had told me I *must* read. On Sabbath, instead of going to the meetings, I luxuriated in my hotel room with a view of the Kentucky hills and traveled to the mountains and valleys of Narnia for the first time. Somehow Jesus-as-Lion seemed more real and personal than the man I had met in the Gospels, his sacrifice became more poignant, and heaven seemed to beckon more sweetly when it held unicorns and talking mice. Lewis made the old, old story seem new.

Then I discovered Paul Tournier. I was fascinated by the case studies of his patients, by his explanations for the way people act. Books like *Guilt and Grace*, *The Meaning of Persons*, and *The Adventure of Living* helped educate my emotional intelligence and link it up with my spiritual life. While living in Switzerland, I joyfully discovered used copies of his books not available in English while exploring the stalls along the quay in Lausanne. I even visited Tournier in his home, interviewing him for *Insight* magazine and bringing

him a jar of homemade chocolate chip cookies.²

At this time in my life I was still struggling with legalism. I distinctly remember the day I finally decided that God loved me, and that what mattered was not being right, but trusting that love. Tournier assured me that I could move forward, even if the path ahead seemed shadowy, because God would be with me on my journey. "I think [we have to] give up the idea that we must be clear, and let ourselves be led by God blindly, if I may put it so, rather than demanding that he show us clearly at each step what our road is."³

Although Tournier wrote metaphorically of blindness, Annie Dillard, with her strange and beautiful prose, taught me to begin to see in a different way. The colors and textures of this world, especially of what we call Nature, she brought to my attention. Somehow she sees into and through things, beyond the trees and the water, looking for their meanings. "God used to rage at the Israelites for frequenting sacred groves. I wish I could find one."⁴ She is on an extended nature walk,

What We're Reading Now

Three members of the *Spectrum* Book Advisory Committee share their reading lists

Gary Chartier

Jean-Pierre Changeux and Paul Ricoeur. *What Makes Us Think: A Neuroscientist and a Philosopher Argue about Ethics, Human Nature, and the Brain*. Reprint ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002. 354 pages.

Just what the title says: a surprisingly readable discussion of complex issues in philosophy and science that draws the reader into its authors' conversation.

Stephen R. L. Clark. *Biology and Christian Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 332 pages.

This examination of the intersection between religion and science (it's broader than the title might suggest) by a brilliant and idiosyncratic Christian philosopher is proof that philosophical prose can be graceful and literate—

simply put, fun to read—as well as intellectually challenging.

Peter Conradi. *Iris Murdoch: A Life*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001. 512 pages.

A compelling intellectual biography of a first-rate novelist and philosopher that demonstrates that a flawed person can radiate love and goodness into the lives of others.

David Ray Griffin. *Unsnarling the World-Knot: Consciousness, Freedom, and the Mind-Body Problem*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 264 pages.

A new and highly appealing take on an old conundrum that shows how an idiosyncratically Christian view, shaped by process philosophy, might help to resolve one of the most fundamental of all physical puzzles.

Daniel Lazare. *The Frozen Republic:*

How the Constitution is Paralyzing Democracy. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996. 393 pages.

An engaging history (and prehistory) of the U.S. Constitution and its role in American political life that argues persuasively that the sacred text of our civil religion needs to be overhauled or replaced.

J. R. R. Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings*. Collector's ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974. 1,216 pages.

Rereading this classic (and, in its author's view, deeply Christian) work after twenty years, I find that Tolkien's prose has the power to send chills down my spine.

James Hayward

Barbara Kingsolver. *The Poisonwood Bible*. New York: Harper Perennial Library, 1999. 566 pages.

watching intently for the secrets of existence, hoping to see them shine out when she least expects it. My favorite passage is in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. It offers better traveling instructions than I've found in any guidebook:

The secret of seeing is, then, the pearl of great price. . . . But although the pearl may be found, it may not be sought. . . . I cannot cause light; the most I can do is try to put myself in the path of its beam. . . . The secret of seeing is to sail on solar wind. Hone and spread your spirit till you yourself are a sail, whetted, translucent, broadside to the merest puff.⁵

This, then, is where my books have brought me: out of the small, rather claustrophobic space where I began, into a larger, more populated landscape; now it seems I am to set out into the universe for parts unknown. I hope, like Sebastian, to step across oceans, make a certain amount of mischief, enter a forbidden garden or two, and be home for supper.

A powerful novel about religion, power, abuse, and human resiliency set in the context of an American fundamentalist missionary family's experiences in Africa.

John McPhee. *Annals of the Former World*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. 696 pages.

This magisterial, Pulitzer Prize winning volume recounts McPhee's travels back and forth across the United States with various geologists and his reflections on its topography and geology around the fortieth parallel.

Del Ratzsch. *Science and Its Limits: The Natural Sciences in Christian Perspective*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000. 191 pages.

A prominent philosopher of science at Calvin College, Ratzsch provides an excellent synopsis of the limitations and strengths of arguments that Christians use in regard to creation/evolution, intelligent design, postmodernism, and so forth.

Terry Tempest Williams. *Leap*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2000. 338 pages.

A strange but brilliant extended essay by a Mormon naturalist/feminist/writer about good and evil and the pleasures of life; based on Hieronymus Bosch's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.

Nancy Lecourt

Barbara Ehrenreich. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001. 221 pages.

A middle-aged woman writer with a Ph.D. becomes a waitress, a dishwasher, a housekeeper, and a Walmart employee to see whether it is really possible to live on minimum wage. It isn't.

Mary Rose O'Reilly. *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton Cook, 1998. 50 pages.

Reflections on life and teaching

Notes and References

1. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 5.

2. It wasn't easy to make chocolate chip cookies in Switzerland in 1982. I had to buy big slabs of dark chocolate and cut them into "chips" with a butcher knife. I also had to use hazelnuts instead of walnuts, not easy nuts to chop. And, of course, I used whole wheat flour, like a good Adventist. The cookies may have been quite an adventure for Tournier.

3. Paul Tournier, *The Adventure of Living*, trans. Edwin Hudson (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1965), 188.

4. Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 69.

5. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974), 33.

Nancy Lecourt chairs the department of English at Pacific Union College and writes a column for the *Spectrum* Web site.

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that ask the question: What spaces can we create in the classroom that will allow students freedom to nourish an inner life?

Philip Pullman. *The Golden Compass*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. 399 pages.

First in a trilogy of astounding fantasy-adventures that involve parallel universes peopled by a fascinating array of characters, which includes talking bears, witches—both good and bad—and angels. Not for the timid.

Eric Schlosser. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. 356 pages.

Muckraking at its best. A blistering exposé of the way fast food has altered America's environment, work, life, and health—especially of children.





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Texts and Trivia: The Denials of Peter

By Ernest Bursey

I am a reader of texts, intentional accumulations of words both ancient and modern. I seek to read these texts in the widening circles of cultural and literary contexts, and to acknowledge and even expedite the intersections of those circles with my own more familiar cultural circles. But my ability to catch all intended cues and comparisons while reading the snippets about Peter's denials in the New Testament Gospels is severely limited. I am disadvantaged by the large distance in time that cannot be closed. I am further constrained by the understated style of the Gospel story tellers and by my ability (or inability!) to read the few lines about Peter's denials in one of the Gospels while keeping in mind all the other sayings and snippets in this particular mosaic of recollections. I am especially limited by my own imagination that extrapolates significance the way a child alone in the house interprets random sounds and imagines movement in the shadows.

As a teacher, I often deal with facts of trivia—the kind of material that turns up on a multiple choice examination: Is the distance from Jerusalem to Qumran (a) 15 miles? (b) 40 miles? (c) 60 miles? (d) 75 miles? This kind of trivia can be significant. Fifteen miles from Jerusalem, the spiritual and cultural center of Judaism, with abundant rainfall for human habitation, there exists a desolate region so arid that ancient papyrus scrolls stored in hillside caves were preserved over two millennia.

A single piece of data from a text—a piece of trivia—can shatter a worldview, like a shard of concrete dropped from a freeway overpass. It happened to Robert Olson. While sitting in a library carrel at Southwestern Baptist Seminary, he read *I Enoch* for the first time as part of the assigned reading in his doctoral studies. In the first chapter he ran across lines identical to lines in *Jude*. He realized at once that *Jude*, a canonical and therefore

inspired writer, had quoted from I Enoch, a pseudonymous and therefore dishonest book, about the alleged heavenly travels of Enoch. The author of Jude did not even acknowledge the source of the quotation. In a recent conversation, Olson retold me how this unexpected finding profoundly disturbed him and altered for all time his understanding of inspiration. As a believer in Divine Providence, he observed how this disruptive discovery prepared him for his role as the head of the Ellen G. White Estate at a time when the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its scholars were confronted with the discovery of Mrs. White's extensive use of sources.

I, too, have undergone a hermeneutical conversion of sorts while engaged in the reading of Scripture, albeit a more gradual and more drawn out conversion than Olson's. This article is a witness to that conversion and to my conviction as a believer that I have gained much more than I have lost.

How Many Ate with Me at Palby's?

Before examining the Gospel data, let's look at a personal story to understand the verisimilitudes of eyewitnesses. My wife and I were married more than thirty-eight years ago in Napa, California. As I remember, all of our family members were there. One memory that has stuck in my mind was the verbal battle between the photographer and the wedding coordinator shortly before the wedding began. Then I remember the most beautiful woman coming down the aisle in a borrowed wedding gown on the arm of her father. I remember worrying about the pastor, standing inches in front of me, because he seemed to sway while his hands shook during the homily about the Garden of Eden. We knelt while my father sang the Lord's Prayer. At the receiving line I was surprised to see one of my professors. At present, I cannot remember who he was.

I remember our hair-raising escape ride after the reception, with my father driving our getaway car, the headlights off to elude the pack of pursuers. He even drove on one-way streets the wrong way. Our families gathered afterward at Palby's, a restaurant outside of Napa, to eat before we took off on our honeymoon. I remember later that night, after saying goodbye to our families, that Beth and I secretly drove back to St. Helena to the apartment that became our home. Exhausted, we slept most of the next twenty-four hours.

Suppose I were asked to write a more complete description of our wedding. There are more details in my mind, but I have forgotten a lot. To write a story

about our wedding, I would need help. I could use the black and white wedding pictures to "refresh my memory." I could draw on my own knowledge of what usually happens at weddings. I could rely on my wife's much better memory for details.

After reading the paragraph that I have written about my wedding my wife pointed out that all our family members were not there. Her brother was unable to get a leave from his navy duty. Furthermore, she knows that only the two of us ate a meal at Palby's while my family packed up to return to Arizona. She's probably right, although my memory bank has the whole group there. The point is that I was there and the difficulties over the details would not prove otherwise.

If I decided to write about our wedding it is likely that I would have a specific reason to do so. Whatever details I chose to include would have to lend support to the reason(s) for my writing about it. I would even leave out information I knew if it distracted from that purpose. This is even true of the version you just received.

Now, back to Peter's denials.

Accounting for the Difficult Trivia in the Stories of Peter's Denials

The four accounts of Peter's denials cannot be harmonized easily into a seamless whole.¹ The differences in detail, chronology, and geography defy a facile solution. Even the "eyewitnesses" differ with Peter himself; they give two different versions, if we accept the church tradition that portrays him as the source for Mark and John.

Notice the divergence among the Gospels in identifying the second accuser. For Matthew, it is "another slave girl (Greek feminine: *halle*, "another"), a different slave girl from the one who accused Peter in the first round (Matt. 26:71). For Mark, the accuser is the same slave girl who accused Peter the first time (Mark 14:69). According to Luke, the second person to accuse Peter is referred to as "someone else" (Luke 22:58). In the original Greek language, this pronoun is masculine, not feminine. Peter's reply, "Man, I am not," clarifies the matter, even for the reader of a modern English version.

This conflict illustrates several challenges the four accounts present for those who hold a position of absolute biblical inerrancy. John and the Synoptic



Gospels differ considerably from each other on the time, location, and wording of the denials. Furthermore, Luke differs from Matthew and Mark. It is not surprising that defenders of biblical inerrancy may choose to omit this account in their treatment of alleged difficulties.²

Even with the differences, the story of Peter's denial appears to pass the acid tests of historical criticism. The story was not likely to have been fabricated out of whole cloth.³ Peter was too important a leader in the early church and the event too shameful. In fact, within a twenty-four hour period there were three shameful scandals: (1) Jesus' betrayal by Judas, a member of his inner circle; (2) the denial by Peter, the leading disciple; and (3) Jesus' execution on the cross as an enemy of the Roman Empire. The Gospels show Jesus knowing all of these in advance. Here the historian who denies the supernatural parts company from the believing historian who does not.

From a historian's point of view the differences are quite understandable. The stories about Jesus and his disciples were old stories when the authors of the Gospels got around to writing their books. At least two of the New Testament Gospel writers were not present, so they had to listen to others for all their information. We shouldn't be surprised at the differences among the four accounts. However, the believer wonders what has happened to the role of the Holy Spirit in such an approach.

Examining the Believers' Options

Believers confronted for the first time with such conflicts in the Bible thus are surprised or even disturbed because they believe that the Bible cannot contain errors if it is inspired by an infallible God who possesses the truth. If there are errors in small details, how can we be confident in the larger matters?

Concerned believers intent on establishing the historicity of the Bible may try to find comfort by deciding that one of the authors was closer to the event or in some other way was more reliable as a writer. This approach runs the risk of denigrating one part of the Bible in order to save the historicity of another part, which results in a canon within the larger canon. Selecting the most historically reliable among the Gospel accounts of Peter's denials has its problems, even for conservative scholars like myself who accept the traditional authorship of the four Gospels.

Matthew as tax collector was likely to have brought a carefulness cultivated with calculating numbers to his writing assignment. According to early tradition, Mark wrote the memoirs of Peter, who certainly was an eye witness.⁵ At the onset of his Gospel, the historian Luke declares his care in getting the story straight from eyewitnesses and other reputable persons (Luke 1-3). If the unnamed disciple who let Peter into the high priest's courtyard was the one Jesus loved and whose testimony the believers explicitly supported, then the unique

features of the Gospel of John cannot be dismissed (18:15, 16; 21:2-23). Seventh-day Adventist readers may decide to ask Ellen G. White, author of *The Desire of Ages*, to have the last word and allow her inspired writings to show which Gospel account is accurate. However, she has indicated that her writings are not to be used to settle details of history.

Another approach is to show that differences in the accounts actually do not contradict each other, even if they seem to.⁶ This willingness to continue looking for solutions that dissolve apparent contradictions

1st

Denial of Jesus by Peter:

	MATT. 26:69-70	MARK 14:66-68	LUKE 22:56-57	JOHN 18:17-18
SEQUENCE	after trial of Jesus	after trial of Jesus		before interrogation of Jesus
PLACE	in the <i>aule</i>	in the <i>aule</i> at the fire (54)	in the middle of the <i>aule</i> (55) at the fire	at the gate (<i>thyra</i>) while entering
QUESTIONER	servant girl	one of the servant girls	servant girl	servant girl who kept the gate
QUESTION OR ACCUSATION	"You too were with [<i>meta</i>] Jesus the Galilean"	"You too were with [<i>meta</i>] the Nazarene Jesus"	"This one too was with [<i>syn</i>] him?"	"Are you too one of this man's disciples?"
REPLY	He denied it before all: "I don't know what you are talking about"	He denied it: "I don't know or understand what you are talking about"	He denied it: "Woman, I don't know him"	"No, I am not"

stands us all in good stead while dealing with incomplete information. But efforts to harmonize in the service of an unbending theory of an error-free Bible can at times lead to complicated and even improbable explanations.

Leon Morris appeals to the group setting of the denials as the probable cause for the differences over who accused Peter the second time: "Our difficulty probably arises because we unconsciously think that in each case one person asked the question and that was that. A moment's reflection, however, shows that this would almost certainly not have been the case. With a group of servants talking informally round a fire in the courtyard when one asked whether Peter were a disciple it is almost certain that others would take the question up, especially if there were any hesitation about the answer."⁷

Morris finds it necessary to split Peter's second denial into two parts—one taken by Mark and one by John. William Hendriksen prefers to see John omitting the second denial, as found in Mark, and breaking the third denial into two denials.⁸ Each account ends up with three denials. This approach presumes that the Gospel authors were constrained to show that Jesus' prediction of a three-fold denial had indeed been fulfilled. So they imposed order on the rather chaotic data. As such, we cannot prove or disprove with the data at hand that Peter denied Jesus exactly three times, as Jesus predicted, and neither more nor less. Such an approach is not satisfactory to more literal minds.

Harold Lindsell forwards the suggestion of I. M. Cheney that Jesus warned Peter two separate times he would deny Jesus three times, which resulted in Peter denying Jesus six times, with the rooster crowing at the end of each set of three denials! As Lindsell acknowledges, "This man had labored long and hard to reconcile problems connected with some of the apparent discrepancies in the New Testament."⁹

Most believers I know go on to deny that the differences add up to anything important. Ordinary people can see that the basic story is the same in all the accounts: Jesus said Peter would deny knowing him three times, and later, in spite of his protest and a promise to do otherwise, Peter ended up denying him three times. The differences in the details seem to be minor, even irrelevant. The majority of the students in my courses react this way.

Don't Lose the Details

At this point, I regularly swim against the tides of my students' indifference by suggesting they have set aside the details as irrelevant too quickly. They ought

to consider the possibility that the details in each Gospel serve as signposts that point readers to the reason why the story is told. Seen this way, the four versions of Peter's denial provide four different perspectives in viewing this unforgettable experience. These different perspectives need not inherently be in conflict, though some of the details may appear irreconcilable and their origins unclear.

The assumption in this approach is that the reader is not invited to judge the detail of one Gospel account as true and dismiss that of another as false. This approach does not deny the legitimacy of historical reconstruction, although the plethora of hypothetical reconstructions on the right and left ought to caution us. What we presently have are four somewhat differing versions of the same event. Our primary effort as believing exegetes and servants of the Word is to listen carefully to each account for what it offers. I find this task almost forgotten in the discussions and defenses. What follows suggests the promise in this approach.

Mark: Ready for the Advent and Coping with Persecution

Among the four Gospels, the book of Mark stands out as a story. Sermonic interruptions are minimal. Peter's denial is part of a dramatic section that illustrates the importance of being ready for the Second Coming of Christ and how to survive persecution that will occur before it. In the eschatological discourse of Mark 13 Jesus outlines to several of his disciples the troubles about to come upon the world, particularly upon the followers of Jesus. There will be persecution on a grand scale and great tribulation that would utterly destroy all human life if not for the intervention of God (13:9-20). In the end, the Son of Man will suddenly appear and those he left in charge will be judged by their readiness. This crisis surpasses even the crisis of persecution.

To emphasize this point, Jesus tells the story of a master who leaves home, puts his slaves in charge of affairs, and commands the doorkeeper to be on watch



(13:34). Turning to his disciples, Jesus orders them to “Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning—lest he come and find you asleep” (13:35, 36). In a final command, which dramatically includes all hearers, Jesus declares “what I say to you I say to all—keep watch” (Mark 13:33-37). The readers of Mark are cued to be alert for the coming of their Lord as if they are guards awake at the doorway, whether he comes at midnight or when the rooster crows.

With this warning to watch fixed firmly in mind, the

reader is carried by the narrative to the final night, when Peter promises that, unlike the other disciples, he will not fall (Greek: *skandalisthesontai*) (14:29). At this point, Jesus informs Peter of his impending threefold denial. Peter vehemently protests that he would rather die than deny Jesus (14:30, 31). Immediately, the scene shifts to Gethsemane, where the warning language of 13:33-37 reappears. Jesus tells Peter and two others to “keep watch” (v. 34; compare 13:37), as if they were on guard. Later, he “comes and finds them sleeping” (14:37), words repeated from 13:35. Jesus asks Peter, “Are you asleep? Could you not watch for one hour?” (v. 37). Again, “he came and found them sleeping” (v. 40). As wakeful listeners, we know that the warning in the sermon and the scene in Gethsemane should be connected.

Acting to overthrow his own promise that Peter would deny him three times, Jesus tries to prepare Peter while he prepares himself. He singles out Peter with instructions to “watch and pray” (14:38). Three times Jesus comes to strengthen Peter. The Gethsemane narrative shows the alert reader that merely being physically awake is not enough. As one on guard, the follower of Jesus must be in prayer, otherwise he will “enter into temptation” (Greek: *peirasmos*) (14:38). It has become clear that Peter was not called to stand guard for Jesus, but to guard his own soul. However, Peter falls asleep again and again. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, Jesus explains. This weakness of the flesh accounts not only for Peter’s sleeping, but also for his cowardice.

At Jesus’ arrest, Peter follows at a distance and mingles with the guards (Greek: *huperetai*) around the fire. After the religious leaders condemn Jesus to death and physically abuse him, the same guards receive him with blows (14:65). Peter’s denial immediately follows mention of the guards striking Jesus. Now the weakness of the flesh appears to be cowardice in the face of violence. It is one thing to promise to go to death, but quite another to stand up to the immediate prospects. Otherwise, the narrative gives no clue as to why Peter would go back on his promise to die for Jesus.

Quickly and skillfully, Mark sketches Peter’s fall into the abyss. First a slave girl confronts Peter. She belongs to the high priest, who has just presided over Jesus’ death sentence. There is no mention of any other persons, although we can not rule it out.¹⁰ Peter clumsily claims that he cannot understand what she is saying and tries



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Denial of Jesus by Peter:

to duck outside, but she follows and starts telling those standing around that “this man is one of them.” Finally, the others challenge him! He utters a curse on either himself or Jesus. So Peter’s three denials provide negative reinforcement to Jesus’ command back in chapter 13 to all readers to “watch.” In contrast, Jesus passes his own trial, having been awake and in prayer submitted to the Father’s will.

To conclude, Mark connects a long discourse to a longer narrative by means of the exchange in Gethsemane through the word “watch” and the phrase “he came and found them sleeping.” As a result, Mark’s subsequent account of Peter’s denial shows readers who wait for Jesus’ return how to cope with the anticipated persecution and trials he promised would happen before the end-time. The coming of Jesus to Peter in Gethsemane is a merciful penultimate to that final coming, which cannot otherwise be illustrated in the available stock of vignettes available to Mark. The expositor will settle on the truth that all was decided in Gethsemane, the place of prayer—both for Jesus and for Peter.

Matthew: Prayer Life Prepares Us for Public Testimony

Much of Matthew 27 reads like Mark. Matthew also contrasts Peter with Jesus, both in Gethsemane and in their respective trials. However, in Matthew the trials of both Jesus and Peter are described more precisely along the lines of a proper Jewish trial. In Jewish terms, at least two witnesses must provide the same accusation (Matt. 18:16; Deut. 19:15). Whereas Mark has one slave girl accusing Peter in an escalating drama, Matthew presents two slave girls who utter the same accusation in two separate scenes.¹¹

Matthew has not reduced Peter’s denials from three to two, but he presents the first two accusations in virtually identical language. This is true only of Matthew’s version. In Matthew, the trials of both Jesus and Peter involve only two persons who aver the

	MATT. 26:71-72	MARK 14:69-70a	LUKE 22:58	JOHN 18:25
1 SEQUENCE	after Peter had moved inside	after Peter had moved inside	after a short time	after interrogation of Jesus
2 PLACE	outside the <i>aule</i> in gateway (<i>pylon</i>)	outside the <i>aule</i> in forecourt (<i>proaulion</i>)	in the middle of the <i>aule</i> (55) by the fire	in the <i>aule</i> by the fire
3 QUESTIONER	another servant girl	same servant girl	another (a man)	“they” = servants and police (18)
4 QUESTION OR ACCUSATION	“This man was with Jesus of Nazareth”	“This man is one of them”	“You too are one of them”	“Are you too one of his disciples?”
5 REPLY	He denied it again with an oath: “I don’t know the man”	He denied it again	“Man, I am not”	He denied it: “No, I am not”

same charge (26:6-62, 69-72). Notice that the accusations the witnesses in Matthew make against both Peter and Jesus are true, in contrast to Mark’s version.¹² According to the false witnesses in Mark’s account, Jesus is accused of saying that he will destroy the temple, whereas in Matthew’s account two witnesses speak of Jesus claiming to be able to destroy the temple. For at least Matthew’s Christian readers, this claim would be seen as true.

Earlier in the book, Jesus had promised his followers that they would be arrested and placed on public trial, where they would be given the opportunity to testify about him. They were not to worry about what to say, for the Spirit of their Father would speak in them (10:16-20, 24-26).¹³ Matthew finds an illustration of this promised publicity in the stories of Jesus and Peter. To help the reader make the connections, Matthew tells us that Peter denies the slave girl’s first accusation “before all.” Only Matthew explicitly declares the first denial to be public. In this way, the trial of Jesus and all three of Peter’s denials emerge in Matthew as opportunities to give public testimony! Jesus had promised his followers that they would be brought before governors and kings to give their testimony (10:18). In Jesus’ case, this happens when he is brought before Pilate (27:1-26). However, Peter fails his preliminary trial in front of slave girls and soldiers, all because he had not prepared in the garden.

Jesus’ prohibition in Matthew against uttering oaths (5:33-37) is illustrated twice in the rest of the



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Denial of Jesus by Peter:

	MATT. 26:71-72	MARK 14:69-70a	LUKE 22:58	JOHN 18:25
11 SEQUENCE	after a little while	after a little while	after about an hour's interval	immediately?
12 PLACE	no change	no change	no change	no change
13 QUESTIONER	the bystanders	the bystanders	another (a man)	servant of high priest, relative of man Peter hit
14 QUESTION OR ACCUSATION	"Truly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you"	"Truly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean"	"In truth, this one too was with him, for he is a Galilean"	"Didn't I see you with him in the garden?"
15 REPLY	He began to curse and swear: "I don't know the man"	He began to curse and swear: "I don't know this man you are talking about"	"I don't know what you are talking about"	He denied it again
16 Cockcrow	Immediately a cock crowed and Peter remembered what Jesus had said Peter wept bitterly	Immediately a cock crowed a second time and Peter remembered what Jesus had said Peter wept	At that moment a cock crowed while he was speaking Peter recalled the word of the Lord after the Lord looked at him Peter wept bitterly	Just then a cock crowed

gender of the second questioner differs, and there are differences in apparent audiences for the accusations and the answers Peter gives. Only in Luke does Jesus ("the Lord") look directly at Peter after the third denial. In the book of Acts attention is drawn to the gaze of the apostle (14:9) or the sufferer (3:4, 5; 9:40) in the healing.

In Luke 22:31-32, earlier that night before Jesus is arrested, Jesus tells Peter that Satan desires to "sift" all of the disciples like a farmer separating wheat from chaff. He assures Peter that "I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. And when you

book. Herod utters an oath in the presence of his guests (14:7) to give Herodias whatever she asks. Peter's denials provide the second illustration of the folly of oath taking. In Matthew's version, Peter utters an oath to accompany both the second and third denials (26:72, 74). Again, only Matthew among the four has this doubled oath, which illustrates a point Jesus made earlier in his teaching: anything more than "yes" or "no" comes from the evil one (5:37).

Luke: Our Survival Depends on Jesus' Prayers

Luke's narrative of Peter's denials is more expansive in detail and style. For instance, a maid, "seeing him as he sat in the light and gazing at him," says, "this man also was with him" (22:56). Luke T. Johnson writes of "Luke's gentler treatment of the apostles."¹⁴ There is no cursing and uttering of oaths, as in Matthew and Mark. Instead, Peter addresses his accusers respectively as "woman" and "man." One is tempted to make a comparison between the Genesis account of the fall, where first the woman and then the man succumb. Here, in Luke, Peter is confronted first by a woman and then by a man. There are other potentially significant differences between Luke and the other Synoptics. In Luke, all the denials take place in the courtyard, the

are converted you must strengthen your brothers." One of Luke's characteristics is the emphasis on Jesus' prayers—here on behalf of an endangered Peter. See also Luke 6:12, 13, before Jesus selects his disciples, and 9:28, when Jesus is transfigured. None of the other Gospels explicitly say Jesus prayed on these occasions. The book of Acts, also written by Luke, shows that Jesus' prayers for Peter are answered. Look, for example, at Pentecost and Peter's sermon in Acts 2.

For the expositor of Luke, the prayers of Christ—not Peter's prayer or lack of prayer—turn out to be decisive. While Peter sleeps, Jesus prays. Even more important, Jesus has been praying on Peter's behalf before the crisis, and through these prayers is able to point to a time when Peter will be strong enough to strengthen others! The preacher will go further by linking the ongoing intercession of Jesus announced by Paul in Romans 8:34 with Luke 22:31-32 to provide assurance for the anxious reader: the intercessory prayers of our Savior will bring us through.

John: When Strength Becomes Weakness

In agreement with the Synoptics, John depicts Peter asserting his loyalty to Jesus. Jesus announces that the disciples cannot go where he is going. Peter asks where

Jesus is going, only to be told that he cannot follow Jesus now, but that he will later (John 13:33, 36). Peter responds, "Lord, why can I not follow you right now? I will lay down my life for you" (13:37). This language echoes Jesus' earlier statement, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (10:11).

