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# SPECTRUM

a quarterly journal of the association of adventist forums

spring 1970

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## GENERAL CONFERENCE 1970

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In this number of SPECTRUM are articles that deal with issues of special interest to the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. Most of the authors have worked many years within the church structure, and all are dedicated to the growth and mission of their church. What they say deserves our most serious study.

The Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is meeting from June 11 to 21 in Atlantic City. Thousands of delegates attend from all parts of the globe, and many more thousands of persons who pay their own way attend also. Some come for the sights and pageantry, some mainly for meeting old and new friends — but almost all come because they are deeply interested in what is done for the total welfare of the church in all the world.

There is much concern about where the Adventist Church is going from here. This solicitude is found in the leadership of the church as well as in its membership. Are we a growing church, not only in number but especially in spirituality and understanding? How can we relate ourselves to those around us in a more truly Christian way in this time of worldwide stress? Are we mature enough to look at the problems that face us in a spirit of responsible fellowship, mature enough to tolerate *difference* of opinion and conviction within that fellowship, and not be threatened by it.

We hope that this General Conference Session can be one of deep spiritual dedication that leads to free, openhearted, enlightened discussion of all the concerns that the church faces. We hope that that dedication and discussion culminate in action that is in harmony with the commitment of this church to truth and Christian service.

MOLLEURUS COUPERUS

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# Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the Seventies

GOTTFRIED OOSTERWAL

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## I

Three features stand out most prominently in the present missionary situation of the Adventist Church:<sup>1</sup>

1. *The church has been planted over the whole globe and is now the most widespread single Protestant denomination (86% of all countries).*<sup>2</sup> Praises and gratitude go to our Lord, the "missionary-in-chief"<sup>3</sup> who has worked this miracle in less than a century. This rapid and far-reaching expansion has not had its equal since the early Christian church conquered the world. It is the clearest evidence of the fact that all MISSION is God's work. Continually reminding ourselves of how God has led us in the past should make us worry much less about the continuing future of MISSION. And now that the remotest ends of the world have been reached with the gospel, we have truly entered the very last days of this world's history.<sup>4</sup>

2. With the growth of this worldwide movement, *by far the larger portion of its membership came to live outside North America and the Western world in general.* Until the early 1950s the majority of Adventists lived in North America, Europe, and Australia. Since the late 1950s, however, this picture has suddenly and radically changed. In many areas in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, nothing less than a church explosion has taken place; and it will continue in the 1970s.

As a result, 80% of Adventist world membership is now living outside of the United States, where the church had its origins. In fact, it is only because of the present high growth rates of our churches in the nonwestern world (in particular Latin America, Africa, and the Philippines) that the church as a whole is still growing at a rate of about 5% per year. The an-

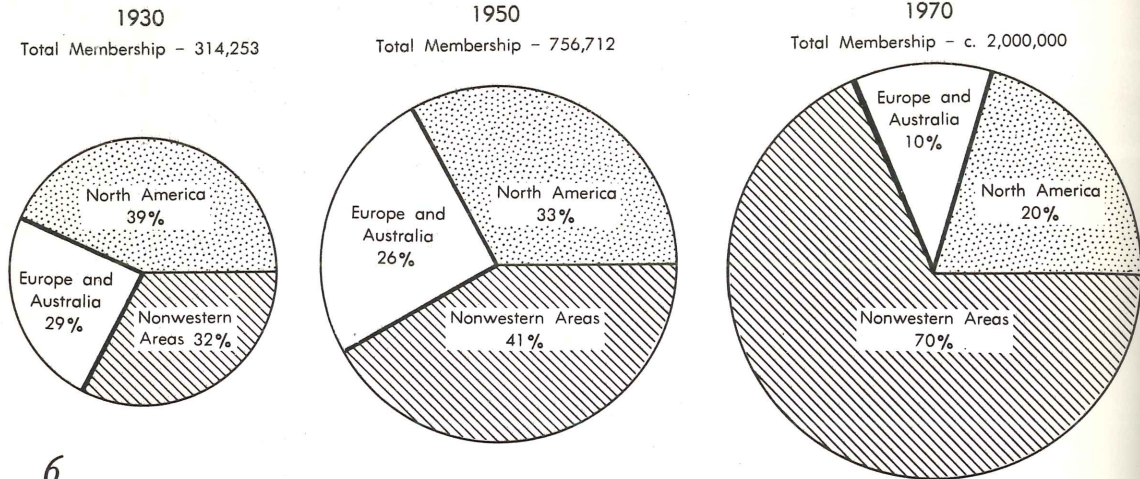


FIGURE 1. Percentages of Adventist world membership.

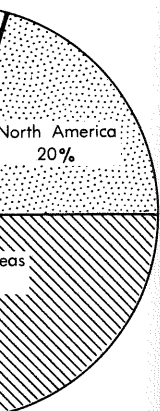
nual growth rate in North America is only a little over 2.5%, and in Europe and Australia it ranges from -1% to 3%. But because at the same time the church in Latin America and Africa is growing from 9% to 15% per year (which is on the average about seven times faster than in the countries of the West), it maintains an overall rate of 5%.

We may expect, as a result, that by the end of this decade Adventist membership in North America will barely make up 10% of the total membership. This means that the Adventist Church, much more than Christendom in general, in the seventies will have become largely (85%) a nonwestern, nonwhite church. Because of its high percentage of first-generation believers, this church will remain a very viable and active church. It may be expected that these members in Latin America, Africa, and Asia will have an increasing revitalizing influence on the Adventist Church as a whole and on its missionary outreach in the seventies.

3. *The scope of the unfinished task is immense.* When Christ was born, there were 200 million people in the world. Some 1,800 years later, by the time the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized, the world population had reached its first billion mark. In the first decade of the twentieth century about 45% (according to a conservative estimate) of the world population was Christian or under the direct influence of the gospel. Today there are 3.8 billion people in the world, a number which



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6, and in the same 10% to 15% of the coun-

Adventist mem-ber-ship is concentrated in western, and in the same 10% to 15% of the coun-

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by the end of the seventies will have increased to 5.5 billion. But already some 1.6 billion people have never even heard about Christ — that is, eight times as many as in the days of the apostle Paul. And there is another billion people that have never heard the advent message clearly. Prospects for the seventies are that their number will be increasing.

Today barely 20% of the whole world population is Christian. Moreover, this 20% is very unevenly distributed over the world. Of all Roman Catholics, for instance, some 90% live in Europe and North and Latin America. But 80% of the world population does not live there. Protestants show a similar distribution: 80% of all Protestants live among 25% of the world population. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has done a little better: about 70% of its membership lives in the Christian countries of the world. But 70% of the world population does not live there. Moreover, over 95% of all Adventist converts come from a Christian background, while the vast majority of the people on earth are nonchristian and seem to be largely beyond the reach of the advent message. These people live largely in Asia with its 2 billion inhabitants.

The "optimist" sees an increase of 1% to 2% in the proportion of Christians to the total world population in the next decade. The "pessimist" expects that by the end of the 1970s the percentage of Christians in the world will hardly be 15%; he points to the powerful mission activities of Islam and Buddhism, the rise of hundreds of new religions, and the continuous and rapid process of secularization within the Christian church, particularly in the West.

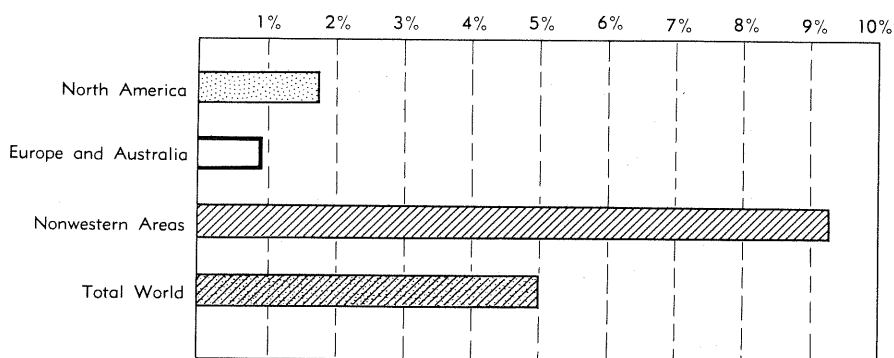


FIGURE 2. Percentage increase of Adventist world membership 1968-69.

An example from Africa may illustrate more clearly the immensity of the unfinished task and its challenge to the church in the seventies. Adventists officially have a mission station in the Sudan, a country of over 15 million people. But there are only 3 members, that is, 1 Adventist to every 5 million people. With a birthrate of 5.2% and a deathrate of 2%, the population of the Sudan is expected to increase to 22 million during the seventies. Even if the Adventist population there would increase 500% in the next ten years, the number of those not reached with the gospel would be larger at the end of the decade than at the beginning. The same holds true for Asia, where, although the Christian church grows 5% to 7% in many areas, the present population of 2 billion is expected to double to 4 billion twenty years from now.

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A word of warning is in place here. The kingdom of God cannot merely be measured by or expressed in numbers. These serve only to describe an issue more concretely. Moreover, in practically all mission territories the number of those who claim to be Adventists is far bigger than membership records indicate. Population censuses in Africa and Latin America give membership figures that are often twice or three times as high as the figures on the church's own records. Nevertheless, the immensity of the task stands out very clearly.

Add to all this the inadequacy of financial resources in the nonwestern areas of the world, the percentual decrease of mission offerings and the increased spending on themselves by the churches in the West, and the lack of missionary enthusiasm; and a picture emerges of a severe crisis. Yet never before has there been a more urgent hour, were the fields more ripe for harvesting and were there greater opportunities to participate in Christ's own MISSION of reconciliation.

## II

The implications of these three prominent features will be felt very strongly in the seventies. Some will be of an administrative and organizational nature, such as the matter of proportionate representation of these overseas churches in the highest executive and policymaking body of the church. Another question deals with the priorities of spending funds on evangelism, on the service branches of the church (education, medicine, welfare, technical assistance), and on the care and administration of the members. Of the total General Conference budget 44% is now spent in capital investment. Some \$300 million has been invested in school buildings, 90% of it in North America and 10% overseas. And only \$4.5 million has

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been invested in radio and television evangelism. Other questions will arise concerning the proper distribution of finances, such as: Should we spend our money largely in "fields ripe for harvesting" or should we spend it more evenly and even continue sowing on "stony ground"?

9 Questions like these can be answered only in the light of what MISSION really is and what the nature and task of the church is in the world. The answer not only requires a bold and honest look at what we have accomplished so far, and what the position of the church is in the world today, but also stresses the need of a clear theology of MISSION. Without such a theology a missionary movement is directionless. The choices and decisions that have to be made, and the church policies and priorities determined, all imply certain assumptions about the task and essence of MISSION. Acting without realizing that theological issues are involved means following non-theological principles, which are often only a nice expression of worldly motives.

A theology is also badly needed to evaluate success or failure in MISSION and to develop right strategies and methods. "The varying circumstances taking place in the world," Ellen White wrote, "call for labor which will meet these peculiar developments."<sup>5</sup> In the light of many new developments it is not at all improbable that certain missionary institutions, policies, methods, and priorities of the past may have to be revised, or even abandoned altogether — not because they were wrong, but simply because they have fulfilled their particular function.

New ways and new priorities may have to be developed which may even be contrary to what we considered good MISSION strategy or even "present truth" before. "Never say, therefore," Ellen White warned, "that this has never been taught. Away with these restrictions. That which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God's message for this time."<sup>6</sup> And "present truth, from the first letter of its alphabet to the last, means missionary effort."<sup>7</sup>

### III

So let us look at a few aspects of the present missionary situation and their implications for the seventies in more detail.

1. In the beginning of the Adventist missionary outreach, all overseas missionaries came from North America. They were sent to areas where there was no Adventist church, to preach the advent message and to plant churches. And though this work is far from accomplished, Adventist

churches have now been firmly established over the whole globe. Not only is the Adventist Church the most widespread of all Protestant denominations, but also, in many areas of the world and in particular in Latin America, it is the largest single Protestant denomination and the fastest growing.

In many nonwestern areas the ratio of Adventists to non-Adventists is already much higher than in Europe or the United States. In North America there is 1 Adventist to almost 600 non-Adventists.<sup>8</sup> In Canada the ratio is 1:1,200. But in the Philippines this ratio is 1:300; in the Central African Union 1:65; and in Jamaica 1:35. Compare with these ratios those of Great Britain, 1:5,000; the Netherlands Union, 1:4,000; or the Central European Division, 1:2,000. These questions arise: What really constitutes a mission field? What is a missionary?

10

The church's present Western overseas missionary endeavor is characterized by Adventist workers leaving the largely non-Adventist areas of the West to work among large concentrations of Adventist believers overseas. These missionaries are not going out any more to work for the non-believers in particular. Rather they are employed by the church to work within the church especially for the members of the church. This is also evident from the nature of their work: the vast majority of overseas missionaries go out as teachers in Adventist *schools* (where we usually do not admit non-Adventists), as medical personnel to work in Adventist *hospitals* (which are left as soon as a government takes over the institution), and a small percentage as *administrators*. But hardly any missionaries at all leave the shores of North America whose main work consists of proclaiming the advent message to nonbelievers and raising up churches. The church's Western overseas movement has thus developed into an *intrachurch movement* to a large extent.

The frontlines of MISSION, that is, the boundaries one has to cross in order to be called a missionary, have been *salt water* (the deeper and wider the ocean and the farther one travels from home, the more one is considered a missionary) and the barriers of *language* (if one learns the foreign language at all), of *culture* (if indeed one crosses this boundary), and of *geography* (climate, physical milieu). These are what is considered "from homebase to frontline."

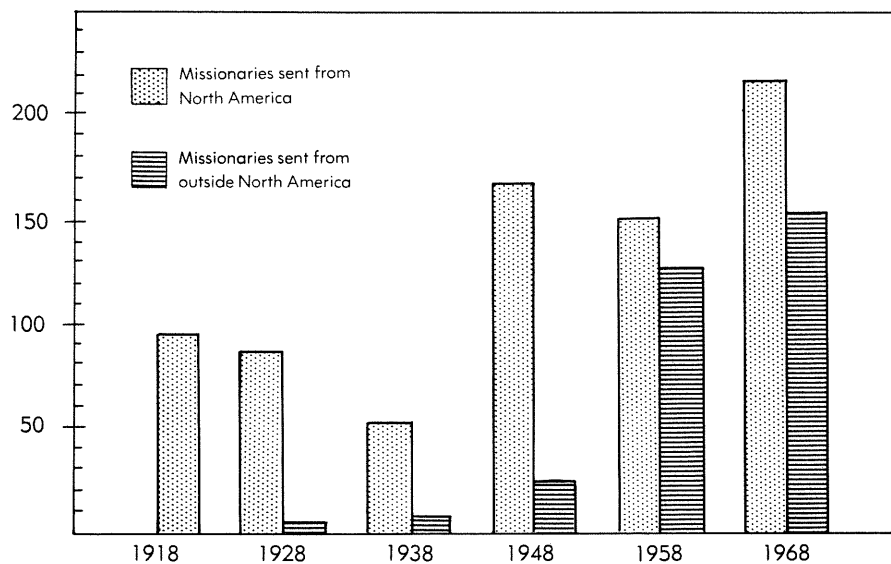
In the Bible, however, the only real frontline that makes a person a missionary is the boundary between *belief and unbelief*, between those who are "foreigners to God" and those who belong to "the household of God." Jesus never left Palestine; he never crossed salt water; and he never learned a foreign language or lived with people whose strange customs he did not

understand. Yet Ellen White rightly called him "the greatest missionary the world has ever known."<sup>9</sup>

MISSION is the imitation and the continuation of Christ's work on earth. Therefore, the only boundary that should determine what is MISSION for the church today and what is not is that boundary between belief and unbelief. This boundary runs through every nation, tribe, and tongue. The frontline of MISSION is wherever there are people who don't know Christ. In this respect the greater New York area, with only 1 Adventist to every 3,000 non-Adventists, is much more a MISSION territory than are most areas in Latin America or Africa. This understanding of MISSION boundaries ought to determine the church's priorities and help shape its future policies.

## II

FIGURE 3. New missionaries sent (world field, 1918 to 1968).



2. With the rapid growth of the church overseas, and its solid establishment, the Adventist missionary movement is no longer a one-way street. At the moment almost as many missionaries are being sent out from overseas areas as from North America. This fact calls for some revision of mission policies which were made when all missionaries came from North America and Europe. The Adventist Church in the Philippines alone has sent more missionaries overseas the last few years than have the Central and Northern European Divisions combined. In the seventies this mis-

sionary movement from the nonwestern church into all the world will greatly increase.

