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# SPECTRUM

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A Quarterly Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Spring 1975

## GENERAL CONFERENCE ISSUE

Interviews of Four Top Church Leaders  
How the Election Works  
A Movement or a Machine?

# SPECTRUM

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SPECTRUM's new logo and cover design are by Henry Rasmussen of Concerned Communications, Arroyo Grande, California.

## About This Issue

For the first time, Molleurus Couperus is not listed as the editor of SPECTRUM. For more than six years, he has brought continuity to this journal, overseeing the publication of articles by more than 200 different Adventists. General Conference officials, college students, lay professionals and Adventist academics have been able to express their views and report their investigations.

Dr. Couperus has skillfully demonstrated that an Adventist lay journal can be both independent and responsible. On such delicate issues as science and religion, church and state, the authority of Ellen White and the nature of inspiration, he has given persons with widely differing views the opportunity to be heard. At the same time, he has consistently required both thoroughness of research and excellence of

analysis.

SPECTRUM could not have become a respected publication without the enormous breadth of experience Dr. Couperus brought to his work. Having grown up in the Netherlands, he studied theology in the United States and served several years as a missionary in Indonesia. Later, he received his medical education at Loma Linda University, joined the faculty after becoming a specialist, and eventually became chairman of the department of dermatology.

Combining his religious and scientific interests, he edited for several years an Adventist lay journal devoted to the study and defense of creationism. He became interested in anthropology, and in time was invited to teach courses in that subject at both Loma Linda University and the University of California at Los Angeles.

When asked to edit SPECTRUM, Dr.

Couperus enthusiastically agreed. And it is not too much to say that for six years he has regarded his work on it as his single most significant contribution to the church. It is appropriate here, on behalf of the Association of Adventist Forums, to salute him for what he has done.

Many others assisted Dr. Couperus. Two should be mentioned especially. Ada L. Turner, editor of academic publications at Loma Linda University during this time, created SPECTRUM's widely admired graphic design, and did the makeup for every issue. Fritz Guy, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of the same university, spent many bone-wearying hours in the editing and re-editing of manuscripts.

With this issue a new Board of Editors begins its work. One member is Dr. Couperus himself. Several other members have been active in AAF from its inception. Alvin Kwiram, chairman, is professor of chemistry at the university of Washington and a member of the General Conference Board of Higher Education. He was the first president of AAF.

Roy Branson, associate professor of Christian ethics at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, has been executive secretary and president of AAF. Gary Land, associate professor of history at Andrews University, has been book editor on the staff of SPECTRUM. Otilie Stafford, who is head of the English department at Atlantic Union College, has served before on this journal's editorial staff.

One member of the Board of Editors is new to SPECTRUM's masthead. Charles Scriven is

pastor of the Blue Mountain Valley Adventist Church in Athena, Ore.

The makeup of the new board—most of the members have been with AAF from the beginning—assures continuity in editorial policy. The journal will still publish articles written with thoroughness and rigor. It will still welcome the work of those who seriously explore the frontiers of Adventist thought.

The appearance and contents of this issue should make it clear, however, that some changes will occur. Sensitivity to the rhythms of Adventist organizational life has not only led to a special General Conference issue, but also to a second issue devoted to topics of considerable interest for next fall's Annual Council—including the role of women in the church and the question of divorce.

SPECTRUM will also try to publish more forms of creative expression than heretofore. Not only formal articles, but interviews, profiles, narratives, personal essays, visual art, and even (as we hope) new hymns by Adventist composers, will appear.

In other words, while aiming still for the highest academic standards, SPECTRUM will be less a scholarly periodical and more a journal of thought, opinion and creative expression. Having established its seriousness of purpose, the journal will now try to put more zest and passion onto its pages. With any luck, SPECTRUM may even develop a sense of humor.

Or that's what we say. We'd like you to see for yourselves what actually happens.

The Board of Editors

# An Interview With Robert H. Pierson

by Ron Graybill

*The chief business of the General Conference Session in Vienna will be the choosing of the church's leaders. In the pages that follow, SPECTRUM brings you interviews of four top church administrators, on all of whom delegates will be making decisions in July.*

*Readers may learn from these interviews something of the ideals and priorities of these men, and in this way be better prepared to carry out their duties responsibly, whether at the General Conference session or in the life of the church in general.*

*The first interview, with Robert H. Pierson, the current president of the General Conference, took place in Washington, D.C., January 2, 1975. It has been edited for the sake of brevity.*

**G**raybill: What is the most satisfying of your accomplishments as a church administrator so far?

*Pierson:* I'd like to reword your terminology just a little, and speak of the blessings of God and of the progress that all of us together as

*Ron Graybill is a researcher with the Ellen White Estate in Washington, D.C. He received the master of divinity degree from Andrews University and is now working on a doctorate in American church history at Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of Ellen White and Church Race Relations and Mission to Black America.*

workers and members have made in striving toward the goal the Lord has set for us.

There are a number of ways, I think, that the Lord has blessed us. One of the most satisfying has been the response to the challenge for evangelism. Our baptisms have increased very substantially. I think in 1965 they ran about 135,000, if I'm not mistaken, and in 1973, there were about 215,000, and we hope that 1974 will go beyond that. When I speak about evangelism, I don't mean just public evangelism—preaching. To me, evangelism includes all the encounters with Christ that take place in our schools and hospitals, even in our Harris Pine Mills and our food businesses. All of these things can and should and must be evangelistic. Our main goal and objective is to get a people ready for the coming of Jesus.

Another thing that I've been very pleased and happy about is the return to the church of so many of the dissidents who have caused the church some problems. You probably know about the various movements that started in Europe during the first World War. There have also been dissident movements in South America and Africa and in Australia and here in America. During the last eight years, after we made the appeal for unity, revival and reformation, many of these folks have come back into harmony with the church.

*Graybill:* Now, in some of these cases, for instance with the "Awakening" movement, the church has not only made an official appeal, but

has also taken a great deal of time to discuss these things with movement leaders. Is that part of the effort?

*Pierson:* I think this has been one of the contributing factors under the blessing of God. Our leaders in Australia have spent many hours with them. Our leaders and our top theologians here in America have spent a good many hours with them—several days, as you know.

I believe that we ought to be pulling the church together. And while there are many divergent elements in the church because this message has gone to every kindred tongue and people, yet I believe that today we have as fair a spirit of unity as we could expect in this world.

*“I want the folks to know that a little group of us here in Washington do not constitute the church, but it includes every layman.”—Robert Pierson*

Now, that doesn't mean that we have perfect unity, but when it comes to the racial and nationalism problems you will find actions on the General Conference minutes and on the minutes of many of our organizations that seek to take away these middle walls of partitions and make us one. We must be one here if we are going to be one in the kingdom. I believe that our black brethren, our brown brethren and our white brethren are working together much better than they might have been, and much better than they're doing in the world around us. And for this I am deeply appreciative.

I'm not suggesting that all the problems have been solved, or that all the inequities have been removed. This is not the case, but we're working toward that end, and with God's help, we will continue.

Another thing that gives me a great deal of satisfaction—and I'm not saying this because a member of the White Estate happens to be interviewing me—is the emphasis on the Spirit of Prophecy. I believe that God placed this gift in the church for all our people around the world. I don't believe that this is an American gift. It has been my desire ever since I came into the

General Conference to give full support to the White Estate in getting the books out in as many different languages as possible, and to help our members everywhere to understand better the place of the Spirit of Prophecy in the last-day church. We recommended that a program of Spirit of Prophecy emphasis be conducted in every division, and this has been accomplished. It isn't just a little old American woman that we're trying to glorify, but a gift that God has placed in this church to help us through the difficult days ahead.

And the fact that the servant of the Lord says that one of the last great attacks will be to undermine the effect of the *Testimonies* makes us feel that we ought to be certain the people are well informed concerning this gift. That's why the research center for Europe, and the one we have voted for Australia, will be such a great blessing. We hope eventually to have them in several other overseas divisions.

*Graybill:* To summarize, you are most pleased with progress in the areas of evangelism, unity and advancements of the area of Spirit of Prophecy?

*Pierson:* That's right. I don't believe we have achieved the ultimate in any of these areas, but I believe that, with God's help, we're headed in the right direction.

*Graybill:* Turning from the past to the future, what do you see as the major challenges that face the church?

*Pierson:* The greatest challenge before this church today is that we each one have the experience with God that He wants us to have. This is what I've been talking about for eight and a half years and will talk about for another six months or however long the Lord grants me. I'm not going to get into a hassle with anyone on the technicalities of “perfection,” but no one has ever challenged me for preaching that *we must overcome sin*. We must get sin out of our lives so that we can be in the right relationship with our Lord. When this has happened, there'll not be any question about our working for Him and winning souls; there'll be no problem about our money's being available for the Lord's work. It's our love for Christ that lies at the bottom of the whole thing.

Our first great challenge as leaders is to lead our people into a relationship with Christ that will bring about a true revival and a real

reformation. If that comes, we don't have to measure girls' skirts or men's hair, or anything else. The Lord looks after those things for us if we'll permit this revival in our hearts.

I think another challenge before us today is to deal with the rising tide of secularism and materialism that is in the world. You know what's happened to the other churches where secularism and materialism have come in. They have a little watered-down gospel left. As a result, they've lost their faith, they've lost their schools—many of them—and they're losing some of their missions. I don't want our SDA church to go the way some of the other churches have gone. A large number of them have empty pews on Sundays. Of course, there are some of the evangelical churches that are still pretty well filled, but you can go into a lot of the other churches—and I've been in some of

them in different parts of the world—and they don't have much left. With the Lord's help, that won't happen to the Seventh-day Adventist church, because it is God's church.

Another area of challenge, of course, is the rising cost of education. With the economic uncertainty in the world today, and especially here in the United States, this is going to be a growing challenge and problem. We've set up the Board of Higher Education in an effort to help curb proliferation and duplication of courses and get right down to the basics of what we must do.

*Graybill:* What is your attitude toward lay involvement in church affairs?

*Pierson:* Well, Ron, I believe in our laity. The work will not be finished until we rally our laity to join hands with the church officers and the ministry as the Spirit of Prophecy says. I do not

*Continued on p. 6*

## Robert Pierson: The Burden of Evangelism

by Kit Watts

**A**n Iowa boy, Robert H. Pierson has had a full and varied 42-year career with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. After two years at Southern Missionary College, he accepted a call to pastor and be lay activities secretary for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. It was the first step of a man who feels keenly the burden of communicating the gospel to the world in his generation.

That burden early drew him to overseas service—first as pastor and director of lay activities on the conference level in India, and later as union president in that field. He has spent 25 years in ministry outside the United States—in India, Jamaica and Trinidad, and the Trans-Africa Division.

He was in Africa in the decade when that continent was experiencing extreme political unrest. In December 1961, he was caught

*Kit Watts is a graduate of Union College and has studied journalism at Walla Walla College. Until taking her current position as editor of publications of Sligo Church in Takoma Park, Md., she was a book editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Washington, D.C. She also wrote the three other profiles that appear in connection with this feature.*

between the crossfire of the United Nations and the Katangese armies in Elizabethville for nearly a week.

Those who have worked with him in his nine-year presidency of the General Conference characterize him as a spiritual man. His all-consuming desire is to see "the work finished." He has encouraged public evangelism by all denominational leaders and engages in campaigns himself. He has set up committees to upgrade church standards.

He has opened his office and his administration to suggestions. He has a reputation for wanting to feel the pulse of what's going on, for being personable, for answering his mail promptly, and having a remarkable facility for remembering names and faces.

The unity of the church concerns him deeply. "Our church has members from almost every nation, and many of those nations have a natural animosity toward each other," he has said. "Only a real dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ can prevent us from being divided."

When Robert Pierson is not preaching, presiding at committees or boards, or working at his desk, he is writing—prolifically. It is his hobby, he says. He has authored 17 books and numerous tracts.

refer simply to lay financial support, or the handing out of literature. It is of prime importance to involve laymen in other types of endeavor as well. I hope some day to furnish an article for the *Review* on the lay representation on our boards and ad hoc committees, on our conference committees and on our advisory committees. Today, we have some very knowledgeable laymen — our excellent businessmen, professional men, well-educated, committed, godly men. I believe we ought to make every possible use of them. I hope the time will come when we will have some lay administrators in our churches so that the pastor will be able to shepherd the sheep instead of being a businessman.

We have tried in the last eight and a half years to open some of the windows in our church. We've called our laymen into counsel with us. We've started publishing the letters to the editor in the *Review*. We, as leaders, have made reports to the church in the *Review* rather frequently. Practically every place I go, not only do I preach but I have a program that I call "This Is Your Church." It is a question-and-answer service. I want the folks to know that a little group of us here in Washington do not constitute the church, but it includes every layman.

**G**raybill: Is there a trend toward more careful attention to parliamentary procedure in conference constituency meetings?

Pierson: I may not be able to answer that question the way that you wish I would. If you mean by parliamentary procedure giving everybody an opportunity to be heard, then I would be with you entirely. But when it comes to resorting to parliamentary manipulation in order to thwart or to accomplish an end, I do not believe this approach is helpful in doing the work of the church.

Graybill: But I have seen meetings where the chairman dominated the meeting in disregard of parliamentary procedure.

Pierson: I heartily disapprove of what I believe you're talking about—the chairman's or anyone else's dominating a meeting and not letting the people have an opportunity to speak. I believe in democracy. But when it comes to this kind of democracy, it ought not to be one or two people that are doing all the democratic

speaking. If there are a large number of folks who want to speak, fine.

Graybill: What do you see as the main concerns of the educated Seventh-day Adventist—those who are sometimes labeled "intellectuals." What problems do they have, what contributions can they make?

Pierson: I want to be a president for all of our people—the intellectuals as well as the most illiterate peasants out in the far-flung corners of the earth. My relationship with church members should be such that I can love and work with all of them. We have good people among the intellectuals, we have good members in the main stream of the church.

These are days when we should be making progress. We must not dig our feet in concrete and stay where we are as far as our planning, our

*"I am pleased that on a few large church staffs we have some women associate pastors. I am not in any way opposed to our fine ladies' playing an increasingly important role. We can do more than we've done in the past to utilize their talents."—Robert Pierson*

programming and our policies are concerned. When it comes to certain basic tenets of this message, however, I believe these are not negotiable. There's room in the church for the expression of our opinions when it comes to peripheral issues, speculative prophecies and things like that, but when it comes to the certain basics of this message, these are the areas I don't believe are negotiable.

Graybill: Thank you. I think that concludes my questions.

**P**ierson: I'd like to mention one more topic that you haven't asked me about. This is the attitude of our church toward the role of women. I noticed recently that *Christianity Today* reported Seventh-day Adventists had turned down the ordination of women. This is

not factual. We haven't voted for or against the ordination of women yet. Some other denominations have been working on this question for years and they haven't fully made up their minds yet. Seventh-day Adventists, maybe rightly or wrongly, have only spent about a year and a half in serious study of this question. We started with a group of scholars and administrators of whom more than half were women. Some we believed would represent the more liberal approach; others we felt could be counted on to present the conservative point of view.

At the 1973 Annual Council, we adopted most of the recommendations that this study group recommended. We are continuing to study ordination. We want to be sure that theologically we're correct. We want to know that we are following the counsel of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I personally am inclined to be a little slow in basing as important a decision as this on what the Bible *does not say*. We have women pastors in different places around the world and they've done a good work. We have approved of this.

*Graybill:* Not in North America.

*Pierson:* Yes, we've had some, but not a large number. Miss Mary Walsh and others have pastored local churches and there are some other

women who have served as pastors.

Down in the West Indies, we've had women who were evangelists, who went out and raised up churches, built church buildings, and then pastored the church. In Finland, of course, we've had women evangelists and some that have pastored churches. This has not been on a large scale, but it indicates that we are not blindly opposed to the idea.

Personally, and I'm speaking only personally, I am pleased that on a few large church staffs we have some women associate pastors who play an important role publicly and personally in the work of our modern-day SDA church. They have some input and some insights that our men do not have. I am not in any way opposed to our fine ladies' playing an increasingly important role in the life of our church.

A wife and mother with small children, I believe, still should find her greatest joy and fulfillment in filling her place as the queen of the home. There isn't any greater contribution that a woman can make than to be a wife and mother. But when it comes to women who have no children, or single women, I believe they will continue to play a more important place in our church program in almost every phase of the work. I believe we can do a lot more than we have done in the past to utilize their committed talents.

# Duncan Eva, Willis Hackett, Neal Wilson: A Symposium

by Roberta J. Moore

*At the request of SPECTRUM's editorial board, Roberta J. Moore conducted the following interviews last fall in Loma Linda during the 1974 Annual Council.*

*These three General Conference vice presidents, W. Duncan Eva, Willis J. Hackett and Neal C. Wilson, were interviewed separately. From about 70 pages transcribed from tapes of the interviews, the author extracted what she considered to be of the greatest interest and arranged the material into a symposium.*

**M**oore: What do you see as the chief concerns of the intelligent, educated young Seventh-day Adventist in his relationship with the church?

*Wilson:* As I see them, these concerns are primarily in the area of how flexible the church is to recognize that we can have some differing viewpoints within the church and still maintain a very strong degree of unity. There are certain essentials on which we must stay pretty close together, but there are other areas, organizational or philosophical, which could vary considerably.

I find, too, a desire among these intelligent,

*Before taking a post in the Communications Department of Loma Linda University in 1973, Roberta J. Moore taught journalism at Walla Walla College. Her doctorate is from Syracuse University. She is the author of If Winter Comes.*

educated young members for more openness on the part of leadership and a longing for worthwhile participation. They feel church leaders ought to be thinking how to make this possible, not just leave it to a hit-or-miss type of situation. I think they're right; church leaders ought to be actively planning and devising ways to bring about this greater participation.

And then, perhaps in some way the result of, or at least related to, these two points, I would have to say that there is a constant question of believability regarding administrative policies.

*Moore:* Let's start with the idea of laymen's participation in matters of church policy. As a church leader, how do you see that?

*Eva:* Church leaders deeply appreciate the interest and involvement of laymen in church matters. The Adventist church has always believed that it will never be able to fully discharge its commission until laymen and ministers unite to finish "the work." We have always believed, moreover, that God will recognize and honor such consecrated cooperation "by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure."

And before you point out that I have not exactly answered your question, let me explain that I see "matters of church policy" as related purely and simply to the church's task of taking God's last message to the world. The church has no other "policies." An interest in church policy, if it is not completely concerned with "the finishing of the work," is basically meaningless to layman and minister alike.

*Hackett:* I'd like to say that a problem in laymen's participation comes from their seeing the church only from the local perspective. We need to see it as a whole. I think our biggest task as leaders is to help the intellectual folk, the professionals of our church, see the church from a wider angle and then they can help us meet the problems.