Jesus challenges Peter's assertion that he will lay down his life for Jesus with the startling prediction that Peter will deny him three times before morning, when the rooster crows (13:38). No further interchange occurs between Jesus and Peter until the resurrected Jesus asks Peter, the backsliding fisherman, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" (21:15).¹⁵ Between these two exchanges, Jesus tells the disciples, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:12, 13). Jesus' three-fold command to Peter to "Feed my lambs/sheep" acknowledges a shepherding role for Peter. Self-acclaimed as ready to die for Jesus, Peter is now directed toward Jesus' sheep to be tended in Jesus' absence. As with Jesus the shepherd, Peter the shepherd will die also, presumably by crucifixion (21:18-19).

When Jesus is arrested in the Garden he requests that his disciples be allowed to "go their way" (18:8). However, Peter does not leave. Unlike Mark, John presents Peter as a man of immense courage. Only John tells us that it was Peter who whirled his sword alone against the band of armed soldiers who arrested Jesus by torchlight after he had already made provision for his disciples to leave without arrest (18:10). On his own, apart from Jesus' leadership, Peter attempts to take over by a courageous if foolhardy defense. Even after Jesus' rebuke, Peter insists on keeping his word. He "was following Jesus" (v.15) right up to the entrance of the courtyard of the high priest. After being recognized by the slave girl at the entrance, Peter shows up next attempting to mingle incognito around a fire with the very officers he had earlier tackled single-handedly by torchlight (18:18)!

In his commitment to follow Jesus, Peter pursues a nearly suicidal course. So in John's version the first two questions Peter's accusers ask him convey a sense of disbelief that the man who tried to defend Jesus would place himself under the nose of danger. The Greek construction of these questions (*me kaisu . . . ei . . .*) is equivalent to the English construction that implies a

negative answer. "You aren't, . . . are you?" (vv. 17, 25). The wording of the accusations in the other three Gospels' accounts are simple declarations of fact, that is, "You were with him." In the final query in John's account, the accuser is a relative of the man that Peter attempted to kill. The Greek construction in this final accusation is affirmative, unlike the previous two accusations in John. After two tentative, even disbelieving identifications, Peter is confronted by a man who knows who he is.

The expositor seeking to draw out the pastoral elements of the story may note that raw human courage or native talent are not enough to succeed in Peter's crisis. Peter fails in spite of earlier protests to Jesus in chapter 13 that he will stand with him. The reader of John shouldn't be surprised. Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the need to abide in him as the branches to the tree (15:1-4). Says Jesus: "Apart from me you can do nothing." However, Peter has his own program. He decides to defend Jesus. He decides to stay near Jesus, even when Jesus had arranged with those arresting him that his disciples be allowed to leave untouched. The strength of character and courage that distinguishes Peter from the others proves to be the avenue for his downfall. It must be confessed that these connections made between the teaching of chapter 15 and the narrative of chapter 18 are far less explicit than between those in Mark 13 and 14, as noted earlier.

In addition, in chapter 21 John has a lengthy scene in which Peter is rehabilitated by Jesus' three-fold question/commissioning: Simon, do you love me? . . . feed my sheep/lambs. The three denials are replaced by the three affirmations of Peter's love and Jesus' commands to leadership. John focuses on Christ. Like Peter, the Christian leader succeeds only as his life is hidden in Christ's. Those for whom he cares are not his property, but belong to the Good Shepherd (John 10).

What It Means to Believe in the Bible

By now, it is clear that details of the four accounts differ in the four Gospels. This article shows that in each case at least some of the apparently trivial details



provide evidence for what the writer wants us to learn from Peter's denial. Since each writer stresses a unique aspect, we dare not use one Gospel's account to silence or even correct the others. Within this story so familiar to early Christians were several important lessons to be emphasized. Each writer saw a different aspect of the truth and wrote a version of the story that supported that truth.

We cannot ourselves deny the differences without denying the Scripture as given to us. Furthermore, we cannot definitively adjudicate among the many possible scenarios that can be construed to explain the historical or literary origins of the details. The writers individually drew out what was latent or implicit. I hold that what each writer found in the old story of Peter was indeed part of the truth—the truth about Peter, the truth about Jesus, and the truth about those of us who read these old stories. Let the distinctive message of each stand out! We are richer for having all four versions.¹⁶

Could God have eliminated the differences, the apparently irreconcilable differences? Could God have set the matters straight in defective human memories? For the believer, the answer is yes, of course. But God didn't choose to do that. To insist on absolute verbal inerrancy is to insist that God do it my way or else. We must be careful not to tell God how he must conduct his affairs. Instead, God in his wisdom chose human writers and with their fallible human perspective gave each glimpses of the truth.

Notes and References

1. For a convenient comparison of the four versions and the details unique to John, see Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (Garden City; N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970): 836-42. On the construction of Mark's version, see Robert Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 888-91, 920-22. On Matthew's alterations of Mark, see Donald Hagner, "Matthew," *Word Bible Commentary*, vol. 33B (Dallas, TX: Word, 1995), 33B: 803-7. Hagner provides an extensive bibliography of scholarship on the denials of Peter through 1990.

2. For instance, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word: The Crisis over Biblical Authority and Biblical Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: The Author, 1996), 282-300, surveys several problem passages in the New Testament but makes no mention of the more difficult one.

3. Though the early Etta Linneman ("Die Verleugnung des Petrus, *Zeitschrift fuer Theologie und Kirche*," 63 [1966]: 1-32, and *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte* [FRLANT 102: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970]) followed her mentor, Rudolph Bultmann, in denying the historical truth of the account. More recently Burton Mack (*A Myth of Innocence* [Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1988], 305-6) has dismissed the account. Any denial of a historical basis of the denials is not complete until the story's existence is explained. Brown, *John*, 2:841, observes "some of these complicated

theories about how a fictional story evolved tax one's credibility more than the acceptance of the narrative as based on history."

5. Eusebius, *H.E.* 3:39.15. For a recent discussion of the identity of the elder in this citation see Gundry, *Mark*, 1026-35.

6. This characterizes Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, which advocates the seven-fold approach of R. A. Torrey, *Is the Bible the Inerrant Word of God, and Was the Body of Jesus Raised from the Dead?* (New York: George H. Doran, 1922), 66-75, in dealing with apparently insolvable difficulties and contradictions in the Bible.

7. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1971), 759.

8. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1953), cited in Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 759.

9. Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervian, 1976), 174-76. The quotation is taken from page 174.

10. In Mark 5:1, several boats filled with men, including one with Jesus and his disciples, arrive on the shore of the territory of the Garasenes. But from verse 2 onward only Jesus and the demoniac are in view. The disciples are seen again in the narrative in 5:31. Obviously, they have been there all along, but invisible from the narrator's camera.

11. Compare "You also were with Jesus the Galilean" (Matt. 26:69) and "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth" (Matt. 26:71) with the first two accusations in Mark: "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus" (Mark 14: 67) and "This man is one of them" (Mark 14:69).

12. Compare "At last two . . . said, 'This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days'" (Matt. 26:60, 61) with "Some stood up and bore false witness against him saying, 'We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands'" (Mark 14:57, 58).

13. The disciples are not to stop worrying because their lives would be spared when dragged into the presence of rulers, but that they would not misspeak. The security offered is the security of having the Spirit speak through them. The same sayings about witness before rulers can be found in Mark 13:9-11. However, Matthew has transported this eschatological instruction forward into chapter 10, a discourse on evangelism, placed far ahead of his eschatological discourse in chapters 24-25.

14. Luke T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 362.

15. These words of comparison are reminiscent of Peter's assertion in Mark 14:29/Matthew 26:33, that even if all the other disciples fall away, he will not. Is this an instance of what some intended readers/hearers of the Gospel of John were presumed to already know, though not included? See John 21:25 for the acknowledgment that what was left out was much greater than what was included.

16. Speaking for myself, I have been attracted to the work of Kenneth Bailey, known for his ethnographical and literary treatment of the parables of Jesus. Less widely known is "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *Asian Journal of Theology* 5.1(1991): 32-54. Bailey draws on his own extensive thirty years of observation in the Middle East. He distinguishes between literary material transmitted with inflexible accuracy, that is, poetry and proverbs by designated teachers or reciters, on the one hand, and the more flexible transmission of parables and recollections of historical events by the whole village, on the other. Bailey suggests that the early believers transmitted the gospel narrative in a manner similar to that of these villages.

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Walking—Sometimes Driving Really Fast—Through the Bible

Walking the Bible. By Bruce Feiler.
New York: William Morrow, 2001. 464 pages

Reviewed by Mike Mennard

I have always dreamed of touring the Holy Land. My dream started when I was a seven year old, when my parents took me to church for the first time. My Sabbath School teacher could make the stories of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and Moses seem like cherished family secrets. Maybe that's why I still have such an affinity for the five "Books of Moses."

Needless to say, now doesn't seem the ideal time for gallivanting about the Middle East. Fortunately, Bruce Feiler has written a marvelous book—part adventure story, part spiritual pilgrimage—that has allowed me to tour vicariously the very spots I would most like to see.

Growing up in a traditional Jewish home, Feiler had a foundation in the Hebrew Bible, but that foundation had ebbed into distant memory. Aware that his connection to the Bible—"just another dusty book on top of the TV"—was hardly a personal one, Feiler came up with the harebrained scheme to travel the path of the Bible's earliest stories.

His friends and colleagues thought he was crazy, and Feiler himself wondered whether his plan wasn't a tad ludicrous. Admittedly, the challenges were many and seemingly insurmountable. Locating with precision the sites that correspond with biblical stories was itself a formidable task, because scholars disagree about where some stories took place.

Most significantly, the region is lacerated with war, making the trek both unpredictable and dangerous.

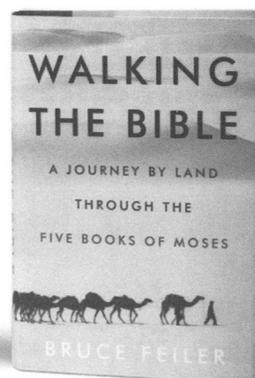
In perhaps Feiler's greatest stroke of luck, he asked the renowned archaeologist Avner Goren to accompany him, and Goren agreed. Although all others laughed at Feiler's venture, Goren seemed at first intrigued, then enthusiastic. Together, Feiler (and his insatiable curiosity) and Goren (and his seemingly bottomless well of knowledge) make for a delightful pair—a kind of anti-quixotic duo. Their friendship takes a narrative that could bog down into dull travelogue and transforms it into an engaging dialogue, like a good "buddy movie."

Feiler and Goren begin their journey along the eastern-most stretch of Turkey, at the base of Mt. Ararat. Here, as at no other place, the flood story looms large and real. Some townsfolk claim to have seen the ancient boat, but they speak of it mysteriously, like a UFO citing. Although Feiler isn't so quick to believe them, he is, for

the first time, confronted with the idea that the Bible—unlike, say, the *Odyssey*—has its roots in historical sites. He has never been a believer in miraculous tales, such as the flood; however, he begins to question himself. This is the beginning of Feiler's own development and spiritual maturation. Like watching a flower with time-lapse photography, one can see Feiler's faith grow, from seedling to full-bloomed flower.

Simply getting to various biblical sites is half the adventure. In spite of the book's title, Feiler and Goren do little walking and a lot of driving—sometimes really fast driving—through the Holy Land. Moving back and forth across tense borders—into Palestine, back into Israel, into Syria, and so forth—Feiler and Goren shrewdly trade packs of cigarettes or money for easy passage. (As one might guess, the passage between borders is rarely easy.) Usually their approach works. (It's amazing how much a pack of cigarettes will buy!) When it doesn't work, the reader is as disappointed as Feiler, and one feels the frustration of a region in millennia-old turmoil.

Still, in spite of the obstacles, Feiler successfully takes us on a 10,000-mile romp through key



biblical sites, such as Shechem, Bethel, Egypt, the Red Sea, and Sinai. At each stop, Goren reads from the Bible and weaves in his own archaeological, geographical, and theological insights. With each insight, it becomes clear how much the terrain has shaped these stories, and how revisiting that terrain makes these old stories seem present and alive. In the dusty deserts of the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula, it's easy to see why water plays such a key role throughout the Bible. In the red dirt of the entire region, one is reminded of the marvelous pun: that God creates the *adam* (man) out of the *adamah* (red clay).

Meanwhile, story after story, adventure after adventure, Feiler

continues to garner faith, not merely in the validity of the stories, but also in the very existence of God. This is why I'm surprised at how universally the book has been received, remaining on the *New York Times* Best Seller List for several weeks. I found the book as entertaining as any novel. At the same time, Feiler's ongoing maturation and spiritual growth was for me as inspirational as most books at the local Christian bookstore.

Toward the book's end, after an amazing sequence of adventures, Feiler and Goren come at last to Mt. Nebo, the site of Moses' death. They climb to the plateau where Moses, unable to cross into the Promised Land, supposedly stood and surveyed the Jordan valley. It's

a sad ending to Moses's story, and Feiler himself feels a bit gloomy. But Goren, as always, helps put the moment into perspective. He reminds Feiler that in the end the last thing Moses saw was not the land, but God. And ultimately, this is how their quest should end—no longer a survey of land, but a glimpse of God.

I still dream about traveling the Holy Land. Feiler's book has neither replaced my dream nor lessened my desire to see firsthand the sites of these great stories, which have enveloped my own life. Rather, although he may have provided a temporary reprieve for my dream, he has paradoxically fueled its intensity.

Mike Mennard is senior writer and editor for Pacific Union College's office of public relations. He recently translated the book of Genesis as part of his graduate studies in English.

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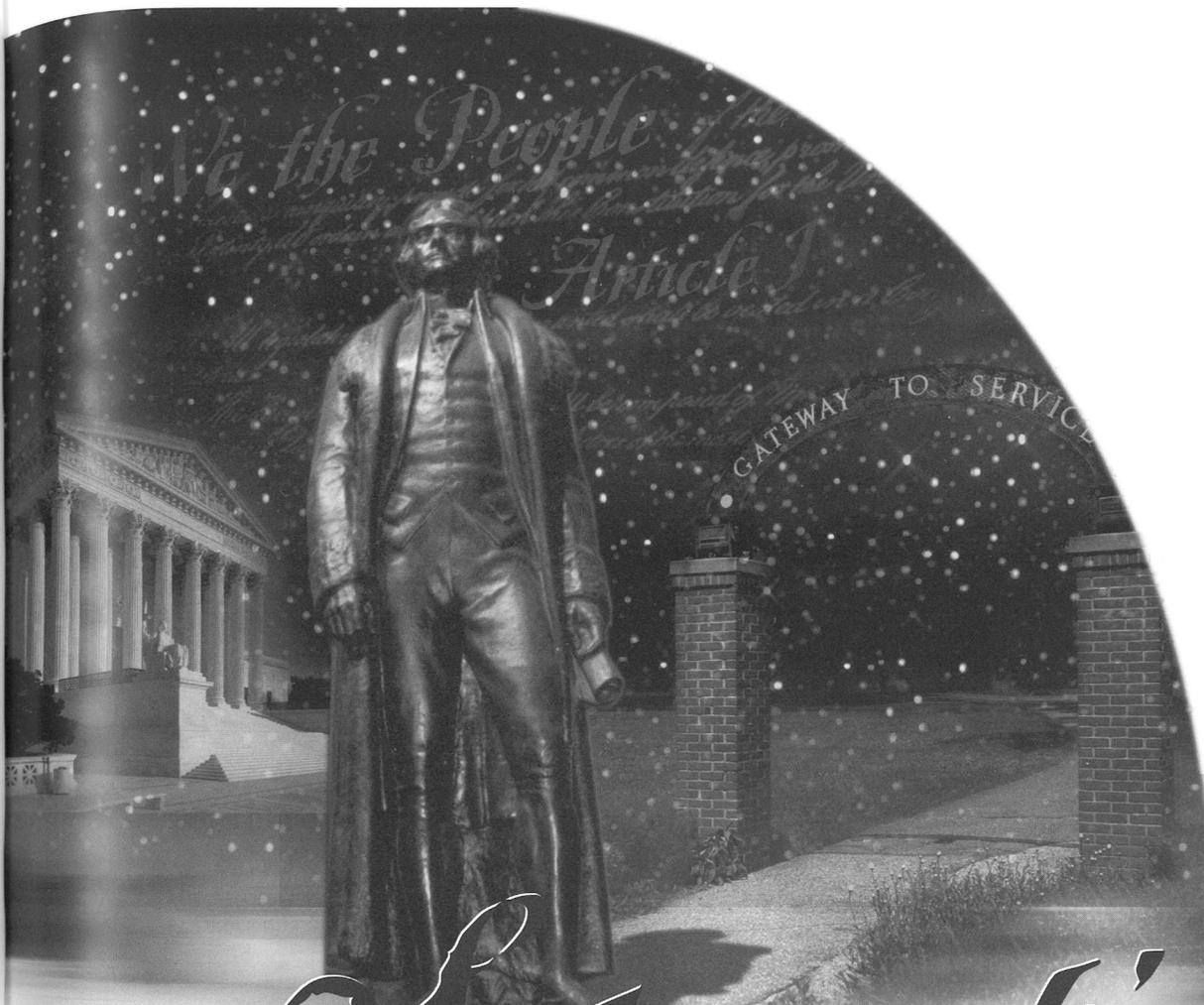
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Separation

OF CHURCH AND STATE

As the Court Turns

Columbia Union College Wins State Funding

By Sasha Ross

The case of *Columbia Union College v. Edward O. Clarke, Jr., et al.*, is a particularly complex case that involves church-state relations in the United States. The college's eleven-year quest to qualify for state funding terminated

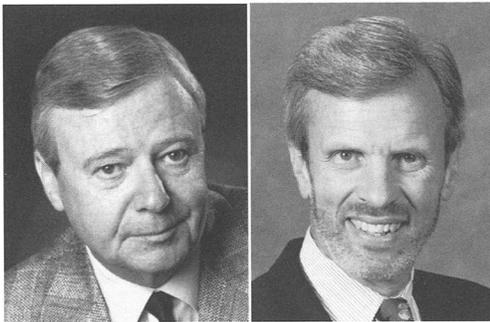
at a denial of certiorari by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 1999, which allowed a controversial appeals holding to stand in favor of the college. The case is legally complex because of the contested applicability and definition of the concept of "pervasively sectarian," one of the central principles in the case. Judicial interpretation of that concept shifted at the U.S. Supreme Court level in the midst of this case. Moreover, *Columbia Union College v. Clark* is of particular interest because it affirms a decision by the U.S. courts to allow public monies to flow directly into the general operating budget of a religious institution. Despite the long-standing relationship that the Seventh-day Adventist Church officially has with a number of prominent religious liberty advocacy groups, several (such as Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the American Jewish Committee) submitted amicus curiae briefs against Columbia Union College, and certain religious liberty groups within the Seventh-day Adventist Church also expressed hesitancy over CUC's course.

Case Summary

In 1971, the Maryland General Assembly created a state program to aid nonpublic higher education institutions. It became known in 1993 as the Joseph

A. Sellinger Program (named after a Roman Catholic priest). Administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), the program entitles eligible institutions to receive direct, annual payments of state tax money for nonsectarian educational programs. Eligibility rules require that the applying college or university be a nonprofit private institution established in Maryland before July 1970; that it be

Presidents of Columbia Union College



William Loveless

Charles Scriven

-
- William Loveless
1978-1990
 - Charles Scriven
1992-2000
 - N. Clifford Sorensen
1990-1992
 - Randal R. Wisbey
2000-present
 - James Cox (interim)
May 15-August 15, 1992
-

Board Chairs of Columbia Union College

- Ron Wisbey (1990-1994)
- Ralph W. Martin (1995-1998)
- Harold L. Lee (1998- present)

accredited and have awarded associate of arts or baccalaureate degrees to at least one graduating class at the time of application; and that it maintain at least one non-seminarian or theological program leading to such degrees. Once approved by the MHEC, the subsidized institution must submit each new program or major modification of existing programs to the MHEC for approval and provide pre- and post-expenditure affidavits by its CEO. These reports must detail both the intended and actual use of the money to ensure that Sellinger funding does not advance sectarian purposes.¹

Columbia Union College (CUC) applied for Sellinger funding in January 1990. The school is a nonprofit, private, four-year liberal arts college in Takoma Park, Maryland. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists established the college in 1904 as Washington Missionary College, at the same time it founded an

denied the indirect support of a student-run, Christian-oriented magazine, *Wide Awake*. The Supreme Court deemed as irrelevant the religiosity of the student organization that applied for funding once the university had established a limited public forum, and therefore held that denying the magazine indirect aid by way of a third-party printing firm would constitute an impermissible “viewpoint discrimination” against that group. For its part, CUC contended that by establishing a state body with the secular purpose of distributing funding to private higher education institutions so as to provide viable alternatives to public education, the state of Maryland had similarly discriminated against the college on the basis of its religious viewpoint. Although *Rosenberger* aided CUC’s claim of free exercise, there were differences between the cases that limited its applicability.

Like the dissenting justices in *Rosenberger*, the

The debate within the Seventh-day Adventist Church over CUC’s successful application for state funding under the Sellinger Program exemplifies disagreement between two mutually exclusive views within the Church.

adjacent sanitarium now known as Washington Adventist Hospital. Columbia Union College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, located in Philadelphia.² It currently offers thirty-seven baccalaureate degrees and six associate degrees, of which three are related to religion. Its student body consistently averaged around 1,175 during the development of its case against the MHEC, according to court documents.

The MHEC denied CUC’s request for state funding in March 1992 on grounds that the religious nature of the institution would incur a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which explicitly forbids any law (or state action) “respecting the establishment of religion.”³ The MHEC acknowledged that CUC satisfied the criteria necessary to qualify for funding, except where Sellinger funds cannot be used for sectarian purposes.

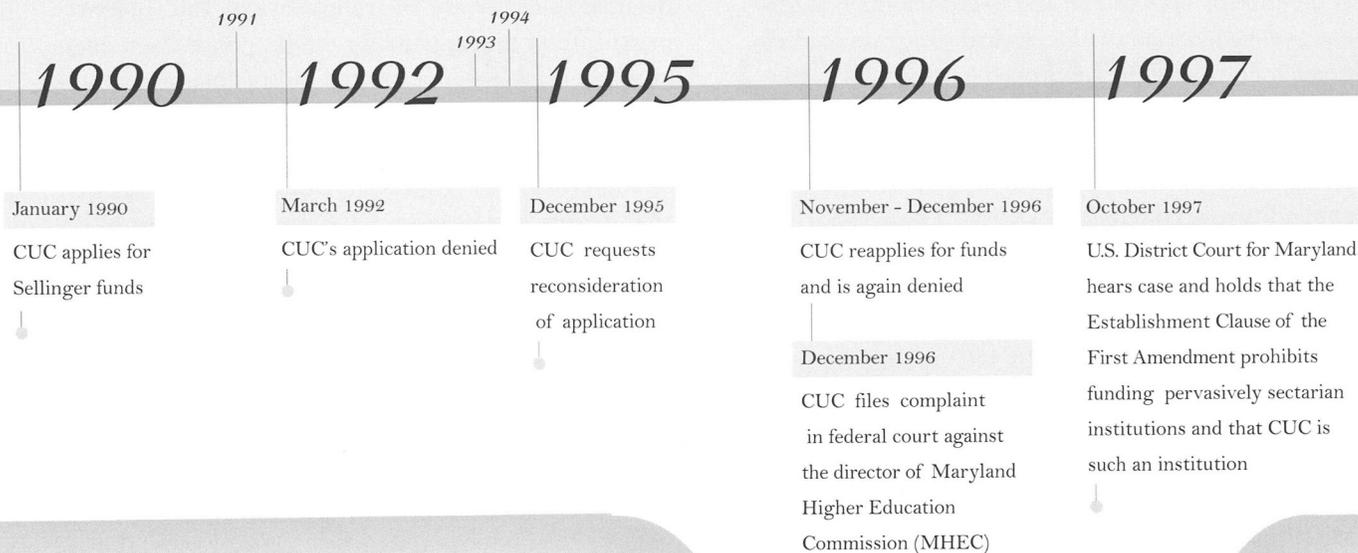
In December 1995, CUC requested the MHEC to reconsider its original application after the then-recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Rosenberger v. the University of Virginia*.⁴ In that case, the Supreme Court found that the University of Virginia had inappropriately

MHEC maintained that the Establishment Clause required it to deny CUC funding because the college’s religiosity was not just one viewpoint tolerated among many, but because evangelism was an indistinguishable part of its academic mission.⁵ For this reason, the MHEC felt that any state monies—even in their limited scope and heavily monitored use—would effectively advance religion because “the college’s religious mission permeated even its assertedly secular educational functions.” One month after receiving its request for reconsideration, the MHEC notified CUC that “unless the nature and practices . . . have changed very substantially since 1992,” there was no justification for its reapplication of aid, and it denied CUC’s application again.⁶

Columbia Union College then filed suit in U.S. District Court against the MHEC, seeking to force an



Columbia Union College Court Case History



approval of its application. When the MHEC asked that the case be dismissed because it was not yet “ripe” (the college had not formally reapplied), CUC reapplied for \$807,079 to fund programs in mathematics, computer science, clinical laboratory science, and respiratory care, as well as 40 percent of its nursing program. Again, the MHEC held that CUC was too “pervasively sectarian” to permit state funding.⁷

“Pervasively sectarian” and its defining criteria come from the text of *Roemer v. Board of Public Works of Maryland* (1976), in which the U.S. Supreme Court held that “the Establishment Clause permits the state to provide direct money payments (‘non categorical in nature’) to a church-affiliated college to fund its secular educational purposes only if the college is not so ‘pervasively sectarian that secular activities cannot be separated from sectarian ones.’”⁸ Thus, *Roemer* gave precedent that, under the Establishment Clause, a state may not directly fund institutions whose religious nature permeates even their secular functions.

The “Lemon test,” once imposed by the U.S. Supreme Court, provides a framework for evaluating permissible state action. Named after the ruling in *Lemon v. Kurtz*, it determined that government involvement should have a nonreligious purpose, that the primary effect of state funding should be neither to advance nor inhibit religion, and that there should be no “excessive entanglement.”⁹ The Supreme Court reduced this precedent in *Agostini v. Felton* (1997) to a two-pronged consideration of whether a federal action has a secular purpose, and whether or not it has the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion.¹⁰ “Aid normally may be thought to have a primary effect

of advancing religion when it flows to an institution in which religion is so pervasive that a substantial portion of its functions are subsumed in the religious mission,” the U.S. District Court quoted from *Hunt v. McNair* (1973), a Supreme Court decision three years previous to *Roemer*.¹¹ The U.S. District Court therefore affirmed the MHEC’s decision not to grant funding to CUC because, although the program had a secular purpose, the court thought that any money given to CUC would indeed advance religion.

In CUC’s claim that the MHEC had committed statutory wrongs, the college argued in part that its repeated denial of funding was a violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993, a legislative bill the Seventh-day Adventist Church had strongly supported. However, by the time CUC made its claim in the U.S. District Court, the U.S. Supreme Court had already decided in *Boerne v. Flores* (1997) that RFRA was unconstitutional—specifically, that it exceeded Congress’s constitutional authority because RFRA’s intent and application on the states was not solely “remedial”—and therefore, the District Court did not allow this argument to stand.

When argument under the Establishment Clause failed, CUC changed course and tested the other First Amendment clauses. Its appeal of the MHEC’s decision claimed that such involved three constitutional violations: (1) the MHEC’s denial of funding violated

1998

October 1998

Court of Appeals for Fourth Circuit rules that district court erred in holding and remands for further proceedings

1999

June 1999

U.S. Supreme Court denies review of CUC Case

2000

August 2000

U.S. District Court for Maryland finds CUC not pervasively sectarian

September 2000

Maryland appeals decision of district court

2001

June 2001

Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals rules in favor of CUC

September 2001

Maryland chooses not to appeal

2002

2003

2003

CUC scheduled to receive Sellinger funds

CUC's First Amendment rights of free speech and association; (2) the MHEC's decision deprived CUC of its federal right to free exercise, made applicable to agents of the state of Maryland (that is, the MHEC) under the Fourteenth Amendment; and (3) that the MHEC's decision violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.¹²

In its first findings, the U.S. District Court affirmed MHEC's decision that CUC was indeed a "pervasively sectarian institution," despite CUC's charge that, to date, the U.S. Supreme Court had never found any college or university "pervasively sectarian." To sidestep the "pervasively sectarian" issue, CUC contended that *Roemer* (through which government is allowed to fund religious institutions so long as they are not "pervasively sectarian") had been overruled by three subsequent U.S. Supreme Court decisions:

Rosenberg, *Witters v. Washington Department of Services for the Blind*, and *Agostini v. Felton*.¹³ It argued that these cases together provided that state funding was permissible even to pervasively sectarian schools as long as the criteria used to allocate the aid was neutral.