When Adventist travel was a one-way street, the only link between the overseas field and North America was the missionary. His life and work became the standard by which the new overseas congregations judged the church and country of the missionary's origin. In general the congregations in the West had the excellent reputation of being self-sacrificing communities, burning with missionary zeal, living perfect and sanctified lives out of faith in the sooncoming Lord.

12 Today, however, Adventist travel is a two-way street, with workers from overseas divisions coming frequently to the United States. Some come to attend General Conference meetings. Many others, often the younger ones, come to study at our colleges and universities. What kind of Adventist Church do they find? The impressions these people take home to their own churches often carry a very heavy weight for the present MISSION situation of the church.

Furthermore, former MISSION fields have now been discovered as prime tourist attractions. Hundreds of Adventists from North America, young and not so young, are visiting these remote beauty spots of the world. But the new mission-minded churches overseas judge visiting Adventists not as tourists but as representatives of the Adventist Church in North America. What image do these individuals or tourist groups leave behind? Is it still the picture of a self-sacrificing, sanctified Body of Christ? Thus every local church from Maine to Mississippi is now involved in determining the success or failure in the church's worldwide missionary outreach.

This whole new situation has caught the church by surprise; it all happened so suddenly and rapidly. But, then, the ways of God's MISSION always come as a surprise. It is high time, however, for the church to wake up. Textbooks in church schools and mission reports in church magazines and Sabbath school reports are still portraying the thatched huts of cannibals, but the people in reality are well-educated Adventists studying and worshipping in the same kind of buildings used by Adventists everywhere.

3. The fact that the Adventist overseas missionary movement had developed into an *intrachurch movement*, in the sense that most of the funds, time, and personnel are spent by the church for the church, is both the church's greatest strength and its greatest weakness. Of a total working force of some 70,000 people, roughly 40% work in Adventist schools for Adventist children, 30% in medical work, and 13% in administrative posi-

tions. Only 10% are engaged in pastoral work, and only a small percentage of these are doing evangelism. Over a billion dollars has been invested in buildings and equipment, of which barely 4% has been in publishing houses, book and Bible houses, and radio and television evangelism. Nearly 50% of this billion dollars has been invested in church buildings and educational institutions. Some \$325 million has been invested in conferences and conference associations.

Every year more than 40% of the total General Conference budget is spent in capital investment. This truly is the strength of the church, which is doing far better than any other missionary organization in taking care of its members and in providing a Christian education for its children. Even though it is losing through apostasy about 35 people for every 100 who come into the church, this rate is rather low compared with that of other denominations. But unless the church keeps the proper perspective, its greatest strength may prove to be its greatest weakness.

An increasing percentage of new members in overseas fields will come from Adventist families. Reliable statistics are not available, but it is estimated that in North America between 75% and 80% of all baptisms involve the church's own youth. In the Philippines, still a relatively young church, the percentage of new members from Adventist families is already 65% to 70%. Unless the church reconsiders its priorities, its growth in the 1970s will become more and more the result of *biological growth*. Once again, this is a strong point, for Adventists are absolutely right in considering their own children and youth their first MISSION field. But on the other hand the Master wants the church also to go out into the world to take the message of salvation and warning to those who do not know Christ. Therefore the church should aim at *conversion growth*, that is, leading people out of the world into the "household of God." This is what MISSION really stands for.

An honest reevaluation should be made to determine the priorities for the spending of money and for personnel. In North America there are some 27,000 active Adventist workers, of whom 40% are employed in medical institutions, another 37% in education, but barely 7% in pastoral work and evangelism. In this respect the Australasian Division gives a much healthier picture: some 20% involved in pastoral work and evangelism, 9% in medical work, and 25% in education.

If institutions absorb too much of a movement's money and personnel, stagnation results. This is called *institutionalism*. The expensive multiplication of colleges and universities, their concentration in a very small area of

the world field (i.e., North America), the duplication of programs, the administrative overhead, the strong emphasis on big hospital work — all these tend to hinder the church's missionary outreach. The aim of institutions is to promote the *worldwide* missionary movement, but at present institutionalism is causing stagnation and in many areas could prevent an increasing growth rate of the church in the seventies.

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4. In Europe and North America 25 to 30% of the population is under 15 years of age. In the nonwestern world there is 45 to 50% under 15 and 60-65% under 25. The church explosion in various countries has resulted in a larger percentage of young people within the church also. To accommodate them, it would have to build five times as many schools in the next ten years in Latin America and Africa alone as it has built in all the world during the past hundred years.

And the same figures, or even higher, apply to the need for teachers. The two Latin American divisions, with twice as many Adventist young people as the North American Division, have half as many academies and only a fourth the number of teachers. The picture of the concentration of college programs looks even worse.<sup>10</sup> There are six times as many college teachers in the North American Division as in both Latin American divisions.

Of all college and academy teachers in the denomination, over 60% are employed in North America, i.e., for less than 10% of all Adventist young people. Here lies, indeed, the church's greatest and most immediate need: to expand rapidly its educational facilities and personnel to those areas of tremendous church growth. Here also lies the greatest challenge for North American college graduates in the seventies: to devote a year or two in voluntary teaching in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The Student Missionary Program is filling some of this need, but barely half of 1% of what is required.

Already thousands and thousands of Adventist children in these non-western areas are going to non-Adventist schools at an age at which they are most receptive to truth and falsehood. There simply are not enough local funds to support Adventist education. *The church explosion is taking place in the poverty areas of the world*, where parents cannot afford to pay the high tuition of a private school even if there were schools. Funds for many new school buildings are just not available, even if the General Conference could double its appropriations to these overseas divisions.

Besides, North America, which supplies most of the funds, is struggling itself to keep its schools open. But in South America and Africa the situation



is desperate: already some 70% of Adventist young people there are going to government schools. With most of the people in the world and the church soon to be in the under-25 age category, it is essential that the church give immediate consideration to these youth, in their various age groups, and explore possibilities and means of reaching them and keeping them.

In the interim, the church might approach this problem in a threefold way: (1) emphasizing the *parents'* responsibility toward their own youth and revitalizing the religious-educational function of the family; (2) strengthening the *local church* programs for youth, especially for the 18-25 age group; and (3) rallying a corps of *youth volunteers* from North America and Europe to teach in Adventist schools overseas.

With the establishment of a larger Adventist Voluntary Teacher Service Corps, people holding a master's or a bachelor's degree could voluntarily, or for a very small salary, teach for a year or two in academies or elementary schools in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. If this cannot be done — and why can't it? — then the church explosion of the 1960s may be followed by a mass apostasy in the 1970s. This has happened before in recent mission history, and it is one of the main reasons why the Protestant missionary movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lost its thrust.

Another factor in worldwide mission of the church is the fact that more than 40% of the world population is illiterate. And every year the total number is increasing by 25 to 30 million. These people, to a large extent, are beyond the reach of the Adventist Church, which has grown and is growing largely through its publishing work. Here is where a new educational program ought to come in: *adult education*. Thousands of volunteers are needed also to do this work, and the response to this need in the seventies may determine whether millions in Africa and Asia will be won for Christ or for Communism and antichrist. It is high time for Adventists to consider the people of these ripened fields in their greatest need and make them our first priority.

Should church priorities be determined, then, by the field? Yes! We may look on the tremendous church explosion in Latin America, Africa, and certain parts of Asia as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. Whole villages and tribes, often with thousands of people, suddenly become receptive to the advent message. And there will be much more of this in the seventies, as the prophets foretold would happen in the last days.

Adventists are not harvesting one-fiftieth of those who are ready to accept their message in those areas. This is evident from the fact, in the censuses of Latin American and African countries, that thousands and thousands of

people are listed as Adventists who are as yet unclaimed by the church. It is further evident from the phenomenal growth of other little-institutionalized Christian denominations in areas where the Spirit has prepared the harvest (although, of course, criticism is in order for the lack of "institutional care" of those brought into the fold of those churches).

For the seventies Adventists ought more than ever to keep their eyes open for people who have been prepared by the Spirit to join them. They ought to make available funds and personnel to harvest those fields that are ripe for harvest *now*. This, indeed, would require much greater flexibility in missionary approach and a shift in priorities and policies. There is too much of the "three-more-months-and-then-is-the-harvest" idea.

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One of the greatest dangers threatening our church in the seventies is that because of certain traditional patterns it will let the harvest time go by in the areas that are ready now, while spending its funds, personnel, and efforts in sowing or cultivating elsewhere. But those men who are already preparing workers and funds for mainland China in order to be ready when God opens the door are evidence that there are leaders in the advent movement who are spiritually clear-sighted.

5. One of the greatest contributions the rapidly expanding congregation in the nonwestern world will make to the Adventist Church as a whole in the seventies may well be the *rediscovery of the church as a lay church*. This concept was characteristic of the early Christian church; it also was the mark of the early advent movement. There are signs that the rediscovery of this biblical concept of the church and its MISSION has already begun. The tremendous church growth of the sixties is not primarily the result of big evangelistic campaigns or the work of ministers. It is the work of lay members who have lived out their faith and given an account of it in the fields, in the factories, and in the villages. This is the secret of rapid growth.

The developing church in the nonwestern world is a lay church after the New Testament fashion; for it is the laity who win the converts. It is also the laity who establish new congregations and who should form the leadership of the church. However, in many of the exploding churches in the nonwestern areas there is still a high rate of illiteracy; although the laity have produced the church growth, they are not yet educated to become its leaders. What is needed right now, therefore, to accommodate the increasing number of new members and churches, are *institutes for lay church leaders* — institutes to prepare these laymen who have produced the growth, to become its leaders.

This is a very crucial issue. If the Holy Spirit can use these often uneducated members of the church to win thousands of converts and establish hundreds of new congregations, it is only a small thing for the church to give them extra training and entrust them with the leadership of the church. Such men ought to be *ordained*, even though they are not in the regular employ of the church. If the Holy Spirit has ordained these people to be coworkers with Christ, what right does the church have to withhold its official recognition?

Right now, lay institutes are of far greater priority than the establishment of a theological seminary, however important that is, in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. For the time being, such a seminary should be organized in the form of *extension schools*. It is high time a special committee started working out the details of a greatly expanded system of seminary and university extension schools in all the world. Such a program would solve the immediate problem of providing sufficient church leaders, teachers, pastors, and trained lay workers.

6. Another aspect of a lay church is its lay missionaries. The success of a missionary movement is proportionally related to the degree to which it has been able to rally the whole church (that is, all of its members) to the task of mission. Ellen White never grew tired of reiterating this truth. "All are alike called to be missionaries for God."<sup>11</sup> "All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men."<sup>12</sup> And it is because of a failure to enlist all of the church in this task that it has remained unfinished so long. "If all of them would have their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory."<sup>13</sup>

There are two primary reasons for developing a lay mission program — one theological and one practical.

Theologically speaking, it is to the laity as a whole that Christ has entrusted his work of reconciliation. When he said, "Go ye into all the world,"<sup>14</sup> that *ye* meant *all* who believe on his name. To prepare the people for their task of MISSION, God has given special gifts: apostles, preachers, supervisors, teachers, etc.<sup>15</sup> The main responsibility of these "special ministries" is to nourish, equip, help, and sustain the community of believers in carrying out its MISSION.

In other words, the ministers and leaders are called to assist the people of God in carrying out the MISSION of the church — not vice versa, as is done too often. "In laboring where there are already some in the faith, the

minister should *at first* seek not so much to convert unbelievers, as to train the church members to work for others."<sup>16</sup> In the New Testament church, authority rested on a man's ministry and the word he preached, not on a position. Success or failure in the work of God depends on the way in which the church prepares and rallies its whole membership to MISSION.

Practically speaking, the *possibilities of lay witness constitute the church's greatest opportunity in the seventies to penetrate into the whole world with the gospel*. In many areas of the world, and many spheres of life, the minister cannot work or is no longer listened to. In the Sudan, where there are 3 Adventists in a population of some 15 million, missionaries are not allowed to enter; yet at the same time the university at Khartoum is crying for staff members and the government desperately wants engineers, doctors, and teachers. Senegal shows a similar picture. And so do hundreds of other areas in the world where the church cannot get official permission to enter or to expand its missionary work, while at the same time governments are craving specialists of all sorts.

Here are the greatest opportunities for mission work in the seventies: Adventist engineers working for the Arabian Oil Company, Adventist secretaries going overseas for companies in areas where the church is weak; Adventist teachers, doctors, and technicians applying for jobs with governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Last year alone some 26,000 job openings were listed in these areas. Of course, the same principle applies at home, where ministers often cannot find a hearing: the universities, industry, and mass communications. We have often been told that the church should go into such areas; but the fact is that the church is already there in the person of its laity.

For salt to fulfill its function on the dinner table and in the kitchen, it must be spread (after it has been obtained, collected, and purified), and so it is with the church.<sup>17</sup> This fact may require Adventists to break up their large concentrations of churches and settle in areas where there are no Adventists. Already some 30% of the church membership in North America lives in California alone, largely in the southern part. Another concentration of believers is found around Battle Creek and Berrien Springs, Michigan, and another in the Baltimore-Washington area.

At the same time, New York City has only 1 Adventist to every 3,000 non-Adventists, and in Montreal the ratio is 1:20,000. Ellen White warned the church that its members should not congregate in large concentrations but should live scattered in small companies,<sup>18</sup> as was the pattern (and therefore the success) of the early Christian church. Who could forecast

how the church might grow in the seventies if Adventists spread themselves out and began a concerted lay mission effort — some moving to the needy rural or thickly populated areas of the United States and others going into the world field to make their application of Christian witness to whatever job they chose?

To put all this into practice and make our lay witness operation most effective, I would propose a *Development Assistance Service*: an organization that would inform Adventist businessmen, professors, technicians, doctors, engineers, and others of the specific opportunities for service in areas of Africa, Asia, and elsewhere, and then bring them into contact with the appropriate recruiting services in order to apply for these positions. Most important, before these people would leave on their overseas assignment, the agency could offer a short, high-powered training and orientation institute (at the church's expense) in Christian witness. Continual communication between these laymen and the agency, in the form of letters and visits from church leaders, would promote MISSION as soon as they were overseas.

Beloved, "the church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purpose, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby low and high, rich and poor, may hear the message of truth."<sup>19</sup> With vision, faith, and power in the church, God's MISSION may be finished in the seventies.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 This article is adapted from a lecture given February 15, 1970, during Mission Emphasis Week at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The lecture was sponsored jointly by the Andrews University chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums and the department of missions of the seminary.
- 2 Unless notation is made otherwise, statistics have been taken from annual church reports.
- 3 ELLEN G. WHITE, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association 1923), p. 293.
- 4 See Matthew 24:14.
- 5 WHITE, Manuscript 8a, 1888.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 WHITE, *Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1923), p. 300.
- 8 It should be kept in mind that children are not included in the number of Adventists reported.
- 9 WHITE, *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1952), p. 118. See also WHITE, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1932), p. 15.

- 10 A question the church should study is whether it is wise to continue to spend so much of its money on its colleges and universities. According to N. R. DOWER, Europe — Land of Promise, *Review and Herald*, January 1, 1970, p. 16, even though no Adventist schools are there, 70% to 80% of Adventist youth in the Central European Division stay in the church. That percentage is barely reached in North America where the church is better equipped with schools than in any other area in the world. Apparently the retention of youth in the church may depend much less on having Adventist schools, particularly colleges and universities, than has been assumed.
- 11 WHITE, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1905), p. 395.
- 12 WHITE, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1898), p. 822.
- 13 WHITE, *Review and Herald*, October 6, 1906.
- 14 Matthew 28:19.
- 15 Ephesians 4:7, 11-16.
- 16 WHITE, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1915), p. 196.
- 17 Matthew 5:13.
- 18 See, for example, WHITE, *Christian Service* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1947), p. 178.

# A Better Way

CALVIN B. ROCK

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The title of this article<sup>1</sup> is lifted from a statement written by Ellen G. White at the turn of the century. The thought in essence is that because of the tensions between the races, the rigors of Jim Crow, white and black believers would be wise to build and operate separate facilities — “till the Lord shows us a better way.”<sup>2</sup>

It is my opinion that there are but three milestones left for us to pass before victory will be complete. The first milestone is *righteousness by faith*. Like the Jews of old, far too many of our members still depend too much on the law and too little on the merits of Jesus. The second milestone is marked *pilgrim ethic*. Like Little John, in the tales of Robin Hood, who disguised himself and went into a chosen city to spy out the land for attack, but who became so comfortable with the ease of city life that he forgot to return, some of us have forgotten our temporary status in this present society. In short, we have lost our pilgrim ethic. The third milestone is *brotherhood and togetherness*.