*Moore:* You think, then, that they don't now see the church as a whole?

*Hackett:* I think not many do. Many see the church as United States and North America.

*"The minute laymen take over and attempt to run the church, to choose the personnel, to make the decisions, irrespective of the ministry, then they will also have to accept the responsibility. And this would mean that we would have to change our complete concept of church administration."*—Willis Hackett

*Wilson:* We have to look at the question of laymanship from a practical point of view. In other words, how could we make it work?

Sometimes, I have said to my colleagues in church administration, "It seems to me that we could spend a profitable three or four days in some kind of conference, made up of those interested in this kind of thing—that is, church leadership and lay participation—and say, 'How are we going to do it?'" I think unless something like that happens, we'll stay in the area of theory and never get into practical application.

I think there are many areas where participation can come about: committees, discussion groups, groups grappling with particular issues in the church. And if we really tried it, I think it would pay off handsomely. But we dream about it as a possibility for tomorrow and keep putting it off for some time in the future.

*Moore:* So you haven't figured out how to accomplish it. Do you have any ideas about how it could be accomplished? What procedures could laymen follow, for example, to gain some input?

*Hackett:* I think support of the local church is the first step. When laymen support their local church strongly, the church will recognize their capabilities; it won't be long until they will be in leadership positions of the church locally.

At the General Conference, we often call in people who are outstanding in some of our institutions—for instance, in our universities. We're calling them so much now, in fact, that the universities and colleges cry, "Look, don't call them any more! We've got a teaching job for them to do!"

*Moore:* So the way you see it, then, the invitation comes from church leaders to the laymen?

*Hackett:* That's right.

*Moore:* Then the layman really can't do anything to initiate this?

*Hackett:* He can be a leader where he is. That's the first thing to do. If he is recognized by his local church as an outstanding leader, we'll soon get the message on the top levels.

*Eva:* Lay "input" is obviously most effective at the local church level. But consecrated laymen can and do make a most valued contribution at other levels, too—on conference, mission, union and other executive committees, and on institutional boards.

There are, moreover, laymen's advisory committees. They are organized especially to provide a channel for lay input into the operations of the church on conference and mission levels at times other than the usual session of the conference or mission.

Furthermore, there is value in direct counsel from thoughtful laymen to conference, union and other officers. I look back over 40 years of service to the church and recall many occasions when I have greatly valued the help given me by laymen. I have not always agreed with everything they said, but I have been greatly enriched and strengthened by their counsel.

*Wilson:* Let me comment on how I think a layman can gain this input we're talking about.

Individuals who are interested in certain issues that they see in the local church or that they recognize in an institution, or the conference, or in the North American Division, or even in our international family—if these individuals would let some of us at the General Conference know of their interest, this would help.

We often bring together groups for a couple

of days, to identify a problem. We parcel out assignments, and then members of the group go back home and work on it for a few weeks or a few months. Then we call another meeting, and the members of the group come together again, to make a report to each other. Usually, we get together three, four times, maybe more before we are through.

Take, for instance, the committee that studied divorce and remarriage. We brought them together many times, but there were quite long periods in between, when they were modifying, refining, doing additional study.

I think the way for laymen to start would be to let us know their particular areas of interest and expertise. This would work at all levels—local, conference, union, General Conference and division levels. When someone has worked with a committee at the local level, he

would be among the first the General Conference would try to pull in.

*Moore:* Are you saying that any layman who wants input should simply let church leaders know of his interest and the areas where he has particular competence?

*Wilson:* Well, we like to find those who are willing to give and take. When there are a number of differing opinions to be considered, we have to find a common ground, unless there's a very clearly articulated doctrine over which there is little controversy. We've got to find persons who can feel a part of a group, moving towards a solution. I think human judgment and wisdom and the collective strength of the church must be brought to bear, to find a way through issues that confront us.

*Moore:* Since we're talking about laymen's input at the local level as a starting point, I

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## Duncan Eva: Years of Upheaval

The Evas were among the earliest English settlers in South Africa, arriving there in the 1820s. More than 100 years later Duncan Eva, then 13, was baptized as a result of tent meetings in his hometown of Aliwal North. It was a town of perhaps 3,000 English and 3,000 nationals. His father worked on the railroad.

Eva studied at Helderberg College and began his career with the denomination in 1934 as an elementary schoolteacher in a single-teacher school. Later, he did mission work among the Indian population in South Africa at Natal.

For the past 30 years, he has been in administrative work.

Eventually, Eva came to the United States to complete his college education in 1949 at Walla Walla College and an M.A. degree from the seminary in 1950.

Division-level work has brought him some of his greatest satisfactions. His longest term of service at this level was with the Trans-Africa Division as secretary from 1954-1965. During seven of those 11 years, Robert H. Pierson was president.

"In the General Conference, you can become isolated and insulated," he says, "but in the division you are next to what's happening and your work has a wide scope."

Eva's service between 1954 and 1965 coincided with years of political upheaval in Africa that brought many difficulties for the Adventist Church. As secretary of the Division, Eva was at the center of every major issue.

Those who worked with him there believe that his great contribution to the church during these years was in his ability to discern the crucial issues in complex situations and provide clear and workable solutions, particularly in rewriting policies, constitutions and organization procedures.

In 1973, Eva became the General Conference vice president assigned specifically to administering the flow of church business coming into the headquarters office. While others travel the world attending business sessions, Eva keeps the wheels turning at home, making sure that decisions get made, and that once made, they get carried out. His fellow workers regard him as very human and approachable. When away from work, his chief interest is working with wood in a little basement shop.

His concern for the church is one he cites from Revelation 4 and 5—that the church find complete devotion to Jesus Christ. "We're not to be preoccupied with saving ourselves or even other people, but in glorifying God," he says.

would like to ask what you think about the question of laymen's having something to say in the choice of their own leaders: pastors and conference officials.

*Wilson:* Well, I've found that when laymen realize that we aren't trying to put something over on them, that we don't have a predetermined choice, there is a meeting of minds and a working together in these matters. I have discovered that laymen not only ask for but also appreciate the counsel and advice of leadership. I remember sitting for almost three hours with a nominating committee, listening to them analyzing some of their needs in that conference, some of their hopes, some of the vision they had.

I don't find it strange at all for there to be a desire for input in the choice of leadership in the local church or, in fact, at any level of the church. I think we miss a lot when we try to move things through so fast that we don't take time to develop rapport between members and leaders.

*"I find a desire among intelligent young members for more openness on the part of leadership and a longing for worthwhile participation. They think church leaders ought to make this possible. I think they're right; church leaders ought to be devising ways to bring about greater participation."*—Neal Wilson

You know, the longer I work with people the more I see that interaction isn't something that develops in just a couple of minutes in a group that have never worked together. This takes a little time. And, of course, we all have to realize—leaders and laymen—that in a committee or in the selection of people we can't always have the ideal. In the final analysis, we've got to be practical about this, but let's come as close together as possible in deciding what we ought to do.

*Hackett:* I'd like to say something about this point. I know that many laymen feel they do not have enough say in what's going on. We need

a balance in that, and I think we're trying to get that balance. Our lay advisory committees, which are totally laymen except for conference officials, are one way to get that balance.

But as long as we hold ministers responsible for the success of the church, they must have authority as well.

If you hire me to run your business and you say to me, "I'm going to hold you responsible, but I'm going to make the decisions and choose the personnel," I'll say to you, "Excuse me; you run your own business."

You see, we have a trained ministry; we hold them responsible for the success of the church. Ministers, of course, report back to the laymen, to our constituencies. But the minute laymen take over and attempt to run the church, to choose the personnel, to make the decisions, irrespective of the ministry, then they will also have to accept the responsibility. And this would mean that we would have to change our complete concept of church administration.

*Moore:* You're saying that there are limitations on the input laymen can have in church affairs, such as the choice of ministers?

*Hackett:* There are limitations on how far we can go in separating the ministry and the laymen. There must be an input from both. But the responsibility for the success of the church rests with the ministry.

*Moore:* Is it possible to find out what laymen would like in a pastor and perhaps even whom they would like?

*Hackett:* I think so. And we do that.

*Moore:* What dangers do you see in the participation of laymen in decision-making?

*Hackett:* I don't think there are dangers as long as we have a balance between laymen and ministers. We're all working together for the same objectives.

*Eva:* I do not know that I see any dangers in the participation of laymen in the formation of church policies and decision-making. They should participate, and their growing interest and concern is something that church leaders value increasingly.

However, we must not forget that the more fully one becomes acquainted with the problems and responsibilities in a certain area, the more his opinions and even convictions are modified. It may not be so clear in the United States, because of its form of democracy, but we have

all seen how irresponsible some politicians can be when in opposition and how much like those they oppose they come to be when responsibility once again rests on their shoulders! This may illustrate what can happen as laymen become better acquainted with some of the situations that church leaders face.

*Moore:* Do you see any dangers in lay participation, Elder Wilson?

*Wilson:* No. In fact, I see a lot of strength. I find no great clamor and no great feeling of uncasiness on the part of laymen where there is open communication by leadership. A leader has to work at that—I mean, to learn how to communicate. It is possible for a leader to be saying a lot and using many words but still not communicating with people. He needs to stop talking and listen. Listening is a part of communicating. When you have made it clear that

you're willing to listen, there's generally a very relaxed feeling; then laymen feel they are participating on an ongoing basis and don't have to demand participation.

*Moore:* Let's look at another area for a moment. What about our overseas programs? To what extent are church leaders seeking input from Seventh-day Adventist laymen who could make a contribution in planning or carrying out overseas missions programs?

*Eva:* We have several programs in which laymen are giving help in overseas fields. There is a plan known as Adventists Abroad, for example, by which the church seeks to make discreet use of the services of such people. Then there are also the Adventist Volunteer Service Corps and our student missionary plan. Of one student missionary I was told, "Send us as many like

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## Willis Hackett: Scrutiny of Doctrine

**T**he father of Willis J. Hackett held seances and never failed in contacting the spirit world. He was a public hypnotist and spiritist.

That was long ago. The girl Hackett was later to marry urged him to attend tent meetings being held by Luther Warren in Pennsylvania, and they both became Seventh-day Adventists.

After one-half year of college, with the Depression bearing down upon his family, Willis Hackett took a job teaching the largest one-teacher school in the Colorado Conference. There were 26 students in all eight grades. At the end of the year, an Adventist contractor, M. E. Carlson, offered to sponsor him back to college if he would take the ministry. Hackett agreed.

Following graduation from Union College in 1939, he began his ministry as a pastor in Texas.

Looking back over his career, which has included 30 years of administrative work, Hackett still feels the six years of pastoring were the most rewarding.

In administration he has most enjoyed being a union president—a position he held in the North Philippines from 1956-1958, the Atlantic Union from 1958-1964, and the North Pacific from 1965-1968. The vice presidency of the General Conference is essentially a technician's job, he points out. One must work largely through other

people and committees.

Currently, Hackett is vice president for coordination of the church's education and health programs. He sits on numerous boards and committees. He also works with the Biblical Research committee and the Geoscience Foundation. Since being in the General Conference, he has helped reorganize the flow of work at headquarters by fathering a plan aimed at making sure what's been decided actually gets done.

Hackett sees himself as a team-man, one who works to weld a group together to get a job done.

A number of issues face the church in the next five years, Hackett believes. Among them: Scrutiny of doctrine, acceptance of Ellen White, the need for a worldwide unity of the church, more tensions between liberals and conservatives, the search for leadership "which will stand up and be counted," facing increasing demand for hospital and education unionization of workers, making church-sponsored education truly Christian education and, of course, economics.

Outside of his strenuous work life, Hackett takes occasional refuge in a few hobbies—a good library, a shop, tinkering with his auto, and when he can, a weekend at the lake with his boat.

David as you can find; there is always a work for them.”

In some countries of the so-called “Third World” large accessions of membership are the order of the day. Behind the thrilling reports are real problems, however. We can never consider the church’s task complete until in every land it has its roots deep in native soil. True Christian maturity will be lacking until the indigenous church stands on its own feet.

I have a growing conviction that in order to accomplish this maturity faster, it is going to be necessary for some overseas missionaries to make greater sacrifices. I mean specifically that there must be greater identification with the people they go to serve than there has been in the past. This obviously will involve a great challenge, but I believe God has His people who will meet it.

*Moore:* This is getting away from the subject of laymen’s participation in church affairs, but I wish you would tell me to what extent overseas divisions influence the thinking of leaders on issues of the church here in North America. Take, for example, such subjects as divorce and women’s role in the church.

*Hackett:* As you know, committees of laymen and church leaders have studied both subjects. The study on divorce and remarriage was done largely for North America, but reports on both subjects went to our overseas officers because anything we do here in North America in regard to either the role of women or divorce affects the overseas divisions.

I’ve served overseas, where we have a policy book for our duties. We adapt many of the General Conference policies to the division in which we work—all the divisions do that—but these policies are operational differences, not major theological concerns of the church. In these concerns, we must stick together.

**M***oore:* Let’s go from this to a related point. To what extent do you think the church can tolerate differences in theology?

*Wilson:* I think there’s something very wholesome about discussion of theology. There are many today who have questions about doctrine, who could be greatly helped if we would dialogue with them.

But we have to remember that doctrine is not

arrived at simply by popular vote. This is something which, of course, some people don’t understand. They feel that we ought to be able to vote on doctrine or theology as we vote on a lot of other issues. But I think we shouldn’t be afraid to discuss these things together.

*Hackett:* I think there’s plenty of room in the Adventist church for differences in the fringe areas of doctrine: the 144,000, for instance, and certain other areas of the three angels’ messages.

But there are certain fundamentals given to us by inspiration and well established by the church, which we all must believe to be Adventists.

*“Lay ‘input’ is most effective at the local church level. But laymen can make a valued contribution at other levels, too,—on conference, mission, union and other executive committees, and on institutional boards.”*

—*Duncan Eva*

I draw a small circle, and in that circle I put the things that are explicitly Bible and Ellen White; these are the doctrines that every Adventist ought to believe. Around that I draw a bigger circle, and in it are those matters that no one can pin down exactly. Some people think they’re in the inner circle when they’re in the outer. The danger, I think, is that young intellectuals sometimes become so enamoured with a concept in the outer circle that they think everybody has to believe it, and they must propagate it everywhere.

*Wilson:* We need to remember that differences of opinion don’t necessarily indicate disloyalty. I don’t find very much substitute for direct, open discussion when we differ. We need to sit down together and say, “O.K., let’s put things out on the table and see how far apart we are and why. What’s the basis? Is it philosophical, theological, or organizational?” When you trace these things back, very often you find that you’re really not very far apart.

*Moore:* What direction do you think the thoughtful young Adventist can go when he differs from the church on points of doctrine or

of church government? What possibilities are there for dialogue in our periodicals, for example?

*Hackett:* I think our periodicals may be the place for differing opinions within reason. But I would object to someone's carrying a confrontation before the whole church in one of our publications. Take SPECTRUM, for instance: I would be a little careful there because I think we have a lot of unsuspecting and unknowing people whose faith and trust and confidence in the church might be marred by carrying some controversies into the open.

*Moore:* Then what would you see as offering a forum for dissent?

*Hackett:* We have set up committees; we have one, for example, which deals with differences in opinion in the Bible and science. Then in the area of church government there are conference

committees and constituency meetings. Anyone can air his ideas in a constituency meeting.

*Moore:* What about the committees you mention—what is the procedure for getting a hearing in the committee which deals with questions about science and the Bible?

*Hackett:* The best way would be to write a paper. The paper would be aired, and the writer might be invited to discuss this with the committee, if his peers see in this something worthy of further exploring; if they don't, they would probably tell him, "Look: you're off base here and here and here. Think it over again."

I'm a little afraid of airing differences in print, however, for the simple reason that this gives the church the appearance of being frag-

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## Neal Wilson: Exhilarating Risks

Before he was five years old, Neal Wilson was learning native languages in Central Africa where his father was a missionary. His playmates were black children who taught him to make simple primitive traps to catch small birds and animals.

He attended high school and completed a junior-college education at Vincent Hill in India, where about 250 missionary children and children of well-to-do Indians studied together.

After his graduation from Pacific Union College in 1942, Wilson was married and began language study in preparation for mission work. His first assignment was with Middle-East Division. He became president of the Egypt mission at the age of 24.

If he weren't a vice president and had to choose another job for himself in the denomination, Wilson feels he would look to the religious liberty field. When he began his work in Egypt, officials told him Seventh-day Adventists had contributed nothing to their country and it was their hope to see the church organization terminated. Taking this as a challenge to his religious liberty interests, Wilson pledged to keep the doors open to Seventh-day Adventists rather than letting them slam closed. Before leaving the Nile Union in 1958, he became adviser to the governor of Cairo on religious liberty, developed

close friendships with many religious and political leaders in the Middle East and negotiated for the opening of Adventist work in Libya, Sudan and Aden. He received a citation from the Libyan government for opening the Benghazi Hospital.

Wilson became vice president in charge of the North American Division in 1966. He is known as one who "listens" and this makes him the natural target for those who are either disenchanted or who seek counsel and blessing upon new ideas. His appointment calendar is booked weeks in advance.

He is an avid mountain climber. He and his son have already seen the summits of the peaks on the east coast and the Tetons. His next objectives include mountains in Glacier National Park, and someday, Mt. McKinley. The ropework is dangerous, he admits, but the risks are exhilarating.

The greatest challenge facing the church, he feels, is "our being able to recognize the gifts of the spirit in the church—how they can mesh and work together to offer the maximum thrust and strength to cope with the demands that face us." He adds that while Adventists must be a working church they must primarily be a witnessing church. "We must keep a balance between organization and an awareness of our purpose for existence."

mented. Often when this is done you weaken the confidence in leadership. The Lord only knows we need all the confidence we can get in this day and time, to lead our people forward into the truths of righteousness without being fragmented. Of course, a lot depends on how it's done. Many of the articles that have come out in SPECTRUM I think have been very thoughtfully done without being detrimental.

*Moore:* You seem to see what is published as having more impact than what is spoken.

*Hackett:* Yes, because it's in a smaller group when it's spoken. There's a place for everything. I think the place to bring our differences is to a small group of responsible people who are knowledgeable in the area. I tell teachers this. The place to propound a question is not before a class of youngsters; it's among your peers who are knowledgeable in the area.

*Moore:* May we go a little farther with this idea? What about presenting two sides of a question in the classroom? For example, what would you think of presenting two views of creationism?

*Wilson:* I wouldn't be at all adverse to getting two sides of the question, provided the teacher has some convictions. I feel very uneasy when the teacher has no personal convictions. Anyone will certainly discover, without any question, that I have arrived at some conclusions about creationism. I see no great problem in alerting students to many of the things they're going to confront and making them aware of the issues involved. I would hope, though, that they would not be left in a dilemma, a state of uncertainty, as to what their teacher believes.