Although the U.S. District Court admitted that the three cases qualified and "unquestionably undermine the *Roemer* dicta," it was not convinced that the cases overruled *Roemer*. The court disputed application of *Rosenberger* to the CUC case on the first issue of free speech because of differences in funding methods. In *Rosenberger*, the U.S. Supreme Court had found in favor of a religious student organization's claim to a free speech violation, based on the issue of indirect funding. However, the MHEC's decision regarding compliance with the Establishment Clause involved direct funding.

Taking a position that interpreted the Establishment Clause strictly, the U.S. District Court noted that the U.S. Supreme Court had recently chided the lower courts and specifically reaffirmed the principle that "any direct money payments to pervasively sectarian institutions offend[s] the Establishment Clause." The U.S. District Court quoted Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor: "The Court's decision today therefore neither trumpets the supremacy of the neutrality principle nor signals the demise of the funding prohibition in Establishment Clause jurisprudence."¹⁴

In *Witters*, the U.S. Supreme Court had allowed a blind student to use state funds to finance pastoral studies at a Christian college because, as set forth in *Zobrest v. Catalina*, it held that state aid ultimately flowing into the religious institution came "only as a result of the genuinely independent and private choices" of the aid recipient.¹⁵ In *Agostini*, the courts again challenged *Roemer* by allowing public school teachers to provide remedial classes for disadvantaged children of "pervasively sectarian" grade schools. However, that aid was allowed because it was separate and "supplemental to the regular curricula" of those schools, and the state gave the aid directly to the



students, not into “the coffers of religious schools.”¹⁶

On the subsequent free exercise and equal protection claims made by CUC, the U.S. District Court found at first that, even with strict scrutiny, MHEC was right in its complete denial of CUC’s application for Sellinger funds on the grounds of the Establishment Clause. Such was a compelling state interest that justified the alleged burden on the free exercise of religion. The U.S. District Court did not find unequal treatment between CUC and other colleges previously granted Sellinger Program monies, despite the fact that several were admittedly sectarian. By 1997, fifteen institutions in Maryland received Sellinger funds, three of which were affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church: Loyola College, Mount St. Mary’s College, and the College of Notre Dame. In fact, *Roemer* had direct applicability to the CUC lawsuit against MHEC because it had specifically allowed Sellinger funding to go to Catholic-affiliated colleges on the grounds that they “were not so pervasively sectarian that secular activities could not be separated from sectarian ones.”¹⁷

The U.S. District Court found several differences between the Catholic institutions and CUC, particularly CUC’s relationship to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Unlike CUC, the Catholic colleges enjoyed a high degree of “institutional autonomy” because they did not report directly to the Catholic Church or require students to attend religious services. Furthermore, the court had found mandatory religion courses merely supplemental to a broad, primarily liberal arts program, and nontheology courses were taught in an atmosphere of “intellectual freedom” without “religious pressures.” Although some classes began with prayer, there was no explicit policy at the Catholic colleges that required it.

some instructors at the Catholic colleges wore clerical garb and that some classrooms contained religious symbols, the determining point was the fact that the Catholic colleges hired faculty and admitted students without regard to religion.

The college did not significantly refute any of the charges or comparisons. Instead, CUC submitted profiles of other institutions to defend its claim that it was not significantly different from—or more sectarian than—the Catholic colleges to disqualify for state funding. It also pointed to *Hunt*, in which Charleston Southern College was deemed not pervasively sectarian, despite the fact that the South Carolina Baptist Convention elected its board of trustees and gave approval to certain financial transactions and all amendments to the college’s charter. In addition, CUC cited Catholic organizations at issue in *Tilton v. Richardson* (1971), which the U.S. Supreme Court had not found pervasively sectarian either, because their predominant educational mission was to provide a secular education for their students.¹⁹

Opponents of CUC’s position argued that in a highly religious institution like CUC the secular and religious natures of the college were so “inextricably intertwined” that direct funding, “even if designated for specific secular purposes, may nonetheless advance the pervasively sectarian institution’s ‘religious mission.’”²⁰ In fact, the MHEC contended that CUC did not have a high degree of “institutional autonomy” because about 21.5 percent (or \$2.5 million) of the institution’s 1996 revenue came from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and almost 90 percent of the voting members of its board of trustees was required to belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In October 1997, the district court dismissed CUC’s

“The only way [CUC] could receive such aid is by compromising or abandoning its religious views. That to me is impermissible inhibition of religion, impermissible discrimination under our Constitution’s religion clauses, and a violation of the First Amendment right to express religious beliefs.” Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III

Judge Marvin Garbis wrote that “Plaintiff [CUC] is quite different from the colleges in *Roemer* which, rather than requiring church attendance, merely provided religious services for those students who were interested in voluntarily attending.”¹⁸ The court noted that although

suit against the MHEC. Columbia Union College then appealed the case to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which set aside the ruling of the district court judge, reinstated the lawsuit, and ordered further study.²¹ The appeals court found sufficient room to doubt the MHEC’s

characterization of CUC as “pervasively sectarian” to remand the case back to the district court for further discovery in order to clarify applicability of the term. Thus, on appeal, CUC bore the responsibility to demonstrate it was not “pervasively sectarian,” as the MHEC had contended. Without such evidence, the appellate court could not bypass the impending establishment violation and award CUC Sellinger funding any more than the district court could.

Photo: Columbia Union College



In his final plea to the MHEC, CUC’s then-president Charles Scriven is quoted in the appellate court documents: “If we recant, would we qualify?” With this in mind, Chief Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit dissented from the majority, which had decided to vacate and remand the case back for further discovery. According to him, the majority “effectively dumps at the state’s doorstep the volatile tasks of distinguishing between religious institutions and drawing controversial and delicate lines. . . . The three Catholic colleges currently receiving funding . . . must now worry about whether they will at some indefinable point offend the state by stepping over the sectarian edge.” Wilkinson continued: “the only way [CUC] could receive such aid is by compromising or abandoning its religious views. That to me is impermissible inhibition of religion, impermissible discrimination under our Constitution’s religion clauses, and a violation of the First Amendment right to express religious beliefs.”²²

Sympathetic to the Catholic schools already funded, Wilkinson did not want to rule in a manner that forced them to look over their shoulders at every turn for fear of losing their funding because they were considered too sectarian. Fearing that a retrial would become “a witch hunt,” he argued that the evidence in the case was sufficient to uphold the U.S. District Court’s judgment without ordering an intrusive investigation into minutiae of the college’s operations. However, the majority of the Fourth Circuit Court maintained that, although *Roemer* had been effectively challenged, the U.S. Supreme Court had expressly not given lower courts the prerogative to overrule it and ignore the Establishment Clause issue altogether.²³

Following the outline set forth in the first appellate ruling, the U.S. District Court held a full trial, this time to “paint a general picture of the institution, composed of many elements.”²⁴ It found that the

MHEC had wrongly contended that CUC was too “pervasively sectarian” to qualify for state funding. Specifically, the court concentrated on four issues: (1) whether the college mandated religious worship; (2) whether academic courses were implemented with the primary goal of religious indoctrination; (3) whether there was an express preference in hiring and admitting members of the SDA Church as faculty and students, for the purpose of deepening the religious experience on campus and/or furthering religious indoctrination; and (4) to what degree the Seventh-day Adventist Church dominated CUC and its affairs, as illustrated by its control over the board of trustees and financial expenditures. The U.S. District Court decided that to be “pervasively sectarian,” CUC needed to exhibit three of the four specified characteristics in a “rather substantial degree.”²⁵

On the first count, CUC did not deny that it required some students to attend worship, but the college argued that it only required attendance from “traditional” students, namely those between the ages of 18 to 24 (calculated as 350–400 of 1,172 students in the appeals court document, and 675 of 1,172 on remand before the U.S. District Court). The appellate court had basically argued CUC’s case and found that a requirement affecting less than half the student body was not determinative toward CUC’s “pervasive” nature, so the district court disregarded further evidence from the MHEC that indicated “serious efforts” on the part of CUC to expose students to Adventist beliefs, practices, and moral standards. According to the U.S. District Court, “a fact finder could reasonably infer



that [CUC's] mandatory prayer policy has a limited reach, suggesting that while religious principles are important to the college, they are not . . . more than a 'secondary objective.'"²⁶

The appellate majority mandated a high threshold of proof for the second inquiry regarding the degree of religious indoctrination, as well. The U.S. District Court could not actually sit in on classes (the appellate court had cautioned it against doing so), nor did it take into account CUC's "Christocentric vision," its course syllabi statements and faculty records on the intended integration of faith and learning, its use of Ellen G. White's writings as course textbooks, or a faculty directive to "bear in mind their peculiar obligation as Christian scholars and members of a [Seventh-day Adventist] college." These points were deemed by the majority opinion insufficient to demonstrate a pedagogy too religious for state funding. Instead, the U.S. District Court used such evidence as the fact that only 17 percent of the syllabi reviewed contained religious references. It found competency in a major field of (secular) study the college's "primary goal" instead of simply one of its goals, as stated in the college's mission statement. The implication of CUC's arguments and the U.S. District Court's ruling was that, notwithstanding the college's official statements to the contrary, religion did not significantly influence the teaching of the majority of courses at CUC.

As for the third issue, the U.S. District Court found that CUC did satisfy the criteria for being "pervasively sectarian." In viewing the evidence of CUC's policy that reserved the right "to give preference" in hiring and admitting Adventists, the court considered it "no coincidence" that during the academic year 1998-99, fifty-six of the fifty-nine full-time faculty members were Seventh-day Adventists, as were fourteen department chairs and eight members of the administrative committee. Because of recruiting efforts targeted primarily at Seventh-day Adventist feeder schools, approximately 80 percent of the student body is consistently Adventist—a statistic that MHEC (not CUC) presented.

On the last count, the U.S. District Court also found against CUC, maintaining that the college was not "characterized by a high degree of institutional autonomy." The two pieces of evidence cited were \$2.5 million in annual revenue from the Seventh-day Adventist Church (most likely through its governing office for the Columbia Union) and a board of trustees whose membership was almost 90 percent Seventh-day Adventist. Although the court counted this

evidence as a "factor to be weighted in favor of finding [CUC] pervasively sectarian," it did not consider the evidence "a dispositive factor" that merited further discussion or consideration.

After weighing the four criteria, the U.S. District Court reversed earlier findings and determined that CUC was actually not pervasively sectarian because it met only two of the four criteria. In response, the MHEC tried to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but was denied certiorari. When the appellate court made its final ruling in 2001, after the case was remanded and tried in detail, CUC continued to claim a right to Sellinger funding, arguing partly that the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision in *Mitchell v. Helms* had changed the circumstances under which sectarian schools were considered eligible for government aid. According to CUC, the "pervasively sectarian" inquiry was no longer relevant to determine a violation of the Establishment Clause.²⁷ Furthermore, CUC argued "in the alternative that the district court correctly found that the college was not pervasively sectarian."²⁸

At issue in *Mitchell* was Chapter 2 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981, which grants federal funding (through state educational agencies) to local educational agencies. Under the act, local agencies can lend educational materials and equipment, such as library and media materials and computer software and hardware, to public and private elementary and secondary schools to implement "secular, neutral, and non-ideological" programs. In *Mitchell*, U.S. Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas, William Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, and Anthony Kennedy concluded that Chapter 2, as applied in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, did not lead to an establishment of religion although many of the private schools that received federal aid in that case were religiously affiliated.

The appeals court found in June 2001 that the MHEC had impermissibly discriminated against CUC in denying funding specifically because of the college's religious nature (its "alleged pervasively partisan religious viewpoint"). The appeals court avoided dealing with the issue of state aid to pervasively sectarian institutions by upholding the district court's most recent finding and by agreeing with CUC that the college was not a pervasively sectarian institution. For the appeals court, the problem was solved when the U.S. Supreme Court determined that state funding for religiously affiliated institutions was not necessarily unconstitutional. Writing for the majority, Wilkinson asserted, "[W]e affirm the judgment of the district court that Columbia Union [College] qualifies for

Sellinger Program funds.” He concluded:

Columbia Union’s use of Sellinger Program money to fund secular educational programs does not violate the strictures of the Establishment Clause. The program has a secular purpose, it

but follows neither wholeheartedly.

The debate within the Church over its position on religious liberty started in the 1880s, during the Church’s first fledgling decades. At that time, Ellen G. White and Elder A. T. Jones, a outspoken separationist and early critic of government gifts to the Church

For the appeals court, the problem was solved when the U.S. Supreme Court determined that state funding for religiously affiliated institutions was not necessarily unconstitutional.

uses neutral criteria to dispense the aid, there is little risk of actual diversion of the aid for religious indoctrination, and the college is an institution of higher learning. And even if a pervasively sectarian analysis were necessary, the district court was not clearly erroneous in finding Columbia Union not to be pervasively sectarian.²⁸

Adventists and Religious Liberty

The debate within the Seventh-day Adventist Church over CUC’s successful application for state funding under the Sellinger Program exemplifies disagreement between two mutually exclusive views within the Church on the proper relationship between church and state. Some observers say that the General Conference Department of Education and other Adventist educational institutions tend to express an accommodationist perspective—that church and state can and should work together to some degree, respectful of constitutional limitations. Those of a more separationist perspective can generally be found in the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) departments within the North American Division and the General Conference.³⁰

Generally, the separationist position among PARL members dissenting from CUC’s position in its case against the MHEC can be characterized thus: “If CUC is secular enough to qualify for state aid, then it is too secular for tithe monies.” Accommodationists respond that if Adventist institutions do not receive neutrally distributed state aid, the state is treating them unfairly and they risk being unable to maintain current operations without that funding. Accommodationists also claim that Ellen G. White never advocated strict separation between church and government. As a result, the Church takes a position that tries to walk both lines,

(land, money, and so forth), disagreed over a grant of land from the South African government on which the Church later built Solusi College, in accordance with White’s recommendations.

In 1948, Adventist Church leaders voted to “reaffirm our full belief in the historic doctrine of the separation of church and state.” Shifting slightly from that position, the Religious Liberty Association (an organization within the global church’s centralized headquarters in Washington, D.C.) changed its Declaration of Principles in 1956. No longer did it declare separation of church and state its first principle, but instead it affirmed belief in religious liberty as “best exercised when there is separation between church and state.”³¹

As Church historian and chair of the department of history and political science at CUC, Douglas Morgan is intimately familiar with the winding pathway the Church has walked in relation to the state and the identity crisis it has faced within the larger American society during the past several decades. In his recent book *Adventism and the American Republic*, Morgan demonstrates that on the issue of religious liberty the Church has not always been consistent. As in the case between CUC and the MHEC, the Church has sometimes asked the state to step in and rule in its favor, yet in other cases it has asked the government to remain totally uninvolved in church business. The latter tendency can be seen in the cases of Merikay Silver and Lorna Tobler, for example, who won lawsuits against the Pacific Union Conference and



Pacific Press in the 1970s after claiming sexual discrimination in hiring and payment practices. In both cases, the Church claimed freedom from government regulation but the courts rejected its claim.³¹

Morgan's book speaks specifically to the double line the Church has tried to walk:

The expanding role of government . . . combined with Adventism's deepening institutional stake in society, led to conflict within the Church over whether and to what extent government funds should be used for church institutions. While the leaders of the Church's work for religious liberty continued to uphold the separationist banner, others, particularly administrators of educational institutions, advocated a more accommodationist approach that would allow the Church to accept some government funds.³³

Morgan contends that the debate surrounding changes to the Religious Liberty Association's Declaration of Principles continued into the 1960s and climaxed in a panel discussion reprinted in the *Adventist Review* in 1968. The panel involved the sitting presidents of three major Adventist colleges and universities—clear advocates of a relatively liberal policy on government aid—and two other individuals committed to upholding a separationist policy, Roland Hegstad, then editor of *Liberty Magazine*, and attorney Warren Johns, in-house legal counsel to the Church for many years. According to Morgan, although Hegstad and Johns conceded that some cooperation between church and state was permissible within original church ideology and the writings of Ellen G. White,

Liberty Department met several times with supporters of the college's quest for state money during the eleven-year course of CUC's case in order to caution it about the methods and implications of its strategy. Such counsel echoed General Conference advice made first in 1971, when Maryland initially established a program to assist private institutions in providing higher education.³⁵ The minutes of a meeting on October 4, 1971, read: "Voted, that we counsel the Columbia Union Conference and Columbia Union College to refrain from accepting funds provided by the State of Maryland to colleges offering bachelors degrees."³⁶ Two decades later, CUC's case had already been filed by the time a North American Division committee established to review the Sellinger Program issued a recommendation that CUC not pursue such funding.³⁷

What has changed over the course of the CUC case is not the two sides within the Church, but the courts, attitude toward the concept of "prevasively sectarian." As discussions of church state relations continue within the Church, participants need to understand this legal climate and the implications it carries in the United States.

Notes and References

1. Statements made by the courts apply "secular" to areas of academic study where traditional religious questions need not apply, whereas "sectarian" denotes a distinctly religious nature. Countering definitions of "secular" as nonreligious, antireligious, or areligious are more than a question of semantics, but rather depend on the context.

2. Columbia Union College also received full accreditation in 1999 from the Adventist Accrediting Association, according to "Columbia Union College and the State of Maryland: Questions and Answers." <www.cuc.edu/cucinfo/sellinger.html>, accessed Nov. 6, 2001.

3. Amendment 1 of the U.S. Constitution reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

4. 515 U.S. 819, 132 L. Ed. 2d 700, 115 S. Ct 2510 (1995).

5. Its mission is as follows: "The heart of Columbia Union College is a Christocentric vision that affirms the goodness of life, the value of earth, and the dignity of all peoples and cultures. The mission of the college, carried out in the spirit of this vision, is: to develop talent through an ethos of excellence; to embrace the adventure of truth; to make learning a pleasure and joy; to link

"Pervasively sectarian" and its defining criteria come from the text of *Roemer v. Board of Public Works of Maryland* (1976)

Adventist principles and the Church's self-identity as part of the "divine remnant" conflicted with any direct collaboration with the state. It would even be "criminal," in Hegstad's words, "for men with the prophetic insight of the Adventist ministry uncritically to involve the church in confederacy with government for the sake of financial aid."³⁴

The debate has continued with this case. Members of the General Conference's Public Affairs and Religious

scholarship and service; to seize the challenge and opportunity of the nation's capital; and to produce graduates who bring competence and moral leadership to their communities." From the Columbia Union College Web site, "General Information" <www.cuc.edu/cucinfo/general_info.html#som>, accessed Nov. 12, 2001.

6. *Columbia Union College v. Edward O. Clarke Jr., et al.*, 159 F.3d 151 (4th Cir. 1998), 5.

7. *Columbia Union College v. Edward O. Clarke Jr., et al.*, 988 F. Supp. 897 (U.S. Dist. 1997), 3.

8. *CUC v. Clarke*, quoting from *Roemer v. Public Works* 426 U.S. 736, 49 L. Ed. 2d 179, 96 S. Ct. 2337 (1976), 740. At issue in *Roemer* is the same assistance program at issue in this case, *CUC v. Clarke*. Four individual Maryland citizens and taxpayers challenged the Maryland statute granting funds as violative of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, arguing that the four colleges affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church were constitutionally ineligible for the state aid. The court disagreed, contending that despite their formal affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church, the colleges were not "pervasively sectarian," that aid was in fact extended only to "the secular side" of the college's organization, that "there is no necessity for state officials to investigate the conduct of particular classes of educational programs to determine whether a school is attempting to indoctrinate its students under the guise of secular education," and that "excessive entanglement" does not necessarily result from the fact that the subsidy is on an annual basis.

9. *Lemon v. Kurtz*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971). The court found that the parochial school system aimed at benefiting under Rhode Island's 1969 Salary Supplement Act was "an integral part of the religious mission of the Catholic Church," and that the act allowed a disproportionate and impermissible amount of subsidy to go to Roman Catholic elementary and high schools. A related complaint challenged the constitutionality of Pennsylvania's 1968 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It authorized the state superintendent of public instruction to "purchase" certain "secular educational services" from nonpublic schools, directly reimbursing those schools. The complaint alleged that religious organizations controlled the church-affiliated schools, which have the purpose and effect of propagating and promoting a particular religious faith. The U.S. Supreme Court held that both statutes are unconstitutional under the religion clauses of the First Amendment, because the cumulative impact of the entire relationship arising under the statutes involves excessive entanglement between government and religion.

10. *Agostini v. Felton*, 521 U.S. 203, 138 L. Ed. 2d 391, 117 S. Ct. 1997 (1997).

11. *Hunt v. McNair*, 413 U.S. 734, 743, 37 L. Ed. 2d 923, 93 S. Ct. 2868 (1973).

12. The relevant portion of the Fourteenth Amendment reads: "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

13. *Rosenberger, Agostini, Witters v. Washington Department of Services for the Blind*, 474 U.S. 481, 88 L. Ed. 2d 846, 106 S. Ct. 748 (1986).

14. *CUC v. Clarke*, quoting from *Rosenberger*, 515 U.S., 852.

15. *Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills School District*, 509 U.S. 1, 125 L. Ed. 2d 1, 113 S. Ct. 2462 (1993). "By according parents freedom to select a school of their choice," the decision to provide sign language interpreters to a deaf student who attended Catholic school was "only as a result of the private decision of individual parents" and "cannot be attributed to state decision making." See also *Witters*, 474 U.S., 488.

16. *Agostini*, 117 S. Ct., 2013.

17. *Columbia Union College v. John J. Oliver, Jr. et al.*, 254 F.3d 496 (4th Cir., 2001). Note: this is the same case as that of *CUC v.*

Clarke. The primary defendant's name changed after the second district court decision due to a personnel change in the director of the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

18. *CUC v. Clarke*, 988 F. Supp. 897, 13.

19. *Tilton v. Richardson*, 403 U.S. 672, 678, 29 L. Ed. 2d 790, 91 S. Ct. 2091 (1971).

20. *Bowen v. Kendrick*, 487 U.S. 589, 101 L. Ed. 2d 520, 108 S. Ct. 2562 (1988).

21. "Court OKs probe of religious college," *USA Today*. <cgi.usatoday.com/news/court/nsco1061.htm>, accessed June 14, 1999.

22. *CUC v. Clarke*, 159 F.3d, 87.

23. *CUC v. Clarke*, quoting from *Bowen v. Kendrick*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court reversed and remanded a lower court's decision for additional fact finding in a case that involved a federal statute providing funds for programs to reduce teen pregnancy. The statute was challenged on the ground that it "violated the Establishment Clause both facially and as applied." The majority in *CUC v. Clarke* wrote: "The court criticized the district court for failing to explore with 'an particularity' evidence that would 'warrant classification' of the institutions as 'pervasively sectarian.'"

24. *Roemer v. Public Works*, 426 U.S., 758.

25. *CUC v. Oliver*, 2000 U.S., 21.

26. *CUC v. Clarke*, 159 F.3d, 24, quoting from *Roemer*, 387 F. Supp., 1293.

27. *Mitchell v. Helms*, 530 U.S. 793, 147 L. Ed. 2d. 660, 120 S. Ct. 2530 (S. Ct., 2000)

28. *CUC v. Oliver* (2001).

29. *Ibid.*, 36.

30. Organized in 1901, PARL supports religious liberty internationally as a fundamental principle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a God-given right. It represents the world headquarters of the Church on government issues, maintains an office at the United Nations, and hosts diplomatic meetings to reinforce relations between the Church and various governments. It also initiates communication with religious leaders (within and external to the denomination) and government officials to broaden understanding about the Church's beliefs and principles on religious liberty.

31. Quoted in Douglas Morgan, "Reservations about Religious Liberty," *Spectrum* 29.2 (spring 2001), 47-48; excerpted from *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2001).

32. *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Pacific Press Publishing Association*, 676 F. 2d 1272 (9th Cir. 1982), aff'g 482 F. Sup. 1291 (N.D. Calif. 1979).

33. Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic*, 47.

34. *Ibid.*, 142.

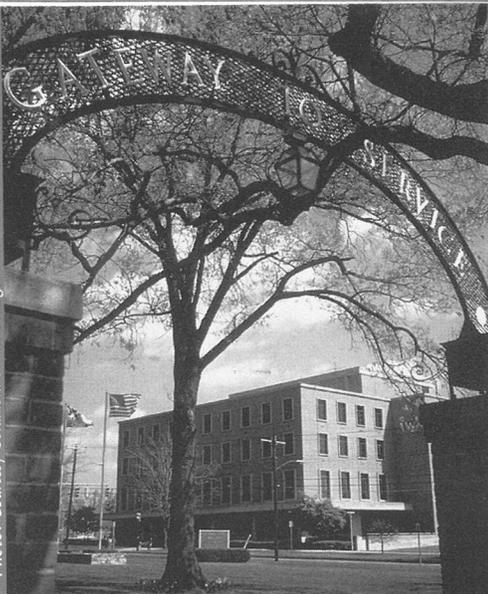
35. Telephone interview with Vernon Alger (Berrien Springs, Mich.), attorney and consulting editor of *Liberty Magazine*, Nov. 15, 2001.

36. Telephone interview with Robert Nixon (Silver Spring, Md.), attorney and in-house legal counsel to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Nov. 26, 2001.

37. *Ibid.*

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Columbia Union College campus.

Debating the CUC Case

*A Question of Credibility: Columbia Union College
and the Pursuit of State Funding*

By Nicholas P. Miller

It's any college's public relations nightmare: being accused by state officials before a federal judge of playing fast and loose with the truth. After all, colleges are meant to be bastions of truth seeking. Secular universities pay honor to ideals of academic integrity—witness the motto of what many see as America's premier university, Harvard, which is “veritas,” Latin for “truth.”

How much more should a religious college, with its commitment to divine ideals of honesty and integrity, be concerned if its credibility were to be publicly questioned? Yet the issue of credibility was precisely the focus of attorneys for the state of Maryland in connection with Columbia Union College's lawsuit to force the state to provide the college with funding.

In a brief submitted in federal court, lawyers for the state of Maryland called into question the basic truthfulness of CUC's leadership. Under a heading entitled “CUC's Credibility Is at Issue in This Litigation,” the state lawyers detailed the apparently conflicting accounts that CUC leadership had given about the religious nature of the college to church officials versus accounts given to state officials.¹

The brief quoted from an August 1998 Institutional Self-Study prepared by CUC officials for review by the Adventist Accrediting Association. In that report, CUC officials had asserted that “faculty at CUC recognize that a vital part of their task is integrating Adventist values and beliefs into all that is taught.”²

The brief also quoted from a deposition given by Lyn Bartlett, academic dean of CUC for more than four years prior to May 1998, in which Bartlett testified that in the Self-Study, CUC had set out “to influence and convince the church fathers that in actual fact we are more religious than you think we are. . . . CUC was desperate . . . to convince church members . . . [that] it was still within the fold.”³

The brief then quoted statements made or written to state officials that appeared to be in conflict with the position taken in the Self-Study. According to the state lawyers, Charles Scriven, then president of CUC, had consistently downplayed CUC's religious character in deposition testimony before state officials. In his deposition, President Scriven asserted that nonreligious courses at CUC were basically no different from those that handled the same subjects at secular colleges, testifying at one point that “calculus is calculus, physics is physics, nursing courses are nursing courses.”⁴

At his deposition, President Scriven was presented with a letter written by CUC's attorney at a time when CUC had been seeking a religious institution exemption from a

federal statute. In that letter, the attorney for CUC had told state officials that “non-religious courses [at CUC] are taught so as to reflect the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.”⁵ Upon reviewing the letter, President Scriven pronounced it “misleading.” He testified that the letter “was written by an attorney who is not a member of the church and a thoughtful reflection . . . would have required revision.”⁶

What course of events led CUC to undertake to navigate the tenuous and thin line between church expectations and state funding requirements? Did the legal arguments CUC pursued cause it to downplay its religious atmosphere and commitments to the state? What implications does the legal decision in the case have for CUC’s ability to operate as an Adventist college? Might the decision have ramifications for Adventist education generally?

In exploring these questions, three areas must be examined: first, the legal context within which CUC has pursued state funding; next, the legal arguments that CUC made in pressing its case; and finally, the educational and legal implications of the court’s decision for CUC and Adventist education generally.

The Legal Background

The requirement against state funds being used to advance sectarian—or religious—purposes is not a unique or arbitrary requirement created by the state of Maryland. Rather, it is the application of a principle historically found in the U.S. Constitution, but older than it by many years. It is the principle that no person should be compelled to fund or support religion.

The ban against state funding of religious activities has a lineage that stretches back to the colonial struggles over state support for religion that pre-existed America’s constitutional founding. Thomas Jefferson, in his 1786 Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, decreed that “to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical.”⁷

Some may quibble with the designation of coerced support of religion as “sinful,” but other founders recognized that the practice was fundamentally unfair. James Madison made a similar objection, writing that it was unfair to force those “whose minds have not yet yielded to the evidence which has convinced us” to support our religion.⁸

But the rule against state aid to religion was based on more than a concern for nonbelieving taxpayers. Rather, the funding prohibition was viewed as protecting

religion itself. Madison wrote about the corrupting and enervating effect that state aid has on religion, producing “superstition, bigotry and persecution.”⁹

This concern was heightened by the political “golden-rule”—he who supplies the gold, makes the rules. Government support and funding of religion would inevitably, it was believed, lead to state regulation of religion because the state must monitor activities that it funds to ensure that those funds are spent properly.