For as it is true that we cannot triumph until we have overcome ritualism, salvation by works, and the creature comforts that rob us of divine incentive, it is also true that the Holy Spirit can never supply that measure of power commensurate with Matthew 24:14<sup>3</sup> while yet we remain a psychologically and structurally divided people. Because of this fact and because we know that our present segregated operations are not ideal, and because Ellen White implies that God will show us “a better way,” we do well to assess our situation occasionally to see if the time has arrived for a more practical and efficient way — in short, a better way of doing God’s work.

## I

Two questions arise.

First, what is this better way? I believe it is the way of open fellowship

and complete desegregation by Seventh-day Adventists on all levels of communion, administration, and worship.

Second, are not we — who, with prophetic eye, go through the sweep of history dissecting kingdoms, analyzing the present, and outlining the future, who sing so blithely, “we are not divided, all one body we” — are not we ready for just such a fellowship? The answer is, sadly but emphatically, *No!* Our long, discouragingly weak record of race relations clearly negates any optimism.

Black Seventh-day Adventists were not accepted in the Washington Sanitarium until the late 1940s. Black people could not eat at the Review and Herald cafeteria until the early 1950s nor stay in the main units of the Florida Sanitarium or the Hialeah Hospital until the early 1960s. It was against regulations for blacks and whites to room together on our campuses until the middle 1960s. And it was 1965 before the largest white Seventh-day Adventist church in Detroit, if you please, would accept its first black member. Add to these the long-practiced quota system of accepting students in our institutions. Add that the brightest black missionaries have returned from service overseas with successful and lengthy records, only to have their tenure and accomplishments unrewarded within the structure while many of their white counterparts were immediately given positions of responsibility. These facts are but a sampling of what the past has been like.

But it is not only the past that speaks to us. More relevantly the present tells us that we are not ready. We are not ready because black Seventh-day Adventists cannot sit on the same pews with white Seventh-day Adventists in Mobile, Alabama. We are not ready because little black Seventh-day Adventist children cannot go to school with little white Seventh-day Adventists in Atlanta, Georgia. We are not ready because black administrators in the local conferences around the country know that there is little or no chance of vertical mobility within their respective structures. We are not ready because, although blacks have almost one-third of the combined membership of the Southern, Atlantic, and Columbia Union Conferences, we are not represented in the administrative structure of these bodies. (What goes on in these regions is no worse than what goes on in the rest of North America — and in fact may be somewhat better.)

## II

Exactly what are the sociological, psychological, and theological forces that have produced this present state of affairs?



*First*, Adventists are a conservative people who have evidently taken their conservatism too far. We shun drastic changes in dress and diet. We are cautious in our financing and in other matters of policy. And well might we be. But to carry our conservatism into the area of human relations is to pervert and misapply an otherwise healthy tendency.

*Second*, Adventists are fundamentalists, given more to dogmatic views and authoritarian preachments that confirm our positions than to understanding principle. Of course, our stated doctrines are correct and our officially announced positions, even on human relations, are good. But because many leaders and lay members spurn the refining, broadening processes of research, relying more on text than context, and more on slogans than scholarship, we ought not be too surprised that we are slow to change any social or theological position. Neither conservatism nor fundamentalism is wrong. Jesus was a doctrinal conservative and was steeped in the fundamentals of the scrolls. But also he was a bold liberal in his social teachings and an outright radical in his social contacts.

*Third*, a significant factor in our approach to social change is this: having concluded that the world is hopeless and that we shall never be able to solve all the problems of society, we have evidently decided that we do best to stay out of social problems and keep busy carrying on "the work of the church." To this end we have not balanced our college and university courses of theology, education, business, and the natural sciences with sufficient offerings in the social and behavioral sciences. Thus our white church leaders are ignorant of the residual effects on the black man both of slavery and of the nitty-gritty problems of survival in the black community. Many white leaders believe it is a waste of time to study these issues, much less to provide the massive reparations due the black man for past indignities suffered at the hands of the slaveowner and the generations that succeeded him.

Now I do not suggest with Augustine that we strive to create a City of God here on earth. Nor do I agree with Walter Rauschenbusch, the father of the social gospel, when he says that we can expect to elevate society to the place where God can adopt us and confer immortality on the whole human race. I do not agree even with Martin Luther King, Jr., who foresaw a time when "justice will reign from the majestic hills of Pennsylvania to every molehill and mound in Mississippi."

But I do say that it is highly regrettable that the children of God have been dwarfed — in government, by such sons of mammon as John and Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson; in religion, by Pope John XXIII,

who wrote in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* so eloquently about the social issue; and in education, in business, and in every other stratum of society, by other convicted and concerned men. The church will never solve all the ills of humanity. But as the moral conscience of the nation, the church is obligated — yea, duty bound, in the parlance of prayer meeting — not only to speak out against man's inhumanity to man, but to dedicate our finances, our votes, and, if necessary, our very lives to the freedom and dignity of the human body and spirit.

*Fourth*, yet another reason that we have come to this seeming social impasse is that historically we have beamed our evangelistic approach to the upper-lower and lower-middle class of citizens, the very segment that the President calls the "silent majority." Since most white church members come from this group, and since this is the white segment most threatened (in their jobs and in their neighborhoods) by the mobility of the Negro, we should not be too surprised that many white Adventists adore Barry Goldwater, praise George Wallace, hire Paul Harvey, believe David Lawrence, subscribe to the *U. S. News and World Report*, vote for Richard Nixon, cheer for Spiro Agnew, hate the Supreme Court, ascribe all liberal legislation to some sinister Kremlin plot within our midst, and persist in thinking that Martin Luther King, Jr., was a Communist.

Of course, the strongest deterrent, other than a misuse of the Bible ("Be ye not unequally yoked together") is a misapplication of Ellen White's statement referred to. In fairness it must be said, however, that our brethren in the General Conference have tried in several ways during the past few years to correct this misunderstanding. But education takes time.

*Fifth*, a further factor that must be taken into account is political expediency. Many white leaders do have understanding and conviction but refuse to act because they fear loss of prestige, loss of finance, loss of status, and even loss of job. The result is an unfortunate vacuum of leadership which leaves white lay members locked in their deep, dark prejudices.

### III

Yes, there is a better way! But, no, obviously we are not ready for it. There is something more basic to be taken into account when we talk about what makes fellowship between the races so difficult, something that Ellen White said she feared would "ever remain a most perplexing problem" — the thoroughly ingrained myth of racial superiority. This myth, which grew so during two hundred years of slavery and ninety years of "separate but equal" coexistence, has produced two pervasive and binding effects.

*First*, white society — not all, but the mass of the population — has written off black America as inferior, cursed, and afflicted by God and nature. This is how the white slaveowners could say that not all men are created equal and could then hold men in slavery. Obviously God meant only all white men.

*Second*, the black man was forced to ascribe beauty and success to white features and a white culture, which by heredity and environment he was never to have. How unfair for the flat-nosed, kinky-haired African, to say that beauty is angular features, flossy locks, and fair skin. But the blacks believed it and even developed a color caste within their own ranks. Not until Stokely Carmichael did we dare to believe that black could also be beautiful. I am saying that the results of this philosophy of racial supremacy are still with us — black and white. Uncle Tom may be dead, but we still have some Brother Thomases around. The dangerous man now, however, is the "Oreo Negro" who, like the cookie by the same name, is black all over but white inside.

The acid test for the *white* man is what he thinks of his black brother, and the crucial question is his attitude toward intermarriage. If my white brother tells me that intermarriage is risky because society is basically against it, I will agree. But if my white brother tells me that intermarriage is wrong because God is basically against it, then I must question the depth of his understanding, if not the sincerity of his relationship.

The acid test for the *black* man, his social Gethsemane, is what he thinks of himself. He has passed the test only when he can say in the paraphrased words of Henry Coleman, "I thank an all-wise Creator of this immutable fact that the bulge of my lips and the texture of my hair and the color of my skin need not be inevitable tokens of my disgrace, but that that hair can cover a brain as keen and that skin a heart as pure as that which beats within any Saxon's breast, and that these marks of my identity can become my badges of honor, symbols of a race that has attained a culture in 105 years that it took the white man 300 years to acquire."

Because of the foregoing reasons, black Adventism was organized in 1944 into separate local jurisdictions with black leaders. What has happened since then in terms of growth, employment, and incentive to black youth well justifies that move.

It took blacks one whole century, from 1844 to 1944, to reach a membership of 9,000. In the quarter of a century since black conferences were organized, we have rocketed from 9,000 to over 70,000. While the church has grown at the rate of 75 percent during this time, including the black

work, the black conferences themselves have grown at the rate of 125 percent. During this time we have gone from 3 percent of the United States membership to 18 percent.

Now suddenly the local conferences have become formidable forces, numerically and financially, within their union conference territories, and we are brought face to face with a crisis of relations akin to that of twenty-five years ago. The burning question then was whether or not our churches had grown sufficiently in size and number and need to warrant separate conferences. Conferences are now so well developed in size and need as to require the specialized supervision of black leadership. Is the cultural gap so wide and our leadership and personnel needs so indigenous to our blackness that our work will be further enhanced by eliminating all white administrative direction between us and the General Conference? In other words, what about black union conferences?

Idealism says, "No. Stick with the present structure; things are bound to get better."

Realism says, "Yes. In the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his poem *The Chambered Nautilus*, it is time to leave this outgrown shell, to build thee more stately mansions, O my soul."

Patience says, "Maybe tomorrow it will change."

Pragmatism asks, "Is not today the tomorrow you looked for yesterday?"

Prudence pleads, "Wait. If the government could break down Little Rock and hundreds of school systems North and South, surely our brethren will yield."

Practicality reminds us that the government had bayonets and threats of withholding funds as two very effective means of persuasion but that neither of these means is available or ethical in our polite Christian communion.

#### IV

And so we have come to the crossroads. We have reached an emotional and tactical crisis. I do not know how the logistics of this tactical problem will be solved. But one thing is certain. Things will never be the same.

It would seem that our leaders must make one of three decisions.

*First*, the General Conference can act swiftly and massively on an organized timetable to implement and enforce, suffering local autonomy if necessary, our announced position on desegregation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church — so much, in fact, that black and white conferences will eventually be completely merged. Such a program, if implemented in stages and begun immediately, would produce a minimum of shock and

trauma and allow for increased association and fellowship among the leaders and members of both races. Without this interaction we can never really know and understand one another.

*Second*, the church can admit its unreadiness or inability to create and achieve the quality of brotherhood we need. It can concede its unfamiliarity with distinctly black problems, such as the ghetto, and decide that under the circumstances it will be best to let black leadership handle its own money, organize its own programs, select its own leaders — in short, “do its own thing.”

*Third*, the church can refuse to do either and hope that the problems will somehow solve themselves.

To do the first, to inaugurate a massive program to desegregate and merge, would be working toward the ideal. To do the second, to organize the black work into separate unions, would be natural and practical if the former is not now possible. To do neither, but simply to cast anchor and hope for day, would be catastrophic.

For the forces that made Rosa Parks sit in the front of the bus, that made young students face “Bull” Connor and his dogs, that sent Thurgood Marshall to the Supreme Court, Carl Stokes to the mayorship of Cleveland, and King to his grave are abroad — not only in the land but also in the church. Business will never be the same.

We are not bitter. But we have discovered that while our white brother was telling us to go back home and raise our ingathering and to pray, he was busy building beautiful churches for his people, well equipped schools for his children, and first-class homes for his family. And then, while we were suffering materially because of the economic deprivation inherent in the American capitalistic system, the few whites and blacks who sensed the inequities were encouraged not to rock the boat. Thus many a black saint who was faithful in his offerings — investment, birthday, missions, week of sacrifice, thirteenth Sabbath, famine relief, Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, and Loma Linda University — has been buried from a third-class ramshackle church. And many a black young person has left the church because both black leaders and white leaders were more concerned about foreign missions by proxy than they were about the poor at hand.

Now we do not claim that black union conferences will solve all black problems; in fact, this *administrative* accommodation must be accompanied by special *financial* accommodation if we are to succeed. As for union conferences, we realize that our knowledge of all their operations is still somewhat incomplete.

But we blacks have peeked in through the windows of apprenticeship and know enough about the processes. We have grasped the rules sufficiently — the printed ones, the “you understand” kind, the firm ones, and the ones that can be changed when the administration desires to do so — to go into business for ourselves. We have discovered how to use the kid gloves of diplomacy and have learned to read the complex blueprint of structural organization. We have located the loopholes of policy and have marked the trapdoors of failure. We have practiced and memorized the shibboleths of administrative success. And as children say in the game they play, it’s “ready or not, here we come.”

There are two forces with which we must reckon, the support of which we will need if union conferences are to be a reality.

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The first is the support of the white leadership. Actually, not too much persuasion should be needed. It is a paradox of note that our white brethren seem surprisingly willing to let black union conferences come about. It would appear that white leaders, like Pharaoh, would be greatly relieved if we would pack up our sensitive, restless militancy and take our own private route to the Promised Land.

The second — and much more formidable — force is the attitude of the black laity. For in spite of their concern about inequities, black leaders have some legitimate skepticism about further separation and would be at no small disadvantage in discussing with our lay members the dirty linen of discrimination within Adventism. Such a discussion could be very disconcerting and unsettling and would have to be handled delicately and skillfully.

We would have to remind both the lay people and ourselves that not all of our white Adventist brethren are prejudiced or afraid. It is easy in the excitement of a revolution to generalize about the ruling class. But I will say that my travels around the Southern Union Conference have acquainted me with some white workers and laymen who are genuinely concerned. I have met them at youth camps in Tennessee, at campmeetings in Florida, at teacher conventions in Georgia, on campuses in California, in churches in Michigan, at worker retreats in New York, and within the halls of our church headquarters in Washington, D. C.

## V

As we stand on the threshold of what seem to be such momentous events, let us resolve to dedicate ourselves to some very clear-cut rules of operation.

*Rule Number One.* Let us refrain from the temptation to mark certain

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brethren for political criticism because they are not so aggressive as we are on these issues. Some men may not want to alter structure; some may want to, but not so fervently as others; some may feel there is no other way. In any event, we must try to avoid polarization of our own ranks. If and when black unions do come about, there must be no vindictiveness nor petty reprisals. Frankly, I would rather be on the tugboat of integration chugging slowly upstream toward the Promised Land than on the sleek new battleship *Black Union* witnessing political purges, verbal homicide, and structural genocide among ambitious, glory-seeking, so-called "soul brothers."

*Rule Number Two.* Let us remember that one of the pitfalls of revolution is loss of respect, by the revolutionists themselves, for all leadership. We may be justified in engaging in honest debate with leaders; we may be justified in attacking the myth of human infallibility; we may be justified in saying that the present structure is not sacrosanct. But, in fighting inequities and seeking to better the structure, if we also lose respect for office, rank, tenure of service, and experience, we are setting the stage for frustration and anarchy. Since the real reason for black union conferences is to facilitate the work in black communities, the vehicle which we fashion for this purpose must have a responsible and respected chain of command. Let us not be guilty, therefore, of throwing out the organizational baby with the structural wash.

*Rule Number Three.* Let us concede that, as well as things have gone, we might have done better. Three hundred years of cultural deprivation have left their mark. We are still weak in spots. We must conquer our penchant for lateness, inattention to details, and lack of long-range planning — a result of our manana complex, no doubt. Let us handle campmeetings, tent meetings, church services, departmental reports, business meetings, board meetings, and personal affairs with greater dispatch, accuracy, and punctuality. We must be no less concerned about *quality* of operation than we are about *quantity* of growth.

*Rule Number Four.* Let us determine that black union conferences will not be exclusive but, rather, clear-cut models of brotherhood in which our white brethren may also enjoy the privileges of membership and structural authority. Let us show them how it is done. . . . And, finally —

*Rule Number Five.* Let us remember that black union conferences, if they do come about, will be but the ultimate form of a structural separation necessitated by circumstances which we hope will change eventually and that their presence is a vivid reminder of a great weakness — a weakness not of principle but of practice within our church.

When Hannibal, perhaps the best known of all black militarists, was called upon to lead the Carthaginians in battle against Italy, he performed one of the most stunning feats of warfare by spurning the popular route to Rome, the French Riviera, where he knew his progress would be fraught with premature battles and probable defeat before he even reached Italy. Instead, he crossed over the rugged, seemingly impassable Alps on a march of fifteen days. He encountered ambush by hostile tribes, storms, landslides, and near starvation, all of which ate away his forces, reduced his already inferior numbers, and made his mission highly improbable.

But, then, in the spring of 218 B.C., finally he emerged from the forests and stood with his troops on a plateau, the kind that the Greeks called an acropolis, overlooking the valley of the Po. Rallying his forces about him, Hannibal pointed to the shoreline of Italy in the distance and said, "Gentlemen, you have done well. You have fought hard. I am proud of you. Carthage is proud of you. But we must prepare for the real struggle. Here we stand upon the acropolis. Yonder lies Rome."