*Hackett:* A teacher can present all the theories of the world in that class; I think this is perfectly all right. Students ought to see the various sides of a question. But when all is said and done, you're teaching in a Seventh-day Adventist school, with a Seventh-day Adventist salary, paid for by a Seventh-day Adventist constituency. That being the case, I expect you to say, "Here's where I stand." If we don't have that kind of responsible teaching, then there's no point in our paying for our school system.

*Moore:* This suggests another matter. What about those Seventh-day Adventists who are on a secular college campus, rather than a Seventh-day Adventist one? What hope do you see for redefining or perhaps extending the ministry of

the church to take in this group? We seem to be offering pretty much the same diet to everybody now. What about the needs of graduate students on secular university campuses? What about racial minorities? Professional women?

*Wilson:* I'm not sure I have the most adequate answer at this point, but I'll attempt one.

I think the Master, in His ministry and His life, which were to be an example to us, made it clear that we ought to try to meet people where they are; we ought to have something for people where they are. The trouble is that it's difficult

*"I'm a little afraid of airing differences in print, for the simple reason that this gives the church the appearance of being fragmented. Often when this is done you weaken the confidence in leadership. But it depends on how it's done."*—Willis Hackett

to put together in one person what it takes to meet all situations. The Master could do it, but I'm not sure I can. However, I think He expects me to be discerning enough as a leader to recognize the variety of gifts in the church, and if one person can't do everything equally well, then perhaps we simply need to look around us for those with gifts I don't have.

We tend too much to restrict ourselves to a few channels; we are not doing enough in some of these areas you mention. Take the campus ministry, for example; we aren't doing much of anything there. If we recognized the variety of gifts in the church, we would see that some can meet that kind of challenge.

What I'm saying is that we stick too closely to rather circumscribed patterns of work, to the neglect of large segments of the population that we should be trying to reach.

*Moore:* To what extent do you think your answer would reflect the thought of other leaders?

*Wilson:* I don't want you to think that I am presuming to speak for the church or its leadership. I'm giving you only my own opinions.

In the basics, however, I think we would be

pretty close together. Oh, some would express it differently than I have; but while their answers would come out in a different style, the meaning would probably be about the same.

*Moore:* I would like to look at one more area. How do you react to the criticism that we're still trying to answer questions nobody's asking?

*Eva:* It is true that we can and do at times all address ourselves to questions no one is asking. We can all be completely irrelevant and amazingly blind to that fact, also.

On the other hand, we are never to judge what is really "relevant" by what the majority, or a worldly-wise minority, considers "relevant." We know Jesus asked and answered some very relevant questions that many people considered irrelevant and would have preferred Him to be silent on. While we must answer the questions that people are asking and answer them with the truth, I hope we will never stop asking and answering some "irrelevant" questions that people would prefer us to be silent on.

*Wilson:* I'm not sure what the questions are, that nobody is asking. I suppose it depends a little on what some consider to be the most pressing, urgent needs in their own experience or in their own circle.

Sometimes people are grappling with some very real situations, day by day, and we're dealing with philosophical problems. Our philosophical problems may have principles which could be applied to those day-by-day situations, but the people to whom we preach may find it difficult to see the principles and to put them together.

*Hackett:* Today we're dealing with people who don't know the Bible. I met a lady on a plane the other day; we were talking about some of these things, and when I mentioned the flood, she said, "What flood?"

*Moore:* How would you approach someone like her?

*Hackett:* I would have to start where she is and try to find a point of reference. I could start with health—everybody's interested in that. Or I could start in the area of economics. In other words, I would start in any area that troubles the person I'm talking with, and lead him into the context.

*Moore:* But as you see it, our mission is still pretty much a Bible-preaching mission? How would it differ from Billy Graham's?

*Hackett:* There's no question in my mind that we have a Bible mission to save men, to introduce them to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the special concepts of Adventism. We have doctrines that nobody else has: the sanctuary, which is the key to the whole plan of salvation, and the investigative judgment, for example.

*Moore:* Is it possible that these may be in the area of questions nobody's asking?

*Hackett:* Yes, if I began there. But sooner or later if I'm going to lead people back to God I have to cover these points.

*Moore:* To what questions do you think we should be addressing ourselves, for the most part? In other words, how do you see the mission of the church in 1975?

*Wilson:* Just what it has always been: to interpret the real character of God, and what solution He has offered for the problem of sin and its destructive results, and to show that the gospel actually works and that it's for everyone.

**E***va:* I think one question to which we should be addressing ourselves is how much are we truly studying the Bible and to what extent are we letting its message speak to our hearts? There is no book in the world that is more relevant in every age than the Bible. While we sit (whether laymen or ministers) on the throne as David sat in great self-confidence and assurance, handing down our moral judgments on this and that, we had better be listening. The Bible could be saying, as Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man!"

We should also be addressing ourselves to the question of our great spiritual need and most earnestly seeking to be completely possessed by the Holy Spirit, to know the strengthening with might that comes in the "inner man," and the blessed results that flow out from that experience.

I know no questions more important than these. When they are answered in our experience, our mission as ministers and laymen will be abundantly clear to us.

# How the General Conference Election Works

by Alvin L. Kwiram

This July in Vienna more than 1,700 delegates and 10,000 visitors will meet for the fifty-second session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. To most, this will be a time of reaffirmation and pageantry. But it will also be the time when the church chooses its leaders. And in an organization where power, policies and programs flow outward from the leadership to the laity, it is important that the leaders be chosen with great care.

This article, therefore, examines the procedures by which the leaders of the church are chosen. First, I shall discuss the composition of the delegation, the selection of the nominating committee and the decision-making processes. (The constitution of the General Conference forms the basis for a general understanding of the procedures, and is reprinted for your convenience at the end of the article.<sup>1</sup>) The second part of the article offers some criticisms of these election procedures.

The voting body of the General Conference in session is composed of regular delegates and delegates-at-large. The number of regular delegates allotted to each union is based in part on the membership: one delegate for each 2,500 members or fraction thereof. Each union is allowed one delegate for each local conference and mission plus one additional delegate which I shall call a "bonus" delegate. Therefore, with world membership somewhat above

*Alvin L. Kwiram was the first president of the Association of Adventist Forums. At present, he is chairman of the board of editors of SPECTRUM. His doctorate is from the California Institute of Technology and he is a teacher in the chemistry department at the University of Washington.*

2,500,000, there will be slightly over 1,000 regular delegates.<sup>2</sup>

As an example, the North Pacific Union Conference of North America, with a membership of close to 55,000, is entitled to at least 22 regular delegates based on membership, six regular delegates based on the number of conferences and missions and one "bonus" delegate for a total of 29 delegates. In fact, the total number of regular delegates from the North Pacific Union Conference to the 1975 General Conference will be 31—two more than the constitutional minimum. There will also be nine delegates-at-large from this union. The five delegates from the Washington Conference will be the conference president, an academy principal, two pastors and a lay member of the conference executive committee. This is a typical distribution of personnel except possibly for the presence of the lay person, and represents the will of the Union Conference Committee, which selects delegates, including those allotted to local conferences.

In addition to the thousand-plus regular delegates, there will be about 700 delegates-at-large. All 350 members of the General Conference Executive Committee are delegates-at-large by virtue of position. This number includes all division administrative officers and departmental secretaries as well as all union presidents. A complete list of the executive committee members can be found in the *Yearbook*. Finally, the Executive Committee (actually a small subset thereof) can appoint an additional 300 to 400 delegates-at-large. This open category provides for the appointment of representatives of institutions and departments not otherwise covered. It allows for response to the requests from unions for additional delegate allotments, and it provides a mechanism for rewarding certain individuals for their steadfast and long-standing

dedication to the church.

It is significant to note that of the total number of 1,700 delegates, all are appointed by those in office, and virtually all are employees of the organization. Very few laypersons and even fewer women are represented in the delegation.

The major official act of the delegates is the selection of the members of the Nominating Committee. This task is taken care of on the first evening of the session. The regular delegates from each division, together with the delegates-at-large connected with that division, caucus in order to select their representatives to the Nominating Committee. Usually each division president acts as the chairman of the division caucus which selects one Nominating Committee member for each 15,000 members in the division. (It is not uncommon in the larger divisions for each union delegation to caucus separately.) Figure 1 displays the relative membership of the divisions, and the corresponding (estimated) delegate count, shown in parentheses. There will be close to 170 members on the Nominating Committee.

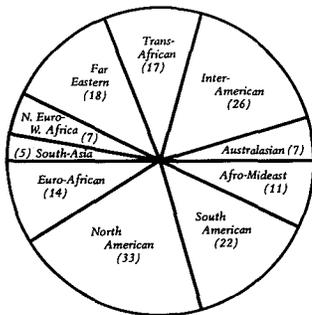


Figure 1. The relative membership of the ten divisions. The corresponding number of delegates who serve on the Nominating Committee is shown in parenthesis.

Only official delegates to the session may serve as members of the Nominating Committee. Delegates-at-large who must stand for reelection at the session may not be members of the Nominating Committee, even though they may participate in the actual voting on their own nominations and those of their colleagues. This includes all General Conference and division officers. The union conference officers represent a notable exception since they do not stand for reelection at the session. Indeed, the union conference presidents from North America invariably serve on the Nominating Committee. And because of the repeated occasions when

they serve together on various church assignments, they are the most influential and cohesive block on the committee.

Once the delegates have selected their representatives for the Nominating Committee, their major task is completed. They spend most of their remaining time at the session listening to and approving the various division and departmental reports. This process is interrupted intermittently to allow the delegates to approve the selections made by the Nominating Committee. The delegates rarely introduce new business from the floor. However, amendments to the constitution or the church manual sometimes elicit active discussion by the delegates. Of course, most policy questions of substantive character are considered at annual councils and studied in detail by appropriate committees before they are brought to the delegates in session for confirmation.

The newly elected Nominating Committee holds its first meeting the morning after the opening session. Acting under the temporary chairmanship of the General Conference president, the committee selects its own chairman who is usually a member of the North American delegation. After four to six nominations for the chairmanship have been made from the floor, the candidates are discussed by the committee and then voted on by secret ballot. Once the chairman is elected, the committee proceeds to elect a vice chairman, who is usually an overseas delegate.<sup>3</sup> Although interpreters are made available for those who do not speak English, their participation in the business of the Nominating Committee is obviously more difficult.

The committee then begins its substantive task—the selection of the officers. The first office considered is the General Conference presidency. The chairman invites nominations, which are usually halted after five to ten names have been introduced. Each name is discussed by the members of the committee and then voted on by secret ballot; each member votes for one candidate. Usually, no one receives a clear majority on the first ballot. The chairman has considerable latitude at this stage. If two or three candidates are clearly the leading contenders for the position, he may choose to submit those

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**H**ow does lay participation in church polity in the Seventh-day Adventist church compare with that in other churches?

Now very well, apparently.

At least this is the conclusion of a study done recently at Loma Linda University, Riverside campus, by E. J. Irish.<sup>1</sup>

On the local level, Irish finds no startling differences in the ratio of ministers to laymen among Seventh-day Adventists and three other Protestant churches: United Presbyterian, Southern Baptist and United Methodist.<sup>2</sup>

He notes that business is done in individual Seventh-day Adventist churches with a ratio of one minister to ten laymen. It is the same among Southern Baptists. Terms vary: Presbyterians call their local organization "sessions," which have no specific ratio; and the Methodists speak of "charge conferences," where the ratio is one to 15.

Procedures for choosing delegates to world assemblies such as the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists vary considerably.

Irish's study finds that among Methodists, Presbyterians and Southern Baptists, members of local churches have a voice in the selection of those who will represent them at the higher levels of church government.

Among Presbyterians, delegates to the top levels where polity takes shape—the General Assembly, held every year,—are chosen by presbyteries made up of an equal number of ministers and laymen from a dozen churches. In an annual conference, also with an equal number of ministers and laymen, Methodists choose delegates to their General Conference, held every four years. Among Southern Baptists, the local church is autonomous, and the local church chooses delegates to an annual General Convention,

What about Seventh-day Adventists?

Above the local congregation is the conference. Here, Irish finds some matters being decided by officers in a ratio of six ordained ministers to one layman. Above the conference is the union conference, with a ratio of ten to one. And it is this group—the union conference—that chooses delegates to the General Conference sessions every five years.

So much for procedures. Now, what about the ratio at this highest level, the General Conference session or its equivalent?

Irish has found that among United Presbyterians, Southern Baptists and United Methodists, the ratio of clergy to laymen is still one to one, straight across the board.

At the 1975 General Conference session in Vienna, however, it will be roughly 20 ministers to one layman.<sup>3</sup>

Irish has attempted to find also what ratios exist on key committees and boards. While the committees in the four churches are not parallel, he thinks some comparisons are valid.

The top five committees and boards of United Presbyterians maintain a one-to-one ratio, clergy and laymen. The two most important United Methodist committees have 54 members, 36 ministers to 18 laymen: that is, two to one. Five key committees or boards of Southern Baptists, with 202 members, all told, have 117 ministers and 85 laymen. In the 60-member executive committee, for example, the ratio is 34 to 26.

Again, what about Seventh-day Adventists?

By far the biggest committee of the General Conference organization is the executive, with a membership of 353. This includes 311 ordained ministers and 40 nonordained but denominationally employed and licensed persons. How many laymen? Two.

On three other key committees at the General Conference level, Irish finds no laymen at all. This is the case with the Sabbath school, communications, and stewardship and development committees.

Robert J. Moore

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Irish, who is instructor in Bible at Glendale Academy, did his research for a class he was taking toward his Master of Arts degree.

The choice of these groups had no particular significance, according to Irish.

<sup>3</sup> Irish obtained the statistics he cites by counting names in the 1973-74 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, then checked his count and understanding of procedures in a lengthy interview with a conference president of wide experience.

United Presbyterians, Southern Baptists and United Methodists publish organizational policies which specify the ratios of ministers to laymen at various levels.

three names for the second ballot. When one candidate has a simple majority, voting ceases. This candidate's name is then brought to the floor of the general session for voice-vote approval by the delegates. The delegates do not have the option of choosing between two candidates, and it is unknown for the delegates to reject a candidate submitted by the Nominating Committee. Once the new president has been approved by the delegates, he joins the Nominating Committee and participates actively (without vote) in the subsequent deliberations.

Normally, the president's immediate associates, such as the secretary and treasurer, are selected next. Then the committee selects the five general vice presidents and the presidents of the various divisions. Although these individuals do not join the Nominating Committee, the newly elected division presidents caucus with their divisional representatives who are on the nominating committee, and thereby have considerable influence on the selection of officers for that division. The selection of departmental secretaries and divisional officers represents most of the remaining work of the Nominating Committee.

Now some reflection on all of this. It should be readily apparent, first of all, that a General Conference session is a convocation of denominational employees—the lay-person has virtually no impact on the selection of the church leadership. This makes it crucial that the selection procedures be as democratic and open as possible. Many observers have suggested that the Nominating Committee submit to the delegates two names for each position, particularly for the major positions. Opponents of this approach usually counter that this would make the election process too “political”—presentation of a dual slate might encourage candidates to engage in the kind of political maneuvering associated with secular politics. But even if some few might be tempted to do this, they would do so regardless of the methods of election. The present system, after all, cannot prevent the surreptitious lobbying of key members of the Nominating Committee. And since the delegates themselves are not given a choice between candidates, the present system *encourages* secret lobbying.

It is difficult to find a logical reason for not allowing the delegates to exercise their corporate judgment. In the most important decision that the church organization makes, our delegates are not permitted a choice but merely an echo.

Another questionable aspect of present election procedures is the method by which information regarding the candidates is transmitted. Anyone who has worked on church nominating committees knows that appropriate information not available to the general public is frequently introduced. Beyond this, however, members of the Nominating Committee (and for that matter, the delegates) should be given the curriculum

*“The GC session is a convocation of denominational employees—the lay person has virtually no impact on the selection of leadership.”*

vitae of each major candidate for office. After all, the committee members are appointing persons who will administer large organizational structures involving thousands of people and millions of dollars. The committee members should not be asked to decide on a candidate on the basis of fragmentary information communicated orally and pre-selected by the person who is nominating him. The candidate's training and experience, his specific qualifications and his areas and length of service should be made available. Unfortunately, decisions now are based less on information than on image and personality. In an age when the church was smaller and more intimate, the information I am talking about may have been common knowledge. But with as many as 170 members on the Nominating Committee, that cannot be the case today.

I will not mention the many other changes that have been contemplated by lay persons, ministers and administrators. Some will object to even these few suggestions, saying they are “political” in nature. But I do want to make one further comment. Traditionally, Adventists have shunned secular politics. Ironically, this stance matches the lack of broad participation by members in the democratic processes within the church structure itself. Even knowledgeable and concerned lay persons are often uninformed regarding either the foci of power or the procedures for influencing the decision-making

processes. The fact that church government is representative, rather than purely democratic, underlines the paramount importance of an informed and active laity. At present, lay participation in church government is essentially restricted to the local constituency meeting—only there are lay persons in the majority. The ministers are the dominant force at the union constituency meetings and, at the General Conference session, the administrators are clearly in the majority. Thus, if lay participation at local constituency meetings is perfunctory, this forfeits the laity's one guaranteed opportunity to act as a majority in affecting decision-making in the church.

With only a barely perceptible commitment to the full implications of "the priesthood of the laity," we have slipped inexorably into a state of inaction, or "passivism." This is hard to change, and should greatly concern church leaders. The work of the church cannot be finished by the leadership; laity active in church government as well as in church ministry is essential for the completion of the task. Therefore, a major responsibility of church leaders at this time must be to discover the means to stimulate the laity to more active participation. This cannot be achieved merely by imposing programs from above; it will require careful examination of the talents and inclinations of the members of the church, and the creation of an atmosphere in which they will feel both the responsibility and the authority to act. Hopefully, this brief overview of one aspect of how the church works will help bring about fuller lay participation not only in proclaiming the gospel but also in shaping the vehicle which can make the transmission of the gospel more effective.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Taken from the *Seventh-Day Adventist Yearbook*, J. O. Gibson, Editor, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1975.

2. The numbers throughout this discussion are based on the membership as of June 30, 1974 (see reference 1), and therefore will not be identical to the final delegate counts which will be based on December 31, 1974 figures.

3. The chairman may choose to consider certain procedural matters at this stage. At one previous session, the committee voted to exclude those over 65 from consideration for office. This action was later criticized since that prerogative did not lie within the power of the Nominating Committee. Nevertheless, that procedural rule was in fact operational for the duration of that committee's actions.