For religious institutions, the positive side of the prohibition against state funds was a corresponding insularity against state oversight and intrusion to which secular groups are subject. Under the U.S. Constitution, truly religious institutions have the right to “decide for themselves, free from state interference, matters of church government as well as those of faith and doctrine.”¹⁰

Religious entities have the right to hire and fire their employees, from presidents to teachers to janitors, on the basis of religious beliefs or criteria.¹¹ Religious colleges can set student admissions and lifestyle standards that accord with the religious beliefs of the sponsoring church. Religious schools are exempted from the jurisdiction of federal labor statutes and can prevent their staff from unionizing.¹²

All these actions are basic to maintaining the religious mission of a school or college, and are rights that secular, or even religiously affiliated, colleges lack. Religiously affiliated colleges can use religious criteria in the hiring of chaplains and religion teachers, for which they bear the burden to prove that the positions are related to a truly religious function.¹³ However, the colleges cannot regulate student admissions and student behavior based on religious moral standards.¹⁴ Neither are they exempt from the activities of labor unions.

Stating the rules regarding wholly religious colleges is easier than applying them, however. One fundamental is the definition of religion. Are all colleges founded for a religious purpose—or by a church or religious denomination—religious? Anyone familiar with the overbearing secularity of the Ivy League schools—all founded by churches for religious purposes—knows the answer to that question is a resounding “no.” Is having a chaplain on campus or weekly worship services in a campus chapel enough to create a “religious college?” Once again, the answer must be “no,” for if this were the standard the U.S.



Army would qualify as a religious organization.

Under the law, a school must possess a variety of religious factors and influences if it is to benefit from the protections accorded truly religious schools. Otherwise, secular schools would masquerade as religious schools by merely changing their names or inserting a religious paragraph in the college prospectus.

Over the years, the U.S. Supreme Court developed guidelines for deciding if a college were truly religious in its mission, or merely had a few religious trappings.¹⁵ Wholly religious colleges were called "pervasively sectarian," meaning that religious views pervaded all classes and activities.¹⁶ Colleges with some religious associations, but concerned primarily with secular education, were called "religiously affiliated." These were not eligible for the protections and privileges accorded to pervasively sectarian schools, although they could receive state funding.

For truly religious schools, however, the Supreme Court excluded not only the state hand that provided public funding, but also the one that burdened it with intrusive regulation. Was this really the internal logic of the U.S. Constitution? Couldn't an institution accept the benefit of funding without agreeing to the burden of regulation? In June 1996, CUC with the assistance of lawyers provided by the Center for Individual Rights decided to find out.

CUC's Legal Challenge

Columbia Union College's partnership with the Center for Individual Rights was an uneasy alliance of interests. The center, a Washington, D.C.-based, right-wing legal advocacy group, is best known for its lawsuits challenging civil rights laws that protect and assist racial minorities. The center hardly seemed a natural partner for CUC, with its largely minority enrollment. But the center's right-wing politics also meant that it viewed favorably the support of religion by government, and on that issue the center's view coincided with CUC's agenda.

The center filed suit on the college's behalf, arguing that CUC's exclusion from the Sellinger Program, a program in Maryland to provide state funding for private colleges and universities, violated constitutional rights of freedom of speech, association, and religious exercise. The college compared itself to religiously affiliated colleges that did receive Sellinger funds and argued that CUC was really like the other colleges.

The court, based on agreed facts and the parties' legal arguments, ruled that CUC was a pervasively sectarian

institution.¹⁷ It held that CUC was unlike the merely religiously affiliated colleges that received the Sellinger funds. The other colleges had a high level of institutional autonomy from their affiliated denominations, did not require student attendance at worship services, did not prefer church members in admissions or hiring, and limited religious instruction to religion class.

The court noted that CUC was closely tied to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with more than 20 percent of its revenues coming directly from the Church and with the college's bylaws requiring at least 34 of the 38 board members to be Adventists. Columbia Union College required its traditional students to attend weekly chapel services and dorm worship. The college required students to take a certain number of religion classes, the goal of which was more than academic, and aimed at "deepening student's religious experiences." Furthermore, courses on secular topics were advertised as being taught from a Christian viewpoint. Finally, the college exercised religious preferences in hiring and admissions, with 90 percent of the full-time faculty and 80 percent of the student body being Adventist.

Because of these findings, the court ruled that CUC was a religious entity, and that insofar as its freedom of speech, association, and equality were infringed by the denial of state funding, this was justified by the compelling interest the state had in maintaining separation of church and state.

The college appealed this ruling, and the center's lawyers made two arguments. First, they said that the college should get the money even if it was pervasively religious. To rule otherwise, they insisted, was to penalize CUC for being a religious college. Second, they argued that CUC was not really as religious as the lower court had found. They again compared CUC to a number of other colleges primarily affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church that received Sellinger funding. Columbia Union College was not meaningfully different in terms of religiosity from those colleges, the lawyers argued, which had been found not to be pervasively sectarian.

Some have argued that the only difference between the religious colleges that did receive Sellinger funds and those that did not was the political strength of their respective denominations—Catholics, strong; Adventists, weak. However, this argument ignores what actually happened on the college campuses that received Sellinger funds. One prominent Catholic scholar, commenting on the Sellinger Program and its effect on Catholic colleges, has written:

Catholic higher education institutions have so watered down the transmission of Catholic doctrine and practice that the distinction between their mission and that of secularly oriented colleges has become blurred enough to permit state aid to the former without violating the First Amendment. [This] should hearten those who have hitherto opposed state aid to religious schools, since it indicates that these institutions are losing their proper religious stamp. . . . *On the other hand, the Court's evaluation of Catholic college education should give pause to Catholic educators and challenge them to examine whether they have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage.*¹⁸

Some people at that time thought that if CUC pursued the case it should not group itself with the now largely secular Catholic colleges. Rather, it should pursue only the first argument, proclaiming its

show this was so, and it sent the case back to the lower court for further findings of fact on this question.

The decision by the court of appeals narrowed the case to a single question: was CUC a pervasively sectarian college? The case had become the inverse of the old saw "if you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" The court of appeals had decided that there was not enough evidence to convict CUC of being a wholly Christian college—and CUC agreed.

At that point, there was no muddling the issue of whether CUC was trying to minimize its religiosity. The only question before the lower court then was precisely the question of the nature and extent of CUC's religious atmosphere. The state of Maryland argued that CUC was a place where religious themes and beliefs pervaded the course work and programs. If the case were to continue, CUC would have to argue the opposite: that it indeed was not a wholly religious institution and that its

Thomas Jefferson, in his 1786 Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, decreed that "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical."

pervasive religiosity but arguing that it was religious discrimination to deny it the funds. The second argument essentially denied that CUC was a wholly religious institution. If accepted by the court, the argument could turn out to be a two-edged sword, because a finding that CUC was only religiously affiliated could undermine many of its legal protections in hiring, firing, and admissions.

Certainly this argument would not be popular with the church leadership and laity. Indeed, church leaders, lawyers, and the laity at large were assured that CUC was not making arguments denying or minimizing its religiosity. However, this claim seemed to be contradicted in the briefs filed by CUC's lawyers.¹⁹

The decision by the court of appeals removed any confusion about the arguments that CUC approved. The appeals court upheld the legal ruling of the trial court that pervasively sectarian colleges could not receive direct government support. However, the higher court overturned the lower court's factual finding that CUC was pervasively sectarian. The higher court said there was insufficient evidence to

primary mission was secular education.

This time, the arguments of CUC's lawyers succeeded. Based on further factual findings, the lower court decided that the college met only two of the four criteria by which to decide whether a college was pervasively sectarian. The court agreed that the college exercised a preference for Adventists in hiring and admissions and that the Adventist Church exerted a strong influence on the college through finances and board membership. However, these two points were insufficient to make up for the facts that only a minority of CUC students were subject to the mandatory worship policy,²⁰ and that there was insufficient evidence to show that "advancing the SDA Church's mission is a primary objective of CUC."²¹

This final point seemed to be most crucial to the court's decision. The court spent some time reviewing CUC policy statements, department bulletins, and



course syllabi, and concluded that there was evidence that “secular education is the primary goal of CUC.”²² It rejected the state’s contention that the “courses at CUC predominately focus on ‘deepening students’ religious experiences.”²³ Put positively, the court said that it could not conclude that CUC’s “attempts at religious indoctrination compromise its academic freedom.”²⁴

This time the state appealed the decision. As to the ruling below that CUC was not pervasively sectarian, CUC lawyer’s told the appeals court that “the district court’s careful opinion on this point is worthy of affirmance under any standard of review.”²⁵

The appeals court agreed. It noted that the lower court had determined that “religious references” in the

prefer Adventists in hiring and admissions will be limited to pastoral positions. The college can expect to face legal challenges if it attempts to enforce Adventist lifestyle standards on students or faculty. It will face difficulty in preventing unions from organizing among the faculty or staff. It may well lose its exemption under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and this alone could more than offset all funds received from the Sellinger Program. It may well find its ability to bring overseas employees on religious worker visas hampered.

Although these limits are not explicit “strings” found in the language of the Sellinger Program, the legal logic behind them is inexorable. Other colleges have already experienced these limits. Once a college

These cases demonstrate that those opposed to the CUC lawsuit are not driven exclusively or even primarily by “absolutist” theology or eschatology, but rather by practical legal and educational concerns for Adventist colleges.

“college’s syllabi” were “too isolated and scattered to justify a finding that religion permeates the secular courses.” The appeals court agreed that “religion certainly plays a prominent role at Columbia Union, but no more so than” the other colleges receiving state funding. Like these colleges, the court said, “secular education is the primary goal of Columbia Union.”²⁶

But in a twist based on a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision,²⁷ the appeals court ruled that it may no longer be relevant whether CUC was pervasively sectarian or not. Rather, the Supreme Court’s new standard appeared to allow for the Sellinger funds to go to CUC, regardless of its pervasively sectarian status. The court found this as an alternate basis to support its decision that CUC should receive Sellinger funds.

The state of Maryland declined to seek review, and thus the court of appeals decision became final. The Maryland state attorney’s office currently accepts that CUC is not a pervasively sectarian school. Indeed, at least one Maryland state attorney has expressed the view that CUC is no longer eligible for the state and federal exemptions extended to pervasively religious schools.²⁸

The Aftermath

If state officials act on the belief that CUC is no longer eligible for the state and federal statutory exemptions due to religiously operated colleges, CUC’s ability to

segregates its religious activity to a limited, defined portion of its programs and receives state funds for its secular programs, it opens itself up to state regulation that a fully religious college avoids.

To claim otherwise is to ignore well-known, widely cited cases of other schools that have been found to be religiously affiliated but not pervasively religious.²⁹ These cases demonstrate that opponents of the CUC lawsuit are not driven exclusively or even primarily by “absolutist” theology or eschatology, but rather by practical legal and educational concerns for Adventist colleges. The irony is that had CUC unabashedly argued it was a wholly religious school with a primary purpose to communicate religious ideals it still may have won its case, but would have done so without casting any doubt on the college’s religious identity and mission.

But now, having downplayed its religiosity to Maryland state officials and federal courts for the last four years, CUC is hardly in a position to reverse itself and claim that, “sorry folks for the confusion, but really we are a wholly religious institution, with all the rights and privileges thereto obtaining.” Such a claim would only serve to underscore the question of CUC’s credibility that state lawyers raised in their brief to the federal court.

These factors make the CUC lawsuit fundamentally different from the Church’s acceptance of strings-free grants, such as the land grant from the government

grants, such as the land grant from the government of Rhodesia in the late 1800s. The “Solousi land grant” was a single grant with no ongoing entanglement with government. The Solousi grant contrasts sharply with the ongoing state review involved with Sellinger funding.

Unlike the CUC case, in Rhodesia the Adventist Church did not need to establish the secularity of its educational programs to receive the Solousi grant. Furthermore, in order to receive the Solousi grant, the Church did not have to challenge a body of law separating church and state that has proven extremely beneficial to religious minorities. Finally, unlike the CUC case, the Church did not put in jeopardy its ability to hire faculty and admit students according to its religious principles in order to obtain the Solousi grant.

In short, the Solousi grant was a “strings free” grant of land. In contrast, the CUC case involves compromise of religious identity, questions of ongoing state entanglement, a serious blow to constitutional protections that have served the Adventist Church extremely well, and exposure of a church college to serious legal liabilities from which it was previously protected. In quoting Ellen White in relation to the CUC lawsuit, one should not look to her comments regarding the Solousi grant. Rather, far more apt is her comment on the Puritans’ cozy church/state relationship in colonial America:

Thus again was demonstrated the evil results, so often witnessed in the history of the church from the days of Constantine to the present, of attempting to build up the church by the aid of the state, of appealing to the secular power in support of the gospel of Him who declared: “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36. *The union of the church with the state, be the degree ever so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world.*³⁰

Columbia Union College’s destructive tinkering with this principle may well have effects far beyond Takoma Park. It is reasonably possible—even likely—that the CUC decision will be cited as influential precedent in cases involving other Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities. Whether it be a student or staff member suspended or disciplined for moral failings, the argument will be that because the college is no different from CUC—is thus not pervasively sectarian—it has no right to enforce religiously based moral standards.

Presently, no church body with jurisdiction over

CUC has made a formal statement to suggest that CUC has inappropriately rejected the pervasively sectarian label or is any different from other Adventist colleges. Early in the lawsuit, the North American Division asked CUC not to pursue the lawsuit.³¹ Certain church religious liberty leaders have also expressed strong concerns over the lawsuit.³² However, public silence on the results of the case from church leadership responsible for oversight of Adventist education may be construed by state officials and judges to mean that CUC’s nonsectarian status is an accepted norm for Adventist colleges.

If CUC’s position on its religious identity is to become the new norm—and this is not certain even at CUC, which is under new leadership—the decision should not happen by default. It should be the topic of active discussion among church leaders and laity. It is unfair to college leaders to place the burden solely on them to make such fundamental decisions regarding the direction of Adventist education. All levels of church leadership—lay and otherwise—should be involved. Adventist colleges other than CUC face the same squeeze between church loyalty and state support,³³ and with President George W. Bush’s focus on “faith-based initiatives” the tensions will only increase.

The question of credibility raised by the state of Maryland involves church laity as well as Adventist college leadership. The financial pressures that cause leaders of our colleges to seek funds from state programs represent, at least in part, a failure of church laity to support those colleges adequately. Adventist college constituencies everywhere need to give thoughtful, prayerful consideration regarding the Lord’s plans for the Church’s educational program. It is unfair for us, by our inaction and inattention, to place our college leaders in places where extreme tension exists between fiscal and spiritual values. If this happens, their temptations becomes ours, and we, too, will face a crisis of credibility in the eyes of an onlooking world.

Notes and References

1. “Defendants’ Proposed Findings of Fact and Memorandum In Support,” 8, filed Feb. 17, 1999, in C.A. 96-1831, at the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 9.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 11.
6. *Ibid.*



7. Julian Boyd et al., eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 2:546.

8. Madison, *Memorial and Remonstrance*, 4, 330 U.S. at 66.

9. *Ibid.*, 7, at 67.

10. *Kedroff v. St. Nicholas Cathedral of Russian Orthodox Church*, 344 U.S. 94, 116 (1952).

11. *Corp. of Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. Amos*, 483 U.S. 327 (1987).

12. *NLRB v. Cath. Bishop of Chicago*, 440 U.S. 490, 502 (1979).

13. *Welter v. Seton Hall Univ.*, 608 A.2d 206 (N.J. 1992) (Ministerial status of nun employees did not allow university exemption from employment regulations where job positions were purely secular).

14. *Gay Rights Coalition of Georgetown Univ. Law Center v. Georgetown Univ.*, 536 A.2d 1, 117 (D.C. Cir. 1987) (University must provide benefits to student gay club, even if club ideals are contrary to religious goals of school).

15. *Hunt v. McNair*, 413 U.S. 734, 743 (1973); *Tilton v. Richardson*, 403 U.S. 672, 685, 686 (1971).

16. *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 657 (1971).

17. All major court opinions and many of the briefs filed in the CUC case can be found on the Web site of the Center for Individual Rights at <www.cir-usa.org/recent_cases/columbia_v_clarke.html>.

18. Vincent R. Vasey, "Roemer v. Board of Public Works, Maryland: The Supreme Court's Evaluation of the Religious Mission of Catholic Colleges and Church Expectations," *Cath. Law.* 23 (spring 1978): 108.

19. Compare "Fighting for Liberty and Justice: A Statement From Columbia Union College," *Adventist Today* (Sept.-Oct 1999): 1, at <www.atoday.com/magazine/archive/1999/sepoct1999/news/CUC.shtml>. There it was claimed that "The college, then, is certifiably, as well as unapologetically, Adventist. No dark hints of institutional compromise, and no careless rhetoric involving the obscure and legally dubious phrase 'pervasively sectarian,' can negate this fact." In contrast, see the arguments in CUC's Fourth Circuit brief, which for many pages minimizes its religious atmosphere and likens itself to the non-pervasively sectarian colleges in the Sellinger program. See CIR's brief before the Fourth Circuit (Feb. 12, 1998), at <www.cir-usa.org/recent_cases/columbia_v_clarke.html>.

20. Closer factual inquiry revealed that the "mandatory worship policy" on which the court relied in its first opinion applied only to students under the age of 23 who lived in resident halls. Thus, only about 350 to 400 of CUC's 1,172 students were subject to the policy.

21. *Columbia Union College v. Oliver*, 2000 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 13644 *31.

22. *Ibid.*, *35.

23. *Ibid.*, *37.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Brief of Appellee to the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals in the matter of *Columbia Union College v. Clarke*, 14 (2001).

26. *Columbia Union College v. Clarke*, 254 F.3d 496 (U.S.C.A. 4th Cir.).

27. The case, *Mitchell v. Helms*, 530 U.S. 793 (2001), involved the gift of state-purchased educational materials, such as computer materials and classroom supplies to pervasively sectarian elementary and high schools.

28. Maryland State Assistant Attorney General Pace McConkie expressed this personal opinion to the author shortly after the court of appeals' final decision.

29. *EEOC v. Kamehameha*, 990 F.2d 458 (9th Cir. 1993) (a religiously affiliated school cannot discriminate in hiring on the basis of religion or religious identity); *Welter v. Seton Hall Univ.*, 608 A.2d 206 (N.J. 1992) (a religiously affiliated university cannot use religious criteria in treatment or employment decisions regarding faculty or staff); *Gay Rights Coalition of Georgetown Univ. Law Center v. Georgetown University*, 536 A.2d 117 (D.C. Cir. 1987) (a religiously-affiliated university must provide benefits to a student gay club even if club ideals are contrary to religious goals of school).

30. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1950), 297 (emphasis added).

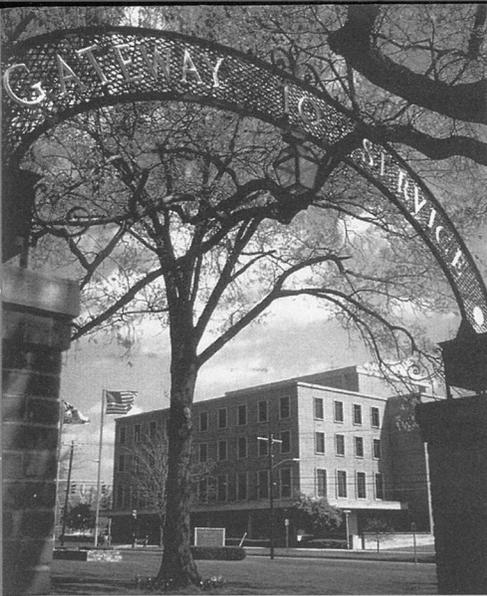
31. "While we recognize that the matter has already been initiated in the courts, it is to be clear that we do not support the action and are requesting that it be withdrawn." Letter dated Aug. 22, 1996, from A. C. McClure, president of the NAD of General Conference, quoted in "Defendants' Proposed Findings."

32. See an article by Alan Reinach, director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Pacific Union Conference, in the Nov. 15, 2000, *Church State Newsflash*, at <www.freedomring.com/news001115.html>.

33. In a statement sent out November 15, 2001, regarding a case involving state funding, the Walla Walla College board said "After further exploring the *Gallwey v. Grimm* case, which had been discussed at the September 10 board meeting, the board acknowledged that further explanations given by college administration clarified some of the misunderstandings which had arisen over statements representing the college in legal documents and court findings. . . . 'Mistakes have been made, but we are working hard to restore communication and trust,' said Jere Patzer, board chairman. 'We want our administration and faculty to know without a doubt that they are valued and are indispensable to the mission of our college and our Church.'"

Nicholas P. Miller is an attorney with the law firm of Sidley, Austin, Brown and Wood in Washington D.C. He practices with the firm's Religious Institutions Practice group. Miller authored a brief on behalf of the Council on Religious Freedom that opposed Columbia Union College's request for certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court in the case discussed in this article. He also is an adjunct professor at Columbia Union College's Center for Law and Public Policy.

Photo: Courtesy Columbia Union College



Columbia Union College campus.

Debating the CUC Case

A Question of Equity: Columbia Union College and the Pursuit of Fairness

By Mitchell A. Tyner

The outcome of a lawsuit often depends on how you frame the question to be answered, and that was certainly true in the Columbia Union College case. If the question had been “Shall we revise a precedent and force a state to give money to a school whose very existence reflects its religious purpose?” then the answer would have been in the negative. But the college asked, “In light of the historic, fundamental doctrine that government must treat all religions equally, was it proper for the state of Maryland to concoct a system that allows it to give financial support to the secular operations of religious schools affiliated with a politically popular and powerful denomination and at the same time deny the same support to a school operated by a politically powerless denomination?”

The second question is the correct one, and it received the correct answer. The decision was the proper one. It properly applied the law. It properly required equal treatment of all religions, not just a politically powerful one. The result is properly synchronous with the overall history of Seventh-day Adventist government relations.

One’s assessment of this decision hinges on the meaning one assigns to ten words: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,” the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. What does this require? So-called “strict separation”? “Accommodation” of religion? Hostility to religion?

Although popular mythology depicts America’s earliest settlers as coming to these shores for religious freedom, the truth is that although some did, others came for economic opportunity. Of those who came for religious reasons, it must be said that they came to set up a society in which they could worship according to the dictates of conscience, yet also prevent others from doing the same. Early New England witnessed the same type of religious persecution that the religiously motivated settlers had fled. Wiser heads gradually came to understand that the only way to preserve the peace and prevent religious hostility was to require government to be neutral and evenhanded in its dealings with all religions. The history of the interpretation of the Establishment Clause has been the history of an effort to understand and achieve that neutrality.

In early America, neutrality was understood to mean neutrality among the various forms of Protestantism. Jews were barely tolerated in the colonies, as were Roman

Catholics. Indeed, the colony of Maryland was founded in large part to allow Catholics the same opportunities afforded Protestants.

In the nineteenth century, patterns of immigration began to change, and far more Catholics began to arrive. They encountered a de facto Protestant establishment, nowhere more visible than in the public schools. The Bible was read, and it was the King James version. Prayers were said, and always in Protestant form. Catholics began to allege that neutrality to all religions might be the ideal, but the reality was something different. Therefore, they said, government should either make the public schools truly neutral or it should provide equal funding for Catholic schools to redress the discrimination.

The height of the opposition to this Catholic challenge came in the 1880s and 1890s—the period of the nativist movement—not coincidentally the time when Senator H. W. Blair introduced a series of proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution that rightly provoked much alarm from the young Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹ In that milieu the phrase “pervasively sectarian” was first used in the context of government aid to religiously affiliated schools. Thus Justice Clarence Thomas was not so wide of the mark when he labeled it as a tainted remnant of bigotry.² It comes down to us with at least a compromised pedigree.²

Meaningful response to the Catholic challenge did

In previous decades, neutrality meant no federal funding for Catholic schools, because no schools of any sort received federal funding. With the advent of federal aid to the states, specifically aimed to enhance the school systems, neutrality became a more difficult matter. By the late twentieth century, the question was being phrased much differently: When government funds all other actors in a specific endeavor, is nonfunding of religious actors neutrality—or hostility?

Consider a hypothetical: Government undertakes to subsidize all providers of preschool child care. Because of the Establishment Clause, it funds all providers except those sponsored by churches. The result is that church-sponsored child care must charge substantially higher rates than other day care providers, rendering them noncompetitive. Eventually church-sponsored day care centers are driven out of business. Is this neutrality toward religion? With the expansion of the role of government, neutrality has taken on a new meaning.

A series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions beginning in the 1980s has reflected this changed reality. A school district that provided a hearing interpreter for every deaf student was told that providing such an interpreter for a student who chose to attend a Christian school was permissible, because the aid was available to all, not just parochial school students.³ The state of Washington was told that if it funded the higher education of blind students to pursue the career of

“By refusing to fund a religious institution solely because of religion, the government risks discriminating against a class of citizens solely because of faith. The First Amendment requires government neutrality, not hostility, to religious belief.” *Columbia Union College v. Clarke*

not to take place until the mid-twentieth century, when the U.S. Supreme Court finally got around to requiring true religious neutrality in public schools by forbidding the practices of staff-lead Bible reading and prayer.

Application of the idea of neutrality in the public school setting was made more complicated by societal change in the early twentieth century. Previously, the American government had constituted a rather thin layer of society. Its functions were primarily in the realm of foreign affairs. But with industrialization and the effort to pull the country out of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the federal government became something hardly imaginable to the founders: a pervasive influence in virtually every phase of American life.

their choice, equal funding for a blind student who wished to attend a seminary was not a violation of the Establishment Clause.⁴ Programs providing remedial instruction in parochial schools have been approved because they are available to all students.⁵ The University of Virginia was told that if it allocated student fees to support a wide array of student organizations, it should treat a Christian student organization as eligible on the same footing as other groups.⁶ To do otherwise would be to penalize religion, not treat it neutrally.

As the U.S. Supreme Court clarified this new understanding of the Establishment Clause, Columbia Union College entered the picture. Columbia Union College applied for a grant from Maryland’s Joseph A.

Sellinger Program. The program, known locally as the “Father Sellinger grants,” gives public aid to private colleges within the state. Annual grants are made to eligible institutions in an amount based in large part on enrollment. To be eligible, an institution must be nonprofit, approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, be accredited, have previously awarded associate or baccalaureate degrees, maintain at least one program leading to a degree other than seminary or theological programs, and submit each new program or major modification to the commission for approval. The statute also mandates that no Sellinger funds be used for sectarian purposes. All parties agree that CUC meets all criteria for eligibility.

In fiscal year 1997, fifteen institutions received Sellinger funds. Twelve had no religious affiliation, and three were affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. The recipients’ eligibility had been tested in a 1976 case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Maryland colleges in question, though affiliated with the Catholic Church, were entitled to government funds because they were not so pervasively sectarian that secular activities could not be separated from sectarian ones.⁷ This case was the genesis of the modern doctrine that prohibited governmental funding of “pervasively sectarian” institutions, the reasoning being that the institution must be of such a nature that government could fund the secular programs and aspects—not the sectarian ones—and therefore must be able to delineate clearly one from the other. Thus the issue is not state funding of religion, but rather the ability of the state to fund the secular functions of an educational institution without funding religious functions.

In 1990, CUC applied for Sellinger funds. In 1992, that application was denied. In 1995, CUC requested reconsideration of its application in view of the U.S. Supreme Court decisions discussed previously. The motion for reconsideration was also denied. The college reapplied in 1996, and was once again denied. Columbia Union College then filed a complaint in federal court against the director of the commission in his official capacity for relief of both constitutional and statutory violations.

The U.S. District Court for Maryland heard the case and held that the Establishment Clause prohibits any state from directly funding any pervasively sectarian institution and that CUC was such an institution.⁸ Since a trial court must follow the law as it exists, the district court was correct to follow precedent. Such was exactly the anticipated result. All involved knew that a different result based on the U.S. Supreme Court’s new direction

in Establishment Clause interpretation would have to come from an appellate court, and perhaps from the Supreme Court itself.

The Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, which was more sympathetic to CUC’s position, then heard the case. It ruled that the denial of funds to CUC “infringed on Columbia Union’s free speech rights” because the state rejected the application solely because of CUC’s religious viewpoint.⁹ Such an infringement, said the court, could only be justified as a means of complying with the dictates of the Establishment Clause. The appellate court remanded the case to the trial court because the record had not been fully developed on the issue of CUC’s pervasively sectarian status. It gave a broad hint to the trial court on remand by observing that “a careful reading of *Roemer* [the case that held state aid could not be given to pervasively sectarian schools] leads to the inescapable conclusion that even colleges obviously and firmly devoted to the ideal and teachings of a given religion are not necessarily so permeated by religion that the secular side cannot be separated from the sectarian.”