It has not been easy, but today we blacks have emerged from the shadows of history to an emotional and structural acropolis. However, it is clear that we have not reached our destination. Yonder lies the holy city. And we must fight on for the conquest in our day.

We blacks do not choose to march on a separate, parallel path to victory. But if we are forced to, let us strive valiantly until God, by whatever circumstance necessary, brings us to that dramatic confluence of social interaction wherein we can join hands with our brethren and, with complete togetherness, move on to capture our prize. Let our faith be strong, our motives pure, our expectations great, our determination unbending. With justice toward all, and malice toward none, let us advance this our grand cause until God shows us a better way.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 This article is based on an address delivered on the occasion of the South Central Conference annual banquet December 16, 1969.
- 2 ELLEN G. WHITE, *Testimonies for the Church* (volume nine of nine volumes. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1902), pp. 206-207.
- 3 Matthew 24:14: And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
- 4 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., in his speech, I Have a Dream, given at Washington, D. C., in 1963.
- 5 WHITE, *ibid.*, p. 214.



## Commitment vs. Capitulation

FRANK W. HALE, JR.

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The crucial challenge to Adventism in race relations is posed by the contradiction between its rhetorical commitment to fellowship without racial barriers, on the one hand, and the racial inequities which are typical of most of its own life as a church, on the other. The challenge is to discover ways of bridging the gap between the present realities and the normative commitment.

The idea of strategy and planned social change is one that is increasingly commanding the attention of social scientists. With an ethical commitment not alien to that of devoted churchmen, many of them are attempting to relate the growing wealth of knowledge contributed by the social sciences to the specific problems of modern times. In planning strategies for social change they have thus sought to implement values with the greatest possible intelligence. In like manner, the black leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is responding to an overwhelming concern and need.

I believe that any strategy within the church must give careful attention to the appropriateness of its objectives and to its ethical presuppositions. Let me inject right here that I hope no one will get "hung up" or defensive about the word *strategy*, which I use from time to time. It is a perfectly *good* word with significant meaning. It is not foreign to any member of officialdom. Its use as a tool is fully defensible as we view the precedent of its high regard among all levels of leadership within the church. Lest we lend ambiguity to the term itself, however, let me explain. *Strategy* may be understood as the general enlargement and organization of the capacity to achieve a chosen objective in the most effective way. *Tactics*, on the other hand, is the use that is made of strategy in the immediate situation by persons having a grasp of immediate problems and opportunities.

The direction of this paper is discussion of (1) the major racial problems confronting us today and (2) the limitations and possibilities inherent in the Christian philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## I

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The question of how our church can best meet the needs of its black constituents and black prospective converts in the face of the growing racial unrest in America is one that needs to be asked urgently and repeatedly. Daily we are brought face to face with evidences of the mounting frustration of the black masses crying out for the power to be free. These current cries are hostile, unsophisticated, uncouth, and unnerving. They testify to a gripping sense of revolt, revulsion, and resignation. A walk through the bleak tenements — or, perhaps better, a stay there for a few days for the “uninitiated” — would provide an unforgettable reminder that some in America are disinherited from the day of their birth.<sup>1</sup>

As leaders, we must carefully avoid too harsh a judgment of those who raise their voices to champion a cause that would disrupt the status quo within the church. Perhaps, like their political and social counterparts, they herald a gospel demanding that the church use its abundant resources to serve the well-being of those whose real problems have too long gone unsolved.

It is not enough to answer that “integration” is the solution. For it is precisely the nature of the operation, or the lack of opportunity under some forms of integration, that is being challenged. After all, historically the black church was created as a result of the refusal of certain imaginative blacks to submit to the indignities of a false kind of integration in which all power was in the hands of white people.

There are those who say “tread softly” lest we endanger the gains already made. Well, maybe we need to learn how to define “gains.” The fact of the matter is, too often we are tempted to accept stated policy for practice. Resolutions are not worth the paper they are written on if they are not implemented. Since the Supreme Court decision of 1954, it is commonly known, *de facto* segregation in every major city in our land has increased, unemployment among blacks has gone up, and the gap has constantly widened between the incomes of nonwhites and whites.

In short, therefore, integration on paper is one thing, but a more nearly equal sharing of opportunity and participation is quite another thing. And this is precisely what is required as a precondition to appropriate human interaction. So let's not get hung up on the tactics of the militants who em-

barrass and chagrin us with their methodology. Since they have appealed for a more honest kind of integration — one that increases rather than decreases the capacity of the minority member — they are saying that integration as it is now practiced is not meaningful.

The church, like the government, has taken a formal stand in its approach to human relations. The General Conference actions of 1961 and 1965 represent our most complete statements on the subject. A series of articles on the general subject of human relations appeared in the *Review and Herald* in 1966,<sup>2</sup> and the 1967 edition of the Church Manual carried a section entitled "No Wall of Partition."

These statements, "woven around the many and stirring counsels" of Ellen White, indicate that some leaders have made an earnest effort to provide at least some moral guidelines for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this most important area of race relations. But let me hasten to add that resolutions alone are *not enough*. Have these resolutions been sufficient to provide the proper balance and interaction in the field of race relations?

## II

Now to the issue — to support or not to support the proposal of *black union conferences* in the church organizational system.

Certain facts ought to be understood at the outset of such a discussion.

It would have to be understood that the organization of black union conferences would be officially determined on the basis of race and would result in segregation at every connectional level of the church below the union conference staff.

It would be incorrect, for two reasons, to assert that the existence of black union conferences would require complete segregation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the first place, a number of states have never been included within the regional conference framework and therefore might not be included in the boundaries of those regional conferences that would comprise black unions. In the second place, the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not specify that any person may be denied membership in any local church fellowship because of his race. Constitutionally, a black union conference would be defined by its regional churches and conferences, not by any provision requiring all black Seventh-day Adventists to belong.

But now it is time for all of us to stop playing church and to start living like we are the "royal and chosen priesthood" that we say we are. Too often

we stir our constituents into a distorted view of God's concern for them here and now by promoting a total view of his relevance for their lives in terms of the "other world" in the distant by-and-by. And too often we have apologized for exerting group pressure when we seek to relieve the oppression among us. This apologetic attitude must go. We dare not apologize for exerting group pressure, for we have been oppressed as a group, despite our individual qualifications.

We cannot recover the past. But, within the limits set by nature and history and our intelligence and resolution, we can make the future. We make the future either by default or on purpose. Since we help to make the future in any case, it is better to make it, not by letting things ride, but by having some idea of where things ought to go and doing whatever is possible to make them go in that direction.

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As a church, we are plagued by the critical gap that exists between the nature of our witness and the caliber of our actions. Nowhere does this gap yawn more dangerously than when we try to face, or try not to face, the question of our living as brothers, black and white, within our own churches. The not-too-remote analogy between the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization and the American political organization, from local to national levels, is inescapable. At virtually every point where there are obstacles to desegregation within the church, one sees a parallel to familiar obstacles which he has encountered in the fabric of his own community.

The opportunity for leadership holds out the buoyant hope that solving the problem within the ranks of Adventism may point the way toward elimination of the nation's most corrosive social illness and toward a more healthy state of the national conscience.

Because of the many, many inequities that are apparent, we have opened the floodgates on ourselves. In short, the patterns of racism are so obvious in so many areas of church life and thought that many black Seventh-day Adventists are losing confidence in the commitments of the church to healthy human relations. Many black Seventh-day Adventists feel that the overt and covert support of a substantial number of white Adventists given to the philosophies projected by such men as Eric Hoffer, David Lawrence, and Paul Harvey make racism endemic to the Adventist way of life.

Consequently, the philosophy of separatism is gaining within our church as it has in secular circles. When we must admit to ourselves that we do not have the spiritual courage to come to grips with the problems that make mockery of our faith, then we may be admitting that our faith is a mockery.

### III

*To my white brothers*, let me say that too long you have equivocated. The pattern of your response has been only to yield under pressure. Where are your hearts? Where are your consciences? Where are your souls? Have not yet the scales fallen from your eyes to see, from your minds to know, and from your hearts to experience that what blacks request is no more than you expect — as individuals, as churches, as local conferences, as union conferences, as committees, and as boards — for yourselves?

It may have been important for you to yield to the support of church opinion, or black protest sentiment, or the ideals of the American creed in the past, but of even more importance should have been your yielding to "thus saith the Lord." There are few biblical scholars who do not admit that the Bible does indeed talk about a *unity* that is incarnate, that must become tangible and find expression within this world. The language used by Paul to describe the church seems to support this position fully. In at least twelve separate passages he uses the analogy of a physical body to describe the church, usually with the members of the church represented by the working parts of the body.<sup>3</sup>

Now, a church is not an association of those Christians who happen to like each other and who can therefore set their own exclusive rules. When that happens, the church has not simply omitted a moral implication of the gospel — it has allowed a fundamental question to arise as to whether it belongs to the church of Jesus Christ. Trying to solve the race question by asking where people "feel at home" is no good. The church is not our club. It is God's holy instrument in which we have been permitted a place — but a place which has room only for God's task, and no room for our conditions and preferences.

For the church to turn its back on its most fundamental religious teaching — the "great commandment" of loving one another, however one may disguise the rhetoric to avoid admitting it — would seem a repudiation of the basic reason for the existence of the church. Without real integrity with respect to the basic religious purpose of the church, it is questionable whether such a religious institution can long endure! Certainly its moral and religious leadership would be greatly weakened.

Have we come to the point where, in these final hours of earth's history, we must admit to ourselves and to the world that in all things physical we shall be as the fingers are to the hand, but in all things philosophical we shall be one, as the hand is to the fingers? I believe that viewpoint is just as untenable today as was Booker T. Washington's position in 1895.

*To my black brothers* who fight the issue by supporting the idea of organizing black union conferences, let me say that I support the spirit of your concern for an effective program that will give our black brothers and sisters what they rightly deserve. We are in a black revolution in this country, and it's real. For the most part, I think that many of us would agree that the aims of the black revolution are quite legitimate.

The caution that must be observed, however, is in the area of strategies and tactics, for our cause is not secular but spiritual. There is a fine line in many instances, we would agree, but Christians have never endorsed the philosophy that the end justifies the means. In other words, we must be careful that our motives are correct. If we would overcome our obstacles, it can still be true today that "my strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure."

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The concept of black power and black revolution did not begin in the summer of 1966 with the desperate and anguished cry of those who participated in the James Meredith march for voter registration in Mississippi. It began in those early days on the plantation in the hearts of the oppressed who sang, "Before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave." The black revolution was in process when Frederick Douglass, that great black statesman, declared, "Our purpose here is neither to beg nor to borrow, but to state the determination of black men in America to exact from this nation not one whit less than our full manhood rights." In other words, the black revolution of today is building on a foundation that has already been laid.

I say that NAACP, CORE, SNCC, SCLC, the Muslims, and many others have contributed toward the gains, small or great, that have been made. It is a ridiculous affront to the mission and martyrdom of Martin Luther King to assess his program as having been visionary. I know that I for one am not too old to remember Jim Crow trains, buses, waiting rooms, and rest rooms; black and white water fountains; closed doors at hotels, motels, restaurants, and a whole bag of "black magic" — all designed to "keep us in our place." Perhaps those gains were small ones, but they were gains, nevertheless. Someone had to stick his neck out, and King did just that.

And so today, as in yesteryear, there is a small but determined cadre of black men and women who are dedicating their energies, and in many cases their lives, to the unfinished task of liberating black people from the psychological, cultural, social, and economic shackles that have rendered them powerless for centuries.

They are concerned with shattering the old icons of whiteness and rightness, of white sheep and black sheep, of white purity and black decadence —

with validating in the minds of black people regenerative black images and black models and a black perspective on the world. It is a just cause waged against the debilitating cycle of hope and despair that has characterized black life on this continent for four hundred years. Their task is monumental, and it is not made easier by the diversionary tactics of the game-players. It is imperative that the black community know the difference between the committed and the comedians.

#### IV

We cannot yield to the temptation of using secular means to accomplish spiritual ends. It is time for black and white brothers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to accept the commitment of *brotherhood* seriously. Let us implement our bold declarations. Let us admit the sins that have separated us. Let us rectify the inequities, and let us begin now. If we are not prepared to do so, then the establishment of black union conferences will forever haunt us for what we are — weak, vacillating, and unprincipled.

Therefore, I would urge our brothers, *black and white*, to accept these reforms immediately:

1. That the union conferences establish an equitable and uniform policy for the adjustment of departmental positions and committee and board assignments so as to reflect balanced black participation.
2. That the union conferences adopt a uniform and simplified procedure for transferring black ministers across local conference lines for pulpit assignments to white churches.
3. That economic sanctions be initiated against those church organizations that refuse to support the authority of the church in matters of race relations, since the church has never strictly supported the policy of "local autonomy."
4. That the church achieve racial parity in employment of blacks and whites, particularly in the educational, medical, and publishing fields.
5. That the church promptly appoint more blacks to union conference departmental positions and establish such guidelines as will enable these blacks to participate on a regular basis, so that they will be invited to serve the needs of the conferences and the churches (black and white) within the union.
6. That black representatives be appointed immediately on the General Conference level to serve in departments not now having black representation (as the Education, the Lay Activities, the Medical, and the Young People's Missionary Volunteer departments).

7. That a sum of \$5,500,000 be allocated for the black Seventh-day Adventists as restitution for the extent to which they and their ancestors were and have been robbed of their time, health, energies, and manhood and deprived of their education by this nation. The distribution of these funds should be apportioned as they are included in items 8 to 17 (following):

8. That a fund of \$2,000,000 be created to offer financial assistance to worthy black students who would be encouraged to engage in church employment on the completion of their college education.

9. That a fund of \$1,000,000 be established to offer financial assistance to those seeking aid to pursue their education on graduate or professional levels and that special attention be given to the needs of those going into medical and paramedical fields.

10. That \$1,000,000 be allocated to the regional conferences to stabilize their economic base.

11. That a reduction of seven percent in tithe percentages for the regional union conferences be granted.

12. That the Inner City Fund be increased from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

13. That a fund of \$250,000 be established to support black students who engage in the Student Missionary Program to promote an interest among black youth for future foreign service.

14. That a fund of \$250,000 be established to assist those black teachers already engaged in Seventh-day Adventist Church employment to pursue advanced study.

15. That the General Conference appropriate \$50,000 annually over the next five years in scholarship assistance to white students who would be recruited as students for Oakwood College, so as to frustrate the pattern that would suggest that Oakwood College is a segregated institution.

16. That a \$50,000 operating supplement be provided annually above the normal operating base increase to Oakwood College for five years to provide for a cushion that would meet the demands of any emergency that would arise.

17. That a \$25,000 operating appropriation be granted annually to Pine Forge Academy over the next ten years, so as to stabilize its economic base.

18. That a \$25,000 operating supplement be provided annually above the normal operating base increase to Riverside Hospital for five years to provide for a cushion to meet the demands of any emergency that would arise.



What is the rationale for making such requests? Seventy-four years ago, in 1896, Ellen White said that the black people are due a debt of love, and that God has ordained that restitution should be made. This is our great opportunity as a church today.

Where do we go from here? If our hearts are right, we must plan an effective strategy for racial desegregation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On each church level considered, effective strategy will require a variety of actions that are interactive and mutually supportive. Included should be strategies (1) emphasizing the changing of attitudes and (2) emphasizing direct changes of social patterns and institutions through active intervention.

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There is no valid ethical ground for categorical insistence on restricting strategy to techniques of "persuasion" and "education" in the removal of racial barriers in the church, notwithstanding the common assertions to the contrary. The very existence of such barriers is not ethical, and the racial composition of the membership and basis for participation in the church is not properly a matter requiring the consent of persons in the church.

The implied commitment to unity and harmony *above all else* has dangers. Too often the majority have yielded their convictions on race relations to the demand for unity and harmony, with the result that hardcore segregationists are able to define the nature of the unity. In short, efforts to change the status quo are interpreted as disruption of fellowship rather than as desirable creative innovation in harmony with the basic values of the church.

Those who have witnessed our avoidance of a serious program toward desegregation within the church claim that we have been deceptive and dishonest. Some have given up in despair to the point of rejecting the principle of an interracial community of brethren. Some among us wish to organize black union conferences. But others of us feel that we must caution against attempting to obliterate the trace of racial shame that might be lurking in our souls by embracing a kind of racial chauvinism — as if in reply to past exclusions (and often in response to present conditions) we will create our own patterns of exclusiveness.