## THE CONSTITUTION of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

### *Article I—Name*

This organization shall be known as General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

### *Article II—Object*

The object of this Conference is to teach all nations the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the commandments of God.

### *Article III—Membership*

Sec. 1. The membership of this Conference shall consist of:

(a) Such union conferences and union missions either in organized division sections or without divisional affiliation as have been or shall be properly organized and accepted by vote of the General Conference in session.

(b) Such local conferences and properly organized local missions not included in any division, union conference or union mission or such local conferences or local missions directly attached to divisions as have been or shall be properly organized and accepted by vote of the General Conference in session.

Sec. 2. The voters of this Conference shall be designated as follows:

(a) Delegates at large.

(b) Regular delegates.

Sec. 3. Delegates at large shall be:

(a) All members of the General Conference Executive Committee.

(b) Such representatives of missions of the General Conference and of general institutions and departments of work, and such general laborers and field secretaries as shall receive delegate's credentials from the Executive Committee of the General Conference, such credentials to be ratified by the General Conference in session. The number of these delegates thus seated shall not exceed 25 per cent of the total number of delegates in attendance otherwise provided for.

Sec. 4. Regular delegates shall be appointed in the following manner:

(a) Delegates representing union conferences shall be appointed by the respective unions.

(b) Delegates representing union missions, and local conferences and missions attached to the division but not to any union, shall be appointed by the division committee in consultation with the organization concerned.

(c) Delegates representing union missions, local conferences, and local missions without division affiliation shall be appointed by the General Conference Committee in consultation with the organization concerned.

Sec. 5. Regular delegates shall be appointed and accredited on the following basis:

(a) Each union conference and each union mission shall be entitled to one delegate in addition to its president, without regard to number, an additional delegate for each local conference and each regularly organized mission in its territory without regard to number, and an additional delegate for each 2,500, or major fraction thereof, of the membership of the union conference of mission.

(b) Each local conference or local mission directly attached to divisions or to the General Conference, as have been or shall be properly organized and accepted

by vote of the General Conference in session, shall be entitled to one delegate without regard to number, and an additional delegate for each 2,500, or major fraction thereof, of the membership of the local conference or mission.

(c) Calculation for delegate allotments shall be based upon the membership as of December 31, of the year preceding the session.

Sec. 6. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the General Conference to those appointed as provided for in harmony with the provisions of this article.

#### *Article IV—Officers and Their Duties*

Sec. 1. The officers of this Conference shall be a President, Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, Associate Secretaries, a Treasurer, an Undertreasurer, and Assistant Treasurers, who shall be elected by the Conference.

Sec. 2. President: The President shall preside at the sessions of the Conference, act as chairman of the Executive Committee, and labor in the general interests of the Conference, as the Executive Committee may advise.

Sec. 3. Vice-Presidents: Each Vice-President shall at the time of his election be assigned to serve as a general administrative assistant to the President or to preside over a division field.

Sec. 4. Secretary and Associate Secretaries: It shall be the duty of the Secretary and the Associate Secretaries to keep the minutes of the proceedings of the General Conference sessions and of the General Conference Committee meetings, to maintain correspondence with the fields, and to perform such other duties as usually pertain to such office.

Sec. 5. Treasurer, Undertreasurer, and Assistant Treasurers: It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all funds of the General Conference, and disburse them in harmony with the actions of the Executive Committee of the General Conference, and to render such financial statements at regular intervals as may be desired by the Conference or by the Executive Committee. The Undertreasurer and Assistant Treasurers shall assist the Treasurer in his work.

#### *Article V—Election*

Sec. 1. The following shall be elected at each regular session of the Conference:

(a) A President, Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, Associate Secretaries, Division Secretaries, a Treasurer, an Undertreasurer, Assistant Treasurers, Division Treasurers, General Field Secretaries, Division Field Secretaries, a Secretary and Associate Secretaries of the Ministerial Association, an Auditor and Associate Auditors, Division Auditors, a Statistical Secretary, a World Foods Service Secretary, a Director of Trust Services, a Secretary and Associate Secretaries of the Bureau of Public Relations, a Secretary and Associate Secretaries of each duly organized General Conference department: namely, Education, Health, Lay Activities, North American Regional, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Publishing, Radio and Television, Sabbath School, Stewardship and Development, Temperance, Young People's Missionary Volunteer; Division Departmental Secretaries (including the Health Food Departmental Secretary of the Australasian Division), Division Secretaries of the Bureau of Public Relations, and Division Ministerial Association Secretaries.

(b) Other persons, not to exceed 35 in number, to serve as members of the Executive Committee.

#### *Article VI—Executive Committee*

Sec. 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of:

(a) Those elected as provided by Article V.

(b) Presidents of union conferences, presidents of union missions, ex-presidents of the General Conference holding credentials from the Conference, the presidents of the two universities, the editor of the *Review and Herald*, the general manager of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, the general manager of the Pacific Press Publishing Association, the general manager of the Southern Publishing Association, the president of the Home Study Institute, the executive secretary of the Association of Privately Owned Seventh-day Adventist Services and Industries, and the manager of the General Conference Insurance Service.

#### *Article VII—Term of Office*

All officers of the Conference and those members of the Executive Committee provided for by Article VI, Sec. 1 (a), shall hold office from the time of election until the next ensuing regular session or until their successors are elected and appear to enter upon their duties.

#### *Article VIII—Incorporations and Agents*

Sec. 1. Such incorporations may be authorized by the General Conference in session, or by the General Conference Executive Committee, as the development of the work may require.

Sec. 2. At each regular session of this Conference, the delegates shall elect such trustees and corporate bodies connected with this organization as may be provided in the statutory laws governing each.

Sec. 3. The Conference shall employ such committees, secretaries, treasurers, auditors, agents, ministers, missionaries, and other persons, and make such distribution of its laborers, as may be necessary effectively to execute its work.

Sec. 4. The Conference shall grant credentials or licenses to ministers and missionaries except in division fields, in union and local conferences, and in organized union missions.

#### *Article IX—Sessions*

Sec. 1. This Conference shall hold quadrennial sessions at such time and place as the Executive Committee shall designate and announce by a notice published in the *Review and Herald* in three consecutive issues at least four months before the date for the opening of the session. In case special world conditions seem to make it imperative to postpone the calling of the session, the Executive Committee in regular or special Council shall have authority to make such postponement not to exceed two years, giving notice to all constituent organizations.

Sec. 2. The Executive Committee may call special sessions of the General Conference at such time and place as it deems proper, by a like notice as of regular sessions, and the transactions of such special sessions shall have the same force as those of the regular sessions.

Sec. 3. The election of officers, and the voting on all matters of business shall be a viva-voce vote or as designated by the chairman, unless otherwise demanded by a majority of the delegates present.

#### *Article X—Bylaws*

The voters of this Conference may enact Bylaws and amend or repeal them at any session thereof, and such Bylaws may embrace any provision not inconsistent with the Constitution.

#### *Article XI—Amendments*

This Constitution or its Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voters present and voting at any session: provided that, if it is proposed to amend the Constitution at a special session, notice of such purpose shall be given in the call for such special session.

# Where Did Adventist Organizational Structure Come From?

by Gary Land

The Seventh-day Adventist organizational structure is the outgrowth of more than a century of denominational experience. Developed first in response to a recognized, though also widely disputed, need for church order among the sabbatarian Adventists in the early 1860s, organization during the next half century evolved as the Adventist mission vision grew to worldwide proportions. The first quarter of the twentieth century witnessed the organizational structure's achievement of its modern form. Changes made since have not been major.

During the 15 years following the Great Disappointment of 1844, the sabbatarian Adventists expanded both numerically and geographically. Scattered in small groups from New England to northeastern Iowa, they were held together only by their common beliefs and the traveling and publishing of James White. Not surprisingly, difficulties arose that pointed toward the need for some kind of organization.

The Adventists discovered that they had no effective way to deal with such problems as dissident groups, the definition of proper ministers and economic support of the ministry. In addition, they needed a legal basis for owning church property and some central direction for evangelizing new geographical areas. As James White, among others, saw the problems, he called as early as 1853 "for order and strict discipline in the church."<sup>1</sup>

Progress toward organization moved slowly

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because many Adventists held a strong antipathy toward church institutions of almost any kind. One believer, R. F. Cottrell, opposed organization on the ground that it "lies at the foundation of Babylon. I do not think the Lord would approve of it."<sup>2</sup> Like many others, he wanted to leave the problems to the Lord to solve. Probably, such antiorganizational bias resulted from the expulsion of the Millerites from the established churches and the general anti-institutionalism that pervaded reform groups during the pre-Civil War years.

In 1859 James White proposed that yearly meetings be held in each state; the next year he issued a call for a general conference. This conference, which met in Battle Creek, Mich., in the fall of 1860, took the first step toward general church organization by adopting the name Seventh-day Adventist. Several months later, in May 1861, the "Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association" organized. Progress had been made, but stiff opposition continued. Patience with those who opposed organization ran thin. Ellen White, for example, wrote that "unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for the future."<sup>3</sup>

The Battle Creek conference of 1861 had taken another major step when it recommended that the churches in Michigan unite as a conference and appointed Joseph Bates as the state conference's chairman. Seventeen churches met together at Monterey, Mich., in October 1862 and entered into the conference. Immediately, they established a fixed remuneration for ministers and required that ministers report their activities and expenses to the conference. During the next few months, five more states followed suit in establishing their own conferences.

Delegates from all the state conferences except one, Vermont, met together in Battle Creek in May 1863. Believers in organization, the representatives took only three days to establish a constitution and elect officers. The resulting structure divided responsibility between the General and state conferences, giving the General Conference the general supervision of the ministry (transferring a minister from one state conference to another, for example) and the special supervision of all missionary labor. The state conferences held the power to appoint ministers to particular geographical areas and to grant ministerial licenses and credentials. The constitution also established the offices of president, secretary and treasurer, and an executive board of three, all serving one-year terms.

The organizational structure adopted in 1863 came from the leaders of the sabbatarian Adventists, not from the local churches. Significantly, the General Conference was composed of the local conferences and those conferences themselves had been organized in response to calls from James White, among others. That the local churches did not even hold the power to appoint their own ministers, a decision made probably because of a shortage of ministers, helped ensure that denominational leadership would never be strongly grounded in the local church. The new structure satisfied James White, for, a short time later, he wrote that "organization has saved the cause. Secession among us is dead."<sup>4</sup>

The primary object of organization on both the general and state levels had been to solve the legal problem of property holding, to define and support the ministry and to give general direction to the denomination. A workable basis for achieving such goals was now accomplished and the organizational structure developed in 1863 retained its basic form until 1901.

During the remainder of the century, however, the growth of the denomination's educational, publishing and medical institutions strained a structure that had not anticipated them. Between 1885 and 1901, for example, 12 publishing, 17 educational and 14 medical institutions came into existence. To make things more complicated, several of these establishments were missionary projects in such wide-

spread areas as England, Germany, India and Australia. Generally, they were operated on a stock basis with the stockholders electing the officials that would run the day-to-day affairs. The legal relationship and the line of authority to the denomination were unclear, a situation that resulted in considerable conflict and misunderstanding among denominational leaders and the various institutions.

*"For more than a decade, Ellen White had been admonishing the General Conference to divide responsibilities among top leadership rather than center it on the president."*

As a result of such problems, questions regarding denominational organization arose at nearly every General Conference session and several attempts were made to rectify matters. In 1887 the General Conference session created the post of corresponding secretary to help the General Conference president with his paper work. In addition, the session added three secretaries to supervise education, foreign missionary and home missionary activities.

Two years later, the General Conference session divided the United States into six geographical districts with a member of the General Conference Committee selected to superintend each district. Among other duties, this superintendent was to attend all the annual conferences in his district and advise the leaders of the local conferences and Adventist institutions.

In the meantime, several separate organizations had arisen in an effort to coordinate the denomination's outreach. In addition to the Publishing Association established in 1861, the denomination created the SDA Educational Society (responsible for Battle Creek College), the General Conference Association (to hold the property of the various church organizations), and the SDA Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association (to oversee health and welfare institutions).

Responding to a proposal by President O. E. Olsen in 1893, the General Conference session moved to change the district divisions into "conferences intermediate between the General

Conference and the State conferences.”<sup>5</sup> Two overseas districts were also created, one composed of Australia, the other of Europe. Envisioned to coordinate the Adventist Associations and to hold title to Adventist properties within their territories, the American district conferences concentrated on evangelism and never became real administrative units. Abroad, particularly in Australia, the districts developed into more effective organizations.

For more than a decade, Ellen White had been admonishing the General Conference to divide responsibilities among the top leadership rather than center it on the president. Up to 1897, the president also served as president of the Foreign Mission Board, the General Conference Association, the International Tract Society and the SDA Publishing Association. In that year, a number of changes came about. George A. Irwin became president of the General Conference but other men took the leadership positions in the associations (except for the mission board, which was discontinued). The Conference also divided church administration into three geographical areas: the United States and Canada, Europe and Australasia.

The difficulties continued, however. One administrator lamented, “The facts are, that no one can ever know the sad condition that things are in here on this side.”<sup>6</sup> Complaints arose of mismanagement of mission funds; assertions were made that the organizational structure was impeding forward progress. Although much soul searching resulted from these criticisms, the leaders took no major steps at the 1899 General Conference session. But a strong movement toward reorganization developed during the next two years, led largely by A. G. Daniells and W. C. White, who were currently leading the denomination in Australia, one of the few districts that had become effective administrative units. Further impetus for reorganization came from Ellen G. White who called for a General Conference Committee that represented all aspects of Adventist work.

As the 1901 General Conference session met, the movement for reorganization became dominant. Amid sermons decrying overcentralization, a large committee studied for a week the general problem of organization and then presented a number of suggestions to the conference. As a result, the conference decided to lodge leader-

ship in an enlarged General Conference Committee of 25 members, which would choose a chairman. The office of president was discontinued. The conference further recommended that the districts be developed into strong union conferences.

When the new General Conference Committee met a short time later, it chose A. G. Daniells as its chairman. Within a year, he was signing his letters and reports in the *Review and Herald* with the title president. Some dispute arose concerning this action but in 1903 the General Conference session officially reestablished the office of president and named Daniells to the post. The conference also resolved that all Adventist institutions should be owned by one of the conferences, state, union, or General and changed the constitution to provide for departments to give general guidance to the various aspects of Adventist endeavor and to take the place of the several associations that were by now discontinued.

On paper, at least, the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination by 1903 placed the General Conference president, who worked with a General Conference Committee, in the primary administrative role. Playing an advisory, rather than administrative, role were the yet-to-be-established departments. The second level of administration existed at the union conference level which was to cover large geographical areas and had yet to be made effective. The third administrative level was the state conferences, and at the bottom lay the local churches. In theory each level was to take care of the problems that did not need referral to a more general body. Thereby authority spread among all administrators, thus relieving the General Conference president of the need for intimate knowledge of the daily activities in all areas of the denomination. Such a change was regarded as necessary because it was impossible for one individual, or even a few, to carry the administrative burden and because the geographical growth of the church made communication and travel difficult.

Although the General Conference sessions created the structure, it took effective leadership to make that structure viable. In choosing A. G. Daniells, the denomination chose a man who

had considerable administrative experience. While serving in Australia, he had become president of the first union conference established by Seventh-day Adventists and on the basis of his experience there he had been instrumental in the push for reorganization of the denomination. Daniells' close association

*“Within North America, the denomination became more centralized. The medical, educational and publishing institutions were now all directly owned by the church.”*

with W. C. White and Ellen White also helped establish him as a strong leader. During the 21 years that he served as president of the denomination, Daniells brought it into its modern form through effective, if sometimes forceful, leadership.

During the twentieth century's first decade, Daniells led in establishing eight departments to help coordinate areas of activity in which the denomination was already engaged. The avowed purpose of each of the departments was the advancement of the gospel, although three—the Medical Missionary, Foreign and Negro Departments—developed in part because of internal denominational conflicts. The Medical Missionary Department attempted to make certain that the denomination's medical work would never again come under the control of someone independent of the church, as it nearly had under John Harvey Kellogg. The foreign and Negro Departments were responses to the demands of ethnic groups in the United States for leadership roles within the denomination as well as vehicles for reaching immigrants and blacks with the Adventist message. The other departments established during this time—Sabbath School, Publishing, Education, Religious Liberty and Young People's—prompted little controversy and, for the most part, simply took over the roles played by the previous Associations.

The next few years saw the creation of the Home Missionary Department and a Press Bureau, later to become known as the Public

Relations Department, but Daniells ran into problems when he pushed for a ministerial association. For decades, General Conference presidents had been concerned with the state of the Adventist ministry, believing that a lack of education was resulting in poor theology. Daniells was likewise concerned and in 1905 announced that improvement of the ministry must be a major goal of the church. Although a few small steps toward this goal had been taken in the meantime, in 1918 Daniells vigorously urged the General Conference session to establish a Ministerial Department. Because of fear that the department might have executive power over individual ministers, the conference sent the recommendation back for further study. Four years later, it established a Ministerial Commission, soon changed to Ministerial Association, with sharply defined duties: to collect facts on ministerial workers and their problems, to serve as a medium for exchange of ideas and methods and to encourage youth to train for the ministry.

This action in 1922 brought to a close, for the time being, General Conference efforts to carry out the 1903 recommendation to establish departments that would give counsel and direction to the various lines of the denomination's work. Under Daniells' leadership, the church had created its modern bureaucratic structure, for only two more departments—the Radio and Television Department and the Temperance Department—were added in ensuing years.

The General Conference, however, moved beyond the recommendations of 1901 and 1903. Although Daniells continued complaining that the Unions had not become effective administrative units, in 1913 he supported the creation of a new unit, the Division, to lie between the Union and the General Conference. The Division, he said, was a natural outgrowth of the local conference-Union Conference arrangement.

The concept of the Division had been first suggested by Adventist leaders in Europe in 1912 as a solution to the problem of coordinating the European work. A special committee considered the proposal for a European Division in January 1913, and recommended it to the

General Conference session meeting in the spring of that year. At the conference, Daniells asserted that the new administrative structure was needed to provide a "binding, uniting, authoritative organization" to enable the Europeans to work together in meeting crises.<sup>7</sup> Although several delegates objected to the possibility of establishing a larger bureaucracy, the proposal passed. In fact, the North American leaders found the concept of the Division so attractive that they were able a few days later to push through action establishing a North American Division, despite A. G. Daniells' opposition.

Establishment of the Divisions was now well underway. Although the 1918 General Conference session, upon recommendation of the General Conference officers, discontinued the North American Division, it accepted the Asiatic and South American Divisions that had been organized during the five-year interim. By the end of the next decade, all territory outside of North America had been organized into Divisions. The coordinated worldwide work that Daniells had envisioned when he became General Conference president had become a reality. In the meantime, the 1922 General Conference session had created a new constitution and bylaws that gave the Divisions the final authority in their territories, as long as their actions were in harmony with the plans and policy of the General Conference. It was hoped thereby that the Divisions could act with considerable independence, without having to rely upon Washington.