On remand, the district court supervised an extensive process of reviewing the factual similarities and differences between CUC and the other Maryland schools that receive Sellinger funds. Based on the criteria given to it by the appellate court, the district court ruled that CUC is not pervasively sectarian, meaning that the state can safely fund its secular programs without funding its religious programs.¹⁰ In doing so, the court found that the differences separating CUC from the other schools were not sufficient to justify denying it equal access to the Sellinger Program.

The state then appealed once again to the Fourth Circuit, challenging the trial court’s decision that CUC is not pervasively sectarian. Columbia Union College responded by arguing that a U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Mitchell v. Helms*, handed down during the course of the CUC litigation, makes clear that the pervasively sectarian inquiry is no longer relevant, or, in the alternative, that the college was not pervasively sectarian.¹¹

In *Mitchell v. Helms*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Louisiana program that provided various teaching and study aids to all schools, with approximately 30



percent going to parochial schools. The Supreme Court reasoned that as long as all students were eligible for the assistance, and the aid did not result in indoctrination fairly attributable to the state, no constitutional violation had occurred. Said the Supreme Court, "If aid to schools, even 'direct aid,' is neutrally available and, before reaching or benefiting any religious school, first passes through the hands (literally or figuratively) of numerous private citizens who are free to direct the aid elsewhere, the government has not provided any 'support of religion.'"¹²

In *Mitchell v. Helms*, a plurality of four justices abandoned the "pervasively sectarian" language. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote a separate concurrence to explain why she did not fully join the plurality opinion. Her explanation had nothing to do with the "pervasively sectarian" language. She is therefore assumed to agree with the plurality on this point.

The following quote, from Justice Thomas's opinion, states the plurality's position on this issue:

One of the dissent's factors deserves special mention: whether a school that receives aid (or whose students receive aid) is pervasively sectarian. The dissent is correct that there was a period when this factor mattered, particularly if the pervasively sectarian school was a primary or secondary school. . . . But that period is one that the Court should regret, and it is thankfully long past.

There are numerous reasons to formally dispense with this factor. First, its relevance in our precedents is in sharp decline. Although our case law has consistently mentioned it even in recent years, we have not struck down an aid program in reliance on this factor since 1985. . . . Second, the religious nature of a recipient should not matter to the constitutional analysis, so long as the recipient adequately furthers the government's secular purpose. If a program offers permissible aid to the religious (including the pervasively sectarian), the areligious, and the irreligious, it is a mystery which view of religion

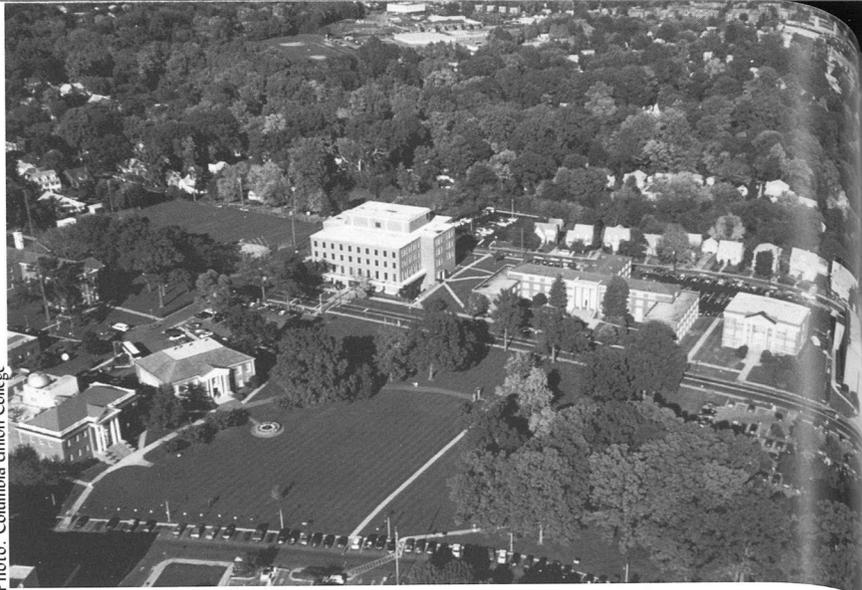


Photo: Columbia Union College

Columbia Union College campus.

the government has established, and thus a mystery what the constitutional violation would be. The pervasively sectarian recipient has not received any special favor, and it is most bizarre that the Court would, as the dissent seemingly does, reserve special hostility for those who take their religion seriously, who think that their religion should affect the whole of their lives, or who make the mistake of being effective in transmitting their views to children.

Third, the inquiry into the recipient's religious views required by a focus on whether a school is pervasively sectarian is not only unnecessary but also offensive. It is well established, in numerous other contexts, that courts should refrain from trolling through a person's or institution's religious beliefs. Yet that is just what this factor requires, as was evident before the District Court. Although the dissent welcomes such probing, we find it profoundly troubling. In addition, and related, the application of the "pervasively sectarian" factor collides with our decisions that have prohibited governments from discriminating in the distribution of public benefits based upon religious status or sincerity.

Finally, hostility to aid to pervasively sectarian schools has a shameful pedigree that we do not hesitate to disavow. Although the dissent professes concern for "the implied exclusion of the less favored," the exclusion of pervasively sectarian schools from government-aid programs is just that, particularly given the history of such exclusion. Opposition to aid to "sectarian" schools acquired prominence in the 1870's with Congress's consideration (and near passage) of the Blaine Amendment, which would

have amended the Constitution to bar any aid to sectarian institutions. Consideration of the amendment arose at a time of pervasive hostility to the Catholic Church and to Catholics in general, and it was an open secret that “sectarian” was code for “Catholic.” Notwithstanding its history, of course, “sectarian” could, on its face, describe the school of any religious sect, but the Court eliminated this possibility of confusion when, in *Hunt v. McNair*, 413 U.S., at 743, it coined the term “pervasively sectarian”—a term which, at that time, could be applied almost exclusively to Catholic parochial schools and which even today’s dissent exemplifies chiefly by reference to such schools.

In short, nothing in the Establishment Clause requires the exclusion of pervasively sectarian schools from otherwise permissible aid programs, and other doctrines of this Court bar it. This doctrine, born of bigotry, should be buried now.¹³

The appellate court responded to CUC’s reliance on the new U.S. Supreme Court precedent by observing that *Mitchell v. Helms* had “significantly altered the Establishment Clause landscape by addressing the circumstances under which sectarian schools may be eligible for government aid,” and that it understood the Supreme Court to emphasize that “the neutrality of aid criteria is the most important factor in considering the effect of a government aid program.”¹⁴ It then examined the structure of the Sellinger Program, including the

funding. It reached this conclusion: “Looking at all the evidence, we fail to see any disqualifying difference between Columbia Union College and the colleges [previously granted Sellinger funds]. Religion certainly plays a prominent role at Columbia Union, but no more so than the colleges [examined in *Roemer* and found to be acceptable for funding.]”¹⁶

The bottom line for the court of appeal: “By refusing to fund a religious institution solely because of religion, the government risks discriminating against a class of citizens solely because of faith. The First Amendment requires government neutrality, not hostility, to religious belief.”¹⁷ To prevent such discrimination, CUC should be given access to the Sellinger Program on the same basis as other religiously affiliated schools. The State of Maryland did not appeal that decision.

Was it the proper decision? If you believe the question concerned the propriety of the state of Maryland concocting a system that allowed it to give financial support to the secular operations of religious schools affiliated with a politically popular and powerful denomination and at the same time deny the same support to a school operated by a politically powerless denomination, then the answer must be yes. Under the interpretation of the Establishment Clause currently used by the U.S. Supreme Court, which has the last word on the subject, it was the proper decision. The result continues to require that government deal with religion evenhandedly.

Those who oppose this decision are really not interested in fairness and equality arguments, for they

“The neutrality of aid criteria is the most important factor in considering the effect of a government aid program.” *Columbia Union College v. Clarke*

safeguards to prevent funding of religious programs, observed that the Supreme Court “has never struck down a government aid program to a religiously-affiliated college or university” [as opposed to aid to an elementary or secondary school], and concluded, “Columbia Union argues that it is entitled under *Mitchell* to Sellinger Program funds without resort to examining the college’s pervasively sectarian status. We agree.”¹⁵

To bolster its conclusion, the court then examined the factors considered by the trial court in deciding that CUC is not so pervasively sectarian as to preclude

wish to oppose any governmental funding of religious schools, no matter what disadvantages result. In their zeal to oppose any such funding they resort to trying to make a moral argument, citing Jefferson’s statement that “to compel a man to furnish contributions of

Photo: Columbia Union College



Wilkinson Hall at Columbia Union College.



money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical.”¹⁸

Sinful? Not in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. For a century, there have been those among us who have tried to steer the Church into a position of absolute separationism, but to no avail. A century ago, A. T. Jones tried to prevent the Church from accepting a gift from the government of Rhodesia, using just such a separationist argument. Ellen G. White disagreed, counseling Jones not to reject a gift that might well prove to be a great blessing to the Church.¹⁹ We gratefully accepted the gift, the campus of Solusi University, which has indeed been a boon to the work of the Church in Africa.

Will those who oppose CUC argue that accepting that gift was sinful? They argue that the Solusi grant was “different” because it did not involve an ongoing relationship with government. Other instances are not so easily dismissed. For instance on December 12, 1971, the General Conference Church-State Relationship Committee voted to approve a federally subsidized loan (which constituted not only the loan of governmental credit to make available a lower interest rate, but also involved an outright gift of government funds in the form of the loan subsidy) to rebuild Glendale Adventist Hospital, which most certainly required an ongoing monitoring by the government to insure that the loan was repaid. More recently, the current facility of the Review and Herald Publishing House was built using similar government-backed bonds. Nor has the opposition made any explanation as to why the large amounts of government money flowing annually into Loma Linda University is fundamentally different from the CUC case.

Acceptance of government funds cannot be made into a moral issue—at least not without calling most of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church sinful. In the vast majority of the territories in which the Church operates, gifts are accepted from government if the conditions are acceptable. It is not a doctrinal matter, but a pragmatic decision, as it should be.

Consider the result of calling acceptance of government aid “sinful.” Suppose a hundred years ago two brothers settled on farms near the border between North Dakota and Manitoba. When the international boundary was finally demarcated, they found that one lived in Canada and the other in the United States, although their homes were only a half mile apart. Is it reasonable to tell the descendants of one brother that they may accept government aid for

their church-operated school, as the Church in Canada has done, but that the descendants of the other brother would be “sinful” to do so? Obviously such a result is ludicrous. Morality exists without reference to international boundaries. If specific conduct is inherently sinful, it is sinful everywhere.

Even so, conduct that is not inherently sinful in all circumstances might be so if illegal in a given situation. But that is not the case in this instance: the court system of the United States has pronounced CUC’s receipt of Sellinger funds legally acceptable.

What other reason could there be for refusing generally available state aid for our schools? One perfectly good reason would be that the “strings” attached to the aid were unacceptable. For instance, a movement is being felt in the United States to require that all recipients of government funds should give up the right of preferential hiring—the long-recognized right of churches to hire only those who are in harmony with that church’s doctrines. To give up that right in order to receive state funds would be a fool’s bargain. But that is not the case with the Sellinger Program. Columbia Union College easily meets the requirements of separate accounting for the funds received and not using the funds to support religious functions. There are no objectionable “strings.”

Those who have opposed CUC so vociferously make much of the supposed inevitable loss of exemptions from various governmental controls and requirements, such as the right to hire only members. But the case law does not support such a presupposition. In one such case, Baptist Memorial College of Health Sciences, of Memphis, Tennessee, fired a student service specialist because she accepted ordination in a church with a large gay and lesbian membership. The employee accused the school of religious discrimination, the school answered (properly) that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 exempted religious institutions from its reach, and the former employee responded that the school had waived that exemption by accepting government funds and by firing other non-Baptists. The U.S. Court of Appeal for the Sixth Circuit ruled for the school, using the following language:

[The former employee] contends that even if the College is a religious educational institution, it waived the Title VII exemption for such institutions because it represented itself as being an equal opportunity employer and because it received federal funds. However, the statutory exemptions from such religious discrimination claims under

Title VII cannot be waived by either party. The exemptions reflect a decision by Congress that religious organizations have a constitutional right to be free from government intervention.²⁰

In addition, the First Amendment does not permit federal courts to dictate to religious institutions how to carry out their religious missions or how to enforce their religious practices. In the Baptist Memorial College of Health Sciences case and *Siegel v. Truett-McConnell College* (1994), the courts concluded that exemptions for religious schools could not be waived: they were not conditioned on good behavior or on

court left no doubt as to the reason for its decision: "Our approach avoids the constitutional infirmities of the NLRB's 'substantial religious character' test. It does not intrude upon the free exercise of religion nor subject the institution to questioning about its motives or beliefs. It does not ask about the centrality of beliefs or how important the religious mission is to the institution. Nor should it."²²

The court also left no doubt as to its opinion of more intrusive inquiry. "Despite its protestations to the contrary, the nature of the Board's inquiry boils down to 'is it *sufficiently* religious?'" That, said the court, is "the exact kind of questioning into religious

"Finally, hostility to aid to pervasively sectarian schools has a shameful pedigree that we do not hesitate to disavow." U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas

meeting some arbitrary standard of minimum religiosity, but rather are based on constitutional requirements.²¹ To move from these cases of record to an assumption that receipt of government funds will result in the lose of such exemptions is a stretch, indeed.

Still another recent decision undermines the "sky is falling" hysteria of CUC's opponents. They argue that, among other evils, acceptance of government money will subject the college to labor union efforts to organize college employees. But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit just rejected that exact argument, in a case of which the opposition is well aware.

For several years, the National Labor Relations board has sought to obtain jurisdiction over the University of Great Falls, a Roman Catholic school in Montana. The board, by statute, has no jurisdiction over religious entities, but the NLRB has advanced a theory that the school is not religious enough to merit that exemption. It advocated an inquiry into the relative religiosity of the school, much as did the state of Maryland in the CUC case. The District of Columbia Circuit Court would have none of it.

It ruled that in determining NLRB jurisdiction it was inappropriate for the NLRB to inquire into the institution's "substantial religious character"; rather, the appropriate test is whether the institution: (1) holds itself out to the public as a religious institution, even if its principal academic focus is on "secular" subjects; (2) is nonprofit; and (3) is religiously affiliated. The university met those three criteria easily. The

matters which [prior Supreme Court opinions] specifically sought to avoid." No, the sky is not falling, the wolf is not at the door, the dominoes are secure.

That probably will be of little importance to those who have fought so hard to prevent CUC from going forward with this action, even convincing other church entities to file a brief in opposition, even though the action was sited outside their territory, and thus outside their jurisdiction. They stand in a direct line with A. T. Jones and his absolutist positions. Based on past conduct, they will likely ignore the international and rational implications of their position and continue to advocate a stance that is based not on law, not on practicality, but, if anything, on eschatology.

Given Ellen White's counsel not to refuse gifts that may be a blessing to the Church, and the Church's long history of accepting such gifts, the logical sequence of evaluating participation in a given program should start with a presumption that participation is appropriate. Certain questions must then be asked: Is the aid legal? Are the conditions of acceptance, if any, acceptable? What, if anything, must we give up in order to participate? On balance, will participation strengthen or weaken the church institution involved?

In the CUC case, the college board found that (1) the aid is court approved; (2) the conditions are not burden-



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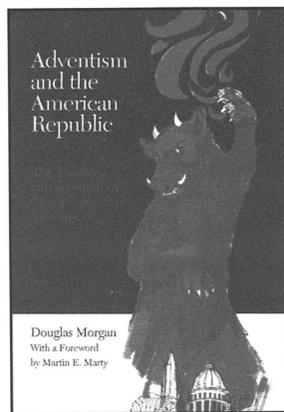
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some; (3) receipt of the funds will strengthen the institution; and (4) challenging a discriminatory state aid system stands in the long tradition of Adventist witness for governmental neutrality as a means to strengthen and perpetuate religious freedom.

Notes and References

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12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, 2550.
14. *Columbia Union College v. Clarke*, 254 F.3d 496 At 501 (U.S.C.A. 4th Cir.).
15. *Ibid.*, 504.
16. *Ibid.*, 509-10.
17. *Ibid.*, 510.
18. Julian Boyd et al., eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 2:540.
19. Knight, *Jones*, 127ff.
20. *Hall v. Baptist Memorial Healthcare Corporation d/b/a Baptist Memorial College of Health Sciences*, 215 F.3d 618 (6th Cir. 2000).
21. *Siegel v. Truett-McConnell College*, 13 F. Supp. 1335, USDC ND GA, 1994; aff'd 73 F. 3d 1108 (11th Cir., 1995).
22. *University of Great Falls v. National Labor Relations Board*, 278 F. 3d 1335 (D.C. Cir., 2002).

Mitchell A. Tyner is associate general counsel, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, with special responsibilities in the areas of church-state relations and religious discrimination. The opinions here expressed are his own, not the official position of the General Conference.

Adventists, Beasts, and America

Adventism and the American Republic. By Douglas Morgan, Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001.

Reviewed by Terrie Dopp Aamodt

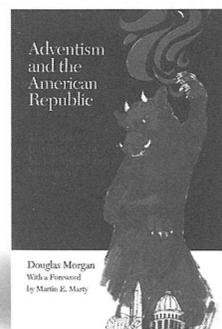
Seventh-day Adventist historiography yields several stages in the recounting of the Adventist past: there was the hagiographic phase, and there was the iconoclastic phase. Lately, we have witnessed Adventist histories that strive for evenhandedness and objectivity. A notable example is Douglas Morgan's *Adventism and the American Republic*. Morgan carries out a sympathetic but judicious examination of the relationship between Seventh-day Adventists and the United States government from the 1850s to the present.

This is really a book about history, especially the Adventist theology of history, which Morgan states has prompted Adventists "in late twentieth-century cultural conflicts, to align more frequently with the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Jewish Congress than with the National Rifle Association or the Christian Coalition" (1). Such an apparently puzzling stance for a basically conservative group is just one of the major ironies connected to a movement that has spawned hundreds of powerful health and educational institutions, an intricate denominational structure, and an upwardly mobile membership while sustaining intense apocalyptic fervor.

Morgan sees the Adventist relationship to American government institutions as a strong illustration of the excruciating space the group occupies between the category of "sect" and the status of "denomination." He maintains there is a "causal connection" between Adventist apocalyptic belief and political behavior

(9). He follows that thread through the passionate nineteenth century separatism that made Adventists feel free to criticize their country for tolerating slavery and passing Sunday laws, the cautious accommodation of such mid-twentieth century moves as "conscientious cooperationism," and the more critical, activist social stances of the Church in the 1970s.

In his conclusion, Morgan responds to Robert Fuller's identification of apocalyptic movements as groups that engage in "tribalistic boundary posturing," employing "apocalyptic name-calling" to compensate for a "curtailed sense of agency" (209). According to Morgan, "although the apocalyptic in the Adventist experience has at times been connected with prejudice, narrowness, and dubious speculation, its public impact has, by and large, been on behalf of human liberty and wholeness" (209). Such a confident assertion might suggest an apologetic tone, perhaps accompanied by some searching questions: Is this a story that can be told by a member



of the Seventh-day Adventist faith such as Morgan? Can any church member achieve the objective distance necessary to tell the story accurately? Perhaps not. Perhaps an innate tendency to portray controversial events in a sympathetic light makes objectivity impossible. Yet it would be supremely difficult for any scholar who is not intimately acquainted with Adventism to provide an account as full and fair as Morgan's. He notices subtleties, nuances, and semiotic patterns most accessible to someone who has spent a lifetime steeped in the literature of Adventism.

Morgan also achieves a notable critical distance, I think, in his descriptions of people and ideas sacred to Adventism. For example, he coins a memorable phrase when he describes Ellen White as "a spiritual wild card, a source of authority in the community outside the usual channels, while also providing assurance of the divine presence in the community" (24). In an even more colorful passage, he describes the way twentieth-century church leaders employed a statement by Ellen White to their own advantage. The context is a description of Ellen White's moderate, pragmatic response to A. T. Jones's insistence that the General Conference decline a 12,000-acre gift of land from Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Land Company. Her advice allowed twentieth-century church leaders to high-

light aspects of her counsel to justify their own enthusiasm for accepting support from government entities. "In attempting to moderate Jones with a sort of ecclesiastical realpolitik," Morgan states,

White sought to ensure that Adventist separatism would not be so radical as to cut the church off from appropriate opportunities to build itself up as a source of good in the world . . . Here was a basis for cultivating cooperative relationships with governments and accepting their benevolence. At the same time the tendency of subsequent leaders to stress her efforts at bridling Jones would contribute to great disengagement from social and political protest. It would lead them to place higher value on minimizing confrontation with governments than on a comprehensive and forthright

witness against suppression of human rights. In their hands, White's action to moderate Jones's radically separatist version of a martyr church's witness to freedom would become, in some instances, basis for emasculating that witness. (57)

The idea of men in denominational leadership bending Ellen White's statements to emasculate Alonzo T. Jones's witness is an intriguing metaphor.

Although Morgan's book is thorough, detailed, and comprehensive, it also contains some intriguing implications. After reading his descriptions and ample quotations of religious liberty lions such as A. T. Jones, Roland Hegstad, and others, it becomes clear that many of the brightest, most colorful, and most articulate Adventist leaders were drawn to the religious liberty arena. Why is that? What entices these

individuals to that particular discourse? Do their wit and energy exert a disproportionate influence on the denomination? Could it help to explain the central Adventist irony of a culturally and politically conservative group caught in a libertarian stance with the more liberal justices on the U.S. Supreme Court?

I could imagine Morgan's conclusion addressing such issues, although his does not do so. In fact, such questions might be more appropriately addressed by Adventist scholars. In the meantime, Morgan's book provides the scholarly world with one of the most detailed and cogent expositions of Adventism available today. We are all in his debt.

Terrie Dopp Aamodt teaches in the English and history departments of Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington. She originally presented this review at the annual meeting of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies, in Denver, Colorado, November 2001.

The advertisement features a watercolor illustration of a village with several buildings, including a church with a steeple. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, the word "SPECTRUM" is written in a large, serif font. Below it, in a smaller font, is "THE JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ADVENTIST FORUMS". In the center, the text "JOIN THE ONLINE COMMUNITY" is displayed. At the bottom, the website address "WWW.SPECTRUMMAGAZINE.ORG." is written in a serif font.



Energizing
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Chalking Up a Good Week

There was good news aplenty for Seventh-day Adventist academics the first week in February. After several months of speculation and comment about the handbook prepared by the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) (*Spectrum*, autumn 2001), there were actions suggesting that this controversial document, which had been released in September, 2001, would not be directly implemented in North America, either at union colleges or at General Conference institutions—Andrews University, Loma Linda University, Oakwood College, Griggs University, and Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies.

First, the Administrative Committee of the General Conference voted to appoint a new task force called the General Conference Institutions' Ministerial and Theological

Education Task Force. This action placed a committee between those educational institutions and the IBMTE similar to what exists at the division level. In addition, it gave the task force the ability to recommend changes in the procedures.

News of this new task force brought a sigh of relief from many of the religion faculty at the General Conference institutions. Four terms of reference were voted for the task force:

1. Serve as the collective voice for General Conference institutions as they seek to implement the guidelines and procedures included in the *IBMTE Handbook*.
2. Review the guidelines and procedures included in the *IBMTE Handbook* and, if deemed appropriate, propose amendments that may have global application and strengthen ministerial and theological education.
3. Review the procedures included in the *IBMTE Handbook* and, if deemed appropriate, propose alternative procedures applicable to all General Conference institutions in accordance with *IBMTE Handbook* provisions.
4. Define and shape the character of the ongoing interface of General Conference institutions with the IBMTE.



Presidents of the Adventist colleges and universities in the United States pose for a historic photograph in February.

Front Row (left to right): *David Smith*, Union College; *Joseph Gurubatham*, Griggs University; *Richard Osborn*, Pacific Union College; *Lyn Behrens*, Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center; *Lawrence Geraty*, La Sierra University; *Niels-Erik Andreassen*, Andrews University.

Back Row (left to right): *Gordon Bietz*, Southern Adventist University; *Charles Scriven*, Kettering College of Medical Arts; *Randal Wisbey*, Columbia Union College; *David Greenlaw*, Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences; *Sylvan Lashley*, Atlantic Union College; *Delbert Baker*, Oakwood College; *Richard Hart*, Loma Linda University; *Clifford Sorensen*, Walla Walla College; and *Fred Thomas*, Southwestern Adventist University.

Given that the IBMTE became part of the Church's working policy when voted into existence in 1998, finding a way to make changes in procedures was challenging. An ad hoc meeting of the General Conference educational institution presidents, deans, and their representatives at the GC recommended to the Administrative Committee that the task force be formed.

Meanwhile, on the North American Division level, President Don Schneider named seven people to the division's Board of Ministerial and Theological Education after receiving suggestions first from the union conference presidents and then from the deans and chairs of the religion faculties. The resulting committee is composed of Don Schneider, chair, and members John McVay, Gordon Bietz, Warren Trenchard, Tom Mostert, Greg King, Zac Plantak, and David Thomas. At the board's first meeting, several participants came with recommendations on how to include the evaluation process in the already standing accreditation system rather than adding another layer of evaluation.

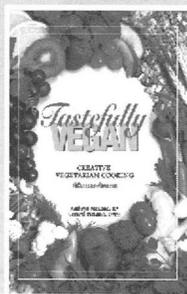
There was more good news that week when the presidents of the colleges and universities decided to establish a Commission on Cooperation during their annual meeting. Although the concept of cooperation had been considered before, this time a decision was made to fund and staff the commission and thereby bring the concept to life. The president's meeting was followed by a symposium on higher education. Each of the presidents spoke at this five-hour session, addressing topics such as academic excellence, character training, service, spirituality, and community involvement. With each new speech the vibrant contribution that the academic community makes to the Church became more clear. In a church formed to pursue present truth, the role of education is to keep that pursuit alive.

Since *Spectrum* had already planned additional coverage of the IBMTE before February, the editors wanted to report the good news, along with the following analysis.

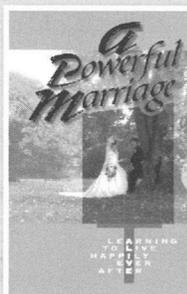
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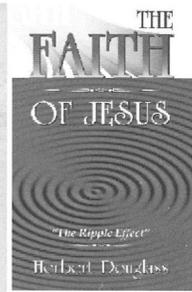
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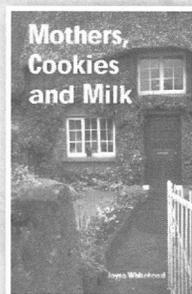
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Grading the IBMTE Handbook

By Ted Benedict

Our church has been growing rapidly around the globe. The new members are coming out of, and still live in, many cultures that are very different from each other. More to the point, their worldviews and religious backgrounds are often not American. Even within the North American Division, the philosophical/theological premises and conclusions of our religious workers display a competitive and uncomfortable variety. The religious workers who will be ministering to our existing fellowship, and those who are actively seeking new members, are being trained in our more than eighty colleges, seminaries, and universities scattered around the world. Only eighteen of them are located in North America. The potential for variations in basic beliefs is enormous, and to some of our leaders it must be frightening.

In response, a firm decision, embodied in actions of the Annual Councils of 1999 and 2001 (G.C. Working Policies 15 15 and 15 20), has been made to impose comprehensive, worldwide, centralized control over the education and ministry of religious workers. This control is to be effected by creating monitoring bodies at the General Conference (the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education, or IBMTE) and in each of the world divisions (Boards of Ministerial and Theological Education, or BMTEs). The functions of these boards will include authority to approve curricula and courses in each school that lead to degrees in religion or theology through a process of accreditation, approval of the appointment of administrators of those schools (presidents, deans, and chairs), and "ecclesiastical endorsement" of religious workers and teachers. Endorsement will be required when personnel are initially hired, and a re-endorsement will be required at five-year intervals thereafter. Without such endorsements, workers cannot be employed in religious work by the Church, or moved from one division to another.

The details of these requirements, and of the procedures to be used in applying them, are contained in a *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial and Theological Education*, published in September 2001. Details about these requirements presently run to fifty-seven pages, followed by fifty-five pages of appendices. This document is similar to a conventional set of bylaws. According to the *Handbook*, "It is now ready to be used."

Each board is governed by its own members, who hold office by virtue of their position in the church organization or are nominated by the Annual Council Nominating Committee (IBMTE) or the division nominating committee (BMTE). These members are then "elected" by the first Annual Council or annual division committee meeting after each regular General Conference Session. Each board will meet at least once each year.

The IBMTE has forty-five members, thirty-five of whom are individually *ex officio*; the rest are selected by the board from persons qualified by their position in church organization. The gender requirement for membership can be met when six of them are women. The quorum for the board is one-third of its membership. The board has an Executive Committee of seventeen members, eleven of whom are *ex officio*; up to nine others are selected by the board. There is no gender requirement for membership on the Executive Committee. Its quorum is one-third of its membership. A majority vote is required to reach a decision. Given the peripatetic nature of this body, effective control could rest with only four persons, over an agenda that is effectively controlled by the secretary.