*Where do we go from here?*

It is time now to have a dramatic confrontation with our consciences (with the Spirit of God within us) to the extent that God will work a revolution — not of rhetoric, but of righteousness (right doing) among us,

designed to enhance the achievement of a progressive Christian fellowship rather than a distorted racial isolationism born of the deluded wish to skirt scriptural injunctions for the sake of unity, harmony, self-determination, "advancing the cause," or whatever reason.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 LOUIS E. LOMAX, *To Kill a Black Man* (Los Angeles: Holloway House Publishing Company n.d.), pp. 162-163. (Read of Martin Luther King's Chicago experience.)
- 2 ELLEN G. WHITE, The Bible Provides Guiding Principles in Race Relations, *Review and Herald*, March 24 and 31, 1966.
- 3 See Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 10:16; Ephesians 1:23, 2:16, 3:6, 4:4, 4:12, 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19, 3:14; John 17 (stressing the unity of Christians).

## Regional Union Conferences

E. EARL CLEVELAND

41

The ghetto is girding for survival. The present political administration has closed the Job Corps; cut the budget of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; paralyzed the Office of Economic Opportunity; and openly encouraged those who would defy the Supreme Court timetable for school desegregation. The Department of Justice assaults the Black Panther party but simultaneously tolerates such white groups as the Minutemen, the Vigilantes, and the Ku Klux Klan. The McCarran Act has provided for concentration camps in the United States for the incarceration of black militants and has envisioned the encirclement and immobilization of ghetto areas in emergency situations.

Since the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert F. Kennedy, hope has well-nigh died that this country will ever accord the Negro all of the privileges guaranteed him under the Constitution, and a new mood has emerged that will surely affect every aspect of life in the ghetto. Black control of every institution in the ghetto is the immediate goal.

In these circumstances the organization of "regional" (black) union conferences is crucial to the survival of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an effective force among blacks. Perhaps one question as to the advisability of this step will inevitably be raised first: What about integration as a preferable solution?

We must avoid the trap of attempting ideological consistency when the problems to be solved are characterized by inconsistency. Let me explain. Total integration means assimilation and dispersion — the ultimate disappearance of the minority. Absolute rule by the majority is safe only when the majority acts with a degree of wisdom and justice clearly not now existing. (Only Christ can claim these attributes absolutely.) Total inte-

gration under imperfect circumstances, therefore, is not desirable to most blacks — in or out of the church.

## I

What, then, would be the effect if meaningful integration were to take place here and now?

42 If instituted immediately, integration would greatly disadvantage the minority. In education, most black teachers would be "consolidated" out of their jobs. Most Negro students would be "consolidated" out to public schools. Only white pastors would be acceptable to whites. To use the Los Angeles Fifty-fourth Street Church as an example, with the assumption of a one-man-one-vote formula — blacks would rarely attain church office, and then at the discretion of the majority, and the benefit of such officeholders to the minority would be doubtful, since their continuance in office would depend on their maintaining the favor of the majority. Developments in the large ghetto areas, especially of the North, Midwest, and West, in terms of the polarization of racial attitudes, make it impossible for white administrators to administer, appreciate, or anticipate the needs of the exploding black society.

Integration leads to the dissipation of the minority's power of collective action; hence, the majority controls the minority. Segregation, on the other hand, means overt denial of human privilege; hence, the majority controls the minority. Both integration and segregation mean death to minority power of action — or at best a form of benign paternalism.

The answer seems to lie between: (1) black control of their own affairs at the local and union conference levels but (2) integration of all departments, boards, and institutions that affect the work of the church. White-controlled union conferences would be expected to retain their black personnel and to maintain an "open door" hiring policy. Conversely, black-controlled union conferences should open their doors for white participation.

## II

Many whites view regional union conferences as a form of separatism and call for their abolition at every opportunity. By the same reasoning, why not abolish white conferences and affiliate them with existing regional units? The fact is that *neither* need be abolished; throwing open the door to full participation by all races on the basis of merit avoids separatism. But since even this decision is subject to the will of the electorate, and since the

ratio is one to seven, the minority is still out in the cold. Exclusion is the necessary mechanism for separatism. An organization, therefore, may be all white or all black and not be separatist.

The Jews have given us the only example in history of minority survival. Their formula is simple: the Jews control their community and stick together at that level. In every country where there are sizable numbers, this is their practice.

Eighteen thousand black people are absorbed by the white race each year. This is possible because in physical appearance their negritude is difficult to detect. But for most of us highly visible brothers, survival outside the church and progress inside require collective action at the community level, and the integration of all institutions and levels of government meaningful to life in the community.

My visits to South America and many other parts of the world convinced me that control of union conference organizations by indigenous leaders does not lessen the fervor with which they love their white brothers nor their faithfulness in the prosecution of the work of the church. Rather, it forms what Ellen White calls a "unity of diversity" which has strengthened the church work.

I saw Brazilians manning the Brazil union conferences and Argentines manning Argentine union conferences. There is a Jamaican in charge of the West Indies Union Conference. Caucasians who visit in all these areas where the work of the church is literally exploding know that nowhere else in the world are they better treated or more warmly received, loved, and appreciated. Local governments in other parts of the world are now demanding that their own nationals in Adventist churches be given these seats of responsibility. Thank God that this practice has been accelerated in recent years. Doubtless we shall learn that we have lost nothing by trusting those who know their people best to administer the affairs that directly concern them.

Ellen White suggested that Negroes should be trained to work for their own people and that whites should be trained to work for theirs, but that there should be no exclusion of whites or blacks from those units of organization operated by both.

### III

In my opinion, the time has come for the organization of regional union conferences for the following reasons:

1. There are sixty-one conferences in North America. Eight of them are

administered by Negroes. This means that when a president's term of office ends, there are only seven other places where he might possibly be invited. This situation can contribute to stagnation of leadership, for, with so few opportunities elsewhere, each man has to hold on where he is. White presidents have no such problem. With fifty-three places to go instead of eight, the advantage is obvious. The organization of regional union conferences would provide a natural outlet for men who have gained experience to move to a new level of church government and would make possible frequent changes in leadership, which, as the church has learned from experience, is indeed wholesome for the whole body. To its everlasting credit, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has had a program of training its leaders educationally, and in any organization the merit system is a key factor in morale.

2. There are certain pressing priority needs that demand the collective attention of all regional union conferences. Under the present arrangement, it is virtually impossible to secure unanimous action and secure inter-union cooperation between blacks in projects that are literally crying for attention. To be specific: in terms of capital improvement, there are needs in education that are becoming a disgrace to the church. A union conference organization would have the power to gain attention for these needs, because the resources of several conferences could be brought to bear on a given project without the organizational tension that might come from inter-union contacts.

3. Since union conference presidents exercise controlling voices in the affairs of the church, especially in North America, it is imperative that black men have someone at the union conference level to speak for them. Since the ratio of black to white in North America in the church stands at one black to every seven whites, the chance of the election of a black man to the presidency of a union conference is remote, to say the least. If it is wrong for black men to feel themselves entitled to presidency positions, by the same token it is wrong for white men to hold such positions.

4. The church needs regional union conferences because the present structure cannot possibly give controlling power to blacks in their own areas, since the whites operate as majority "stockholders" — which means that the position of blacks in the Seventh-day Adventist Church would ever be that of assisting, or associating, adrift in a sea of white power.

One point needs to be made clear here. The request for black union conferences is not a prelude to a request for a separate General Conference organization. In the perilous days ahead, blacks and whites will always

need each other. I can envision joint (black and white) union conference gatherings where men will meet as equals. Such gatherings could be the means of more significant Christian fellowship, as has been the case at the conference level, if there is mutual good will. Whites must not consider themselves threatened by this new maturity. This is not rebellion. It is the natural consequence of growth. Let it be remembered that this attainment is not intended to be the dividing of the church. It is the one means by which blacks and whites can "press together" as equals.

Although the church must *never* forsake its commitment to world missions, the Negro must be free to establish priorities closer home. It is a fact that for all of the far-flung mission philanthropies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we, like the rest of the nation, have been slow in coming to the ghetto. Just here let me pay tribute to those white brothers who sense our needs, understand our language, and plead our cause. We are aware of the pressures that are sometimes consequences of their efforts. These white brothers are supported by prayers that they know not of. We blacks are embarrassed that they have to speak for us. If we are granted union conference organizations, we will speak for ourselves!

#### IV

Integration means one of three things, depending on who is talking:

1. Integration may mean total assimilation — dispersion through the body — intermarriage, interaction, and interpersonal relations. Race is forgotten! We blacks know that most of our white brothers don't want this. It may give them some comfort to know that most Negroes don't either. As Doctor King used to put it, "I don't want to be your brother-in-law, just your brother."

2. Integration may mean the establishment of a quota system all along the line — in churches, schools, and all church organization levels, the quota varying according to the pressures exerted by the minority, the good grace of the majority, or the direction the country is taking.

3. Integration may mean that the majority decides who the minority "representatives" among them shall be, using them to keep their fingers on the pulse of the minority. These are, in fact, representatives of the establishment.

The white minister isn't ready for integration in any but perhaps the third sense, and the white laity is even less ready. We are fooling ourselves if we think we're going to get anybody to try to force integration. Our white brothers know well that to begin a program of forcible integration would

jeopardize the financial security of the church and its success at its world mission. Therefore, they are left only the alternative of persuasion. This being true, we can expect no instant miracles! And further, while we refuse to start a revolution, we cannot wait for evolution.

The church regional conference organizations have anticipated the actions of the rest of the religious world. The Unitarians, who delighted themselves as a classless society, have organized a department for Negro affairs. This year the Catholics finally organized a black department within the hierarchy. (We were fifty years ahead of them.) The Methodists abolished their central jurisdiction and after a few years of "integration," in which blacks were consistently outvoted and outdone, the relationship is about to fall apart.

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We must combine the ideal with the pragmatic. In the language of our prophet, we must face the situation as it is. One need only visit a Sabbath service and see black men and women exercising fully the privileges of lay leadership to realize what a wise plan it would be to offer equal opportunity for each member of the human family to function to the full limits of his capacity. At the same time, equal opportunity knocks down walls of exclusion that would prevent the black from fellowshiping with his white brother.

It would seem philosophically sound, then, that we tailor our solution to the nature of the problem, namely, (1) that we integrate those institutions of church government that may indeed be integrated and (2) that we provide equal opportunity within the framework of one's own community relationship in those areas where resistance is strongest.

The record in eight conferences shows that with black men in control of their own business there has been an explosion in soulwinning and that financial support has skyrocketed and continued to rise. If this record is any indication, then the next step — the development of regional union conferences — can only make even more outstanding the results heretofore attained.



## Black Power and Christianity

EMORY J. TOLBERT

47

Young Stokely Carmichael revived the term *Black Power* in his now famous speech during the Montgomery March in the spring of 1966. The phrase had become strange to both black and white ears over the years of its disuse. Uncertain of its meaning, whites turned to trusted black spokesmen for a definition. Those black leaders who did not denounce Black Power out of hand set about the task of constructing a positive definition of the term.

At the height of nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights movement, many of the leaders were clergymen. Martin Luther King, Ralph D. Abernathy, and most of the other Southern Christian Leadership Conference spokesmen were ministers. Local black clergymen were among the first to be called on for aid in organizing voter registration drives and freedom marches throughout the South. The heavy involvement of clergymen gave the nonviolent phase of the Civil Rights Movement a distinctly religious orientation. Consequently, leaders demanded black equality as not only a constitutional guarantee but also a God-given right. Appeals to whites amounted to appeals to their sense of Christian obligation. And the methodology of the Movement was continually subjected to moral tests by those who realized that its public posture had to remain consistent with the rationale for its demands.

The blacks of the mid-1960s, however, were relearning a bitter lesson. Their faith in white institutions had been renewed by favorable Supreme Court decisions and a flood of new legislation. An apparently cooperative mood was in evidence among many whites, and the overt racism attributed to the Deep South seemed to be slipping out of favor. But the hostility which met civil rights demonstrators in Northern suburbs, coupled with unimproved conditions in the ghetto, began to create a different impression.

Ominous urgings by white "liberals" that blacks decrease their level of activism and "consolidate" their gains led many blacks to conclude that even the most sympathetic whites had not fully realized the pain of being black in America. And with the rediscovery of widespread white toleration of gradualism, black men — especially the impoverished ghetto dwellers — began to see their plight as essentially unchanged.

The stubborn core of the black man's problem in America is white racism. More specifically, the black man is faced with a society that refuses to define him as a human being. Furthermore, not only is he defined as a nonperson, but he is expected to respond as a nonperson. James Cone refers to this as an "existential absurdity." The absurdity is the black man, who must define himself as a human being, facing a world which insists that he respond as something he is not, a nonhuman.<sup>1</sup>

Black Power represents the reexamination by blacks of the problem of a subhuman identity. Hence the definition of Black Power. Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton state in their book *Black Power*: "Black people must redefine themselves, and only *they* can do that. Throughout this country, vast segments of the black communities are beginning to recognize the need to assert their own definitions, to reclaim their history; their culture; to create their own sense of community togetherness."<sup>2</sup>

Christians who were comparatively comfortable with the "suffer until the enemy feels it" philosophy which underpinned the nonviolent movement often find Black Power disturbing. Black Power and its advocates, therefore, are often doomed to fail the moral tests put to them, because we assume that their redefinitions conflict with ours. Granted, not everyone who shouts Black Power shares a philosophy consonant with that of the Christian. But it cannot be denied that Black Power, as a notion deemed important by millions of blacks, merits more consideration in the light of Christianity than the summary dismissal it has received from many of us.

Finding a position on Black Power that reflects the attitude of Seventh-day Adventists is difficult. Caught between a past influenced by the somewhat liberal racial views of abolitionists and a present dominated by the conservatism characteristic of institutions run by white middle-class Americans, the Adventist Church seems to adhere to a careful noncommitment on the weightier issues of race. Blacks today, however, are demanding commitment — not only to their right to live as citizens but also to their effort to secure a human definition. Each man, therefore, is either a party to the black man's oppression or an ally in his liberation.

Any institution whose posture on black liberation is unclear presents the

blacks in it with problems; and so it is with many Christian churches, including the Adventist Church. The black Christian's choice not to be *of* the world leaves him very much *in* it. And the almost constant state of rage that James Baldwin says characterizes the mood of the aware black tempts the black Adventist. Yet, the black is told that rancor is a detriment to his experience in Christ. And so he correctly labels white racism as "sin" and dismisses it as further evidence of Satan's chaotic presence.

This tidy device successfully wards off rage until the black Christian encounters that anomaly, the racist white "Christian." Now a new set of problems arises. The Adventist black's defense against the attitudes of racists outside the Fellowship of Christ was not designed to handle the "Christian" bigot, and he is once again as vulnerable as ever.

The racist in the church is a troublesome presence to all blacks, whether or not they choose to admit it. But that presence is far less frustrating than are the efforts to explain it away. Among Adventists one hears churchgoing racists characterized in many ways: (1) as neophyte Christians whose continued growth will lead them to accept all men; (2) as products of social custom whose notions about race are neither right nor wrong; (3) as staunch fundamentalists who perceive the newfangled doctrine of up-close interracial brotherhood as what it is: a ploy of Satan to prevent the preaching of the *real* message of Adventism; and (4) as high-strung persons whose quirks must be tolerated in the interest of harmony. Black people know rationalizations for racism when they hear them. And they also realize that persons who rationalize racism *are* racists.

In addition, blacks know that racist "Christians" are unconverted, and therefore are really not Christians at all. Efforts to sidestep that fact by using the hoary doubletalk of racism's tired apologists only aggravate the black's inner struggle with the rage born of oppression. And the rejected black who, after Benjamin Banneker, feels the "scorn and censure of the world" in turn often rejects the church as yet another once-trusted friend.

Those blacks who survive the painful crisis generated by signed-up white "Christians" and who remain in the church conjure up new mind-devices to keep faith alive. Most often these blacks place total reliance on the teachings of the church, as distinct from the human arguments of many of its white members, and on the just Deity of the Bible. They thereby effectively shut out the white who so often intrudes on their spiritual happiness, dismissing him as an unsavory experience.

This device is imperfect; the tragedy is that it is necessary in the first place. Black Americans who already confront a nation whose words to

blacks historically conflict with its deeds toward them should not have to grapple with the same contradictions in church. And this explains why the black-church and white-church phenomenon exists in most Christian churches, including the Adventist Church. The "racist Christian" is a contradiction of terms, and we both combat and accommodate him by creating two more contradictory terms: "black church" and "white church." The black Adventist church shields the black man from the disturbing presence of the racist "Christian;" the white Adventist church shields the racist from the threatening presence of the black human-being-Christian. And the situation rests uneasily on a maze of official and unofficial nonpolicies often explained in nonstatements by meticulously uncommitted persons.

The assumption that Black Power is an entirely political animal, and therefore not within the scope of church concern, is erroneous. One needs only to listen to the rhetoric of Black Power to understand that its thrust is also spiritual and, in a sense, moral.