With the creation of the Divisions, the modern church structure had reached completion. Although, as the denomination grew, the boundaries of Conference, Unions and Divisions changed and new units came into being, the changes took place within the framework established by 1930. The organizational structure of 1975 is essentially that of 1930.

**T**heoretically, the changes made in organizational structure beginning in 1901 were to decentralize the affairs of the denomination. For the most part, the Unions were to be the means of this decentralization, but they never became really independent administrative agencies. The Divisions achieved this independence to a greater degree, helped along by the 1922

constitution and bylaws. Except for a five-year period, however, they existed only outside North America. Within North America, the denomination became more centralized. The medical, educational and publishing institutions were now all directly owned by the church, at the local, Union or General Conference level. The secretaries of the Departments who coordinated the various lines of endeavor within the church were now part of the General Conference Executive Board. The individuals chosen for these positions were now chosen at General Conference sessions and in almost all cases were ministers, a not insignificant change from nineteenth century practice. Furthermore, individuals might hold more than one position simultaneously, being both president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and an officer of the General Conference, for example. Such interlocking directorates clearly helped centralize activities at the General Conference level.

Although the centralized structure that emerged in the early twentieth century was not exactly what the leaders had in mind when they began seeking organizational change, it did prove effective in promoting denominational growth. By the mid-1920s, Adventism had clearly become a missionary church, for more Adventists lived outside North America than within. But although the denomination and the world it was attempting to reach changed at a rapid pace during the next half century, the organizational structure remained basically the same. Whether it is still adequate in 1975 is a question that deserves serious examination.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> *Review and Herald*, December 13, 1853, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1860, p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Review and Herald*, August 27, 1861, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> *Review and Herald*, June 2, 1863, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> C. C. Crisler, *Organization: Its Character, Purpose, Place, and Development in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. Washington, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938, p. 139.

<sup>6</sup> I. H. Evans to E. G. White, March 17, 1898, Ellen G. White Estate. Incoming Files. Quoted in Richard W. Schwarz, "Conflict and Expansion," unpublished typescript.

<sup>7</sup> *Review and Herald*, June 5, 1913, pp. 6-7.

Acknowledgment: For information regarding the history of Seventh-day Adventist organizational structure prior to 1900, I am indebted to the studies by Godfrey T. Anderson and Richard W. Schwarz for the forthcoming *Studies in Adventist History*. Any errors of fact or interpretation, however, are my own responsibility.

## 'How Humans See'

I am primarily concerned with how we as humans see," says Greg Constantine, chairman of the art department of Andrews University. "It is necessary sometimes to investigate other ways of 'seeing' in order to truly understand the phenomena we call vision."

The paintings featured in this issue of SPECTRUM represent Constantine's fascination with "the mechanics and illusion of sight." Here he turns his attention to the television image. "We say, 'There's Walter Cronkite,' when in reality he is not there at all," says Constantine. "Only three colors are used to imitate the infinite range of the subtle tints and hues of reality. The 525 horizontal lines used in TV limit the infinite range of physical variation of an object in real space. Economics and marketability limit the size of the TV image." Yet the human mind can adapt to this, can "accept the illusion as an extremely believable reality."

What the artist calls "the huge frozen image of a painting" gives an "objective view" of the

reality of TV watching—it reminds us that the mind makes distortion "believable."

Of the paintings shown here, one, "And Every Eye Shall See Him," moves away from readily identifiable TV personalities. Why did he include this in his series? "I had resisted for years to do a painting of Christ," Constantine explains. "But I think now was the right time, and the least it accomplishes is that it sharpens one's awareness of Christ's second coming because it helps us to think of it in a new way."

Constantine was born in 1938 in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, of parents who emigrated from Romania. He is a graduate of Andrews University (B.A., 1960) and of Michigan State University (M.F.A., 1968) and he has studied under Angelo Ippolitto, John deMartelli and Mel Liezerowitz. His work has been exhibited in the midwest, the south and at the James Yu Gallery in New York City. This summer he will have one-man shows in Bucharest, Romania and at The Gate in Georgetown, Washington, D.C.



"Carol Channing," acrylic on canvas, 51" x 65".



*"Every Eye Shall See Him," acrylic on canvas, 69" x 89."*



*"Colonel Sanders," acrylic on canvas, 51" x 65".*

# How To Be a Movement, Not a Machine

by Charles Teel, Jr.

How can the institutional church remain responsive both to its message and its membership? How can it incorporate the “first love” of the past and the “latter rain” of the future into the nitty-gritty of the institutional now? In short, how can those who are committed to the institutional church keep the movement from evolving into a machine?

In pondering how the church can be at once a responsible organization and a responsive organism, I will draw on the work of pioneer social theorists Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber. Troeltsch's monumental *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, and Weber's *Sociology of Religion* and *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, have charted the course for much contemporary scholarship concerning the nature of religious institutions. Employing ideal types—generalized polar categories used for analytical purposes—these men laid the groundwork for the following constructs, which aid in analyzing the dynamics of change in religious institutions:

Type of organization: movement from sect to church

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Type of leadership: movement from prophet to priest

Type of authority: movement from charisma to bureaucracy

Before going on, let me express my clear hope that a review of these constructs will lead beyond the level of description to the realm of ends. As one who was reared on the church from the time I drank my mother's milk, and who still finds much meaning and fulfillment in nurturing and being nurtured by a gathered community of faith, I make no bones about subscribing to deeply rooted norms and values. These norms and values both inform and are informed by what I perceive as “empirical” reality. Thus, it is precisely because of a commitment to the church I love that I am led both as pastor and as sociologist to lean heavily on the sociological description of “what is” in directing efforts toward “what ought to be.”

*Sect/Church Organization:* The sect is defined as “a voluntary society, composed of strict and definite Christian believers bound to each other by the fact that all have experienced ‘the new birth’ ”.<sup>1</sup> As a voluntary association which one enters only after having experienced a conscious conversion, the sect tends to be exclusive and to appeal to the individual element in Christianity. The sectarian community views the sacraments as symbols of fellowship and accordingly stresses lay participation and the priesthood of all believers. Sectaries live apart from the world and emphasize the simple but radical opposition of

the kingdom of God to secular interests and institutions. They have no intention of evangelizing the social order but instead attempt to incorporate within their own circle a Christian order based on love. In protesting against the status quo and attempting to embody a corporate life style that offers an alternative to existing social structures, the sect appeals primarily to the lower classes and thus works "upwards from below and not downward from above."<sup>2</sup>

*"The priest builds up the system as opposed to inspiring renewal and reform. His first allegiance is the maintenance of institutional structures."*

The church, in contrast, is characterized by institutionalism, organization and tradition. Instead of joining voluntarily, members are "born into" the church. The institution, in turn, defines itself as the sole keeper of an objective treasury of grace which it dispenses through rites and sacraments administered only by stipulated functionaries. Desiring to cover the whole of humanity and to be coexistent with society, the church accepts the social order and becomes an integral part of prevailing social structures. Hence, it correspondingly becomes dependent on the upper classes and reflects an overwhelmingly conservative outlook. In sum, the church is "an institution which has been endowed with grace . . . , is able to receive the masses, and to adjust itself to the world."<sup>3</sup>

*Prophetic/Priestly Leadership:* The prophetic leader stands in the tradition of the rugged Amos and his Hebrew colleagues. His authority is legitimized by his claim to having received a divine command. Unencumbered by a tradition, a constituency or vested power interests, the prophet proclaims a "breakthrough" to what he perceives as a higher spiritual order. Sharing the sectarian characteristic of withdrawal from the social sphere, the prophet shepherds a gathered community who are dissatisfied with belief and practice in existing religious institutional structures. In inspiring a strong sense of community among participants, the prophet encourages fol-

lowers to contribute their energies and expertise in giving birth to the movement.

The priest, who is most directly associated with the church-type religious organization, claims authority by virtue of his office and years of service in a sacred tradition. In contrast to the prophet who does not work within a structural framework, the priest must perform established service and maintenance roles in relating to a specified constituency. His priority is that of building up the system as opposed to inspiring renewal and reform. His first allegiance is thus the maintenance of institutional structures.<sup>4</sup>

*Charismatic/Bureaucratic Authority:* The prophet exercises a charismatic type of leadership, that is, leadership that is authenticated as participants in the movement attribute to him exceptional "gifts of grace." These gifts are perceived to be of divine origin and on the basis of this the prophetic leader is invested with authority. In the religious community governed by charismatic authority, leaders are not technically trained. There is no hierarchy, no dismissal, no promotion. In place of formal procedure or abstract legal policy, the community responds to one claiming a divine "call" and, in turn, seeks creatively to enhance the workings of the movement.

A bureaucratic type of religious authority emerges as initial enthusiasm for the prophetic endeavor begins to wane. In its pure form, charismatic authority is specifically foreign to everyday routine structures. Hence, a rational organization of administrative procedures is called for. Bureaucratic forms are established with an emphasis on hierarchy of administrative offices. Then follows the creation of an administrative staff and the formulation of policy, procedure and protocol. As bureaucratic authority takes root, the laity become readily distinguished from the clergy. Creeds and formal statements of belief become numerous and complex. Formal declarations and abstract policy emerge as authoritative in place of the charismatic call to which the prophet lays claim.<sup>5</sup>

Each of the typologies of Christian faith and practice and social organization has roots in the gospel and the primitive church. In minimizing the lay/clergy distinction and maxi-

mizing the total involvement of the membership, the sect type uniquely embodies the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. In ascribing specific role and function to members of the body by way of structuring an ordered and organized church, the church type places a greater emphasis on the doctrine of the body of Christ. The sect type, moreover, builds on the model of a gathered community which seeks radically to live out the gospel ideal while awaiting the future Eschaton. The church type instead fosters a scattered community which bears witness to and through the present social order.

From the sectarian types cited above, we glean obvious traditional "goods." Creativity. Spontaneity. Involvement. Renewal. Community. Responsiveness. The search for authenticity. A romantic idealism and radicalism. The prophet inspires and pioneer movers of the movement move. There is little time or interest for rank or organization or typing carbon copies or logging information to keep service records up to date. There are wrestlings and probings and truth seekings and prayer meetings. To the common pot one member contributes a printing press, another contributes the use of a vacant carriage house, another contributes editorial expertise while yet another hustles paper and ink. Letters to the editor reflect intense involvement in both the belief and practice dimensions of the movement. Articles are diverse in that Truth is viewed as a quest. Editorials at once liberally blast the status quo of the world and inspire community and an eschatological hope among movement participants.

From those church types cited above we also glean traditional "goods." To gear a movement for action requires organization, structure, planning. There is the matter of paying a full-time editor or president or treasurer or subscription manager. Practical and existential questionings follow on the heels of the earlier enthusiastic affirmations. Who carries on the work of a prophet? How can we do this most effectively? Who educates the children? Can we trim down the purchase price of ink and paper enough to get by without raising subscription costs? Given the complexity of our involvements and the increase in personnel, would not a systematic statement of policy help encourage more fair and equitable treatment? What iden-

tity is uniquely ours in relation to the world we are called to serve?

The religious institution thus faces a paradox; the demand for commitment and spontaneity and broad participation, and the demand for systematic order and structure and procedure. Hand in hand with this "structure" paradox is the "function" paradox: the demand for sanctification through detachment from the world and the demand to be a leavening dimension within the social order. Said bluntly, can the religious institution have its cake and eat it, too?

*"The religious institution faces a paradox: the demand for commitment and spontaneity and broad participation, and the demand for systematic order and structure and procedure. Said bluntly, can the religious institution have its cake and eat it, too?"*

Troeltsch alludes to this matter of paradox in his conclusion:

The Ethos of the Gospel is a combination of infinite sublimity and childlike intimacy. On the one hand, it demands the sanctification of the self for God by the practice of detachment from everything which disturbs inward communication with God, and by the exercise of everything which inwardly binds the soul with God's will. On the other hand, it demands that brotherly love which overcomes in God all the tension and harshness of the struggle for existence, of law, and of the merely external order, while it unites souls in a deep spirit of mutual understanding, as well as in the most self-sacrificing love, which, even in its simplest expressions, gives a true hint of the nature of God Himself. This is an ideal which requires a new world if it is to be fully realized; it was this new world-order that Jesus proclaimed in His Message of the Kingdom of God. *But it is an ideal which cannot be realized within this world apart from compromise.*<sup>6</sup>

The essential issue, to be faced in this General Conference year as surely as it was faced in the

days of the early church, is how to handle the "compromise" demanded by this paradox. "The history of the Christian Ethos becomes the story of a constantly renewed search for this compromise, and of fresh opposition to this spirit of compromise."<sup>7</sup>

To return to the questions posed at the outset: How can the institutional church remain responsive both to its message and its membership? How can it incorporate the "first love" of the past and the "latter rain" of the future into the nitty-gritty of the institutional now? In short, how can those who are committed to the institutional church keep the movement from evolving into a machine?

If the ideal types of Troeltsch and Weber hold any response to these questions, it is this: the viable religious institution will have a structure, as church-type organization requires; but it will be a structure flexible enough to encourage sectarian creativity and dissent. In the creative tension which ensues, the priest is then consistently forced to respond to the exhortation of the prophet; the bureaucratic planners of program and policy are necessarily reminded that the nature and essence of their vocation is grounded in the lay-orientated and charismatic call to discipleship; and the church with its forms and traditions is obliged to be open to the sectarian nudge of reform and renewal.

Some may question how a contemporary community of faith might build on this model of sect-church diversity and still experience that unity which is by definition essential to the very existence of community. To this query I regularly hark back to the refrain which reminds us that the decisive New Testament passages on unity do not speak of one program, one form of ministry, one vote, or one life style. Rather, these Scriptures speak of one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism. In fact, unity shines more brightly in the conflict of wills than in concord, for it is in such creative tension that we see ourselves as brothers united under one God who is above all and who is Father of us all.<sup>8</sup>

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Troeltsch, Ernst, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. Vol. II. Translated by Olive Wyon. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960, p. 993.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 993.

<sup>4</sup>Weber, Max, "The Prophet." *The Sociology of Religion*. Translated by Ephraim Fischhoff. Beacon Series in the Sociology of Politics and Religion. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

<sup>5</sup>Weber, Max, "The Types of Authority and Imperative Control." *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons. New York: Free Press, 1947.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 999 (emphasis supplied).

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 999.

<sup>8</sup>See Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Life Together*. Translated by John W. Doberstein. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1954, p. 24.

# Sect or Denomination: Can Adventism Maintain Its Identity?

by Bryan Wilson

To sociologists, to describe the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a sect is simply to seek an appropriate designation for the movement, as one of a number of significant and eventually sizable religious movements that had their origin in the eastern United States in the nineteenth century. These various movements have become some of the largest minority religious movements in Christianity. They have become international, and they have given the very word "sect" a somewhat new dimension. From being small, local, separated, communities, sects have now become worldwide, growing, internationally organized bodies. Despite growth in size, however, they remain sects, separated from other Christians by distinctive teaching, a more uniformly dedicated life-style, and by a self-interpretation which claims at least a unique place in the Christian community (and which sometimes denies much of a place to other groups).

Let me pause to make clear the limits of my task. A sociologist looks for examples in social conditions. He treats his data as social data; religious movements are to him, social phenomena. The explanations of their emergence and development are to be looked for at least in very large part in prevailing social conditions. His attempt then stands in sharp contrast with

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the attempt of theologians to explain. Theirs is a normative discipline; he attempts a level of value-neutrality. Theologians are concerned with prescribing just what the truth is, with the implication that truth must then be canvassed against all other views which are, in greater or lesser degree, heresy. The sociologist, while seeking truth, is not committed to it. For him, the truth is not necessarily identified with the good or the desirable. The truth is limited to the possibility of establishing casual connections, describing functions, providing a mode of analysis which is convincing. It is not his business to look for correct statements of faith; to attribute truth to particular nonempirical propositions; to endorse particular ethical prescriptions. As far as possible, his language is neutral and his terminology is devoid of pejorative or commendatory connotations.

Thus, unlike theologians, who have usually used the word 'sect' in a pejorative sense, the sociologist employs sect in a neutral way to describe a separated minority, a group with ideological differences from those of the majority in the broad tradition which they share.

All the sociologist means by "sect" may be set out in a number of propositions which describe certain expectable (but not essential) characteristics:

1. Sects are separated minority groups, which have chosen to stand apart from traditional church communities. They also separate themselves from the culture of the wider society by their ethical precepts, and a sense of apartness and of special mission.
2. Sects claim a monopoly of the complete truth; (a) either as restoration of pristine teach-

ings, or (b) by special revelation appropriate to the time of their own emergence and to all subsequent ages.

3. Therefore, the sect represents itself as in some measure an "elite" vis-a-vis the outside world, a remnant specially preserved and with a special destiny.

4. Within the movement, there is an expectation of equal commitment of members, and rejection of all internal distinctions of religious virtuosity as a special calling.

5. This equal commitment is expected to be total commitment, and there is a sense in which sects seek to provide a total environment for their members in one way or another (either by attempting to control their mental orientation to the world, or by proscribing many aspects of secular involvement).

6. There is an emphasis on lay leadership and equality among members in respect of leadership roles, and often the rejection of a professional ministry, and certainly of a specialized professional "priesthood."

7. Concerned with standards of commitment, the sect must have mechanisms for the expulsion of the wayward and the maintenance of sect boundaries: thus there are tests of merit for admission and for continued membership.

8. The sect maintains a distinctive way of life, not merely separating its members from involvement in the world, but prescribing special modes of conduct and particular patterns of ethical obligations.

9. Thus sects stand as ethical protest groups against the wider society which is seen as in some measure damned.

10. The sect has a special historical sense of its own role in world affairs, reevaluating the historical past in terms of the sectarian present.

These propositions appear to hold, in a general way, for the groups that sociologists (and the man-in-the-street) readily identify as sects. Like all religious bodies, sects are concerned with salvation. They are communities of the saved, or at least of those who have made themselves eligible for salvation. What they are to be saved from may be variously specified, but in a sociological sense it can be said that the sect is saved from the world, from the destiny facing other men, and from the prevailing circum-

stances in society. There is a sense, sociological rather than theological, in which the sectarian movement itself is "salvation"—in taking men out of the wider society, and bringing them into a community which has a strong sense of its own sanctity and destiny. This idea of the community itself as salvation is an ancient one and conforms to a wide range of human experience. The extent to which it is consciously elaborated as doctrine varies, of course, from one movement to another, but it is often a discernible element in the appeal and self-interpretation of sectarian movements.