The officers of the IBMTE include a chair (the general conference president or his designee), two vice chairs (the GC vice presidents for education and the Ministerial Association), a secretary (the director of the GC Department of Education), and an associate secretary (the secretary of the GC Ministerial Association). The staff of the IBMTE consists of the elected members of the GC Department of Education and of the Ministerial Association. As is usual in church terminology, the secretary and associate secretary are the actual administrators of board business.

The administrative structure of the BMTEs is similar but is less specifically stated, which may give the divisions a little discretion in deciding details. Additionally, the division boards may, with narrowly limited IBMTE approval, follow procedures that are more appropriate to their regional needs.

This critique of the *Handbook* will be limited to some observations of its probable effect on Adventist higher education in North America. There will doubtless be significant consequences for schools elsewhere. Other parts of the world will feature relationships unique to their national locations, laws, politics, and cultures. There will be effects upon the work of pastors, church administrators, chaplains, and others currently engaged in spiritual ministry, but these are outside the scope of this commentary.

Underlying the drafting of the new constraints are several likely assumptions. Those assumptions appear to drive the details of the regulations. They are consistent with a particular style of management, and should not surprise us. We will look at these premises before we comment on their consequences.

Those who drafted these documents and created the relevant boards appear to have made several key decisions:

1. Pastors and others whose jobs involve spiritual ministry are not being properly trained.
2. Mechanisms now in place to ensure the appropriateness and quality of curricula and faculty appointments are not working to suit the purposes of the Church.
3. The campuses themselves cannot assess either the competence or the orthodoxy of the faculty hired for, or assigned to, teach religion courses.
4. Even if the campuses could, they cannot be trusted to use criteria that are acceptable to the world church.
5. Nor can the campuses be trusted to take decisive action on their own assessments.
6. Market forces (job placement of graduates from religion courses) will not operate to develop effective workers (that is, bad graduates will continue to be hired by the conferences and other schools just as frequently as good ones, and the production of unemployable students will not generate feedback to prompt changes in the education of future ones).

If one grants these assumptions, the remedy (another assumption) is to remove judgments about curricula and faculty suitability from the campuses, and to locate these decisions in these newly created boards.

The truth of these assumptions is not certain. There is nothing in the documents that spells out the location, nature, and magnitude of the problems that the new policy addresses. We do not know, for example, whether the problem already exists, or whether it is merely anticipated. We do not know which areas around the world are causing distress, or what the defects are. No data are given. The consequence is that, from my point of view, we seem to have a very specific solution to an unknown problem, a global solution to a local problem,

a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

The policy proposes to solve problems for which the educational system—at least in North America—already has working remedies. It should be noted that our schools are established according to state and other laws through their charters, articles of incorporation, and bylaws. In these documents their ownership is identified, the nature, jurisdiction, and limitations of their governing powers are described, and relationships to other organizations may be spelled out.

For example, each of these schools is already accredited by a regional association that very carefully examines the institution as a whole. Appropriate programs within each are also accredited by specialized professional organizations. These accrediting organizations are very particular about the nature of the institution's governing authority and processes, and it is a matter of great concern to them that the trustees, officers, and faculty actually have the power to make binding decisions that affect all aspects of their programs. We should also note that, although accrediting bodies may offer recommendations for improvement of programs, they very carefully do not step over into actual management. This cannot be said of the proposed boards.

The processes that a campus uses to recruit, appoint, retain, promote, tenure, and terminate faculty are also critically reviewed by the accrediting agencies. These employment processes have evolved over many years—have become standardized—and the principles

developed have acquired the status of law. The proposed procedures would violate those principles and have very serious consequences—financial and otherwise—for the schools.

Teachers, especially in tertiary institutions, do their work in a culture that is not well understood or appreciated by persons outside the teaching profession. According to the principle of shared governance, it is generally expected that the faculty will be consulted in matters in which they are uniquely competent and especially concerned. This consultation leads to recommendations to school administrators and governing boards regarding curriculum and personnel matters.

Thus, these proposed policies have ignored the recognized integrity of this professional culture, the existence of legal organizational powers and limitations, the colleges' obligations to accrediting bodies, and the carefully worked out processes of professional judgment and recommendation that inform and support administrative decisions in curriculum and personnel decisions.

These flaws in the proposed policies are very obvious. Among our educators, it is agreed that the consequences of accepting them will be extremely serious. It seems, though, that the drafters either were unaware of the flaws or, although knowing that they are there, they have decided to accept them in order to gain some benefit.

So far as I know, each of our North American schools is

Neither the General Conference nor the North American Division,
nor even the union within which it operates, has a legal authority to participate
in the administrative affairs of the school.

Andrews  University

GRIGGS UNIVERSITY



a unique legal entity, deriving its powers from its own corporate status. Each school is thus independent, governed under its own bylaws by its own trustees, whose fiduciary responsibility is to that institution. Neither the General Conference nor the North American Division, nor even the union within which a school operates, has a legal authority to participate in the administrative affairs of the school, neither in approval of its administrators, the structure of its curricula, nor the employment of its teaching (and other) personnel. From this, it follows that a campus could not, even if it wanted to, yield authority to either of the proposed boards without a major restructuring of its corporate nature. If this is so, the boards are without the power to do the very things that the policies spelled out in

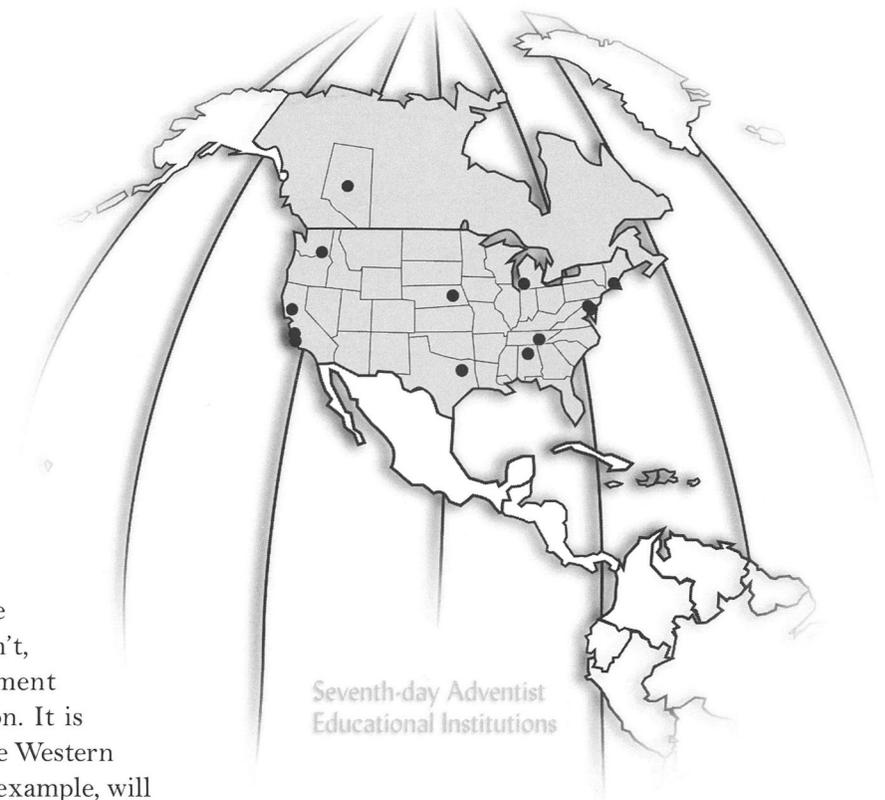
the *Handbook* intend them to do.

Accreditation by regional and professional associations is not realistically optional for our colleges. A loss of accreditation would have massive and destructive consequences; no longer do we entertain the idea of doing our work of education without it. An accrediting review is essentially an exercise in "truth in advertising," a careful examination of the question whether the school presently offers, and can continue to offer, an educational experience that measures up to its public claims. To answer that question, it must be determined that the school has the power to manage its own shop. If it doesn't, then those who do have that management power become the target of investigation. It is completely unreasonable to expect that the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, for example, will extend its approval to the officers of the North American Division, sitting as the governing BMTE, in its accreditation. For example, the accreditation of schools in the WASC area of jurisdiction would immediately be questioned under the proposed arrangement. The same can be said of other American regions.

Not all teachers at our schools are eligible for tenure. Some will fail to qualify because their education is insufficient. Some will fail because they are hired to meet temporary curricular needs. Some will fail because they are not members of our church. But this proposal will remove the possibility of tenure status from all teachers who are employed to give instruction, at least half-time, in religion or theology courses. Those teachers who presently hold tenure would have that status removed. The proposed "certification" of faculty members is not the equivalent of tenure. It does not provide the same protection of academic freedom and accompanying academic due process.

This development would also have immediate consequences for accreditation and expose our schools to very serious financial liability if the faculty members chose to object. This is not the place to make a detailed case for traditional tenure, but it can be said, reassuringly, that tenure does not remove from our institutions the right and power to protect themselves or our church from the evils that the new boards seem designed to eliminate. We already have the protections that we need, and we have an effective system for maintaining them.

Administrators of programs containing religion or



theology courses would have to be approved by the new boards, which would very actively participate in the search process leading to their appointment. These administrators would include department chairs, deans, and even presidents. Again, our accrediting bodies would have the most serious objections to this intrusion into the affairs of the campus.

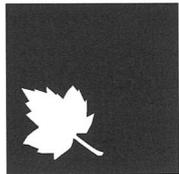
In summary, it seems plain that the newly created boards intend to solve some problems perceived by some persons in church leadership by exercising massive central control of institutions over which they have no legal jurisdiction, and with very significant damage to our schools. It is unlikely that this proposal is malicious; the more probable explanation is that it is uninformed and springs very naturally from a simplistic bureaucratic mindset.

Given that there is neither legal reason nor even the possibility for our colleges to accede to this proposal, that we already have a set of mechanisms that work quite well, that the expected change would have sweeping negative consequences that we cannot afford, what should be our response? There are several possibilities.

One is that our North American educational institutions accept the proposals, transferring effective control of our campuses to

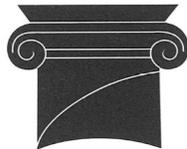


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UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE

WALLA
WALLA
COLLEGE



SOUTHERN
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COLUMBIA UNION COLLEGE
Gateway to Service

a central agency, removing tenure from our religion and theology teachers now and from most of the rest of us later, and replacing regional and specialized accreditation with accreditation by the Adventist Accrediting Association.

If we choose to work within the system as best we can, we can appeal to the BMTE to ask the IBMTE to provide unique guidelines for North America (and other divisions as they wish). Feasible guidelines would require a very heavy editing of the *Handbook* before it could be applied. It is, I think, unlikely that this kind of change would be allowed by church leadership unless there are modifications somewhere of our administrative philosophy.

Because there is no legal compulsion requiring us to conform, we could simply ignore the proposal. As a courtesy, we should then notify the BMTE that this is our response. The consequences might be amusing, of course, but one effect would be that the BMTE would have to acknowledge the realities of the situation, and it could then go back to the drawing board, this time with more respectful and, therefore, effective consultation with our several campuses.

In any case, we should encourage the governing boards of our campuses to initiate a review of the proposals, leading to their considered suggestions for an alternative strategy to solve known problems in a way that would be legal and would not compromise institutional independence and integrity or risk loss of existing accreditation. That strategy should be built on our traditions of professional respect and trust as displayed in the principles of collegiality and shared governance. I think this is possible, though it would require reeducating some among our leadership. That course is desirable, and, perhaps, even doable.

Ted Benedict is a member of the La Sierra University board of trustees, honorary professor emeritus of communication at Pacific Union College, and professor emeritus of communication at San Jose State University. For ten years under three presidents he served as special assistant to the president for faculty governance issues at San Jose State University.
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The Gifts of the Spirit vs. The Demands of IBMTE

By A. Greg Schneider

The statements of purpose in the *Handbook* of the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education speak of fostering “a dynamic theological unity in the world Church,” of nurturing a “strong partnership between church leaders, educational institutions, and faculty engaged in the training of ministry,” and of energizing the “spiritual life of Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions through committed faculty. Words like “unity,” “partnership,” and especially “spiritual” denote powerful and deeply desirable realities that I, too, seek and have sought throughout my life and calling. Is the IBMTE, in its design as a board of official inquiry and endorsement, likely to accomplish these purposes?

The introduction to the IBMTE *Handbook* asserts also that the Church promotes its mission primarily through its ministers—“pastors, theologians, Bible/religion teachers, chaplains, and administrators.” Assuming that the mission of our church is that commanded by Christ, to make disciples, how is the spiritual formation of Christian disciples done? Is it a matter of demanding common assent to a list of propositions? Is it accomplished primarily in and through the activities of the ordained clergy? These questions and others have led me to reflect on my own spiritual formation. I offer my story here as one of many stories that ought to inform our answers to these important questions. Of course, mine cannot be a story that is normative for the whole of the richly diverse culture of Adventism. On the other hand, I am unwilling to have it swept aside or disparaged in the name of abstractions like “the world field.”

I was a gifted child, and I am now a gifted adult. What do I mean? Let me start with Mom, Roberta Klooster Schneider, an English major who was herself gifted by a dedicated Washington Missionary College faculty and the opportunities given her to grow her gifts as editor of the school paper and yearbook. She gave me the gift of language skills and the love of words. It was characteristic of Mom that at the time when Alex Comfort’s *The Joy of Sex* was selling over a million copies, she rather impishly evangelized for an obscure book she thought was much more interesting—*The Joy of Lex*. The foundations of my calling are built out of passions and skills I learned from her. Others built on those foundations—English teachers like Gay Mack at Takoma

Academy and Judith Nembhard at Columbia Union College, my mother's (and my father's) renamed alma mater. These two English teachers did as much as any ordained preacher to evoke in me a sense that I might become a minister of the Word.

My love of the Bible was nurtured at home and school and church—all three—but I remember best the big Junior Sabbath School room in the basement of the Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist church. There on the bare asphalt-tiled floors we grade schoolers would scoot our metal folding chairs into small circles around our Sabbath School lesson teachers to recite memory verses and compete in Bible quizzes. Among the many faithful laypeople who led those circles, I recall especially Roy Rubottom, whose florist shop was just across the street from the church and who in later years would supply the orchid corsages I would pin with sweaty fumbling fingers to my dates' dresses.

At age ten, however, these were matters unimaginable. Mr. Rubottom mainly just wanted me to remember to bring my Bible to Sabbath School. He bought me one himself, so that whenever he directed us to look up texts,

I had his gift at hand. I still have that Bible, and I have opened it now and then to glance at Mr. Rubottom's signature on its front page, a tangible reminder of the spiritual gifts I have been given.

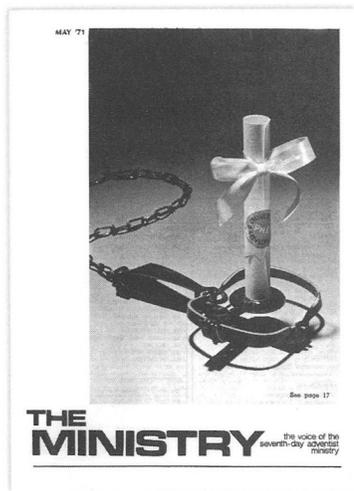
Thanks to Elna Quade, I learned to carry a tune. Mrs. Quade, music teacher at John Nevins Andrews school, also in Takoma

thought it a place of honor. Fortunately for my six-year-old self-esteem, it took me only a few weeks to find the melody and a breathy boy soprano voice to follow it with. Only years later did I tumble to the fact that I started out as a musical dunce.

Neither Leland Tetz at Takoma Academy nor Paul Hill at Columbia Union College had much to work with when I joined their choirs, but they labored faithfully and gently with my mediocrity. These three musicians' gifts to me were the great traditions of Christian hymnody and choral singing, and by that music I have been led into communion with God and all his creatures more surely and deeply than by any of the sermons I have either heard or preached.

Lynne Schwindt taught both French and religion at Takoma Academy. Prior to her senior year "Youth Problems" class, much of my religious instruction had seemed to set me, with desperate energy, against the sinful world and against my own sinful propensities. So on guard was I against the evil without and within that I was ignorant and fearful of the world around me, unaware of and at odds with myself. Mrs. Schwindt used her knowledge of psychology, especially personality theory, to challenge me to know who I was, and who I might become. I found that I was not only fallen, but good, my sinful propensities only the misguided, misused gifts of God's good creation. Lynne's husband, Bob, taught psychology at CUC. His rambling reflections in class led me further along the path his wife had opened up, nurturing my spirit better than any pulpit ministry I had known.

To be fair, there were gifts from preachers that mattered deeply. Elder William Keith taught my baptismal class and conveyed to me the symbolism of death, burial, and resurrection in our Seventh-day Adventist ritual of immersion. I can still hear Elder Keith's soft southern drawl in the stairwell of Takoma



The Quest retreats were near ecstasies of spiritual communion. The legacy I received were the mysterious and inexhaustible scriptural images of the church as the Body of Christ through which came the gifts of the Spirit.

Park, had a proven method for taming those comically wandering voices we sometimes hear in less well-taught children's choirs. I was one of the tuneless wanderers for whom she made a special place at the front of the music class. We were to be "whisperers," she said, a position she described in terms of such hope and promise that I

Park Church when, in a tiny moment of special attention to a preadolescent's budding but insecure manliness, he remarked to me and my parents how much he admired my firm handshake.

Later on, Bill Loveless became one of the few preachers in my young experience who met the demands of an adolescent and young adult intellect for ideas that made

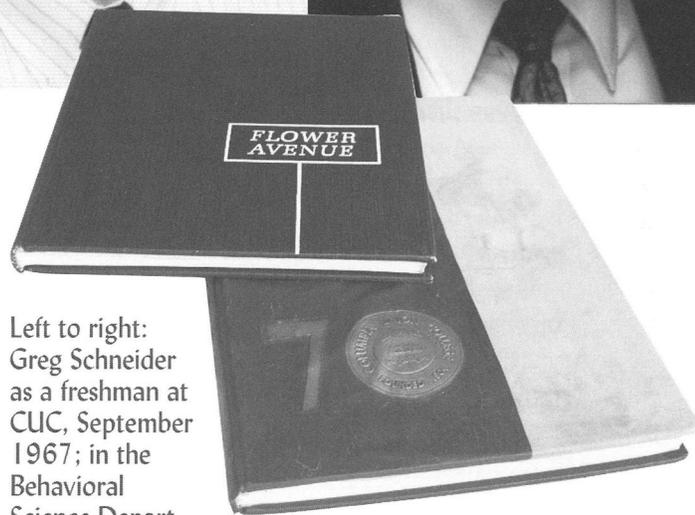
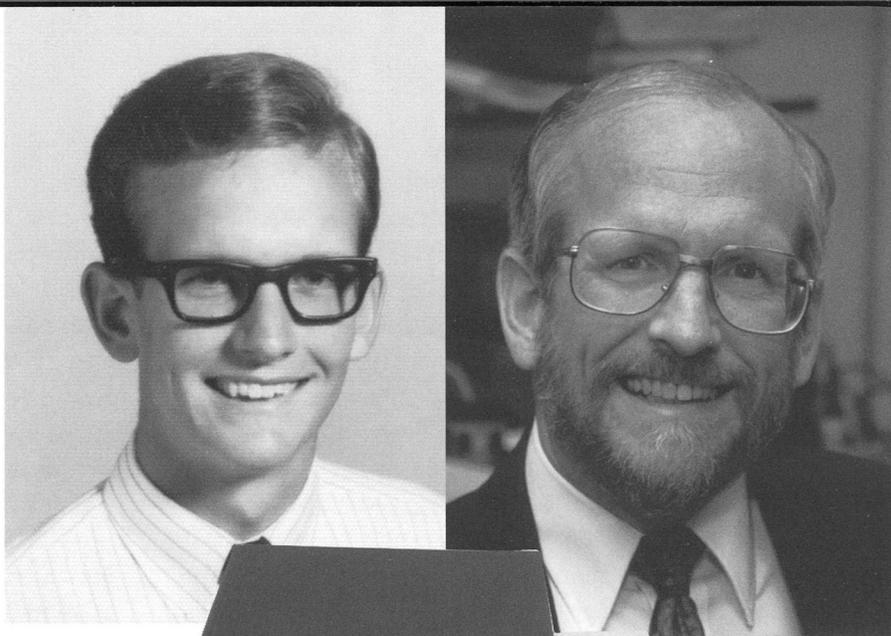
sense of my life and times. I especially loved the sermons where he would team up with Winton Beaven, Columbia Union College president, and they would, with disarmingly light banter, drive home profound points of faith and ethics. I also treasure the image I have of Elder Loveless on Sabbath mornings in Sligo church turning around, back to the congregation and face-to-face with the college choir as we led the congregation in the opening hymn. With the lower three voices in unison and the sopranos descanting on the alto part an octave high, we would see in his eyes a smile of affirmation and delight and we would reach to bottom of our being to produce sounds to make the spirits of all worshipers soar.

Elder Bob Zamora was both teacher and preacher for me. As my undergraduate New Testament teacher, he built on Mr. Rubottom's foundation to endow me with a passion to know the historical and linguistic depths of the biblical text. More pivotal still was his invitation for me to assist him at a week of prayer he gave to the students of Mount Vernon Academy in Ohio. There, as impromptu spiritual counselor, I learned the joy of service in the nurture and formation of young people. It changed my life. Prior to this experience, my double theology and history major had reflected my design to become a minister and a lawyer—to specialize in religious liberty work—and thus defend the Adventist Remnant from encircling dark forces of the last days. During the week with Zamora, teaching and nurture of my younger fellow disciples began to emerge as my calling.

Then I received the gift of a group of young ministers scattered through the Columbia Union who departed from their normal rounds of pastoral duties to plan and execute a series of weekend retreats they called "Quest." The leaders, Ray Greenley and Clarence Schilt, had been schoolmates of my older brother and sister, and they were happy to recruit their friends' kid brother. I was pleased and surprised that two conference presidents, Elders Bob Follett and Don Reynolds, also accepted invitations to these meetings.

The Quest retreats were near ecstasies of spiritual communion. The legacy I received were the mysterious and inexhaustible scriptural images of the Church as the Body of Christ through which came the gifts of the Spirit. I found the biblical language with which to speak of what I felt called to be. I was to be one of the teachers whom the Spirit gave for the building up of the Body

Photo: Courtesy of A. Gregory Schneider



Left to right: Greg Schneider as a freshman at CUC, September 1967; in the Behavioral Science Department at Pacific Union College, ca. 1998. Below: CUC 1969 and 1970 yearbooks.

of Christ. Of course, these metaphors had been lying there in the letters of Paul for nearly two millennia, but it took the profound spiritual intimacies I enjoyed with friends to bring them to life. Once, the Church had seemed to me mostly a club where belonging depended on assent to a list of required beliefs and conformity to a set of demanded behaviors. This "dry bones" idea was now wrapped around with the body and blood of Jesus Christ and the Church became a means of grace to me.

I have named only a few people to represent a wide, dense network of family, friends, teachers, and, yes, preachers who formed me spiritually. They created a lattice of very personal ties among concrete human beings, and they taught me how true spiritual formation is done in its very human actuality and mortal fragility. I thrived amid bonds of trust that these people and many others before and around them labored faithfully to build. I have learned also,

The IBMTE . . . is no more appropriate for creating the kind of unity that nurtures gifts and confirms callings than a hammer is for painting portraits.

ostensibly because the tutoring in secular subjects was done on Sabbath. Jesus's question about whether it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath seemed not to occur to them.

The dean of women at Columbia Union College, Betty Howard, labored as effectively as these men to elicit and celebrate the gifts and energy of dozens of CUC students, men and women alike. "Come on in and talk a while," she used to say to me. When I sat down in her office, the dozens of snapshots of my fellow students on her bulletin board told me that this midwife of the Spirit had many children. Nevertheless, talking with her made me feel special and realize that in pursuing my studies at this Christian college, I was becoming part of something special. She was as strong a shaper of the spiritual life on our campus as any of the men I have mentioned, and, like them, utterly free of pious cliché or rigid dogma in guiding young people.

The ministerial hierarchy of the Columbia Union, however, seemed blind to these good workings of the Spirit. Instead of lending their own discernment and support to Columbia Union College's quest for the deeper matters of the law and the Spirit, they saw to it that the college campus was "cleansed." It was a bitter and wounding time for those of us in student leadership. Our mentors were gone—Beaven from the presidency, Madgwick from the dean of students' office, Loveless from Sligo Church, Dean Howard from Halcyon Hall. We who had loved and admired them were left not only with the grief of loss, but also with angry questions about how persons who had done so much to lead us to Christ and tie us to his church could be subject to such unrelenting attack and rejection from the Church's leadership.

The distrusting gaze of what we took to be "the Church" made it difficult to grieve our loss cleanly, and thus doubly difficult to welcome those who followed our mentors in their respective offices. These were dedicated people of talent and goodwill who did the best they could, and we student leaders did the best we could to work with them. But the pall of doubt bred a series of misunderstandings and conflicts, helping to make my senior year feel like a limping endurance contest, rather than the bold sprint to the finish it might have been.

When it came to deciding what to do next with my life, the weight of ministerial watchfulness helped push me away from accepting a well-funded invitation from Andrews University to pursue a master's degree in religion. I chose instead the University of Chicago Divinity School, where I could pursue my interest in a field called "Religion and Psychological Studies." I felt I simply had to get out of what I was by then calling "the Adventist ghetto."

It was not an easy choice, for I had internalized much of Adventism's culture of surveillance and thus doubted myself as well as the Church and the world. The doubt and fear intensified as several watchful church leaders warned me I was risking not only my future career in the Church, but also the very integrity of my faith. Nightmares of devil-like figures assaulting me haunted my sleep in my first months of graduate work. An undercurrent of insecurity and suspicion tainted my relationships with professors and students in the divinity school. This was a spiritual legacy of the same church that had gifted me with a love of the Word and a sense of calling as a teacher.

The echoes of Columbia Union College's purge, moreover, were awakened in my spirit at the beginning of my teaching career. My mentor and now colleague, Gordon Madgwick, was once again forced from office, this time the office of academic dean, because he and President Jack Cassel had risked welcoming Desmond Ford to the Pacific Union College campus. Ford's first year at Pacific Union College was also my rookie year as a college teacher. While I struggled to find my feet as a teacher of social science and religion, this upright, charismatic, and, to some, curiously abrasive man drew down on himself and his colleagues the wrath of American perfectionist Adventism.

The fury of Ford's detractors helped create an atmosphere where secret tape recordings, back channel reports to church administrators and editors, and even charges of demon possession all flourished. Any means seemed legitimate if, in the end, he and anyone associated with him might be silenced. In the charade

of the Glacier View retreat, he was.

It was a move that blighted the optimism with which I had begun my teaching and my membership in a new community of learning. The community of surveillance had returned, and with it the toxic smog of distrust and doubt. Conversation partners who had sharpened my wits and broadened my awareness fell victim to the purge politics. I saw immediate family members and intimate friends whose spirits had been enlivened by Ford's message of freedom in Christ flung back into spiritual depression and self-doubt. Many colleagues lost their jobs simply because rumors among the constituency caused enrollment to plunge.

In such a setting, the building of bonds of trust, the nurture of collegiality, the cross-fertilization of minds dedicated to Christ and to the pursuit of truth all tended to take a lower priority than social and emotional survival tactics. We learned to leave each other alone and thus reduce risks from prying eyes and ill reports. It was an atmosphere far removed from the sweet spirit of the Body of Christ that I had tasted with my young ministerial friends in the days of our Quest retreats. As I struggled to breathe in it, I groped for ways to remain faithful to my calling and hoped that events like those that generated it would not be repeated.

But there have been rumblings of yet another purge. A self-published book by a Seventh-day Adventist brother deals ostensibly with the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture and also deals harshly with distinguished SDA theologians with whom the author disagrees. The obvious agenda of the book is opposition to the full equality of women in ministry and church life. This book has served as a catalyst to yet another effort to "cleanse" a religion department, this time at Walla Walla College. So far, the move to a wholesale purge has not succeeded. Nevertheless, as I have witnessed the suffering of these friends and

colleagues, I have felt old wounds from twenty and thirty years back begin to throb.

The pain is now assuaged a bit because I have very recently learned of dramatic repentance and reconciliation between church administration and religion faculty at Walla Walla College. I will note, nevertheless, that there are people who used to be members of that close fellowship of religion teachers who have felt compelled to move on. Glad as I am of the healing at Walla Walla, I cannot help but ask when and where the next breakout of clerical suspicion and purge politics will occur.

The answer, apparently, is that we will institutionalize these tendencies. Every religion teacher, eventually perhaps every teacher of any kind, will be kept on a short leash, forced to prove his or her good faith every five years regardless of past records of faithfulness in service to the Church and its educational institutions. The smog of surveillance will now be generated continually.