Black Power, first of all, claims to be the enemy of white power. If white power, more commonly termed white supremacy, is to be judged by the number and condition of its victims, it is evil. This places Black Power at odds with evil, an evil which dehumanizes its victims. The assumption that Black Power is simply a euphemism for black supremacy does not agree with the definition its advocates give it. Black Power does not seek to undermine any human's status as a human being, as does white power. Rather, it challenges the white man's status as master.

Liberation is the major concern of Black Power. This liberation is not only physical, but spiritual. The redefinition of the black man alluded to earlier is a process with which Christians should identify. Aiding in the formulation of a subhuman definition of a human — which is what all racists do, regardless of their denominational affiliation — is murder. To counteract this is the appropriate work of Christians. But Christian churches have countenanced racism to the point of complicity. And one cannot help the black man reassert his humanity unless one believes in that humanity.

Unfettering the minds of tormented blacks (and whites) would certainly be the work of Christ. After all, with whom did Christ spend his life on earth? Those on the periphery of existence had him live among them. The good news he brought them spoke to their need for a human definition in a hostile world: they were sons of Deity.

Christian churches have not escaped the effort on the part of Black Power advocates to "blacken" all institutions that relate to black people. Today, institutions that do not reflect the culture and value system of the

black community are suspect. Therefore, Christians who desire to continue to speak to the black community must confront this mood.

There seems to be ample evidence that most of our interpretations and applications of Christianity are culturally derived. This fact has plagued the black man in America for centuries. Black men have accepted a Christianity that seems to tolerate their status as oppressed people defined by whites as subhuman. Albert Cleage calls this "slave Christianity," the version of Christianity that masters taught their chattel.<sup>3</sup> White masters selected from Scripture the concepts that they felt best supported their status as masters. Slaves, therefore, learned a Christianity convenient to white needs and consonant with the white man's definition of the black slave.

Were the black man today to continue to accept this slavemaster's subhuman definition, he would deny his most precious identity, that of a child of God. In its place he would be accepting a shabby substitute concocted by sick minds. To fulfill the white racist's concept of what he should be, the black man must become an "it;" this is what living at peace with racism demands. Blacks who countenance racism, consequently, must hate themselves; and this alone eliminates the possibility of a love relationship with anyone, black or white. Therefore, the prospect of accepting the presence of racism in any institution is immoral, as well as unattractive to blacks. Black men must confront white racism and expose it as evil. This is the love-act which is most relevant to oppressed blacks.

The surprising attribute of the new Black Power is its agreement in goals with much of what is traditional in Christianity. If the Christian church should seek to "make human life more human," as Joseph Hough asserts, its duty does not differ significantly from what the Black Power Movement is about.<sup>4</sup>

If Christ became man to suffer the anguish that accompanies our condition, cannot the church "become black" and suffer with those whose blackness brings down torment? Christianity deals with identity and with liberation and with suffering because Christ dealt with them. Christians who insist upon allying with racism have allowed a Black Power Movement similar in aim but different in name to preempt their opportunity to respond to Christ's life. And the black man's self-affirmation continues without them.

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- 1 JAMES H. CONE, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press 1969).
- 2 STOKELY CARMICHAEL and CHARLES V. HAMILTON, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House 1967), p. 37.
- 3 ALBERT B. CLEAGE, JR., *The Black Messiah* (New York: Sheed and Ward 1969), p. 43.
- 4 JOSEPH C. HOUGH, JR., *Black Power and White Protestants: A Christian Response to the New Negro Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press 1968), p. 146.

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## the testing

EDWIN MARKHAM, 1852-1940

When in the dim beginning of the years,  
God mixed in man the raptures and the tears  
And scattered through his brain the starry stuff,  
He said, "Behold! yet this is not enough,  
For I must test his spirit to make sure  
That he can dare the Vision and endure.

"I will withdraw my Face,  
Veil Me in shadow for a certain space,  
Leaving behind Me only a broken clue —  
A crevice where the glory shimmers through,  
Some whisper from the sky,  
Some footprint in the road to track Me by.

"I will leave man to make the fateful guess,  
Will leave him torn between the No and Yes,  
Leave him unresting till he rests in Me,  
Drawn upward by the choice that makes him free —  
Leave him in tragic loneliness to choose,  
With all in life to win or all to lose."

SPECTRUM

## A Christian Declaration ON RACE RELATIONS

### OUR COMMISSION

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*We are commissioned by the Holy Scriptures to witness to the Gospel's teaching that before God mankind is one.*

Mankind is one because God called men into being by one act of creation: God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth (Acts 17:26). God created man in His own image (Genesis 1:26).

Mankind is one because God saves men by one act of redemption: Christ has been lifted up, drawing all men to Himself (John 12:32) as members of one new humanity (Galatians 6:15). Christ has broken down all walls of separation (Ephesians 2:14) so that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free (Galatians 3:28).

Mankind is one because God offers men membership in one fellowship of the reconciled: Men may now experience interdependence and a common life as members of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4). Men may enjoy reconciliation with their brothers through membership in the household of God (Ephesians 2:19).

*We are commissioned by the prophetic passages which have always guided this religious movement to witness that before God mankind is one.*

"Walls of separation have been built up between the whites and the blacks. These walls of prejudice will tumble down when Christians obey the Word of God, which enjoins on them supreme love to their Maker and impartial love to their neighbors" (*Christian Service*, p. 217).

"Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God" (*Testimonies for the Church*, Volume VII, p. 225).

"In Christ Jesus we are one. By the utterance of one name, 'Our Father,' we are lifted to the same rank. We become members of the royal family,

children of the heavenly King. His principles of truth bind heart to heart, be they rich or poor, high or low" (*Review and Herald*, October 24, 1899).

"In our worship of God there will be no distinction between rich and poor, white and black. All prejudice will be melted away. When we approach God, it will be as one brotherhood" (*Review and Herald*, October 24, 1899).

#### OUR CONDITION

We recognize that from the beginning of history fear and hate, pride and suspicion, violence and oppression have set man against man, race against race, and brother against brother.

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We recognize that in our time and in our nation man's cruelty to his fellows has taken the particularly damaging form of racism, the practice of categorizing a person on the basis of his racial background alone.

We recognize that America's history includes a long record of injustice and violence that the white man has imposed on the black. Today we are reaping the bitter harvest of our past — a harvest of hate, suspicion, and renewed violence. Yet the same attitudes which led to the brutal oppression that our Adventist pioneers resisted in the 1850's and 1860's still persist in the minds of many Americans in the 1970's.

We recognize, further, that these attitudes are found not only outside the Church, in the world we seek to reach, but within the community of faith as well. In our own hearts are often found ignorance, mistrust, and condescension.

We recognize that prejudice, exploitation, and discrimination are sins. These sins both grind down the victim and scar the soul of the person guilty of them.

#### OUR CONFESSION

We confess our sins.

We confess that often we have been silent and insensitive when we might have uttered a prophetic witness.

We confess that often we have failed to display a reconciling and redemptive spirit when the opportunity has broken in upon us.

We confess that too often our religious organizations have not only fallen behind the Christian ideal but also behind some secular movements in opposing sinful injustice and oppression.

We confess our failure, and in prayer and penitence we pledge ourselves to work at all levels for the realization of the mind and life of Christ.



OUR COMMITMENT

*In our teaching and preaching*, we commit ourselves to specific tasks and goals intended to educate our membership in the area of human relations. We therefore urge:

1. That we seek to present more clearly the teachings of Scripture, trying in particular to correct misunderstandings about supposedly Biblical bases for discrimination.
2. That we prayerfully review the writings which record our beginnings as a movement, to inform ourselves of the courageous stands taken by our spiritual forefathers on racial issues.
3. That we help people to understand that differences among races serve to enhance unique cultural contributions and are in no way to be construed as indicators of inherent superiority or inferiority.
4. That we utilize available resources in coordinating seminars, workshops, and exchange programs aimed at bringing about understanding and interdependence among racial groups.

*In our formation of institutional policies*, we commit ourselves to specific tasks and goals in an attempt to foster racially inclusive practices. We therefore urge:

1. That each congregation of our Conference prayerfully adopt the following covenant: As a congregation under the Lordship of Christ and by the grace of God we declare that "In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." Such a person of whatever color or national origin is therefore welcome to us as brother, guest, member, co-worker, or leader.
2. That each Conference-related institution prayerfully adopt the following covenant: As an institution under the Lordship of Christ and by the grace of God we declare that in our personnel and admission policies and in our programs of service we will give consideration to all persons without regard to color or race.

*In our individual and corporate life* we thus commit ourselves to the "ministry of reconciliation" and pray:

1. That we may come to be free from prejudice, pride, condescension, paternalism, and scorn toward any group, whether it be racial, national, economic, or religious.
2. That we may learn to love every person as Christ loves.
3. That we may actively cooperate with God's healing, reconciling, and renewing work in the Church and among all men.

# Urban Crisis and the Church

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SAMUEL BETANCES

The urban crisis is getting attention in many different circles in American life.<sup>1</sup> Everyone talks about it: most people deplore it, many demand that something be done to correct it, and a few even attempt to define it. The reason why it is so hard to define is that various people interpret the phrase differently, each one thinking of it in terms of the impact it has on his particular area of concern. For example:

For the Negro youngster in the central city ghetto, it is overcrowded schools, inadequate facilities, and insensitive, ill-trained teachers.

For the welfare mother it is feeding and housing a family, with increasingly inadequate resources as costs continue to soar.

For the aged person it is old neighborhoods breaking up and deteriorating, growing property taxes and skyrocketing food costs — all to be provided from a fixed income.

For the big city mayor it is not-to-be-denied demands from municipal employees for higher pay combined with equally insistent demands from the general public for better quality services, all to be met from a deteriorating tax base and lagging state aid.

For the suburban commuter it is traffic jams and insufficient parking facilities and a suburban environment which every day resembles more the city environment supposedly escaped.

For the unskilled in search of work, it is nonexistent jobs or jobs located many miles from place of residence, or jobs denied because of employer and union discrimination added to limited and often irrelevant training opportunities.

For many urban scholars it is a system of local government characterized by overlapping, fragmented jurisdictions with tax bases unrelated to public service needs, and with public power, particularly zoning, used for anti-social purposes.

For militant blacks and disillusioned youth it is demonstration of America's refusal to allocate its resources to humane and social purposes, instead of to destructive ends.

For many other Americans, the urban crisis is racial strife, crime in the streets, polluted air and water, and a generally deteriorating environment.

The urban crisis is all of these things and many more. For the average citizen the crisis is defined by how it affects him personally. It is the direct personal impact which he feels and understands.<sup>2</sup>

However it is defined, the urban crisis certainly demands new and forceful efforts by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in helping to untangle the problems of men and women in desperate need of healing and salvation. The creation of the Urban Service Corps Committee is but a beginning effort of the church to organize its concerns and determine what implications the urban crisis really holds for it, and to discover new responses to the challenges the church faces in the cities. Also needed is an Adventist urban training center through which the church can utilize the resources of its educational and medical institutions in inner-city programs.

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Such a center should perhaps be located in Chicago. The geographic environment here includes Andrews University with its graduate school and seminary, the headquarters of the Lake Region Conference (predominantly Negro) and the Illinois Conference (predominantly white), and the Hinsdale Sanitarium and Hospital. The city itself has sizable minority population groups, including blacks, Appalachian whites, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Cubans, and Eastern Europeans. Further, such a location would be near the middle of the nation.

The church needs an urban training center to prepare personnel for administrative work in the cities, for urban ministry at the congregational level, and for viable educational efforts in metropolitan areas. The church needs such a training center also to bring about Christian understanding between the races within the church itself, where, tragically, racial strife and misunderstanding are deteriorating relationships between brothers.

Ministers who are new to the urban environment, and who do not know what it means to be directly affected by its dynamics, need training in order to be effective pastors to their congregations, to bring counsel and healing to their parishioners. For a long time Adventists have had a notion of "the universality of the pulpit," assuming that all Adventist congregations have the same needs, whether at home or abroad, in a rural setting, in a city, or in a suburb (with perhaps the only exception being the careful appointment of pastors for the "institutional" churches). But a successful pastor in rural Iowa may not be a successful pastor in metropolitan Detroit or New York unless he is trained to meet the special problems of an urban ministry.

For example, the Spanish Adventist church in Chicago has about three hundred members, including at least fourteen nationalities. The largest group is of Puerto Rican descent, followed in order by Mexican-Americans,

Dominicans, and smaller groups from Cuba, Brazil, and other parts of Latin America. The older members and those most recently arrived in the United States do not speak English; but others, especially among the young, speak only English and refuse (for psychological and sociological reasons) to speak Spanish. Some of the members have attended college, and a few have done graduate study. Some are very poor and are forced to accept public welfare assistance in order to survive. Some are very light-skinned, some very dark, and some in between. The lighter children want to learn English rapidly in order to be absorbed into the larger society, but the darker members (even in the same family) refuse to learn English, not wanting to suffer the plight of the American Negroes. Some of the adults plan to return to their native lands, while others want to stay in the United States indefinitely.

Where is a conference president going to turn to find the right man to pastor such a congregation? The challenge involves much more than instructing the people about proper dress, movies, sex, reading, Sabbath observance, etc.; it includes helping people to survive in unfamiliar surroundings in a big city with cold winters and segregated neighborhoods. Sometimes a pastor is called from as far away as Chile — from a setting 10,000 miles away, farther than from Washington, D. C., than to Vietnam. Now a conference president has the right to call any man, wherever he can be found, to meet the needs of his conference; but he also has the responsibility of providing whatever training is necessary to make that man an effective minister to his people. An Adventist urban training center would be able to give the necessary preparation for effective preaching and counseling within the context of what is happening in the cities.

Ministerial students are expected to study Greek, on the assumption that an understanding of the New Testament in its original language makes it easier to apply the principles to the present. It has been assumed all along that the ministerial student already understands the present, so that all he needs to do is to study the materials of the past. The tragedy is that few in the church do understand what is taking place now, particularly in the cities. For too long Adventist evangelism has marched only to the borders of the metropolitan areas; it has not gone past suburbia into the central cities. Signs have proclaimed "Christ is the Answer" before anyone has asked "What is the question?" A training program in a proper setting could bring administrators, educators, ministers — and laymen, too — up to date, so that they could really be a bridge from the past to the present, and thus be a true *remnant*.

Many kinds of programs could be sponsored by an urban training center:

1. *Classes for teachers and educational administrators.* These might deal with education and urban politics, the psychological and sociological implications of growing up black, the special educational needs of Spanish-speaking minorities, the preparation of a black-history curriculum, and the counseling of minority-group students. The classes could be taught at the center by instructors from nearby universities and (as soon as possible) by Adventist teachers equipped to present such subjects within an Adventist framework. In any case, the courses would be sponsored by Andrews University, which would offer appropriate undergraduate or graduate credit. Such a program would bring the participants closer to their advanced degrees, to their environment, and, most importantly, to their own students.

2. *Courses of special interest to black Adventist ministers.* The church has recognized, at least since the establishment of the regional conferences in the mid-1940s, the unique needs of its black constituency; yet little has been done to train black Adventist ministers specifically and effectively to deal with these unique requirements. The seminary has the same program for everyone, even though different ministerial candidates will face very different problems. The black revolution in America is forcefully raising difficult questions for the black Adventist ministry. How does one relate to black militancy? Can a young man be Christian and truly "black" (in the psychological sense) at the same time? Can the church survive in the ghetto? What significance does the history of Negro religion in America have for Adventists? How does one best react to attitudes of white supremacy? What should be done in response to the attempt to discredit the writings of Paul by prominent black religious leaders? What does a minister say to young black Adventists who can't understand why there is racism in Adventist institutions? And how should they regard the writings of Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, and Huey P. Newton? Are there any alternatives to these? These questions suggest but a few of the topics that could supplement the training Adventist ministers have received in college and seminary.

3. *Workshops and conferences.* Conference ministers, student-teacher groups from academies and colleges, church youth groups, etc., would have the benefit of a closer look at the church in action in the center of a city.

4. *Intensive training seminars.* Lasting perhaps six weeks, such seminars could bring in people from different cities to study the problems and possibilities of inner-city church centers. The seminars could be conducted in summer or winter, depending on the time when the participants could best

afford to be absent from their own areas, and could well include conference administrators, most of whom have responsibilities for areas that include large cities.

5. *Seminary courses.* Perhaps groups of seminary students could spend one day a week at the center.

6. *Human relations workshops.* Church personnel and others who might be interested could profit from workshops.