*"Mutation of response may also occur when events enforce some reappraisal of doctrine. Clearly, such reappraisal occurs most unalterably in respect of the failure of prophecy."*

The idea of salvation is, of course, capable of very diverse interpretations theologically. The different world religions conceive of salvation in very different terms—as the overcoming of desire; as the resurrection of the body; as the transmigration of the soul. In less abstract religious systems, salvation may be more concerned with "making things work" by magical devices; by eliminating illness; or by ridding oneself of the attention of a witch, a bad fairy, or a curse. Even within the Christian tradition divergent soteriological possibilities can be distinguished, and much of the spectrum, from the healing of the body to the purely spiritual conception of a heavenly afterlife, can be found in the Christian tradition—not excluding the need to be saved from an evil political order in the world. Whatever the theological content of the concept of salvation, however, there is a common sociological element which can always be discerned in the advice, activities and hope that have to do with salvation. That element is the search for present reassurances about one's life circumstances, one's life chances, or one's afterlife chances. Religious systems are always short on empirical verification. The prospects of salvation remain matters of hope in by far the

greatest part: even where healing of the body occurs by application to supernatural power, it is often emphasized that the subjective condition of the supplicant is more important than the objective power of the supernatural—men are healed by faith. This subjective element then is what the sociologist recognizes as the sociological aspect of salvation: salvation is present reassurance concerning what is culturally defined as great evil.

Clearly the problem of salvation from evil is faced by all sects within the Christian tradition. But different movements differ in respect of what they take to be evil, and in what form they expect salvation. Different sects have differing responses to the world. There are several easily distinguished hypothetical responses among Christian sectarian movements:

1. The *Conversionist* response, in which the emphasis is on “changing men” by prompting a subjective experience which is of such intensity that their attitudes to life, the world and their fellow men are all transformed. The emphasis is on the heart, and salvation largely consists in the awakening and release of new emotionally based orientations to the world. The Salvation Army, the Holiness movements and the Pentecostals approximate this position, which has the closest links of all sectarian positions with the older Protestant orthodoxy.

2. The *Revolutionist* response avers that God will change the world, eliminating evil and securing righteousness. This response is the expectation of the overturning of the world order and the establishment of God’s Kingdom suddenly by God’s own intervention in human affairs. The Jehovah’s Witnesses and Christadelphians most closely approximate this position.

3. The *Introversionist* response is to withdraw from the evil world. Neither men nor the world need to be changed. Men must be abandoned and the world must not be allowed to intrude into the piety of the community. This response was characterized by the English eighteenth century Quakers, by various communitarian groups and by the Exclusive branch of the Plymouth Brethren movement.

4. The *Manipulationist* or *Gnostic* response seeks to overcome evil by the use of secret knowledge of divine principles provided by God for man but partly hidden from him. The initiate learns how to manipulate his own

conceptions of the world, society and God in order to reinterpret events in ways which will diminish evil and enhance the prospect of the experience of salvation. Christian Science and the various New Thought movements are close to this position.

5. *Thaumaturgical* responses are similar to these last mentioned manipulationist responses, but they tend to be very much more limited appeals for dispensation from the operation of normal causation. They provide a personal and local experience of salvation in some immediate instance. This is less a belief in objective principles of the metaphysical sphere as in particular spirits or powers which have almost personal connotations and relationships. In western society, Spiritualists come close to this position.

6. The *Reformist* response is of a rather special type. Evil is seen as something that may be dealt with piecemeal by the application of conscientious effort and social works. Religious insights are largely reduced to the promptings of conscience in this position, which is much more affected by rationalistic interpretations of society. The contemporary Quakers are the closest sectarian group to this position.

7. The *Utopian* response is a radical demand for the complete reconstruction of human society on the divine plan. This response also occurs in strong rationalistic forms, but it is a possible Christian and sectarian response as long as the ends that are sought are believed to be in conformity with divine precepts. The Oneida community is an example of a group which adopted such a response.

These are hypothetical and pure types of “responses” to the existence of evil in the world and the need to overcome it or escape from it. Actual sects may adopt one or more of these positions at any given time, and in time may change the balance of their responses. Certain circumstances precipitate changes of response. Most typical of such changing circumstances is the impact of war, which may radically alter the living conditions of a sect, and its relationships with political authorities, nonsectarian neighbors, etc. A second kind of change may be prompted as a movement experiences a shifting balance between new converts and

second or subsequent generations of members. All persisting sects face the problem of socializing the children born to converts. All of them face the fact that second-generation adherents may have different preoccupations from those of their parents: they may interpret their own positions vis-a-vis the world rather differently; they may fail to appreciate positions that were hard-fought in the past; and they may be ready for much greater adjustments and accommoda-

*“The influence of internal specialists is likely to produce ambivalent relationships between different sections within a movement: between traditionalists and liberals, between intellectuals and men of simple faith, between organizers and thinkers.”*

tion to the outside world than was ever originally conceived as possible. Since most movements acquire new converts and second-generation adherents over a considerable timespan, the actual moment of tension is often far less dramatic than that which arises from the experience of war, of course, but analytically the two types of “intake” can be distinguished and some of the crucial problems isolated.

A third circumstance conducive to change is the problem of reconciling sect values to the changing life-circumstances of members. Not infrequently the austerity, regularity, conscientiousness and hard work that are enjoined in sectarian movements—the canons of Victorian virtue—result in considerable increases in the prosperity, education and social status of many members of the group. Wesley saw the logic long ago in regard to the Methodists of his own lifetime, but the problem is perennial. There can be no doubt that improved relative prosperity, a greater measure of education and the attainment of position and respect in the world are circumstances that tend to alter men’s religious predilections. To state an extreme case, the man who has attained social respectability in the business community may not find it congenial—as he may have done as a poor youth—to continue to

engage in the emotional excesses of an extreme Holiness sect. The consequences of such changes are various. In denominations with little differentiation, people may shift their allegiances (most easily effected when moving house) by leaving a denomination of lower general standing for one with a clientele which is closer to the newly attained position of the individuals concerned. Status confirmation can be obtained by belonging to the desirable social groups—churches included. Alternatively, the sense of allegiance to the group may remain, but the upwardly mobile members may entertain new ideas about the appropriateness of various group activities, the style of worship, the extent to which involvement in the wider society is justified and so on. Generally, as their members have risen in social status and prosperity, the pattern has been for sects to accept increasingly liturgical styles and forms of worship, and to seek parity with older churches in respect to excellence of buildings, robes and organs. Sometimes there is active competition with other denominations; sometimes the same trend appears to be simply the demand for “status congruence” in respect to religious and general social milieux.

**M**utation of response may also occur when events enforce some reappraisal of doctrine. Clearly, such reappraisal occurs most unalterably in respect of the failure of prophecy. Some explanations must be forthcoming to provide members with an adequate understanding of their position once firmly expected events have failed to take place. A number of possibilities always remain open, of course, some of which will perhaps fail to satisfy some of those who had previously been faithful. Usually, at least some measure of doctrinal readjustment must take place. In the matter of prophecy there must be a reinterpretation of the significance of dates, or new exegesis, for not only must failure be explained, but also new hope, commitment and reassurance must be provided. Not all failures have to do with actual prophetic exegesis, of course. Some are related to more general expectations: the growth of the movement (as in Christian Science); or the mental accomplishments of votaries following a particular process of therapy (as in Scientology, in

which the end-state of "clear," in which the individual would be free from all implanted engrams and so find himself with much improved memory and intelligence, has been at least twice reassessed as these desired results failed to be attained). Such reappraisal is, however, not necessarily an occasion for the mutation of pristine response; it is the occasion on which mutation might occur.

Among the various types of sect, it is the conversionist type—the sect which relies on a profound inner experience—which most causes the individual to alter his whole orientation to the world. The conversionist sect is most likely to undergo a process of denominationalization, and by sloughing off specifically sectarian characteristics to seek a place of parity among denominations. This particular type of sect is likely to be denominationalized for a number of reasons. In the first place, it was in many respects least differentiated of all sectarian groups from the general Protestant tradition, and thus could always take the older denominations as some type of reference point, even if a reference point of similar but more Laodicean movements. Secondly, because in part of the ease with which new members are drawn in, these groups are likely to undergo the experience of the loss of commitment on the part of their membership. Specific allegiance to the movement is often less emphasized than a general sense of being a saved individual. With this less intense commitment to movement boundaries, a certain fluidity of association may lead to diminished doctrinal rigor and to eventual adjustments for convenience. Third, there is implied in this position a wider tolerance of other groups, and their diverse or slackening standards may also begin to exert influence. The absence of a firm badge of identity to a particular tradition and to a known body of people encourages a dilution of original positions. Fourth, groups of this kind which are intensely committed to evangelistic campaigns, often develop a centralized bureaucracy, in which agencies of control evolve at the center which are themselves relatively out of touch with local and grassroots concerns. As the movement acquires increasingly specialized agencies, so the distinctions between professionals and laymen have every opportunity to develop. The process encourages a sense of specialized

divisions of labor in which differential standards come to be emphasized for professional ministers and local laymen. In particular, professionals may be expected to "know doctrine" while laymen need not be concerned. The absence of a widely disseminated knowledge of doctrine, and even of the distinctive "truths" of the movement further attenuates distinctive commitment. The growth of such a class of professionals is also a way in which decisions pass from the sectarian community to the special department. Technical considerations increasingly influence decisions without regard to local demand for involvement, or the pristine sense of the equal competence of saved individuals to discern the will of God.

*"The Sabbath teaching, perhaps more than any other item, has been a means of keeping Adventists separate and different. This is the badge of identity."*

Fifth, such movements tend increasingly to routinize their operation, and often become preoccupied with the success of their activities as measured in terms that can be used in the "rational" processes of accounting and book-keeping. Quality is somewhat surrendered for quantity—one has this perspective most consciously subscribed to in the writings of the missiologist Donald MacGavran. The swift conversion of people who are but little socialized to the values and norms of a movement cannot but lead to the dilution of the movement's goals and life-style. Since the characterization of a sect depends upon the members' being recognizable as sectarians before they are described by their occupation, ethnicity, education, etc., this process is a clear intimation of incipient denominationalism.

Sixth, and this follows from the fifth point, such is the pressure for conversions—now relatively easily attained through "changes of heart"—that the relatively unsocialized converts are likely to be pressed into the process of evangelizing, intensifying the process of dilution. Since these movements are not doctrinally oriented, it is easy for knowledge of doctrine to be discounted as long as the felt experience of

conversion has occurred. But the felt experience of conversion is not always easily communicated, and if communicated, is likely to be communicated with only vague doctrinal support. Uncertainty of specific commitment is closer to denominational positions than to that of pristine sects.

**R**evolutionist sects may also undergo mutations, but the likely change here is from the revolutionist, adventist position, to a much more introversionist position, particularly after the disappointment of unfulfilled prophecy. The formal hope of the advent may not be abandoned, but what may happen after either a specific disappointment with respect to time, or gradually as patience is increasingly demanded, is that the adventist idea may in effect recede in significance in the life-style and day-to-day involvements of the group concerned. The up-building of community life may loom more largely in the daily concerns of such a group—as with the Rappites of Pennsylvania. Or the emphasis may shift to the idea of salvation attained within the life of the community, as has occurred among the Exclusive Brethren. Formal doctrine is not in itself the only evidence of response to the world, for often sects inherit a wide and even divergent set of traditions, some of which more fully characterize its actual concerns than others. Even the Christadelphians, who had a strong and insistent adventual hope from their earliest beginning, became in the inter-war years a much more introverted group, although they now appear to be emerging increasingly as a reformist sect.

The Seventh-day Adventists do not conform to the mutation pattern of revolutionist to introversionist movement. This is in part because the movement did not begin as a very close approximation to a pure type of response. From the beginning, its response was many-sided, and although not a conversionist sect, the movement has shown a much more denominational path of development than have many of the separatist bodies which emphasized the advent as their primary point of separation from the other bodies in Christendom. Several broad considerations help to account for the difference between the Seventh-day Adventists and the development of other sectarian bodies which began with

strong adventist-revolutionist-orientations.

1. First, the Seventh-day Adventist movement did not emerge as a separate body simply as an adventist movement, but rather in disappointment about the advent, and after some reformulation of ideas.

2. From the beginning, the Advent teaching was one among several concerns which were part of the primary charter of the movement and in terms of which it came into being. Not only preaching the advent but also the conditions for it became an essential focus of attention, with significant consequences for faith and practice.

3. These conditions and the need to preach about them were validated by divine inspiration. So the movement acquired from its origins as a separate organization an alternative source of legitimation; not only the Scriptures, but also a vessel of interpretation. Thus Adventism had possibilities for other courses of development than the model I have been employing.

4. The movement inherited and adapted a professional ministry to its service. This factor circumscribed the extent to which the demand for full equality of commitment might be exacted, and gave room for the development of specialized agencies in a degree which would be precluded by a more completely sectarian stance. It is clear, of course, that in Seventh-day Adventism the ministry does not stand in quite the same relation as do other ministries to their movements, but the existence of a cadre of full-time agents of the movement was an influential element in the possible development of the Church.

5. Extremely important elements in causing the movement to develop differently from the model I have outlined was the accretion of concerns: in particular, the concerns with educational provision, dietetic requirements, medical care, religious liberty and Sabbatarianism. In some respects, these various items might, of course, have become mechanisms for the insulation of the Seventh-day Adventists from wider involvements with the society, and perhaps in some respects have done so.

**C**ontrol of educational provision is an extremely important strategic device for the maintenance of boundaries, since it operates in the most sensitive area of socialization of the

young. I do not know just how important education has been to the maintenance of the separate identity of Seventh-day Adventists, but I should be inclined to believe that it has been extremely significant to reinforcing group solidarity in the past. This has remained so as long as a very large element of education was essentially moral rather than strictly technical. (The trend has been, in all education, for the moral to give place to the technical—no doubt also in Adventist schools.)

6. Finally, the course of Adventist development has probably been considerably influenced by the inherited diversity of liturgical styles and by the relative freedom within the movement for liturgical development. It is not for me to speculate about the reasons for the liturgical differences within Adventism. Given the different traditions from which Adventists came in the beginning, perhaps emphasis on liturgical uniformity might have appeared unnecessarily divisive, and to be a matter of less than primary importance, given the expectation of an early return of Christ. It may also have been the case that the emphasis of the Sabbath teaching itself may have made actual liturgical *practice* less

*“Denominationalism implies a complex of characteristics, including increased tolerance of other movements, attenuation of distinctive commitment and diminished emphasis on boundaries.”*

important than the *occasion* for practice. It may be that in common with many other “free church” groups, primary interests were in doctrine and in exegesis, which itself is the mark of a newly literate public capable of debating such issues. In the face of these interests, liturgy, styles of devotion and the embellishment of churches and church practice were of less direct concern. This may have permitted somewhat “higher” styles to be established in some places which may have reflected the upward social mobility and increasing status of Adventists. It is also the case that, with the diminution of doctrinal interests (as other concerns have mobilized man’s capacity for literacy), so the

attention to worship has increased, leading usually to more elaborate forms. Where the interest in liturgy grows, one can be certain that it will be expressed in the development and elaboration of liturgical practice. If there has been an enrichment of church life by liturgical development, this may also, of course, indicate some diminution in the urgency of Adventual expectations. Other elements in Adventism have also had the opportunity to grow since the disappointments of the 1840s, and this could be said to have occurred in approaches to diet and evangelism.

It appears to me that certain factors in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition point to the likelihood of a process of denominationalization. The existence of a professional ministry is important in this respect. Ministers are likely to take as one important reference-group for their own performance the already-existing ministries of other movements. Therefore, the ministry is likely to evolve concerns important to its own functions. These are especially concerned with training in which there is likely to be a desire for intellectual parity with the ministry of other movements. These concerns differ from those of the laity, and the ministry is often in a position to cultivate its concerns and to impress the need for them on the whole movement. It is also likely that over time the more seriously committed young men give increasing thought to whether they ought not to become ministers. This in itself becomes a recruitment of those who feel themselves more likely to be suited to a life of greater religious virtuosity. Differential opportunities come to exist for those with different dispositions towards their common faith.

The existence of a ministry over a long period is also likely to promote an interest in research and a desire to know what is being said by other religious professionals, by the intellectuals of religion (the theologians). This leads to demands for the movement’s own theologians, both to provide the movement with the types of scholarly support enjoyed by other movements, and to claim respect according to the same criteria. Such a process is not merely a development of new interests. It is likely to lead to an increased relativity of religious beliefs. To enter into a

universe of discourse with outsiders is to begin to share the premises of that discourse, and to accept frameworks for argument and discussion which belong to the theological tradition and not to the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. This process is likely to lead to reappraisals of one's own teachings, history, assumptions and self-interpretation. The existence of universities within the movement is a commentary on the processes of sect development. The very fact that an outsider who knows only a little about Seventh-day Adventism is asked to talk about the movement from an external point of view is an indication of a type of liberal orientation which is not characteristic of sects, except after very long processes of development. The influence of internal specialists is likely to produce ambivalent relationships between different sections within a movement: between traditionalists and liberals, between intellectuals and men of simple faith, between organizers and thinkers. However, there is also a sense in which the existence of a body of ministerial specialists must encourage the development of other groups of professionals either from the ministers themselves, or in the form of new cadres of special recruits.

A movement having as many sides as the Seventh-day Adventist Church has abundant room and urgent need for expertise in several departments, particularly in education and medicine (each of which subdivides at an increasing rate into internal branches of specialization of its own). The development of these areas of specialization cannot but create more demands for coordination, administration and organization at various levels, so that bureaucratic posts must also grow in number and influence. Given the contemporary world situation, especially in missions and education as well as medicine, the trend can be discerned as growth of centralized agencies over local activities. Economies of scale are increasingly realized in many departments of human activity; technical subdivisions grow in number, and so does the need for their internal coordination one with another. There is the increased dependence on elaborate and costly equipment (in hospitals, research laboratories, computer departments, etc.) and the considerable likelihood of growth at the central agency, with further subdivisions of hierarchic coordination. As technical control and rational plan-

ning increase there is likely to be a displacement of the strictly moral, and perhaps the theological, by the demands of the new methods of organization. Growth of specialization is itself something which can be seen within church organizations. It is itself a feature of the large denominations, and in many ways the Seventh-day Adventists are equipped to continue to develop in this direction towards increasingly denominational patterns of organization, internal specialization and control.

(I am not unaware that, in spite of the trends in this direction in the wider world, the movement maintains what is to an outsider an interesting and, in many respects, unique balance as a "mixed economy," in which there is both official and private enterprise, in, for example, nursing homes, publishing work and the production of health foods.)