If I could converse closely with those who have conceived the IBMTE, I would want to say this:

"Brothers, you are not my superiors. I am not your subordinate. We are all equally members of the Body of Christ. Your influence, by virtue of your position, is more extensive than mine, but it is in like measure attenuated in its capacity to elicit the spiritual gifts of the rising generation. Where I live no 'dynamic theological unity' has ever been promoted by the Church's inquisitorial supervision of its schools, unless it be the unity of shared suffering.

"Your lack of trust and respect for me and for my colleagues disrupts the intense and delicate work that only people in our positions can do. The IBMTE is in essence a tool of power and control. As such, it is no more appropriate for creating the kind of unity that nurtures gifts and confirms callings than a hammer is for painting portraits.

"As an expression of the teaching 'organ' of the Body, I would plead with your pastoral administrative 'organ' not to institutionalize behaviors that have in the past wounded the Body and left long-term toxic effects. Please, let us find a way to avoid further hurt. Even better, let us find a way actually to build a 'strong partnership' like that spoken of in your statement of purpose for the IBMTE."

A. Gregory Schneider is professor of behavioral science at Pacific Union College.
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Risking Being Right

By Heather Isaacs

Five months have passed since that fateful Sunday in late August when I arrived at seminary and almost turned around and went home. I remember desperately asking God for some sign that I had made the right decision, that my impulse to come had not been misguided. As is God's prerogative, he remained silent. However, I stayed despite the silence.

My life path took a turn that day, and as a result I am not the same now. With only one semester behind me, I have come to understand that San Francisco Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian institution, is at this time the best place for me to be.

This is not to say that I don't feel beaten up at times. A few weeks ago, someone asked me to compare my life to one of the four seasons. Without exaggerating, I responded, "The season of chaos." There was a period this fall when I was afraid to answer the phone for fear of what news it might bring. I had a hard time describing how God was working in my life at that time because my life seemed messier than ever. But I chose to believe he was there—working from within the murkiness.

When I am asked what the experience of being at a Presbyterian seminary has done to my Adventism, I answer that I don't really know yet. But when I compare my experience of seminary with the formal theological education I encountered in college, I realize that I am getting more than I ever bargained for. *Nothing* is being spoon-fed to me now.

Learning to feed oneself can be awkward, but I am grateful for the experience of independent struggle within a supportive, diverse Christian community. Rather than learning a theology, I am learning to think theologically. This process is as disturbing as it is liberating. The responsibility to represent God faithfully requires the humility to be critical of one's beliefs, to ask if one can possibly be wrong.

As someone who will perhaps become a teacher of theology, I am concerned about recent evaluations of teaching standards in Adventist theological and religious education. I worry that important theological dialogues will soon be compromised or silenced. In order to do justice to Adventism as a theology, we must not invest ourselves more in the institution of theology than in the process of theology; we must risk teaching students to think theologically rather than simply to recite a theology.

However, before we can teach others to think critically we must be critical of ourselves. I am reminded of several instances where this process was short-circuited while I was in

college. By and large, my college experience was one of new insight and growth. I value those years for the people who challenged and supported me. However, with a few treasured exceptions, I did not have the same positive educational experience in my religion or theology classes.

For a period during my junior year I considered taking a major in theology. By the end of that year, however, I was so frustrated that I dropped out of the program. As a woman, I felt marginally accepted in the department; I felt that I was a foreigner.

The signs were often subtle. One faculty member, from whom I had never taken a class, once asked me with kindness

Heather Isaacs



Photo: Courtesy of Quicksilver

and good intentions, "How's our little Hebrew scholar doing?" A fellow student and future pastor was quick to remind me that women were spiritually unfit to be leaders in the church. In my Bible classes I often felt patronized when I asked questions; the professor would nod patiently for me to finish, thank me, then continue with his lecture. Once, when I pursued a question after class, he explained that many things about the Bible, even some that might appear obvious, could only be understood by biblical scholars. That moment, above all the rest, sets me imagining that perhaps one day I will become a biblical scholar only to finish that conversation.

I understand that my experience is anecdotal and that it does not fully represent the spectrum of Adventist theological education. But my story represents one type of experience that should be addressed in Adventist schools. Is it possible that something is lacking in our theological pedagogy beyond doctrinal homogeneity? To think theologically means to seek God with our lives beyond the ease with which any one theology allows us to rest or to think that we fully understand God in a final and exclusive sense. How right can we be if the theology we teach emphasizes conformity over diversity and exclusive privilege over universal access?

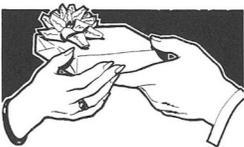
I am an Adventist theologian in training, but I am learning that my theology is not Adventism. My theology is my life. Adventism was the primary religious vocabulary with which I learned to speak the theology of my life. However, my life is a study of God and even more: it is God's study of me. As I approach an infinite God with the finite days of my life, I must ask if I should include more words in my evolving expression of faith in a loving God.

I do not know what comes next in my theology, only that God is on the other side, inside, and outside of it even as he stands silently beside me. He makes himself known when he must. The rest remains to be discovered. The tension between the presence and silence of God is where true theological education begins.

Heather Isaacs is a graduate student at San Francisco Theological Seminary. Isaacs4@hotmail.com

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Are Christian Colleges and Universities Really Possible?

By David R. Larson

Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton and a host of other colleges and universities began as Christian educational institutions and now are wholly secular, we often hear. How did these losses occur? Why are they still taking place? Are any Christian ventures in higher education succeeding?

Because it displays the different ways colleges and universities can be Christian, the anthology edited by Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian is a good place to begin when reading about these issues. Their book consists of reports written by different specialists about how fourteen campuses in North America embody their Christian commitments. One point of these stories is that "there is no such thing as generic Christian higher education."

Institutions in the Reformed tradition, like Calvin College and Whitworth College, place a premium on approaching every topic from a Christian point of view. Without denying the value of Christian beliefs, schools in the Mennonite tradition, like Goshen College and Fresno Pacific College, put more emphasis upon how their students and faculty live. "The Reformed model," according to one report, "tends to be cerebral and therefore transforms living by thinking. The Mennonite model, on the other hand, transforms thinking by living."

Even those schools that attempt to transform living by thinking do

so in a variety of ways. Wheaton College over the years has tried four different approaches, for instance.

The convergence model senses little or no tension between Christianity and the best secular learning. The triumphalist model experiences irreconcilable conflict between the two and is confident that the first will prevail. According to the value-added model, the role of a church-related college or university is to supplement what can be learned elsewhere with Christian insights and experiences, especially the latter. The integration model seeks to transform all of the academic disciplines by doing their work on the basis of more adequate Christian convictions. According to Hughes and Adrian, the more explicit a campus can be about these and other alternatives the better.

There may never be a more thorough and witty lament of what so often goes wrong than *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches*. Authored by James Tunstead Burtchaell, formerly at the University of Notre Dame and now at Princeton, this huge tome mourns and mocks

Robert Benne.

Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with their Religious Traditions.

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001. xii + 217 pages.

James Tunstead Burtchaell.

The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches.

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998. xx + 868 pages.

Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian, eds.

Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century.
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997. ix + 461 pages.

the divorces of seventeen colleges and universities from their religious organizations.

Despite all their differences in detail, these stories usually possess a similar plot with three chapters. The first is a saga of early struggles, heroic sacrifices, and tense relationships between churches and campuses. The second celebrates an eventual measure of academic, financial, and religious success. The third is the strange and sorry picture of both churches and campuses forsaking the dream of Christian higher education just when it is finally starting to come true!

Academic specialization is one of many factors that contributes to this unanticipated but frequent outcome, Burtchaell claims. In order to be effective in teaching, research, and service when knowledge is exploding, professors concentrate on smaller and still smaller areas of study. This makes it progressively difficult to articulate

in substantive ways how the concerns of some specialty or subspecialty relate to the whole of Christian life and thought.

Furthermore, over time the constituencies with whom professors stay most in touch shift from those on their campuses and in their churches to similar specialists scattered around the world. Eventually everyone recognizes that such professors serve "in" the Christian college or university without actually being "of" it. Once this pattern becomes widespread, neither the churches nor their campuses see much point in maintaining their unions. The neglect of connections, both conceptual and human, has contributed to yet another dissolution.

The study by Robert Benne of Roanoke College is not filled with instant remedies for such complex and subtle problems. It stresses instead the importance of cultivating over long periods what he repeatedly calls "robust connections" between

the vision, ethos, and personnel of the campus and those of its sponsoring religious organization.

Benne underlines the importance of embedding the vision of the church and its campus in its promotional literature but even more so in its people: administrators, newcomers, members of the religion or theology department, faculty in other areas, and those who lead centers and institutes or hold endowed professorships.

Without neglecting other methods of religious formation, he writes that excellent chapel services that are well attended by administrators, faculty, and students are still exceedingly effective in nurturing an institution's ethos. He holds that in schools that attempt to make a Christian paradigm the organizing principle at least one-third of those who teach, learn, and support should be active members of the church with at least another third willing to cooperate. Those who are indifferent or even part of the loyal opposition should comprise no more than one-third, he writes.

One way or another, these various methods take seriously the words of Scripture about "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the Day approaching (Heb. 10:25 NRSV). As these ancient lines suggest, successful communities of faith foster continuity by making large investments in ongoing companionship and conversation. Funding these "robust connections" is costly. Not financing them is more so.

David Larson is professor of religion at Loma Linda University. He also serves as president of the Association of Adventist Forums.

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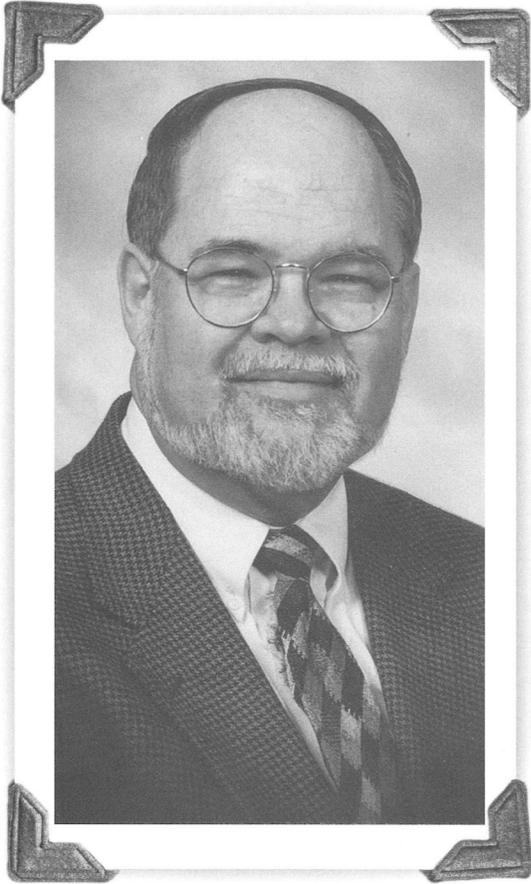
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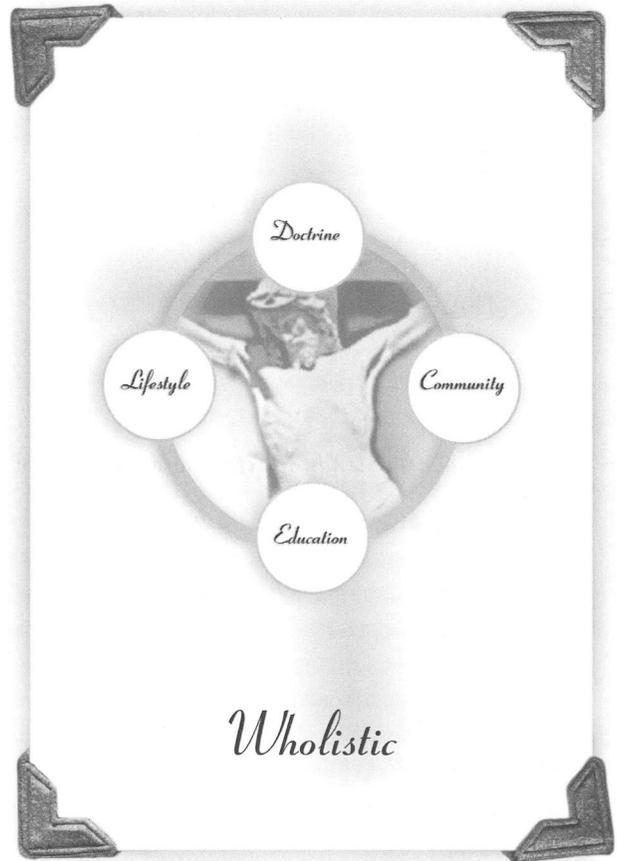
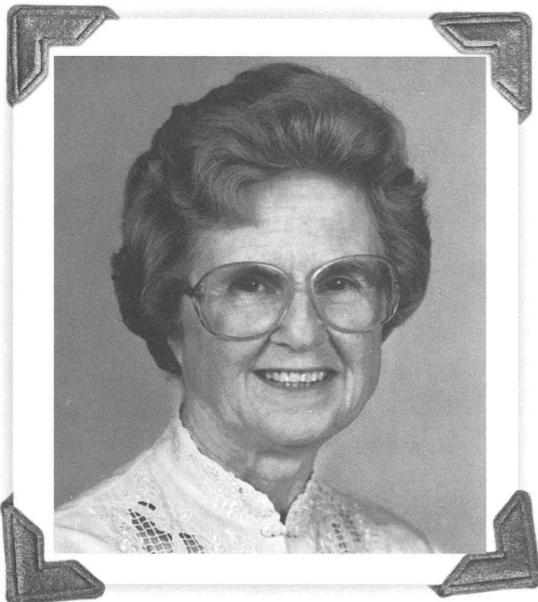
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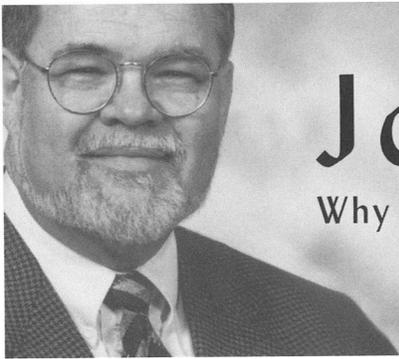
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Keeping the Faith



Wholistic



John Brunt

Why I Remain a Seventh-day Adventist

To the question, “Why I remain a Seventh-day Adventist,” my short answer is, I can’t imagine *not* being a Seventh-day Adventist. This church has shaped everything that I am. I am a product of an Adventist home, Adventist churches, and Adventist educational institutions from the first grade through seminary.

Yet I could never remain a Seventh-day Adventist if it were only a comfortable cultural home. I remain a Seventh-day Adventist because I am captivated by the vision of this church. I have sometimes been asked what it is that makes Adventists unique. I don’t believe that any single specific doctrine does this. The genius of Seventh-day Adventism is the holistic way that it puts together our entire religious life.

I think of the triad that Richard Rice speaks about: believing, behaving, and belonging. If Adventism were only doctrine, it would be cold and lifeless. If it were only lifestyle, it would be shallow. If it were only community, it could become narrow and tribal. It is the holistic combination of doctrine, lifestyle, and community that makes Seventh-day Adventism appealing to me.

I remain a Seventh-day Adventist because I believe Jesus Christ is my Savior. I believe that he invites me to Sabbath rest. I believe that he invites me to live a responsible life of service for others. I believe that he invites me to be part of a wonderful worldwide body that transcends nation and language, and I believe that Jesus promises to come again and bring about an eternal kingdom where life will be lived as he, the Creator, originally intended that it should be lived.

In addition to these basic beliefs, I enjoy the fringe benefits of Adventism. I appreciate the educational system that shaped my life and that I believe has blessed my children. I appreciate being able to travel around the world and find friends who share this vision.

I see the results of these fringe benefits in my mother’s family, a family of twelve children. Some stayed in the Church and some did not. As I look at the families, it seems that the quality of life has been demonstrably different, for the most part, for those who have remained in the Church.

Sometimes I feel almost guilty for the privilege of being part of Adventism with so little cost, since I was born into an Adventist family. It has been different for my wife. She has had to pay a high price. She was not reared an Adventist. She attended evangelistic meetings in Denver when invited by a family for whom she babysat. She made the decision to join the Church, her family objected, and she was secretly baptized at the age of sixteen. At eighteen,

she was given an ultimatum: either renounce Adventism or leave home. She decided to leave home. She and her father were never reconciled. She continued to write, to send Christmas cards, letters, and gifts. We went to Denver and attempted to visit him on two occasions. Both times, her father spoke to me but would not speak to her. Three years ago, we attended his funeral. She continues to feel the pain of this unresolved conflict.

When I left home at the age of eighteen, I went to La Sierra University, and that is where we met. As she thinks of the great pain she has suffered from this alienation, she often quotes Mark 10:29-30.

"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters,

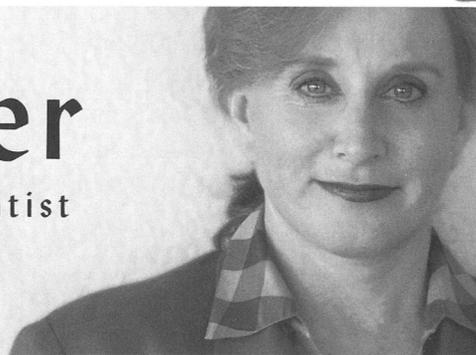
mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life."

I remain a Seventh-day Adventist because I am overwhelmingly grateful for the blessing of being part of this family and sharing its vision.

John Brunt, for many years the academic vice president of Walla Walla College, has just become the pastor of the Azure Hills SDA Church in Grand Terrace, California. Brunj@wwc.edu

Bonnie Dwyer

Why I Remain a Seventh-day Adventist



The first time I remember addressing this issue was when I was twenty. I was working in Washington D.C. at the National Association of Public Welfare Administrators, next to the Russian embassy on Sixteenth Street. Newly married, fresh out of a two-year degree program at La Sierra University, I was exhilarated by being out in the world. For lunch, my coworkers and I often walked down to Lafayette Park and watched the TV crews set up for live news shots in front of the White House.

This occurred during Nixon's last days as president. The tensions and rumors over his possible impeachment or resignation filled the air with electricity. During one of those lunch hours someone asked me about my church affiliation. "Seventh-day Adventist," I answered. Then I dispassionately added a list of SDA beliefs because the questioner was not familiar with the Church. "Sounds like you're not totally convinced," was the reply. I have to admit that, up to that point,

the Church and its schools seemed to have dominated my life. I was trying to understand my identity separate from Adventism.

The next time I remember asking myself came a couple years later. We had moved back to California. I had completed a journalism degree and picked up an assignment with *Spectrum* to help investigate a breaking story about church finances that involved a man by the name of Davenport. Going through the stacks of correspondence files

and lists of investor names at a lawyer's office made me feel like a real reporter. But the work was also depressing.

One day, I stopped by the office of Wilford Hillock, a business professor at La Sierra, to ask questions about the intricacies of the Davenport finances. "Does this whole business affect your faith?" I asked. His reply was, "no." His faith had never been in the Church. His faith was in Jesus Christ, so whatever the brethren did had no effect on his faith. That answer has helped me keep things in perspective ever since.

There have been other times when I have asked myself why I belong to this organization. Covering Annual Council one year in the 1980s, when there were hints that action would be taken against the Association of Adventist Forums and its journal and that a motion for ordination of women would be

rejected, I went home asking myself why I belonged to an organization that seemed not to want people like me.

This past summer, I was stunned when ASI—Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries—rejected *Spectrum's* application to have booth space at its convention and blocked our distribution of magazines to attendees. Reading the handbook of the International Board for Ministerial and Theological Education, which seems to me to signal the closing of the Adventist mind, has severely depressed me. Once again, I found myself muttering about the organization, while still being determined not to let other people define me out of the church I love.

What gets me through those times—and this is the number one reason I am still an SDA—is people, my heroes. I think about people like Fritz Guy, who taught me that Adventist Christianity includes lively intellectual curiosity; Richard Rice, who articulates so eloquently ideas about the importance of Adventist story and community life; Roy Branson, who showed me the transcendence in laughter and gave me opportunities to write about the community that he has loved so passionately. People like my mom and my son, my church friends. People make life within Adventism rewarding and significant.

That is not to say that Adventist beliefs are not important to me. I am an Adventist because I love the Sabbath. To me it is biological. While training for a marathon several years ago, I found rest just as important as long-distance runs and carbohydrate loading. Learning that lesson taught me to cherish the Sabbath. The more I read about the Sabbath and experience the joys of resting, ceasing, embracing, and

feasting, as Marva Dawn says, the more precious it becomes. I don't keep the Sabbath, it keeps me.

Corporately, the good deeds of the Church through its agencies and institutions fulfill my need to be part of something bigger than myself. The Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency helps address my wish to feed the hungry and house the refugees. The health care system that meets very specific community needs, the educational system from which I graduated—these entities make me proud to be an Adventist.

I am an Adventist today because within Adventism I have found rich community experiences throughout my life. First on Griswold Street in Worthington, Ohio, the one-block-long street with the church at the end; there I spent my childhood. Next in Silver Spring, Maryland, where my classmates included General Conference progeny like Ted Wilson; there church politics

became very personal. Then in La Sierra and Loma Linda, where the theological air was rich and Sabbath mornings confronted me with decisions about where I wanted to worship. After that, to *Spectrum*, where I found my voice within Adventism. I guess that is what I had been looking for ever since I was twenty. We all want our voice to be heard. Now that I have a voice and have discovered a community of people with vibrant ideas about what it means to be Adventist, I know I can't leave. There's so much more that we have to share.

I'm still an Adventist, because now I couldn't think of being anything else. This is the community that feeds my soul, understands my jokes, loves me through tough times.

When I sat down to write this piece I began by making a serious list, but while staring at the computer screen it turned into a David Letterman-style top-ten list. Since I'd like to leave you smiling—or at least groaning—here it is:



Top Ten Reasons Why I'm Still a Seventh-day Adventist

10. Don't want to miss Sunday football games
9. Pathfinder honor sash not yet filled
8. Have too much tithe invested
7. Addicted to Super Links
6. Still have a set of Bible Story books and an Eric B. Hare recording of "Mr. Crooked Ears"
5. Want to see how the Great Controversy turns out
4. That wholistic thing
3. Love my ADRA T-shirt
2. Have a lifelong subscription to *Spectrum*
— and the number one reason —
1. The people; I just love being part of a worldwide family

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Beatrice Neall

Why I Remain a Seventh-day Adventist

There are many reasons I remain a Seventh-day Adventist. First, I believe the Adventist Church has more truth than any other denomination—the Great Controversy, the Sabbath, the nature of man, the health message, the Second Coming. Secondly, the Adventist family is a great family to belong to. When you've come through the Adventist educational system, when you have served in different places, you have friends all over the world. Also, I was born into an Adventist home. But I would like to concentrate on the role of Ellen White in my life.

I derive my primary nourishment from the Bible. I love it and make it my study every day. The Bible is my bread and carrots and potatoes. The Spirit of Prophecy writings are my supplements—my vitamins, minerals, and barley green. I need inspiration every day, and although the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy are inspired, I don't find all parts equally inspiring. There are mountain peaks of the Bible that are awe inspiring—stories of the patriarchs, the revivals under Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat, Jesus' farewell discourse, the book of Ephesians. At times some sections seem arid.

Not all parts of the Spirit of Prophecy inspire me, either. I agree with Alden Thompson that there's a movement in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy from Sinai to Calvary, from law to grace.¹ I

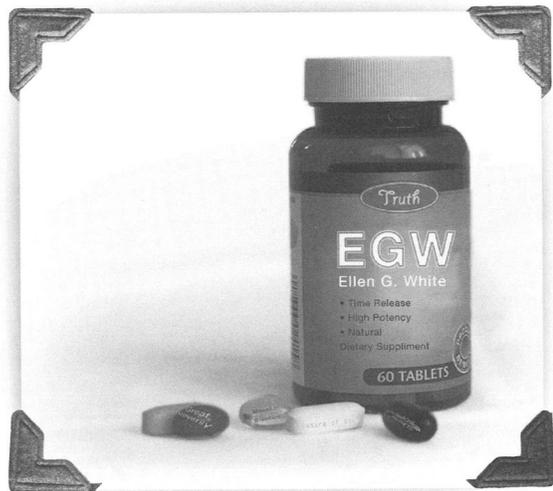
receive the greatest inspiration from the later works of Ellen White—the ones she wrote and rewrote as she learned more and more about the grace of God—especially after 1888. There's where the mountain peaks are. I call these the classics.

The Spirit of Prophecy had an influence in bringing my forebears to the Lord. Mother's family was brought into Adventism by George King, the first Adventist colporteur, around the turn of the twentieth century. King was heeding the counsel of Ellen White to work the cities, especially New York. So he came to my grandparents' door selling some Ellen White books and Uriah Smith's *Daniel and Revelation*. When King delivered the books, Grandpa Gordon's heart sank when he saw that several of them were written by a woman—

"another Mary Baker Eddy," he complained. So he began reading the book by Uriah Smith. Grandma picked up *Patriarchs and Prophets* and said, "Samuel, this is a good book!" So Grandpa read all the books, George King had Bible studies with the family, and they became Adventists.

My father's conversion was different. As a young doctor, he was walking down Broadway in New York City one night trying to decide which movie to attend when he saw on one marquee, "Will the League of Nations Succeed? Hear this compelling address by Carlyle B. Haynes." (Haynes rented the biggest theater in town and packed it every night.) My father was captivated. After two years of attending meetings and studying, he was almost ready for baptism.

Then Haynes introduced him to the Spirit of Prophecy by having him read *Ministry of Healing*. Dad was annoyed that the Adventist Church had a female prophet. Also, he was offended that a lay person would presume to write on health and healing. He accepted the book with many reservations. He liked the part about tobacco and alcohol, but he maintained his belief in the medicinal approach to disease and in a high protein diet. He liked his



meat and coffee and lived a high-stress life. My poor father suffered greatly from ill health for many years before he died of a massive coronary at age seventy-five. Though he read the Bible through every year, I am not aware that he spent much time with the Spirit of Prophecy books. I missed the sweetness of disposition that comes from long tarrying with the life of Jesus. Dad's critical attitude toward the writings had the paradoxical effect of confirming my faith in them.

Mother was the one who reared us four children. She had morning and evening worship with us every day. She called it "prayers"—"It's time for prayers now." This was an important part of our lives. We'd sing and study and pray, joined by any friends who happened to come by. She not only taught us the Sabbath School lessons, the memory verses, and Bible doctrines, she also had us memorize many Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, and other great chapters of the Bible. In the evenings she would read the *Junior Bible Year* and biographies of great Christians.

One year, she read portions of Ellen White's Conflict Series to us. My heart was touched by the story of Jesus' trial and death, and the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome. I

decided I must start reading those books for myself. At twelve years of age, I began getting up early in the morning, going off to a quiet place, and reading *Desire of Ages*.

Early in the morning, I would crawl out of bed and walk to the top of Sunset Hill, where there was a shelter, and read. My eyes nearly wore a hole through the

passages about Peter's denial and Jesus' forgiveness, and the pages got all wrinkled from my tears. When World War II struck and I went to live on my aunt's farm, I read *Great Controversy* before going to sleep, huddled under the covers while the wind howled around the icy windows. Those were precious times for me. When I entered my teens and the hormones began to surge, I was kept from many temptations by the loving admonitions of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Years later, during the years my husband Ralph and I served in the mission field, I tried to bring the gospel to people of other cultures by writing books and Bible courses. The portrayal of Jesus and his role in the Great Controversy never ceased to thrill my soul. As I endured the stresses and heartaches of life and felt a need for Jesus, I always knew where I could find him—in the Ellen G. White classics.

The most difficult time for me was in the 1980s when my family was in turmoil; Union College was in turmoil; the Church was in turmoil with Merikay Silver, Desmond Ford, Walter Rea, and Donald Davenport; and anything that could be shaken really got shaken. I personally was involved in theological ferment finishing my

doctoral program, modifying my views of inspiration and my confidence in the Church.

That's when I experienced the deepest gloom—what Wesley called the "dark night of the soul." Heaven seemed closed to me and I didn't know where to go. I had lost my innocence, the simple faith of my earlier years. There seemed to be a black cloud over my head shutting me off from heaven. But I soon found that there is nowhere else to turn except to God. He's all we've got! The place to find him is in the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy writings, and the great hymns of the Church. These words gripped me:

How firm a foundation ye saints
of the Lord
is laid for your faith in his
excellent Word.
What more could he say than
to you he hath said?
Who unto the Saviour for
refuge have fled.