7. *Assistance in project planning.* The center would not be headquarters for community action programs as such; rather it would offer information and advice (for example, in regard to developing proposals for projects) to those interested in organizing such programs. The center would be an "idea bank," gathering materials from those who have sponsored successful programs and making these materials available to others. It would also be a center for research to determine the best ways for the church to respond to the challenge of the urban crisis.

8. *Orientation of medical personnel.* It is clear to those who are acquainted with the ills of urban living that more medical talent and effort must be brought into the cities. This is the challenge that the urban crisis holds for Adventist medical institutions, whose resources are needed to make healing possible in poverty-stricken areas. Adventist hospitals are not very sensitive to the needs of the poor; and the dynamics of specialization in medicine have led many doctors to the treatment of the disease instead of the patient. An Adventist urban training center could influence the education of future medical personnel to regard the total man in his social setting — with the urban context providing the greatest challenge.

Finally, an Adventist urban training center must be a North American Division enterprise. One important reason is that the urban crisis affects the whole church in North America, not just some of its members or organizations. Another reason is that the various programs of the center would need the cooperation of many schools, conferences, hospitals, etc. And a third reason is that the North American Division is the only structure of the church with access to the necessary resources to deal effectively with the challenge of the cities.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 This article is adapted from a paper presented at the inaugural meeting of the Urban Service Corps Committee of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, February 10, 1970, in Washington, D. C.
- 2 Alan K. Campbell (editor), *The States and the Urban Crisis* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1970), p. 4.

# Concepts of Church and State

ERIC D. SYME

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Contemporary thought on relations of the church and the state is increasingly concerned with the present impact of governmental activity on the life and work of the church. The practical and social problems of our highly complex era have brought the government into every sector of the national life. Welfare-state philosophy, American confrontation with global communism, civil rights controversy, antipoverty programs, increasing crime rates, civil disorders, and spiraling costs of education occasion greater interference by the federal government in the state and local scene. As areas of governmental activity frequently overlap zones of church concern, Christian denominations that formed their church and state views in a much simpler age of American past are now finding it necessary to rethink or rejustify their attitudes in the circumstances of this changed situation.

One danger occasioned by increase in government action is the potential threat to religious liberty, and this has disquieted some churches. They have looked for feasible means to cope with the problem, but they disagree as to the best way to accomplish this aim. The principal difference of opinion lies between transformationists and separationists.

*Transformationists* tend to emphasize the church's "prophetic" role in society, believing that the role of the church includes influencing the state to fashion public order into as close harmony as is possible, in relation to the Christian understanding of the revealed will of God. They believe that by exerting the right influence on the government, the church can secure responsible rule that both preserves liberty for all citizens and solves grave social problems in Christian fashion. Thus they hold that the church should exercise greater moral leadership to influence the government toward assuming a vital role in dealing with the social and moral issues of

our time. The alternative, as they see it, is decreased Christian influence on the government, with the consequent possibility that the secular state may dominate the religious as well as the civil life of the country.

*Separationists*, on the other hand, believe that the present extension of government influence has further strengthened the case for "complete" separation between church and state.

Seventh-day Adventists are among the most separationist-minded of Christian groups. Our doctrinal, and especially eschatological, interpretations have kept us apart from other Christian churches and have prevented us from favorably regarding contemporary ecumenical developments. Although the General Conference did not state its official position on church-state theory in any definite way until the 1948 Autumn Council, the religious inheritance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, derived from its Millerite origins, ensured adherence to a policy of separation of church and state.

Yet our religious philosophy does not assume that the state is demonic. We recognize a proper function of the state when that body is rightly administered. We do assume, however, that the state will ultimately become demonic when crime and depravity reach the place where they destroy the possibility of good government. We believe that both biblical prophecy and present trends indicate that this tragic situation will eventually be realized. Yet at the same time that we have expanded our membership and scope of activity, we have increased our contact with the government and its officers, and this fact has tended to "liberalize" our relationship with the state.

I

An initial factor affecting the Seventh-day Adventist concept of the relationship of church and state is the Millerite background. For several reasons, the Millerites were opposed to any relationship with the state. In the first place, many of them had been expelled from their own churches, and this gave them a distaste for legal church organization. Second, they regarded the major church bodies as apostate; and they considered that if they formally organized, their attention might be drawn away from spiritual realities to earthly considerations. Third, their expectation of the imminent return of Christ made formal organization seem unnecessary.

Many of these attitudes were inherited by the early Sabbatarian Adventists. At the same time this growing sect was so soon confronted by problems of property ownership and financial administration that, although many of the group remained opposed to any relationship with the government, the commonsense counsels of the core of leadership ultimately prevailed.



When the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formally organized in 1863, the religious patterns of the thought of the new denomination continued to give shape, coherence, and significance to its church-state theory. Although our theology is Arminian in emphasis, we have always believed that the state's impact on history has been evil when it has been closely allied with the church. Similarly, we have held that attempts among religious groups to create a superchurch, using the state as a tool, have led to apostasy in the church and persecution in the world. We have consistently viewed the true church of Jesus Christ as a "suffering" church. A minority body, persecuted by the unified power of religion and statecraft, this church relies on its own inner discipline and personal commitment to achieve true discipleship.

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This concept of the church, held by Anabaptists and other minority groups through the centuries, became important for Seventh-day Adventists because Roger Williams, partly through Anabaptist influence, promoted the separation of church and state in America. When this theory was supported by religious pluralism and Enlightenment thought, America became the supreme example of church and state separation.

Shortly after the end of the American Civil War, the outstanding problem facing our denomination was the revival of state Sunday laws, leading to attempts to secure federal Sunday enforcement legislation. Various Protestant agencies and reform societies were involved in this activity, but an interdenominational movement called the National Reform Association was the chief initiator and early organizer of the development. Powerful groups such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the American Prohibition Society, and the American Sabbath Union Party later joined the National Reform Movement; and from this time on, Sunday labor prosecutions of Seventh-day Adventists became particularly intense.

This linking of Sunday enforcement legislation with temperance activity was especially vexing to Adventists, because they found themselves associated with saloon owners and liquor dealers in their opposition to the activities of the religious and reform associations seeking to develop the Prohibitionist-Sunday enforcement movement. As a result of these problems, the church formed the Seventh-day Adventist Religious Liberty Association, which attempted to defeat Sunday bills, to help imprisoned Adventists, and to awaken the American public to the constitutional dangers involved in this type of legislation.

Combating Sunday enforcement legislation and its effects remained a major Seventh-day Adventist concern until the end of the nineteenth cen-

64 tury. With the changing social and national mores of the twentieth century the situation eased. The church became more conscious of the need to improve its own public image; its leaders had noted that wherever local Adventist groups were persecuted, it was because most churchmen and people in these areas had disliked and distrusted them.

Particularly important to our public relations activity in the two early decades of the twentieth century was the development of a strong temperance program. In the context of the Progressive epoch, this was an effective way to remove from the denomination's reputation the slur that it was associated with liquor interests, merely because both it and they were opposed to Sunday legislation.

While this was not the primary cause for Adventist prohibitionist activity in this period (for from its inception the Adventist Church had clear views on the subject of temperance), it certainly was an additional reason for the church's enthusiasm in assisting other prohibitionist groups to achieve the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment.

Developments arising from the New Deal and the later war mobilization vastly increased the scope of American government. This disturbed many Adventists, but they were still more alarmed by the increased importance of the Roman Catholic Church; and Adventists joined other Protestant groups protesting the appointment of a United States representative to the Vatican. By the close of the Second World War, the Roman Catholic Church was still more significant on both the national and international scenes.

In attempting to establish ambassadorial relationships with the Vatican, both President Roosevelt and President Truman seemed to be giving force to the arguments of Roman Catholic apologists who endeavored to present their church as a rallying point against the growing Communist threat. Giving force to these Adventist apprehensions was the success throughout western Europe of political parties whose affiliations with Roman Catholic interests enabled them to form close, though varying, relationships with the Holy See. Many Seventh-day Adventists at this time believed that they were witnessing dangerous, albeit anticipated, alliance between the United States and the Papacy in reconstructing Europe.

This threatening international situation seemed to be matched by Roman Catholic strength in America. Catholic endeavors to secure state aid for the church's parochial school system aroused Adventist fears that Roman Catholic interests already sought to destroy the historical church and state separation that provided the basis for American religious liberties. Encouraged in their opposition to Roman Catholic efforts by the emergency

of POAU (Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State), Adventists in various conference sessions throughout 1948 and 1949 passed resolutions affirming allegiance to principles of separation of church and state.

Maintaining this principle seemed the more important at this time because of the significance of Roman Catholic support of a renewed emphasis on Sunday law enforcement. Catholic action organizations during the late 1950s united with business interests and trade unions to exert considerable pressure on state legislatures to enact stringent Sunday laws.

But the adverse reaction to prosecutions under such laws finally compelled the United States Supreme Court to hear a group of test cases. The Court's majority decision was significant: it ruled that Sunday laws are no infringement of the separationist principle, since this type of legislation had long since lost its religious significance; these laws must therefore be considered as a normal exercise of the state's constitutional police power to protect its citizens and community.

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## II

All of these factors — the new significance of Rome, the resurgence of Sunday laws, attacks on the issue of separation of church and state, and ecumenical developments in both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism — reawakened Seventh-day Adventist speculation as to the possible imminence of the great events which the church's eschatological understandings had long taught it to expect. At the same time, however, a number of other factors were working in different directions.

Chief among these were the problems facing the denomination's educational system. However much we might resist Roman Catholic endeavors to save their own parochial school system at state expense, hard pressed Adventist educational administrators were facing similar problems. They also recognized that state aid might save them from future financial crises; and choosing between eschatological anticipations of church and state union and possibilities of financial relief, many Adventist leaders preferred the possibility of present gain to that of future problems. They were willing to take any form of state aid that the church could justifiably accept without yielding control of its own institutions.

This raises the question of the consistency of our church and state policy in regard to financing our educational system. We have accepted certain types of state aid: Hill-Burton funds to rebuild and repair our hospitals, available surplus properties, and a number of research grants — all of these

having been taken on the basis that the church has been fulfilling a public service of reciprocating value to the government.

Ever since the Solusi affair, the church has accepted tax exemption in a number of areas. Most recently, with some stress of mind, the church has seen Loma Linda University accept major government grants; but since the grants are related to medical and kindred educational programs, this acceptance is consistent with the present church rationale. Certainly many of the educational leaders have wished that the church had taken far more than it has.

66 Current discussion of the Solusi affair illustrates the varying positions taken by Adventists today. Some of the arguments on this subject seem somewhat puerile. For all practical purposes, Cecil Rhodes was the British government representative in South Africa. He was anxious, and through him the British government was anxious, to provide all possible facilities to national groups under British colonial rule. The Adventists had an excellent program of missionary intentions which could well fulfill much of this need. Rhodes was impressed.

Adventists on the spot were quite clear that the land offered by the company on Rhodes' direct intervention should be accepted. Theorists at home in America were not. Fortunately, church leaders received excellent advice from the one person capable of impressing them to reverse themselves and to accept the grant: Ellen G. White told them to accept the land the company was offering and also to accept tax exemption for institutions; she even suggested that this might be a way to preserve religious freedom.

### III

The most logical conclusion about the Adventist church and state policy is that it has generally been a practical one within the framework of the actual principles accepted by the church. We have not allowed doctrinaire considerations of "separationism" to interfere with a number of our working policies. Alonzo T. Jones, religious liberty representative at the time of the Solusi land grant, demanded a refusal of the Rhodes offer on the grounds that to take it would be a violation of the principle of separation of church and state. But the church finally took the land on the grounds that it was sensible to do so under the circumstances.

Adventists never questioned the constitutionality of influencing the government toward prohibitionist legislation. While it is true that this legislation did not interfere with the religious principles of any citizen, it was certainly a case of the church trying to influence the state to secure social

objectives. And when the spiritual needs of young Adventist men demanded chaplains, the church reversed its earlier positions and refused to allow separationist theory to interfere with the training of military chaplains.

In the hesitation about accepting many forms of aid to Adventist educational institutions, the real consideration has not been separationist theory but the justifiable fear that the church might surrender its control over its own institutions.

This point emerges very sharply in a position paper presented by Roland Hegstad, editor of *Liberty*, to an audience of educators, church administrators, and Religious Liberty Association representatives at the North American Division Quadrennial Council for Higher Education at Andrews University on August 22, 1968.

Hegstad's main argument against receiving state aid for Seventh-day Adventist higher educational institutions was based on his personal conclusion that two factors, which he called "the pitfalls of public policy" and "the snare of secularization," prohibit Adventists from assuming this kind of relationship with the government. He rested his case on the decision of the Court of Appeals of Maryland that one Methodist college and two Roman Catholic colleges were not eligible to receive grants because they were church-related.

Examining the criteria used by the Court for determining whether these schools were church-related in the sense that affected the constitutionality of the grants, Hegstad emphasized that no Seventh-day Adventist institution could possibly qualify if compelled to meet these criteria. Stressing that the Court's ruling was a justifiable one, Hegstad urged the view that the church must expect that government policy or public policy rather than Adventist policy will control its institutions if the church should accept government money.

Only by secularizing its school system, he affirmed, could the Adventist Church qualify for the grants, and if it did this, the schools would cease to fulfill the function for which they were created. Since that time a further Supreme Court decision has given to any American citizen the right to sue any religious organization unconstitutionally accepting government aid.

Perhaps a proper Adventist position on church and state issues is best summarized by stating that the real principle at stake is *religious liberty* rather than separation of church and state. It is certainly doubtful whether complete separation has ever existed; and in the present complex age it is impossible to conceive it in any absolute sense. This is not to say that the separation in the sense of the First Amendment is not important. It has

been basic to recent Supreme Court decisions that are vital in protecting principles of religious liberty. But it is a form of church and state polity that needs to be continually interpreted from the standpoint of religious freedom, which it was designed to protect.

If separation of church and state is seen as an expediency or a policy, then we have respected its deeper significance. Most Adventist departures from it in the literal sense have been intelligent ones, quite justified under the circumstances. But in these increasingly complex times, more consideration needs to be given to the importance of public relations in prolonging religious liberty.

While the church, because of the uniqueness of its message, cannot join the ecumenical developments of our time, as individuals we need continually to cultivate an irenic spirit toward people in other churches. We expect that ultimately a superchurch will control the state and demand uniformity in matters of conscience. But at this present time nowhere has the note of religious liberty sounded more emphatically than from leading ecumenicists.

Dr. Carrillo de Albornoz, Secretary of the Religious Liberty Chapter of the World Council of Churches, has called on all churches to define their views on the basis of religious freedom and proper relations of church and state. Religious liberty has been expanded in many areas as the result of the work of both Protestant and Roman Catholic progressives. Religious truth is more important than religious unity, but with this one essential provision: love and amity between men and churches is of vital importance.

Religious dialogue within the proper framework is as significant to Adventists as to other Christians. We must not so apply our knowledge of prophecy as to change it into a deterministic system. Men and institutions have the right to be evaluated in terms of their present actions. Although we do anticipate a future world apostasy, we also expect the greatest Christian revival of all time. The essential task of the church, therefore, is to present the positive truths of its message in such a way as to commend its love as well as its truth to the world.

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CONFRONTATION

# Does the Church Need a Center of Higher Learning in Europe?

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CARSTEN JOHNSEN

A question has arisen in Europe about the possibility of giving Adventist graduate students (who have attained "Studenteksamen," "Abitur," or "Baccalaureat" status) an opportunity to obtain at least part of their further education under the guidance of Adventist teachers. Even among European students who have come to America the lively debate has been carried on: Should an Adventist school on the university level, adapted to specifically European needs and educational systems, be established?

Such a school would meet the needs of two different groups. First, it could function as a seminary (Seventh-day Adventist Theological Faculty) based on the regular university entrance examinations and thus adapted both to the student's scholastic background and to his future professional needs as a church worker in Europe. Second, it could be a "temporary station" for Adventist students in other academic fields, who now go directly from their intermediate schools (*gymnasiums*) into secular universities.

There is in fact already a sort of temporary station common to all students entering a university in Europe. During their first semester or two of graduate work, they still have time to reflect before definitively choosing their respective careers. For whatever line of academic studies they choose, there is one indispensable prerequisite: philosophy, which is the common fundamental and compulsory subject for every discipline, including theological studies. It would be an obvious advantage if all Adventist students could spend this period of reflection and vocational decision in an intellectually and religiously congenial environment. There would be an opportunity for Adventist teachers to do some effective counseling during that



time. For example, some students who would make first-class ministers simply never think of the ministry as their vocation, because there is nothing in the "gymnasium" milieu to suggest such an idea. And at the age when ideals have their strongest grip, those who wish to become, say, physicians or lawyers could make up their minds to become physicians and lawyers *for Christ*.