Denominationalism implies a complex of characteristics, including increased tolerance of other movements, attenuation of distinctive commitment, diminished emphasis on boundaries and boundary-maintaining devices. Also, the denomination accommodates to the secular culture in very large measure and accepts its provisions. There is a compromise in moral obligations to a point somewhere between the official and ideal norms of the society and the ordinary practice of other people. There is also gradual increase of reliance on secular and political agencies of control instead of on internal group control. Willingness to cooperate across group-boundaries in a variety of special causes, even at the risk of "losing" to those special causes the members who are primarily concerned with these areas, is a final characteristic of denominationalism. Clearly, in these terms the Seventh-day Adventists have still some way to go before they are denominationalized. There are, of course, several important barriers which have hindered their "progress" to this goal.

The inhibiting mechanisms scarcely need to be listed since they are better known to Adventist readers than to me. First among them is the Sabbath teaching, which, perhaps more than any one other item, has been a means of keeping Adventists separate and different. Perhaps more than anything else this time is least understood by those outside the movement. This, above all, is the badge of identity, and such a badge must act as a distinctive, sectarian device, maintaining

boundaries and reaffirming, however unstressed the point may now be, the idea of an elite.

It is also evident that the acceptance of special inspiration by the movement at its origin must also be a point of division between the Seventh-day Adventists and other movements, and to them must appear as a distinctive sectarian trait. As long as other movements hold the Seventh-day Adventists at a distance, the process of denominationalization is likely to be impeded, both because of the inappropriateness of the models of other movements in Christendom, and because of the Seventh-day Adventists' own likely reactions to enforced separation.

The dietetic position of the movement is also a powerful boundary-maintaining item and this has, of course, been a cumulative force, from Old Testament prescriptions to their extension through Mrs. White's further proscriptions. The practice of Adventists in these matters thus reinforces their distinctive beliefs to consolidate and to make evident in actual life-style as well as in important symbolic form their apartness from the wider world.

In some degree the voluntary segregation and concentration of Adventists into particular regions, at least in the United States, has, of course, been a powerful agency for the further consolidation of isolation from the wider community. Sects are, in origin, communities, and the Adventists despite their size have managed to maintain many of the features of community in the face of increasingly impersonal society. Clearly, such developments enhance group social control, reinforce group values, and maintain distinctions between community ideals and the practices of men in the wider society. The development of the mass media has somewhat altered the possibility of geographical segregation into self-contained neighborhoods, and the simultaneous distribution of news, ideas, values, styles and fashions from centers far outside the control of the movement may have its powerful accommodating effect. The prospects for community life and for sectarian separation are very much altered in the world since the second World War II.

To the outsider, there are certain features of

distinctiveness in the movement that should be mentioned. In the first place, there is the balance of local autonomy and hierarchic order. Adventists are, of course, proud of the structure they have evolved, and there is no doubt about the unusual balance between center and periphery, through intervening echelons of considerable regional independence. Perhaps it is this diversity of levels of control which leads to a wider diversity in the movement than is usual in sectarian movements; a diversity in liturgy and in the openness-exclusivity or ecumenistic-separatist dimensions of Adventist life and practice. (Ecumenical thrusts are, of course, affecting many movements today, and the unfashionability of boundaries in highly mobile society, in which a permissive ethic of "man come of age" prevails, is evident in many movements.) There is also an interesting balance of communal values in an international movement. Adventists are perhaps not unique in this respect, since all modern large sects necessarily seek to foster local involvement and pride in international presence, but certainly a great deal is done in the Adventist movement through the Sabbath School to make local people aware of their connections with people across the world.

Yet it also appears that there exists some measure of tension with respect to primary

*"Science, curiously, is easier to accommodate with religion than are the humanities. Science has boundaries. The arts are another problem, offering alternate values to those that have been received."*

goals. Adventism is many-sided and its many-sidedness is both a strength and a source of problems. If one divides, as has Sir Isaiah Berlin, the world into hedgehogs and foxes—hedgehogs who, in difficulty, know one big thing, and foxes, who know many things, then the Seventh-day Adventists are foxes. If one asks how man shall cope with difficulties, the Adventists point to education, to dietetic practice, to a variety of health measures, to particular avoidances, and

finally, to the solution of all problems in the adventual hope. Yet the balance between these concerns (and perhaps some others) in any given situation is perhaps not always easy to strike.

There is also the feature of openness in Adventism, seen particularly significantly in education. For all sects, education is a problem comparable with the development of the mass media. Contemporary education conflicts with various premises on which religious ideals may rest, and it is no secret that the majority of teachers in higher education in, for example, Britain, have no religious affiliation. Education challenges the idea of inspiration as a concept. Committed to empirical procedures, methods of verification, testability and adhering to both assumptions about the material nature of causation and the possibility of rational techniques of enquiry, education clearly finds the operation of the supernatural a problem. Sudden nonnatural processes and events pass beyond its expectation, and such processes (in inspiration, or charisma) and such events (in biblical times, or in the expectations of prophecy) are central to the Seventh-day Adventist position and implicit (if less emphasized) in the traditions of much of Christianity.

But science is, curiously, easier perhaps to accommodate with religion than are the humanities. Science has boundaries. The scientific enterprise can be contained on the assumption that other causes might operate certain well-defined spheres. The arts are but another problem, offering a range of alternate values to those that have been religiously received; relativizing human experience, and frequently drawing (particularly in literature and poetry) on areas of experience that stand in sharp contrast with contemporary ideal morality, even more with the ideal moral assumptions of Christianity,

most particularly Christianity in its sectarian forms. The social sciences most of all, using or attempting to use the rational empirical methods of the sciences, but dealing with the content of the arts—the realm of values—makes compartmentalization of knowledge almost impossible. The social sciences proceed on the assumption that knowledge can be relativized, that religious truths can be, in some measure, “understood” in relation to the context in which they arise and find acceptability.

Openness to education for the Seventh-day Adventists must mean that at some point these problems are confronted, even if they are not readily resolved. For it must become apparent that the energy and resources that have gone into the wider educational process outmatch what has gone into the specific religious tradition of any group. The prestige of education in the secular world is difficult to scale down, even in the face of strong faith and doctrinal certainty. A movement which is open to education will not escape this particular problem, although there may be other grounds for hope.

To the outsider, the tensions for the separated religious movement must occur in the extent to which it is open to the wider world. Evangelism does not allow the Adventists to turn away from the wider society, yet evangelism, too, presents its own problems for the persistence of community values and the morality that is learned in face-to-face relations of local community. As social relationships transcend the communal level, as they now so quickly do, even in the life of the child, so the moral commitment of the separated groups may be harder to sustain since its moral precepts were forged with face-to-face relations in mind. In the modern world, it appears to me to be more difficult than ever to be in but not of the world. But Seventh-day Adventists appear to be continuing to wage that struggle—and not without success.

# The New Shape of Adventist Mission

by Gottfried Oosterwal

After a hundred years of overseas mission, the Adventist Church has grown from a small community of 6,000 believers to a worldwide movement of over 2.5 million people; from an American church to a universal church firmly planted in over 90 percent of the countries of the world. It is now the most widespread single Protestant missionary organization; and every year the Lord is adding nearly 250,000 believers by baptism or profession of faith, making for a net annual church growth of over 5.5 percent.

The vitality, growth and comprehensive scope of Adventist mission amazes even the casual observer. It is evidenced by the very high per capita giving of U.S. \$162 per year (over \$305 million in 1973); by the church's 50 publishing houses with 5,500 literature evangelists; by the 71,000 denominational workers, the 3,847 elementary schools, 345 hospitals and dispensaries, 462 colleges and academies, 3 universities, 49 orphanages and old people's homes and 27 food factories. But it is even more amazing that during these hundred years of world mission the church has preserved such a remarkable unity amid the forces that are breaking every global structure to pieces. Seventh-day Adventists are still proclaiming with fervor the one and the same message that moved the pioneers, namely that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all men and the Lord of the whole world, has entered the

last phase of His mission to bring about the restoration of the Kingdom of God in full glory (Rev. 14:6-12). And even though, if present trends continue, by the end of this decade barely 10 percent of all Seventh-day Adventists will live in the United States of America, where the church had its origin, this worldwide community has remained one genuine brotherhood, one great family and one fellowship.

But a number of trends are now developing that are not only putting the unity of the church to a severe test, but are also affecting the whole life and mission of the church. Unless the consequences of these new trends and developments are clearly recognized, both in their positive and negative functions, the missionary advance and growth of the church may be seriously stunted. A greater awareness of the actual missionary situation may lead the church in this General Conference year to an honest self-evaluation in the light of the divine commission (Matt. 28:18-20), and to a reassessment of the present challenges and opportunities for Seventh-day Adventist mission in all the world.

With the church established in most of the world, a shift has occurred in the very nature of the Adventist overseas missionary movement. It took place in three stages. First, men and women left the shores of North America to proclaim the Gospel message and establish churches. Second, the work of the missionary shifted to the building up of the established churches. Institutions were established; increasingly, missionaries became involved in training indigenous workers, and in the organizational aspects of church growth and mission.

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This shift continued even further in the third phase of mission, which became the most tumultuous and revolutionary one. Indigenous workers now became entrusted with the propagation of the message and the care and the building up of the churches. They also took over many—if not most—of the organizational and administrative functions of the missionaries, who now became advisers and specialists in academic or technical aspects of the work. In most areas of the world, the Adventist missionary movement today is characterized by this third phase. As a result, less than two percent of missionaries from North America and Europe are going out to evangelize or to plant churches. Nearly all teach in Adventist schools, serve in a medical or paramedical capacity, or work as specialists within the church organization or as administrators of Adventist institutions.

We should immediately recognize the dangers in this shift from evangelistic mission to intra-church movement, from being a sending community to being a lending organization. Although few people detect anything abnormal in this development, it has, in the light of a biblical view of mission, two negative consequences, which already are causing considerable stagnation in Adventist mission.

The first is the trend to leave the evangelization of the field and the planting of churches exclusively to the indigenous workers, while the missionary does the administrative, organizational or specialized work. The second is the concept that the missionary's role is to prepare and equip indigenous workers to take over as soon as possible, so that the missionary himself can move up to a higher or more specialized, organizational function. When all the positions have been taken over, and there is no higher place for the missionary to climb to, he returns home, thinking that his mission is accomplished.

This is already having a devastating effect on the advance of Adventist mission. What is wrong is not the principle of making the local church or field responsible for the evangelization of its surrounding areas. This clearly has a basis in Scripture. But the exclusivistic manner in which this principle has been used and the separation between church activity and mission that is the result of it, is wrong. Nowhere in Scripture does this principle mean that the foreign missionary movement should shift from pioneer-evangelism

and church planting to institutionalized service, or that after a while, when these institutions and organizational structures can be taken over by indigenous workers, the missionary should move out altogether. That concept is rooted in a wrong kind of colonialism and betrays an unbiblical spirit of paternalism. The example of Christ shows us that real mission is not climbing up, but coming down; not going out, but moving on. It is not making oneself dispensable, but making oneself nothing and becoming a servant to all men (Phil. 2:5-8; Matt. 20:28; etc.).

It is not just biblical theology that calls for a stop to this trend and for a new missionary spirit that will send thousands of missionaries overseas

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to evangelize and win converts and plant churches. The very missionary situation leaves us no choice! After a hundred years of mission, the Adventist church may have been planted in 90 percent of the countries of the world, but this is a far cry from having brought the Gospel to all nations, kindreds, tongues and people. There are some two billion (2,000 million!) people in the world who have never even heard the name of Christ and another billion, perhaps, who have not been confronted with the message of the three angels of Rev. 14:6-12.

The future of Adventist mission stands, or falls, with the concept that mission is always reaching out to those who do not know Christ—not by proxy, but by personal presence and proclamation. In view of all of this, three actions should be taken:

1. The preparation of a profile of the many tribes and tongues and people, country by country, who have never been reached with the Gospel; of what prospects there are for mission among them; and of the ways they can best be

TABLE 1

	Population (1973)	SDA Church Members (1973)	Ratio
Africa	374,000	685	1:546
Asia	2,204,000	358	1:6,156
North America	233,000	486	1:479
Inter-America	92,000	320	1:288
South America	206,000	376	1:548
Europe	472,000	171	1:2,760
USSR	250,000	40	1:6,250
Oceania	21,000	108	1:194
Total	c. 3,860,000	c. 2,400	1:1,608

reached. One way to implement such an action would be by establishing a *Seventh-day Adventist Institute of World Mission*, which could coordinate this—and other—urgently needed missionary research. Such an institute could stimulate the church's thinking on new missionary methods, and assist in the selection, recruiting and training of missionary evangelists leaving the various countries and continents for service abroad.

2. The setting aside, from the General Conference down through the various divisions, of special budgets for pioneer-evangelists to work among people not yet reached with the Gospel. At least one division has already begun to do this. But a hundred missionaries should be in the field where now there is one only.

3. Establishment of special training programs for these missionary evangelists and church planters to prepare them for their work of cross-cultural communication.

Every year, according to the 1974 United Nations population figures, 132 million people are born, while some 55 million die, making for a net population growth of two percent, or 75-80 million people per year. This means that in 1980, over 416 million people will have been added to the present world population of four billion. Unless the church will find ways to reach out more rapidly to a much larger population, the number of those who live and die without having been brought into contact with the Eternal Gospel will increase. More than ever, therefore, Seventh-day Adventist mission should be oriented towards those who have never even

heard the name of Christ. The road ahead for Adventist mission means *mission to millions*—in fact, some 3,500 million, 85 percent of whom are non-Christians.

About 60 percent of the world population lives in Asia, three times as many people as in all of North America and Europe and Australia and New Zealand combined. Less than three percent of the Asian people are Christian, while as Table 1 shows, the total number of Seventh-day Adventists is only 358,000, or one in 6,156 people.

One cannot deny the urgency of mission in Africa, Inter-America and South America, or Oceania, Europe and North America; even in North America barely 15-20 percent of the people have ever heard the Adventist message clearly. Yet, the situation in Asia is really indicative of the challenge of mission in the near future: the many millions of people of other faiths, the teeming urban populations and the millions of unbelievers in a secular world.

It is obvious that new approaches to mission are demanded. Bringing individuals in one by one will never accomplish what the Lord commissioned His church to do. Christ spoke of baptizing families (kindreds) and tribes and language groups. In these last days, the church should prepare itself for *people movements* toward Christ: whole villages, tribes, castes, families and communities accepting the good news of salvation and forming churches obedient to the commandments of God. Besides reaching out more rapidly to the millions, people movements bring a quality to church growth that individual conversions seldom do. People become Christian without social dislocation,

making for much more stable churches, greatly diminishing the present high apostasy rate of individual converts who have become separated from their own group, and establishing a link to those members of the group who have not yet taken their stand for Christ. People movements, of course, should not be equated with careless baptizing, without personal decision or involvement. They are not "mass" movements. Each member of the group participates in the decision to join the church, except that the members make their decision collectively, much as households did in Old and New Testament times.

In the past few years Adventist mission has repeatedly been challenged by such people movements, from Peru to Zaire to Indonesia and Korea. Many of these have not been recognized. Others have fizzled because the church was unable or unprepared to form such a movement of thousands of people into a genuine Adventist church in a relatively short time (being an important factor in harvesting a people movement). The immediate future will see many more such people movements arising in all continents. It is, therefore, imperative that Adventist workers and missionaries be instructed in how to nurture these movements and care for the churches that will grow out of them.

Though exact figures on the adherents of the world's religions are, of course, not available, the best estimates give the following picture:

TABLE 2 (1975)

Christian	c. 900 million
Muslim	c. 660 million
Hindu	c. 505 million
Buddhist (Outside of the People's Republic of China)	c. 275 million
Confucianist (Outside of the People's Republic of China)	c. 250 million
Animist	c. 150 million
Under Communist Regime	c. 1,200 million

The challenge of the world religions does not, of course, consist merely in their numbers of people, amounting to more than twice that of the Christian populations in the world. It consists rather in the fact that these religions are a total way of life, a culture, a value-system that has shaped these peoples' whole life and

thought, behavior and identity. The encounter between Hinduism or Buddhism does not take place, therefore, on the level of systems of thought or formulation of doctrines, but on the much deeper level of human experience. The communication of the Christian message has to take place, therefore, on that level, or there will be no communication at all. The evidence for this is all about. After centuries of missionary endeavor, barely two percent of India's population is nominally Christian. After more than a century of Protestant mission in Japan, fewer than one percent are professing Christians. In the Muslim world of the Middle East, the total harvest of Christian mission is even less. Moreover, the converts from the non-Christian world have by and large come from the minority peoples in these areas and from the isolated populations least affected by the dominant way of life.

Though the SDA church has far greater potential to reach out to Muslims and Buddhists than any other Christian church, until now it has made little or no concentrated effort to win these people to Christ. One reason is the church's self-understanding. It has looked upon itself as a remnant within the Christian community, and it has conceived of its mission as "calling the honest people of God out of the apostate and decadent churches which constitute Babylon." From the very beginning, therefore, Adventist mission has been oriented towards the Christian populations of the world. Even today, over 90 percent of all converts come from a Christian background. The others are won mostly from animist populations.

A second reason Adventists have not accomplished more among non-Christian religious groups is that the church has neglected to prepare special literature written for the Hindu or Buddhist or Muslim mind. Practically all Adventist mission literature in these non-Christian areas—and there is very, very little—is translated from English writings intended for Christians in a Western cultural setting.

A third reason is found in the prevailing concept of evangelism in Adventist mission. Evangelism, which in the Scriptures clearly means to present Jesus Christ in such a way that people clearly understand His promises and

demands, His grace and His conditions of salvation, thereby forcing them to make a decision about Him, has become identified with "soul winning." This has given rise to the tendency to concentrate on those individuals who are prospective church members. And though there is biblical support for working with those populations the Spirit has already prepared for harvest, the exclusivist application of this principle has led to a fatal neglect of non-Christian populations in Adventist mission.

Fortunately, in the last few years a new vision has gradually been emerging in Adventist mission circles. In the fall of 1973, after a hundred years of Adventist mission, the Annual Council of the General Conference appointed a committee on Adventist relations with people of other religions. There are new insights now on the role of these other religions in the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan. New concepts are developing regarding the most fruitful ways of communicating the Gospel to people of other faiths. To keep this newly awakened momentum going, it is imperative that the General Conference appoint someone as soon as possible to coordinate the new interest and activity in this area. Such a coordinator could be responsible for further research in communicating the Gospel to non-Christians, and could stimulate the preparation of Adventist mission literature especially written for such people. In order to keep constantly before the church Paul's ambition—and therefore ours—"to bring the Gospel to places where the very name of Christ has not been heard" (Rom. 15:20, 21), he could also organize and conduct workshops, seminars and workers' meetings in areas of the Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim world.