All that we need is there in God's Word. What more could he say than what he had already said? I also found this beautiful passage: "O for a living, active faith! We need it, we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us or drive us to despair. It is the veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings."²

Other quotations that I had memorized in college years comforted me: "Never feel that Jesus is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as one who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion."³ "Never a prayer is

offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it.”⁴

The conviction deepened that the Bible was inspired, Ellen White was inspired—not, perhaps, in the way I had thought, verbally, mechanically—but dynamically. You can pick flaws with isolated statements, you can argue over sources and originality, but if you want to know how to find life through Jesus, how to experience the heights and depths of the love of God, how to aspire to and achieve the highest goals in life, how to avoid the snares of Satan, how to maximize health, how to have a happy home, how to bring souls to Jesus, how to live and end your life with the greatest satisfac-

tion, then make it a habit to read the great Ellen G. White books.

Just this last year I went through some deep trials. I needed the Lord with me. Once again I pulled out *Desire of Ages* and feasted on its contents. Then I turned to *Ministry of Healing*, especially those last chapters, “In Contact with Others,” that tell how to be Christlike in the midst of strife. Then I went on to *Christ’s Object Lessons*, *Steps to Christ*, and *Mount of Blessings*. I found Jesus there. I found that he had experienced all I was going through and much more. I clung to him and prayed, “Lord, help me to act as a Christian through all of this.” I slipped a few times, but he helped me through.

I find that I need not only my bread of the Word every day, but my supplements—the great Ellen

G. White classics—to give me easy access to the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. That is one reason why I remain a committed Christian and a Seventh-day Adventist.

Notes and References

1. Alden Thompsen, “From Sinai to Golgotha,” *Adventist Review*, Dec. 3, 10, and 17, 1981.
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3. Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1942), 85.
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Rehabilitating the Testimonial

Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith. By Anne Lamott, New York: Pantheon Books, 1999. x + 276 pages

Reviewed by Dennis Brand

I am reluctant to admit my Christianity. Partly this is because I can’t help wishing to distance myself from wild-eyed, far-right-wing-type Christians. You know; those overly sincere, humorless folks who bomb abortion clinics, think Jesus destroyed the World Trade Center to get back at homosexuals, and use words like “abomination” with no trace of irony.

But there’s also the cringing, status-conscious, wannabe liberal arts intellectual part of me worrying that in the smart-people culture Christianity is just not cool. Yes, it’s straight back to junior high. So, even more remarkable to me than

the power and beauty of Anne Lamott’s meditations on faith and living in touch with the love of Jesus is the fact that she makes Christianity seem cool, something compatible with feminism, reading the *New Yorker*, and thinking.



She also rehabilitates the testimonial. *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* is basically a testimonial—stories from her life, often relating how faith or God helped her deal with death, heartbreak, and that hardest trial of all, daily life. Unlike most testimonials—where ex-sinners detail the many and lurid escapades of their previous life until they hit rock bottom and in the end get themselves saved—Lamott takes the end of most stories and begins hers there. She fits her entire preconversion story (which has as much drama as any I’ve ever

Photo: Thomas Osborn

heard) into her overture, which is entitled "Lily Pads."

However, her story is hardly your average testimonial. (For instance, I don't recall any of the speakers at my college's vespers ever using the "f-word" to accept Jesus into their lives.) The problem with most testimonies is, as far as I'm concerned, the problem with our whole society: ratings. The drug deals, violence, general depravity of the "before" part of conversion stories make for much better ratings, and in an attempt to hold audiences' short attentions, these features become the focus.

Lamott trusts that the Christian life—eating breakfast, paying bills, leaning on Jesus every day—will make for an exciting enough story. Instead of focusing on her old life, with all its lurid details and vicarious thrills for those safely in the fold, she knows that much of what is thought and said and done each day is often lurid enough, and infinitely more useful for those of us not currently addicted to drugs while running from the law and the mafia.

Community is central to Lamott's Christianity. All the Christians (and Hindus and unaffiliated people) who help her get over alcoholism attest to the importance of community. Members of her church help her get through pregnancy and single motherhood with their love and financial help, even though most of them can hardly afford to take care of themselves. When she is depressed or angry or afraid, God most often uses her friends—whether they're old friends or have known her for five minutes—to comfort her.

However, what really made me understand the point of community for maybe the first time since high school was the end of the book, after the last chapter, where Lamott thanks all the people who helped her

write it. There are priests who explain theology; her mother, who helps with Marin County history; friends who help with politics, marine biology, and geology; and editors who give input and ideal conditions in which to write.

Perhaps I'm the only one foolish enough never to realize this before, but that's the way to do it. If I had tried to write this book, I would never have thought to involve my friends. I would be out there reading encyclopedias, trying to become an expert about too many things, when other people could have explained it all in a fraction of the time and in greater detail. It's amazing to me to think of just calling up a friend and chatting about, say, politics, instead of slogging through mostly unhelpful entries in reference books or entirely unhelpful Web pages.

Because I was so dense about community, it took this outright, unsubtle example to make me finally understand. The idea of community permeates this book, the beauty of people working together to make the world better, to prop each other up, and to let each other know that they are not alone. To me this was a revelation, an epiphany even, which may mystify those who have understood community all along.

Anne Lamott knows how easy it is to slip into routine, how easy it is to go from relief at simply being alive after bulimia and alcoholism to complete despair because the car ran out of gas. But she also is able to find meaning, and sometimes even miracles in everyday life.

At one point, she is traveling on a plane, sitting between a prim, uptight Christian man reading a book she has recently reviewed ("hard-core right-wing paranoid anti-Semitic homophobic misogynistic propaganda—not to put too fine a point on it" [60]) and a woman who hardly speaks English. Then the plane hits

turbulence so bad that the pilot yells at the flight attendants to sit down, and a passenger has a heart attack. Then, bolstered by the memory of a small miracle that happened in church, Anne Lamott reaches out and connects with the two people sitting next to her.

Writes Lemott: "I thought, I do not know if what happened at church was an honest-to-God little miracle, and I don't know if there has been another one here, the smallest possible sort, the size of a tiny bird, but I feel like I am sitting with my cousins on a plane eight miles up, a plane that is going to make it home—and this made me so happy that I suddenly thought, This is plenty of miracle for me to rest in now" (66-67).

Lamott knows a thing or two about grief. Close friends, her father, and people at church all die in the course of this book. "I am no longer convinced that you're *supposed* to get over the death of certain people," she writes, "but little by little, pale and swollen around the eyes, I began to feel a sense of reception, that I was beginning to receive the fact of Pammy's death, the finality. I let it enter me" (72-73). And, "if you are lucky and brave, you will be willing to bear disillusion. You begin to cry and writhe and yell and then to keep on crying; and then, finally, grief ends up giving you the two best things: softness and illumination" (72-73).

Often bitingly funny and insightful, and at times heartbreaking, Lamott's writing conveys the feeling of coming from a normal person—small, weak, scared—who has the exhilarating experience of resting safe in the arms of Jesus. All of us could use more of that feeling.

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Miracle Vote Brings Consensus To Regional Retirement Issue

By Julie Z. Lee

After a year of research and negotiation an agreement has been reached in the debate over the funding of the “tail” in the North American Division retirement system. At the NAD 2001 Year End Meeting, church leaders took action to accept the terms of an agreement that outlines a structure by which the regional conferences can conclude their involvement with the NAD retirement plan completely and still pay for remaining financial obligations to the old program.

The terms of the agreement state that regional conference employers agree to assume their portion of financial responsibilities that remain in the old defined benefit plan, referred to as the “tail.” The tail will cover those employees and retirees who have vested service in the old plan, which is now frozen in favor of a defined contribution plan. The total direct regional liability, the amount of money needed to provide benefits for employees and retirees who have had service with regional employers on the old NAD plan, is \$109.2 million.

The agreement provides four components by which the outstanding regional obligation will be fulfilled:

- Regional conferences will pay, as a percentage of tithe, a total of \$39.4 million between execution of the agreement and December 31, 2021.
- Regional conferences will accept transfer from the NAD plan the benefits obligation of \$34.3 million dollars for employees active with a regional conference on December 31, 1999.
- The North American Division acknowledges that \$35.5 million of current NAD plan assets are allocable to regional conference contributions.
- In addition to these three components, which together constitute the \$109.2 million obligation of the regional conferences, the NAD agrees to make a one-time lump sum payment of \$6 million toward the start-up of the Regional Conference Retirement Plan.

The agreement was drawn from more than a year of research conducted by a Task Force on Equity, formed in January 2000 after several regional conferences began withholding their retirement fund contributions to the NAD. The Task Force was asked to explore a possible compromise that would satisfy the regional conferences without having them adopt a separate retirement plan altogether. The Task Force studies showed that some conferences, large and small, continued to overcontribute significantly, whereas others were heavily subsidized. In the past, such inequities were known to exist, but were accepted as a way for stronger conferences to help support the weak. However, the recent investigation revealed that the differences were drastic.

“The regional conferences were clearly at the extreme end of being contributors, subsidizing many of the ‘weaker’ conferences at a rate that had not been anticipated,” says Del Johnson, administrator of the NAD Retirement Plan. “They were not alone as a group, but dominated the ‘contributors.’”

The agreement closes what has been a long debate between the NAD and regional conference leaders. For years, the regional conferences have asked for actuarial studies to be conducted on inequities in the Church’s retirement plan. When their request continued to be overlooked, regional conference leaders took the matter into their own hands. In 1998, Joseph McCoy, president of the South Central Conference, led out in researching strategies that might improve retirement benefits for regional conference employees.

In 1999, the regional conferences approached Mutual of America Life Insurance and requested studies of possible options. They learned that on a different plan, a 401(a) Defined Benefit program, conferences could make smaller payments and receive considerably higher benefits. The reports from the studies were presented to regional conference executives and constituencies.

In January 2000—the same date the new NAD defined contribution plan became effective—eight of the nine conferences stopped making payments to the NAD system. With the switch in the NAD from the old plan to the new happening at the same time,

regional conference leaders determined that January was the best time to make a clean transition. They began to place their conference-designated retirement funds in a separate escrow account until the issue could be resolved.

Resolution took longer than anyone had anticipated. Although the Task Force’s initial findings showed the old NAD Retirement Plan inadequate for specific conferences, it determined that an actuarial study was also needed to examine the records of all Adventist employees and assess their retirement benefits to a specific conference. Such an undertaking proved far more extensive and time-consuming than predicted, delaying an official proposal from the task force. By December 2000, the regional conferences had decided to form an independent nonprofit organization for the purpose of establishing a separate retirement system without waiting for the Task Force’s report. Instead, all research would serve to establish the regional conferences’ financial obligations to the old plan.

Finally, in August 2001, Don Schneider, president of the NAD, was able to present the terms of an agreement to regional, conference, and union presidents at a meeting in Rocklin, California. In what Schneider called a “miracle vote,” it passed, and was then presented for final approval in November at the Year End Meeting, where it passed again.

Although the plan has brought resolution to the regional conferences, what does it mean for the other conferences, large and small? Actuarial studies estimate a debt of \$1.2 billion that the Church in North America must pay to take care of the tail. Initially, it was hoped that all organizations would be able to reduce contributions to the frozen plan in small increments. It is now unlikely that such a reduction, which would relieve budgets, will take place any time soon, and organizations will have to continue making full contributions to the obligations of the frozen plan to make up for the financial adjustments made for the regional conferences.

The regional conferences are not the first to form a separate retirement plan. More than ten years ago, a task force discovered an inequity in contributions in Canada and created a plan that was fairer for each conference. The Adventist Health System also uses its own retirement program, and the Adventist Church in Bermuda went through a similar process.

Julie Z. Lee is a freelance writer as well as communications coordinator for Maranatha Volunteers International. Jlee@maranatha.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



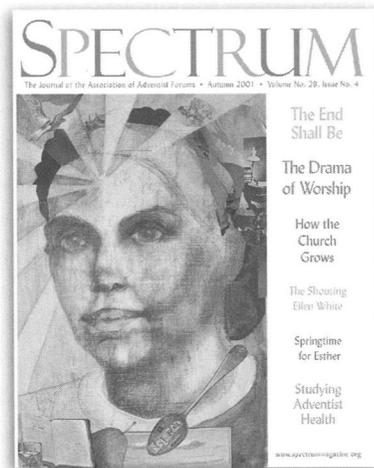
Creation Books Becoming More Sophisticated

As editor of *Creation*, *Catastrophe*, and *Calvary*, I read with deep interest the article by Reinder Bruinsma entitled, "Adventist and Protestant Fundamentalism," in the winter 2002 issue of *Spectrum*. I find his assessment of Adventist participation in aspects of fundamentalism to be done evenly and astutely.

In his discussion of creationism he correctly notes that, although the Adventist acceptance of a historical creation week links this orientation to the fundamentalist camp—I would say to certain subgroups within the fundamentalist camp—current Adventist theology clearly distances itself from fundamentalistic anti-intellectualism.

I appreciate Bruinsma's evaluation that recent Adventist books like Colin Mitchel's *Creation Revisited: A New Look at the Case for Creations* (1999), Ariel Roth's *Origins* (1998), and John T. Baldwin's *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary* (2000) constitute works of increased sophistication. He might well have included Leonard Brand's new publication, *Faith, Reason, and Earth History: A Paradigm of Earth and Biological Origins By Intelligent Design* (1997), Dwight Nelson, *Built to Last* (1998), and Albert Waite, *Let the Earth Speak of God's Creation* (2001).

John T. Baldwin
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Mich.



What Keeps People Like Schneider?

In *Spectrum's* autumn 2001 issue, I especially enjoyed Greg Schneider's review of Ann Taves's book on the shouting Ellen White and Terrie Aamodt's review of David Morgan's book, especially in regard to the issue of Adventist iconography. I would add that the expansion of four-color printing in the 1950s and the development of the four-color press made possible the publication of Arthur S. Maxwell's *Bible Story*. The images in the *Bible Story*, which included some very graphic depictions of the Adventist view of last-day events, I believe greatly influenced the mental images of many Adventist children of that generation.

It occurs to me that Schneider's conclusion—that the Whites' demonization of "competitors" led to a subcultural phobic reaction to life generally, which lead to a

controlling state of mind and many other dysfunctional and possibly neurotic personal and community outcomes—calls for further exploration, particularly in the area of the social psychology of Adventism.

Ron Lawson is currently writing what will, I believe, be the definitive work on the sociology of Adventism. Social psychology might well be another mirror to look into, though the results may not be welcome. I have often wondered if there are any scientific studies that correlate, for example, fear behaviors and church membership/religious beliefs. Other approaches could be discussion of how one changes organizational behaviors to healthier models, if possible, or what keeps people like Schneider part of an organization as unhealthy as the one he describes.

Harvey Brenneise
East Lansing, Mich.

Puzzling Over 9/11

Thank you for Malcolm Russell's excellent article, "Is Islam Really a Peaceful Religion?" (*Spectrum*, winter 2002). As an Adventist, I have been puzzling over the events of September 11 and trying to put them in context with our traditional end-time beliefs. I don't recall Islam being a part of anything I studied in Adventist education.

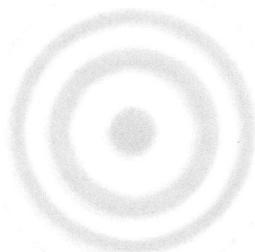
Your article gave me insight into a part of the world I have

never visited and increased my understanding of Middle Eastern culture. It was easy to read and the analogies were thought provoking.

I will share this article!

Kathleen Clem

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Limitless Nature of Truth

“Falkenbergism” (one church theology worldwide) lives on. The article “Targeting Higher Education” in the autumn 2001 issue of *Spectrum* confirms that.

The makeup of the newly appointed International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) and the Executive Committee of the IBMTE is a case in point.

Membership from U.S. colleges and universities is primarily limited to institutions influenced by the Adventist Theological Society. Other colleges and universities represented on the board are based primarily in third world countries. We saw what third world representation did to women’s ordination at the Utrecht General Conference.

It is glaringly obvious that none of the western U.S. colleges and universities were represented, for example, Loma Linda University, La Sierra University, Pacific Union College, or Walla Walla College.

It seems to me that the IBMTE is clearly a move to limit the

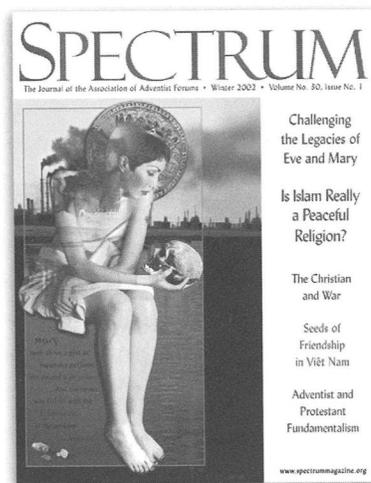
“Truth” about God to a rather small “27” box.

It is difficult for me to accept the premise that “we have all the truth,” or that there is no room in our theology for newer understandings of “Truth.” I like to think that God is “Truth” and that we will never arrive at “Total Truth” because the understanding of God is limitless and our understanding is so limited. Hopefully, the search will last throughout eternity, and we will want to continue it forever. “Falkenbergism” flies in the face of that pursuit.

God help us if our understanding of “Truth” is limited to the beliefs of our church during the 1960s.

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The Side Effects of IBMTE

I agree with Dave Larson’s editorial on twelve problems with IBMTE (*Spectrum*, winter 2002). However, it seems pointless to spend scarce resources developing procedures for a process that is not necessary in the first place. There are already policy and procedures manuals adequate for dealing with personnel

problems.

The “Total Commitment to God” document that preceded the IBMTE succeeded only in defining a narrow view of commitment to a narrow view of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Only God is qualified to specify a metric for commitment to himself.

Although the Creator could claim the right to have dominion over the minds of his creatures, it seems significant and indicative that he does not. Apparently our freedom is too important to him. IBMTE is a terrible violation of our freedom and right to privacy. Every human has the innate right to think new thoughts and document those thoughts without being held accountable to anybody. Our spiritual journeys are strictly private affairs, to be revealed only if, when, how, and where we choose.

To tell scientists in advance what they are allowed to discover when they go looking for God’s footprints in nature, and to tell theologians in advance what they are supposed to discover when they contemplate the Creator, places a serious limitation on the liberty of members and employees, as well as the future of the Church. Paradoxically, this is the same church that publishes a magazine that promotes religious liberty.

Of course we should be concerned about our SDA educational system, but not for the reason that some appear to think. The SDA system of schools is one of the accomplishments of which we can justifiably be proud, but we shouldn’t educate people then get upset because they got educated and learned to think.

Being an Adventist tends to have a lifelong effect on a person. Our school system plays a major role in the difficult task of maxi-

mizing the degree to which this effect is positive. A significant factor in accomplishing this important objective is minimizing the extent to which alumni later discover that things they were taught as students do not stand up to close scrutiny. Those who believe they were lied to as students in our schools tend to find it difficult to have a positive attitude toward our church. The quickest way to slow down the membership drain so widely lamented and much analyzed is to solve this longstanding problem while promoting the freedom we have in Christ.

IBMTE might make it easier to deal with a few "thorns in the flesh" of the Church. However, this will be at a serious cost in terms of the number of people alienated. These thorns, mavericks, and renegades are an important part of the diversity so widely promoted by our church. There are already too many alienated current and former members.

I struggle to understand the Church's propensity to eliminate committed scholars, thus effectively burying their talents, at least insofar as those talents would have benefited the Church. Ronald Numbers was eliminated even though no one could demonstrate that any of his history was wrong. Desmond Ford was unjustifiably eliminated after the Glacier View Conference. The truth of his scholarship was not seriously challenged then and is now being increasingly acknowledged. Walter Rea was effectively eliminated, but his side-by-side comparisons of original and borrowed text are glaringly obvious. We should thank him for his research.

If the church leaders really wanted to impress me, and, I suspect, a great many others, they

would apologize to these three gentlemen while they are still alive. We should bring them back and take full advantage of their talents.

Note that all of these unfortunate events took place without any need for IBMTE and resulted in: (1) alienating people who can, do, and will think for themselves; (2) a large reduction in the Church's credibility; and (3) a concomitant further drain in committed members and contributed resources. It is difficult and time consuming—if not impossible—for any church to regain lost credibility. Carried to its logical conclusion the IBMTE document will have the side effect of causing more loss of credibility and alienation than our Church can afford while changing for the worse the nature of our wonderful educational system. Kill this camel that has its nose in the tent before it comes inside and tramples us.

Bob Wonderly
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Evaluating the Role of the Academy

In his article "Thinking of God as an Artist" (*Spectrum*, summer 2001), Glen Greenwalt enunciates a refreshing perspective on the imaginative God and decries the lack of such creativity and free-thinking in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In order to bolster his criticism of the Church, Greenwalt was willing to minimize the role of

"formal academies." One of the functions of the academy is to separate hackers from artists. Does Greenwalt see a role for such an entity in the Adventist Church? What would be an acceptable forum? How would the institutional responsibility and commitment to its mission govern the integration of divergent views?

While Greenwalt's new job as a graphic designer vests him with a newfound freedom to create, his boss insists on "hairline precision" in some tasks. His new job demonstrates that rules do not necessarily stifle creativity. Greenwalt's position would be more persuasive had he offered suggestions about how the Adventist Church could foster propagation and assimilation of new ideas without losing its distinctiveness.

Leslie Hardware
Silver Spring, Maryland

Correction

In the autumn 2001 issue of *Spectrum* Todd Peterson should have been credited for the photography in "Springtime for Esther: A Responce to the Musical, Esther," by Nancy Lecourt.

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The Sanctuary Doctrine Revisited?!

Many Seventh-day Adventists consider our most unique doctrine securely settled following the work of the ad hoc Sanctuary Review Committee that met in 1980 at Glacier View, Colorado. But that does not include Raymond F. Cottrell or the very active San Diego Chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums.

On February 9, 2002, Cottrell's good friend Larry Christoffel, associate pastor of the Loma Linda Campus Hill Church, read a somewhat abbreviated version of Cottrell's forty-nine-page paper "The 'Sanctuary Doctrine'—Asset or Liability?" in the nearly filled Tierrasanta Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although still recovering from a serious bout with pneumonia, Cottrell was present and, as always, provided incisive answers when the session was opened for questions.

"The traditional interpretation of Daniel 8:14 with its sanctuary and investigative judgment, which gave birth to Seventh-day Adventism and accounts for its existence as a distinct entity within Christendom, has been the object of more criticism and debate, by both Adventists and non-Adventists, than all other facets of our belief system combined," writes Cottrell. "The same is true with respect to church discipline on doctrinal grounds, defections from the Church, and the diversion of time, attention, and resources from Adventism's perceived mission to the world."

Cottrell's paper discusses the politics and ongoing occupational casualties associated with the doctrine, in addition to tracing its origin and history, examining it on the basis of the "sola Scriptura principle and recognized principles of exegesis," and reviewing non-Adventist reaction to it. Cottrell points out that one "experienced, respected, and trusted administrator or Bible teacher" has been fired on average every fifteen to twenty years since 1887 for calling attention to flaws in the traditional interpretation.

He also compares the mutual trust that developed from the mid-1950s to mid-1960s between Seventh-day Adventist biblical scholars and General Conference President R. R. Figuhr, on one side, with mutual distrust between scholars and the succeeding president, R. H. Pierson, from the mid-1960s through 1979. This distrust led Pierson to appoint a nonbiblical scholar as chair of the Church's Biblical Research Institute and the eventual appointment of an ultra-conservative fundamentalist as dean of the Theological Seminary in 1980.

Unfortunately, it is not difficult for Cottrell to trace the path of "obscurantism" that these "three principal architects" devised and to show that it "continues to be alive and well at the GC level." He observes that the "divisive" work of the recently appointed International Board of Ministerial Training and Education is also motivated by obscurantism and could result in "schism"—a fate beyond "the traumatic episodes of the past for which this pseudo-biblical (sanctuary) doctrine . . . has been responsible."

The paper is vintage Cottrell, full of interesting facts and observations, including an estimate of the cost of Glacier View (\$250,000); why the seminary dean was fired in 1987; and how that precipitated the founding of the Adventist Theological Society (at Southern Adventist College) in 1988. In my opinion, the most useful contribution of Cottrell's purposefully "constructive and remedial" "review and analysis of the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14" is his "permanent remedy for doctrinal obscurantism." He proposes formation of a "Bible Scholars' Council on Biblical Exegesis" as an agency of and funded by the General Conference for the purpose of developing "a bona fide consensus of its community of Bible scholars on all biblical and doctrinal matters." WOW!—wouldn't that be a breath of fresh air?

Bravo Ray! . . . and bravo Association of Adventist Forums San Diego Chapter! I long for the day, hopefully soon, when I'll be able to say "Bravo General Conference!" for facing this problem directly and honestly and for putting a permanent end to the "obscurantism" whose effects continue to haunt us as a church.

Audio tapes of this meeting and copies of Cottrell's manuscript can be obtained from the AAF San Diego Chapter, P.O. Box 3148, La Mesa, CA 91944-3148.

*Gordon M. Rick
AAF vice president*

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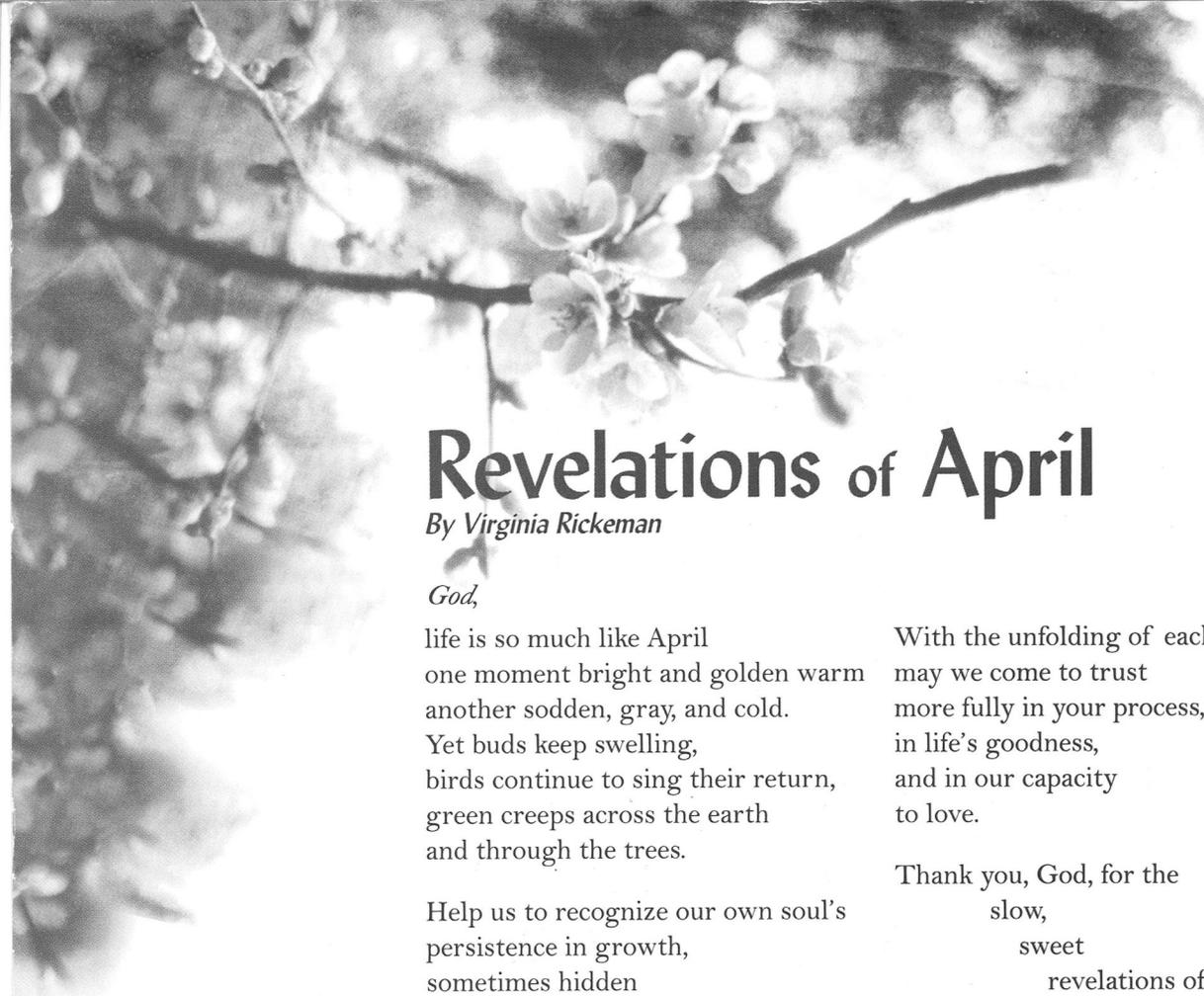
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Revelations of April

By Virginia Rickeman

God,

life is so much like April
one moment bright and golden warm
another sodden, gray, and cold.
Yet buds keep swelling,
birds continue to sing their return,
green creeps across the earth
and through the trees.

Help us to recognize our own soul's
persistence in growth,
sometimes hidden
deep within us,
sometimes surging
across the landscape of our lives
in explosions of color.

With the unfolding of each day,
may we come to trust
more fully in your process,
in life's goodness,
and in our capacity
to love.

Thank you, God, for the
slow,
sweet
revelations of spring.

Amen

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