The way any subject is taught may turn out to be a question of eternal life or death for the student. In an ordinary university the particular subject of philosophy is not very likely to be taught in such a way that the students will tend to become Christians. But where the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White could provide a true vision of the drama of the ages, this vision could mold the outlook of both teachers and students. There is no place where a pervading and gently transforming Seventh-day Adventist atmosphere is more desperately needed than in the life of a first-year student in a European university.

Now I am not at all speaking about the establishment of a complete Adventist university in Europe; that would appear to be a dream of the distant future. I am speaking about a response to the present crisis. And because in times of crisis one has to manifest a particularly high degree of realism, I want to be carefully realistic in my suggestions.

Fortunately there are already two fully accredited Adventist universities in America. It would be an honorable task for Andrews University and Loma Linda University, both of which possess a fair degree of academic prestige already, to sponsor some modest beginning of a European school on the university level. The general preparatory courses in philosophy would give adequate and indispensable knowledge to any European Adventist in his first year of university study, regardless of the profession he enters. The theologian needs all the proper knowledge he can acquire about the inroads of philosophy; and on the other hand the nontheologian needs all the proper knowledge he can acquire about religion during the decisive preparation year for his professional career and his life. I do not doubt that a series of extensions would be fully recognized as qualifying Adventist students for the "preparatory examinations" that would allow some students to enter existing European universities on the level of specialized studies and would enable other students to continue with a theological education in the Adventist center for higher learning.

As far as official recognition of Adventist-sponsored courses is concerned, it is encouraging to see that other universities, both in America and in Europe, have willingly accepted Adventist-educated students for further

studies toward doctorates. It is further encouraging to see how rapidly American degrees, and American education generally, are being acknowledged in Europe. American university manuals are being adopted in Europe in an increasing number from year to year, particularly in such fields as psychology, sociology, education, and the natural sciences. America is able to help Europe now as never before.

Unless an institution has some kind of "missionary project" (in the form, for example, of an extension program abroad), it is doomed to become weaker and weaker, and perhaps even to die out some day. There is nothing to lose by establishing an urgently needed more-or-less permanent overseas branch of the existing Adventist universities; and European students would greatly benefit from the academically recognized courses offered by Adventist teachers.

A common Adventist center for higher learning in Europe would also be an inestimable asset for the spirit of unity — that is, a sound, enthusiastic Adventist internationalism — that is much needed among both young and old. The right kind of school can help to overcome a spirit of narrowminded nationalism. Speaking about Europe as a whole — in desperate need, then as now, of a transforming missionary endeavor — Ellen White advised:

Some who have entered these missionary fields have said: "You do not understand the French people; you do not understand the Germans. They have to be met in just such a way."

But I inquire: Does not God understand them? Is it not He who gives His servants a message for the people? He knows just what they need; and if the message comes directly from Him through His servants to the people, it will accomplish the work whereunto it is sent; it will make all one in Christ. Though some are decidedly French, others decidedly German, and others decidedly American, they will be just as decidedly Christlike.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the fact that universities all over Europe have basically a similar structure, some will say, "Impossible! How could students with such different languages and divergent backgrounds fit together in one school?" But turning the different national characteristics into a source of inspiration is precisely what an international Adventist school is supposed to do in preparation for an international event — the coming of Christ.

The diversity in languages is a certain barrier, to be sure; but at the same time it is a new door of communication and oneness. For to the European intellectual of the present day, English is the great *lingua franca*. And any progressive Seventh-day Adventist student knows that the "new Latin" of his own sacred fraternity is English. So it is simply a blessing in disguise to have to look for a common language and to find that the only one available

is English. If an educational center in Europe is to be a real center of awakening, a cornerstone of Adventist unification in the Old World, it cannot ignore the prime importance of historic Adventist literature. To know the language of the writings of Ellen White is a necessity for anyone who really wants to be an effective Adventist leader.

It is perhaps superfluous to mention how much less expensive it would be for a European seminary student to attend school in Europe than to travel to America, where prices have proved prohibitive for many. Also, a much larger number of students from Africa and the Middle East could probably afford to study in a theological seminary located in Europe.

It seems certain that to erect a permanent school structure, with all the facilities demanded in modern times, would be a long-term project. But the church simply cannot afford to postpone into the indefinite future a plan for a European center for higher learning. Something must be started almost immediately. The present Adventist schools in Europe may not be able to accommodate any additional group of students during the winter. But along the Mediterranean coast, at least, there are thousands of hostels and seashore houses fully equipped with modern facilities and simply left empty from the end of September to the beginning of June (because that is the slack season for tourism). At that time of year prices for accommodations are surprisingly low, so that the winter might well be a veritable summer filled with radiant light and buoyant life for a zealous student digging for knowledge in an Adventist school.

Of course the vision of a permanent school building is a pleasant one. Adventist history has proved, however, that it is entirely possible to obtain rich blessings in rented rooms. And sometimes it is good to be relieved of the worries inevitably connected with large capital investments and high maintenance costs. Furthermore, in Europe the necessity of having immediately a fully equipped library is not the same as in America, for the nearest state university library is open to anybody who cares to use it (although of course a smaller library would be needed for the indispensable reference books).

A university-level extension program can be begun at once in rented quarters. If it develops into a permanent school, an ideal location might be Switzerland, whose international political neutrality might allow students from behind the Iron Curtain — who should not be forgotten by any means — to join the cosmopolitan Adventist fellowship.

In this article I have not attempted to present a detailed program. But perhaps the suggestions here can stimulate the thinking of church ad-

ministrators and interested laymen. The innovation I am proposing will demand a degree of internationalism and cooperation even more resolute and tenacious than that which has become proverbial among Adventists. But something like this must be done to meet the present acute Adventist educational needs in Europe.

#### REFERENCE

- 1 ELLEN G. WHITE, *Testimonies for the Church* (volume nine of nine volumes. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association n.d.), pp. 179-180.

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#### THE SEA

MAX GORDON PHILLIPS

The necklace  
of the sea  
was amber  
I remember.  
I remember  
how the waves  
ran out forever,  
rushed and laved  
our desert-bitten  
feet there, after we  
had reached the shore,  
O Lord!  
when we had reached  
the sea!

SPECTRUM

## REVIEWS

### White Fantasies — Black Man's Burden?

TOM L. WALTERS

THE CONFESSIONS OF NAT TURNER

By William Styron

A Signet Book, New American Library, Inc., 1966 404 pp \$1.25

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The man who led the most publicized slave insurrection in the United States<sup>1</sup> is the subject of the 1968 Pulitzer prizewinning book by William Styron. Many white reviewers have hailed Styron's book as a remarkably penetrating insight into the psyche of a black slave revolutionary. There is no question that Styron has analyzed Nat Turner in a way that appeals not only to white readers in general but also to liberal white literary critics.

Yet I am left with the persistent suspicion that Styron did not successfully analyze the black hero. Styron is a twentieth-century white, free American; Turner was a nineteenth-century black, slave American. Such a gap is nearly impossible to bridge. For although we all have known oppression and injustice, probably few white Americans have known it with the intensity that black men in this country even today know it, to say nothing of those who survived the terrible abuses of slavery.

Styron says in his introductory note: "I have rarely departed from the *known facts*. . . . I have allowed myself the utmost freedom of imagination in reconstructing events." It is my opinion that in writing the story of Nat Turner, Styron has ignored some important facts and traditions about the man and in so doing has perpetuated, unconsciously, contemporary white fantasies about race.

1. Styron describes Turner as a celibate who was obsessed with thoughts of white women, in spite of the evidence that he was married to a black woman owned by the master of a neighboring plantation.<sup>2</sup> Why did Styron lose the hero in a white dream world when Turner had his own real black world? Why does Styron omit any mention of Turner's wife? It seems likely that but for her there would have been no rebellion. Surely one can at least begin to imagine the incredible frustration of having a wife who was owned by another man who could beat her, disgrace her, or sell her on a whim. If anything would drive a man to violence, surely this would! But Styron, ignoring the evidence and this obvious consideration, supports the arrogant fantasy that black men dream primarily of white women.

2. Turner is presented as fearful, unmanly, and thoroughly "Samboized." In fact, Turner had escaped from his owner and returned to help free his own people.<sup>3</sup> Is this the act of an effeminate coward? Styron implies that Turner lacked courage because he did not take a major part in the fighting during the rebellion. What does one expect

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of a commanding officer with a small army? Styron seems to feed the fantasy that there is no such thing as a brave, dignified black leader.

3. According to Styron, Turner was literate because his early owner thought he was cute and taught him to read. This is not in accord with the statement about Turner from the original *Confessions*: "As to his ignorance, he certainly never had the advantages of education, but he can read and write (*it was taught him by his own parents*) and for natural intelligence and quickness of apprehension, is surpassed by few men I have seen."<sup>4</sup> Why does Styron have Turner educated by whites rather than as he was, by his own parents? Why support the delusion that knowledge, original thought, and the ability to teach are peculiar to the white race?

4. Will, who joins the rebellion, is pictured by Styron as a bloodthirsty animal. The original *Confessions* depict a different Will, one who says, on joining the rebellion, "My life is worth no more than others, and my liberty as dear to me."<sup>5</sup> These are hardly the words of a moronic beast. I know of no attempts to picture the colonists who took part in the Boston Tea Party or the attack on Fort Ticonderoga as unthinking, violent fools. Why picture what seemed to be an intelligent revolutionary black as stupid? Nevertheless, in Styron's account, the animal Will challenges Turner as the leader of the rebellion, and poor Nat quakes! This seems an insult to the obvious ability of Turner. Again, Styron is supporting the white fantasy that a nonwhite simply cannot lead.

These are but a few examples of an attitude that strips the black revolutionary of his heroic qualities. Styron's analysis of Turner's motivation for the rebellion does the same: his frustration comes from his desire to be white. Why such a reason for a man who loved his people and gave his life in an attempt to free them? Why not frustrated because he was a man and had seen too much oppression and injustice? If taxation without representation is tyranny, and as such is frustrating enough to provoke violence, isn't slavery? Is it surprising that intelligent, decent men would die for such a cause? The fact that these revolutionaries lost surely does not make them less noble, less honorable, less courageous, less heroic. George Washington won his war and Nat Turner lost his. Does that make Turner's cause less just and Turner less a hero? If so, Huss, Jerome, Nathan Hale, and Alexander Dubcek are not heroes — they also lost.

Styron's book is hardly all bad; certainly it is not sinister. It is a very readable account directed against some of the paralyzing abuses of the institution of slavery. Styron seems to be a sensitive man who empathizes with downtrodden humanity. But with all his empathy, in my opinion, Styron does a disservice to both blacks and whites by encouraging contemporary white prejudices and by emasculating a black hero. He thus continues a modern version of the attitudes that are our heritage of the slave system and perpetuates a defense of past injustices against minorities.

Styron stimulates pity, but not respect, for the blacks. Therein lies the greatest tragedy for all Americans, the seeds of racism. Though unchristian, racism has prospered in this country, and the organized Christian church has often contributed to the tragedy rather than alleviating it, in spite of the fact that racism underlies the meanest chapters in the annals of Christian and white history, from the Inquisition to American slavery to Nazism. As we Christians consider those of another race or

creed as inferiors and less than fellow men created in the image of God, we deny our own Christian heritage, foolishly embrace our own vain fantasies, and cut ourselves off from the spirit of understanding and love that we claim as Christians. We become living symbols of hypocrisy. Who cannot see through our false dignity and rationalizations? Surely those who suffer from our oppression or spinelessness see it most clearly of all.

A tragedy of Adventism is that it did not continue its early interest in abolition and equality. There was a time when Adventists were encouraged to go to prison for the civil disobedience of breaking the fugitive slave law.<sup>6</sup> Currently, removed from the realities of the problem, we have fallen unwittingly into prejudices, and thus we show the same attitudes that make Styron's book, a literary masterpiece, an unplanned tragedy.

Most Seventh-day Adventists are not white, yet our church history books refer almost exclusively to whites. Our rallies tell of the history of our conferences and unions and divisions, and the actors are white, except perhaps for a benediction from a black pastor. We warn of the horrors of the last days, when the people of God will be unable to buy and sell, yet we perpetrate the same horrors on nonwhites by refusing them jobs and housing. Are the value of our property and our own egos worth more than the feelings of human beings? Is the Golden Rule outdated?

It is a continual temptation for a man on top to believe he is there because God wants him there. But right inevitably wins only for the pragmatist — and Christians are not supposed to be of that ilk. Sometimes he who controls does so *because* he is dishonest and ruthless. The question is not, "How do we maintain control?" but rather "What is just, merciful, and truthful?"

By facing this question we white Seventh-day Adventists can show that we are mature enough to face up to our past hypocrisy. Many men of good will have said and done nothing, because they do not know the facts. Contemporary analyses of the problems suggested in Styron's *Confessions* are available in such books as *Before the Mayflower*, *Crisis in Black and White*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and *Black Like Me*. The greatest potential value in carefully considering Styron's *Confessions* is that perhaps we may come to wrestle with our own arrogance — the arrogance that is almost invariably inherent in power. But Styron's book is best considered after reading at least one such book as these mentioned above.

Our past arrogance is difficult to face and will lead to temporarily shattered egos and trying situations, but Christians have met such challenges before. We must not, we cannot, refuse to consider the terrible injustice to the black people. Such consideration can lead us to real Christian brotherhood and understanding and to the joys and freedoms of leaving prejudice behind.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 On August 21, 1831, in Southampton County, Virginia, Nat Turner led a band of slaves in an attempt to seek freedom. The revolt was put down in a few days, and Turner was captured over a month later. Blacks thought to be involved with the uprising were executed. The event spread terror throughout the white South, and many whites fled to the North.

HERBERT APTHEKER, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (doctoral dissertation, Columbia University 1943). Published also as *Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law*, edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, No. 501.

- 2 THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON, *Travellers and Outlaws: Episodes in American History* (Boston: Lee and Shephard 1889).
- 3 THOMAS R. GRAY, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, Baltimore, 1831.
- 4 Ibid. (italics mine).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 ELLEN G. WHITE, *Testimonies for the Church* (volume one of nine volumes. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association n.d.), pp. 201-202.

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## Book Selections

*The Beginning*. By Arnold Ehrhardt. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1968. Oxford: Manchester University Press 1968. Pp. xiv plus 212. \$6.75.

This scholarly book reviews the idea of the "beginning" in Greek thought and discusses the possible relation of this to the use of the words "in the beginning" in the gospel and epistles of John, the writings of the apostle Paul, and to the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* in late Judaism and early Christianity. The author was senior lecturer in ecclesiastical history at the University of Manchester.

*The Black Vanguard: Origins of the Negro Social Revolution 1900-1960*. By Robert H. Brisbane. Valley Forge: Judson Press 1970. Pp. 285. \$6.95.

*Crisis in Eden: A Religious Study of Man and Environment*. By Frederick Elder. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1970. Pp. 172. \$3.95.

*The Cry for Freedom*. By Frank W. Hale, Jr. New York: Barnes 1970. \$10.00. The author is president of Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

*Escape from Reason*. By Francis A. Schaeffer. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press 1968. Pp. 96. \$0.95 (paper).

A brief analysis of some of the trends of modern thought, and a call to communicate the unchanging truths of the gospel in a meaningful way to this generation.

*Interrogating the Oracle*. By William S. Peterson. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press 1969. Pp. 276. Illus. \$10.00.

The subtitle of this book is *A History of the London Browning Society*. The author is assistant professor of English at Andrews University.

*Naming the Whirlwind*. By Langdon Gilkey. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company 1969. Pp. 483. \$7.50.



*The Nature and Destiny of Man.* By J. R. Zurcher. Translated by Mabel R. Bartlett. New York: Philosophical Library 1969. Pp. 186. \$6.00.

The author is president of the Séminaire Adventiste du Salève in France.

*Retire to Action: A Guide to Voluntary Service.* By Julietta K. Arthur. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1969. Pp. 254. \$5.95.

The author lists and analyzes the regional possibilities that exist for service to our fellowman and the specific agencies that desire help. Cognizance is taken of individual interests and talents.

*The Scientific Enterprise and Christian Faith.* By Malcolm A. Jeeves. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press 1969. Pp. 168. \$4.50.

*Understanding Christian Education.* By Wayne R. Rood. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1970. Pp. 406. \$8.50.

*Where Religion Gets Lost in the Church.* By C. Edward Crowther. New York: Morehouse-Barlow 1968. Pp. 158. \$4.75.

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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ERROR. In Ray Hefferlin's review of Stanley L. Jaki's book *The Relevance of Physics* (1970 winter issue of SPECTRUM), the statement that begins paragraph four on page 76 should have read: "Jaki comes close to an 'error' in a very mild overstatement that matter waves are a necessary model for explaining particle focusing (p. 109.)"