What are the prospects for a fruitful mission to people of other faiths in the coming decade? They are greater than ever. It is no exaggeration to state that a whole new day has come, challenging the church to prepare for an abundant harvest. Among the human factors responsible for this are the end of the colonial era and the technological and economical supremacy of the West, and the process of modernization and secularization. Until the 1940s and 1950s, Christianity was identified with the colonial West, and the church was considered an instrument of Western culture. This both brought success to Christian mission—and caused resist-

ance to it. Now, this stage is passing away, and the question is: Are Adventist missionaries ready for the new opportunity? Thrown back on our spiritual values and resources only, without the powerful incentives of Western technology or riches or power, are our message and spirituality and Christian example strong enough to convince non-Christian believers of the power of Christ? Success in mission now depends not on our management abilities, academic or technical specialization, or organizational strength, but on the kind of persons we are and the spiritual fruits in our lives. Here also lies the answer to the process of modernization and secularization that affects all religions today. A Spirit-filled life is what people need to find meaning in the confusion of the future shock with its neuroticizing effects on all men.

When the first century of Adventist mission was drawing to a close, at least four distinctive periods in human history also came to an end. One of these, already mentioned, was the colonial period. During the 25 years of decolonization since 1945, a hundred new nations have joined the United Nations. This process of decolonization, with the nationalism that accompanies it, has had a great influence on Adventist missions.

A special tribute must be paid here to the African and Asian leaders of the Adventist church who—often under the most adverse circumstances and immense social and political pressures—have shown such remarkable loyalty to a church that so unmistakably bears the stamp of the West. Many of these leaders have been *self-expressive* in their nationalism, but not *self-assertive* and never *self-satisfied*. With such leaders, we may expect the unity of the church to be maintained in the future, even though the present *cultural nationalism* could be more destructive than the political nationalism of yesteryear. As a new ideology, it works more subtly, affecting the believer's whole life and thought.

Further intensive contact between Adventist believers and leaders, a common sharing and especially a large and continuous flow of missionaries, from everywhere to everywhere, are means to counteract the negative consequences of growing cultural nationalism in the world. If

present trends are any indication, the future of the unity in the Adventist church looks very bright.

A tribute must be paid here to the Adventist church leaders, who have greatly strengthened the large flow of missionaries from home bases other than the United States and Europe. In this respect also Seventh-day Adventist mission has set an example to all other mission organizations. Adventist mission today has become a two-way street. Already some 45 percent of Adventist missionaries—that is, of the nearly 3,000 persons now serving the church in a

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country other than their own—comes from areas outside of North America. Filipino missionaries have been called to work in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and as far as Africa. Missionaries from South America are not only serving in Inter-America or Africa, but in North America and Europe as well.

The other three distinctive periods of human history that have come now to an end are the era of capitalism with its individualism, free enterprise, private ownership, profit-making and competition; the age of belief, which is now making place for a secular mentality; and the rural era, which is now giving way to the age of the technopolis with its new kind of man, *homo metropolitanus*, and its radically new mode of existence.

The shock of these tremendous, and rather sudden, changes is also greatly affecting the shape of Adventist mission. Most of the new nations—and the old as well!—are accepting a form of socialism. The nation, the people as a whole, become the overriding interest. It is the freedom, the development and the pursuit of happiness of all—and not just of a few—that

count. Churches, and certainly foreign missions, lose many of the rights and privileges they had under the former capitalist (and colonial) system. In some countries, churches are forced to form a union, since the division among them is considered harmful to the ideal of unity, to the concept of equality and happiness for all. In most areas churches and missions are no longer exempt from joining labor unions, national councils and political activity.

All this compels Adventists to ask some serious questions. Can Adventists in the near future participate in joint action programs with other churches? Should we always insist on having our own schools or organizing our own relief and welfare and health programs? In quite a number of countries, Adventists already are operating schools together with other churches, paid for by the national governments. Should the church continue to insist that Adventist doctors, nurses and staff members leave their work as soon as a hospital is nationalized? What role should Adventist mission, with its strong emphasis on the restoration of the image of God in men, in its wholeness, and on the “healing of the nations,” play in nation building? Are not nations and tongues and tribes the object of God’s mission, besides the individual who is a part of that community?

It is absolutely imperative that the church officially takes stock of its present attitudes and concepts in mission in order to give an answer to such questions. This may be done through a series of General-Conference-organized seminars on the present missionary situation, or through a world conference on mission, or both.

**O**f particular challenge to Adventist mission is the rapidly increasing city population of the world. While the world population increased four times in the period 1850-1975, the population living in cities of 100,000 or more increased 70 times in that same period. At present, already 35-40 percent of the world population is living in urban centers. Twenty-five years from now, about two-thirds of the world population will live in cities, most of them in large metropolises. A church that is devoted to reaching the millions will find in the sprawling cities its largest mission field.

Since urbanism is a way of life that in many

ways greatly contrasts with the ideals of a church shaped in the rural world of yesteryear, Adventist mission has found it very hard to reach out to the cities. In fact, with some rare, though very significant exceptions, such as São Paulo in Brazil, Adventist mission has failed in its mission to the cities. Even though large

*“The last five years the church has lost many more hospitals in the mission fields than it was able to open. This trend will continue in the future. Nationalization will be one important factor, but there will be other reasons as well.”*

amounts of money have been spent on “city work,” results have been very minimal. And of those who are won to the faith in the cities, a very large percentage leave.

All this seems to indicate that the city *per se* presents a climate so hostile to the Adventist message that no great harvest can be expected there, no matter what approach the church might use. But in light of spreading urbanism, this conclusion would lead to a horrid pessimism, even to a flight away from the cities, not unlike Jonah’s flight from Nineveh. This pessimism is clearly present among many church and mission leaders, in East and West alike. In fact, an anti-city mentality has developed among most Adventists which has become fatal to the advance of mission. To turn the trend, it is imperative that Adventists begin to apply some of the new insights and methods that other churches or religious groups have used with great success, from Tokyo to Bangkok to New York and San Francisco: the training of the laity for city mission; the use of people’s relationships with neighbors, friends and colleagues at work; the formation of house churches or factory (company) groups; city colonization; restaurants and health clinics and joint evangelism and social action efforts. But all of these will remain without effect unless Adventists will have overcome their anti-city attitude. There’s where the crux lies to our success or failure in mission.

The anti-city attitude is rooted in a one-sided application of the writings of Ellen White. She emphasized that Adventists should leave the cities to avoid their polluting influence. These counsels, however, were given not as a principle of mission, but in the context of our spiritual growth. Whenever Ellen White speaks about the city as an *object of mission*, she urges that “there should be in every city a corps of organized, well-disciplined workers; not merely one or two, but scores . . .” (ChS 72)\*; that centers, restaurants, plants, hospitals, even church schools should be established in the cities (CG 306); that families should not leave the cities, but rather work in the neighborhoods of their homes, “carrying with them wherever they go the atmosphere of heaven” (ChS 116); that Adventist families should move away from the (rural) areas where there are already many Adventists and *settle in the cities to raise up there the standard of Christ* (8T 244; ChS 180; etc.). To Ellen White the city was not just a symbol of evil or confusion, but also an object of God’s love and care and mission. Hearing only one part of her message has been fatal to the advance of the Gospel for which we must give an account.

The new road of Adventist mission is leading to the cities. May God give us the power and the grace to be in the city, without being of the city.

Two strong pillars of Adventist mission in the past have been the medical and educational work. Like every other aspect of the church’s work, these two also are greatly affected by changes in the missionary situation today. Schools and hospitals are being nationalized or put under severe restrictions of government control; secularization is undermining the particular aims and goals of Adventist education; the end of the capitalist system has led to the socialization of medicine, making it difficult for Adventist hospitals to continue supporting themselves by serving the affluent classes. The last five years the church has lost many more hospitals in the mission fields than it was able to open. This trend will continue also in the future.

\*6T26: “In the city of London alone no fewer than one hundred men should be engaged”! And this was written long before London had grown out to its present form or had developed its present style and spirit.

Nationalization of Adventist medical facilities will be one important factor, but there will be other reasons as well—economic, medical, cultural and missionary.

When Adventist mission hospitals were first established, they filled a real need. But as the work of the church grew and developed, mission hospitals became more and more patterned after the institutions in the United States. There was the same specialization of the physicians, nurses and staff; there were similar, if not identical, facilities and equipment, and the same pattern of individualized care and orientation toward curative medicine. This kind of health care, however, has begun to cost prohibitively—even in America. And it is now virtually impossible to operate mission hospitals on a similar level as those in North America or Europe, even if they were allowed to continue their operation. The church will increasingly be called upon to make up the deficits, something it cannot afford, and should not do! The alternative, operating mission hospitals on a much lower standard, has no future either. Already modern government hospitals and well-equipped institutions operated by universities or international foundations are giving the much older mission hospitals serious competition, causing a serious decline in income and a further deterioration of the good image these mission hospitals have enjoyed for many years. Moreover, such a solution will make it much harder still for mission hospitals to attract American doctors and staff. And national Adventist personnel would likewise be less inclined to work there, only compounding the problem.

What other alternatives are there for Adventist medical mission? Which road should it take?

In light of our mission to the millions, the question arises whether the almost exclusive emphasis on curative medicine and individual care is really the best missionary approach, to say nothing of the economic aspect.\* Hospital work, though necessary, is the least effective in reaching out to the millions who still suffer from malaria, hookworm, amebiasis, trachoma, yaws, diarrhea, filariasis, pneumonia, schistosomiasis, dysentery, influenza or malnutrition. And these

\*A survey sponsored by the Loma Linda University School of Medicine Alumni Association in 1958, and again in 1963, indicated that about half of the SDA hospitals had no programs in public health, in health education or in preventive medicine for their surrounding areas.

account for 50-75 percent of all deaths in most of the developing countries of Africa and Asia. Small—even mobile—clinics, health education to prevent many of these diseases and community health programs are what is needed. The change of people's health habits, eating patterns, system of hygiene seems to be a much better criterion to evaluate success in medical mission than the number of operations or occupied beds in a hospital. Moreover, such work is really oriented to the whole man: his physical, cultural, social, mental and spiritual life.

Since today about 90 percent of Adventist medical mission is concentrated in hospitals, the road ahead may mean a rather radical change from the established pattern. But at stake is the advance of the Gospel. Hospitals are necessary, and specialized individual care is needed. But first the real needs of the millions should be solved, and the root of their problem lies in their environment, in the community or the family. It is the problem of sanitation, hygiene, facilities, drinking water and malnutrition. What good does it do a person to find healing in a hospital when he has to return again to his disease-infested environment and disease-promoting evil habits?

The crisis in Adventist hospital work overseas may prove to be a blessing in disguise. It forces mission leaders to take a hard and bold look at the situation, and thereby discover new openings and better opportunities for mission. And, really, the future of Adventist medical mission looks bright. Not only do the programs and approaches suggested here make it possible to reach out to the many millions who are now virtually shut off from Adventist medical mission; not only is this work economically possible and in harmony with the Adventist concept of mission to the whole man; but it also enables, more than ever, the ministers and other workers—and the *whole church*, in fact—to become part of this medical missionary work.

Adventist educational mission is faced with similar problems and challenges. It demands, therefore, similar changes and new approaches. In many countries, of course, the Adventist church can no longer operate its own schools. Governments feel that education is too powerful an instrument for the molding of

national character to be left in the hands of foreigners or private institutions. It is only a matter of time until most church schools will either be nationalized completely or put under rather strict government control.

But the question arises: even if Adventist churches are allowed to operate their schools, are the costs worth the effort? If, in the affluent United States, Adventist schools are already hurting for lack of funds and more and more Adventist youth (now at least 55 percent) are attending public schools as a result, how would the churches in the poverty areas of the world, where most Adventists live, be able to support church schools? The answer is: They cannot. These schools would have to be supported by mission funds from abroad, and still only a fraction of the thousands of Adventist young people could be absorbed. To accommodate our Adventist youth in Africa and Latin America, for example, would mean to build there in the next one or two years as many schools as the church has built these past hundred years in the whole world.

What other road is there for Adventist educational mission? Most Protestant mission organizations have given up educational mission as part of their plan to evangelize the world. In fact,

*“To accommodate in Adventist schools our youth in Africa and Latin America would mean to build there in the next one or two years as many schools as the church has built in these past hundred years in the whole world.”*

mission leaders are feeling quite relieved now that their schools have been taken over by governments. It frees the missionaries for work more directly connected with the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the church. And the money saved that way can be spent in other, evangelistic programs of the church, including the strengthening of local churches, youth programs, family evangelism, literature evangelism and other missionary activities. They consider the loss of their many schools, though painful at

first, a gain in the long run. Schools, so necessary in the beginning phase of mission, had begun to absorb far too much in resources and personnel without giving a proportionate evangelistic harvest in return.

There is great validity in this attitude, and Adventists should learn from it. But there are some dimensions of educational mission that these churches clearly have overlooked and where Adventist mission can make a tremendous contribution, if it chooses to walk that road. The first is to establish models of education.

Without arrogance or pride, it may be stated that there is something in genuine Christian education that is lacking everywhere else: the concept of the harmonious development of the whole person. It is clear that Adventist mission won't be able to operate many schools everywhere. But it can operate some schools in a few, centrally located areas. The impact of such schools, if genuinely built on the counsels given to us in Scripture and in the writings of E. G. White, will be far greater than the relatively small number of students that can attend. The whole surrounding area will see the difference! And governments of these new nations will be persuaded to follow the example set by these few real Adventist institutions. I strongly recommend that Adventist mission as soon as possible consolidate its educational institutions. Quality, not quantity, is the answer.

A second dimension, closely related to the first, is that Adventist education must consider the real needs of the people. One of the weaknesses of educational mission in the past has been that it has transplanted Western education systems into cultures and societies that, in fact, demanded a totally different emphasis. What need is there, really, for the many liberal arts colleges that now cause an overproduction of people with degrees in the humanities, etc., for whom there is no employment? The basic need in most of these new countries is technical, agricultural and vocational training. Liberal arts programs tend to stimulate—if not create!—an aversion to manual labor. They are conducive to a strong rationalism and often produce a mentality of elitism. Seventh-day Adventist schools in the past have not altogether escaped these negative influences.

Most of the new nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America are perpetuating in their state schools the model inherited from the West, emphasizing mental development and neglecting the other aspects of man and his existence. The real exception to this rule has been the People's Republic of China, with its emphasis on the unity of head and hand, theory and practice. Genuine Adventist education has a mission to perform that greatly transcends the conversion of individuals who are attending our schools, however important that is. By establishing schools, founded on a genuine Adventist philosophy of education, that really fulfill the most basic needs of the population, millions of people will truly be helped and at the same time be reached with the message where now only a few are influenced.

There is a third dimension that Adventist educational mission needs to explore more fully: theological education. The aim of that education should be the training and equipping of leaders and workers in the countries of Africa and Asia. Nearly 2,000,000 converts have been won in recent years. Thousands of churches have been established. But in most of these fields we have not trained nearly enough leaders. The church should make this task one of its first priorities, if not its very first! The problems connected with implementing such a program, worldwide, are well known: lack of finances, a paucity of qualified teachers and small enrollments. One of the best ways to overcome these difficulties is to establish a system of Theological Education by Extension. The church would not have to wait until it had enough qualified teachers in the particular locales themselves, since these could come from various areas in the world. Neither will the church have to invest a lot of money in expensive buildings.

A beginning has already been made through the extension programs of the Theological Seminary and Graduate School of Andrews University, and of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Far East in Manila. The following should be considered, however, in order to fulfill the pressing needs in the fields:

a. The program should be greatly expanded beyond its present format.

b. The *need of the field* should be the determining factor, not just the requirements for a degree program as it is listed in the bulletins of

the Seminary.

c. The program should fit within the educational system, and be offered on the level of, the requesting field.

d. Contacts between teacher and the field should be recognized as a necessary requirement for a successful training by extension.

As soon as possible, the church may wish to appoint someone who could serve—with a representative committee—as the coordinator of such a program of Theological Education by Extension.

The varying circumstances taking place in the world," Ellen White wrote, "call for labor which will meet these peculiar developments" (MS 8a, 1888). Though the mission remains the same, methods and approaches must change. Reforms are necessary, and new priorities will have to be established. "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." And "present truth, from the first letter of its alphabet to the last, means missionary effort" (MS 8a, 1888; CH 300).

Today, after a hundred years of Adventist mission, there are nearly ten times as many persons who have not heard of Christ as in the days of the apostle Paul. We know the work is not finished. But the question is: Can our mission be accomplished in this generation? The answer is: Yes, definitely so! Christ's promise is sure: This Gospel of the Kingdom *will* be preached in all the world (Matt. 24:14), and the power to do so has been given to us long ago (Matt. 28:18-20) and is with us every day, every hour (John 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-21).

What is lacking then? The right methods? These are important. But they are not the heart of the matter. "A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work" (CS 41).

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to accomplishing our God-given task lies in our selfishness, which reflects itself in complacency, a decline in the missionary spirit, the lack of sacrifice and hearts that "are no longer aglow with love for

souls, and a desire to lead them into the fold of Christ" (4T 156).

Ellen White calls for "doing the right thing at the right time" (2T 36). This takes different forms for different people in different locations and at different times. Each believer, each church and each corporate structure, from the smallest institution to a union or a division, may examine itself. For North America, to be specific, it means a change in the giving pattern and the way we spend our money. According to the church's statistics, mission offerings in the Adventist churches in North America show a tremendous percentage decline, from 33.5 percent of the total offerings in 1930 to 11.1 percent in 1971. At the same time, the rate of spending for home and local projects has doubled—and continues to rise sharply. During the first six months of 1973, the actual offerings for mission in North America were \$52,000 less than during the first six months in 1972. At the same time, however, the churches outside of North America, and especially those in the Third World, increased their mission offerings 26.5 percent, from \$4,020,894.73 during the first half-year of 1972 to \$5,085,623.57 for the first six months of 1973.\* Sabbath School offerings during that same time also rose 26.11 percent outside of North America, but only 7.05 percent in the North American Division.

The relative decrease in mission offerings over against a rapid increase in spending for home and local projects is only one symptom of a dangerous trend that, unless it is reversed, will seriously hinder the advance of Adventist mission in the world.

One fatal result of the decline in mission offerings is the ever-widening gap between the number of workers in the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the number of members. Already there are places where there is only one minister for 25 to 30 churches. Apostasies are very high—in some places 40-45 for every hundred that are won—because of the lack of pastoral care. At the same time, however, the growth rate of workers in North America is increasing more rapidly than that of the mem-

bers. The result is that the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer. While the percentage of Seventh-day Adventist world membership in North America decreased from 39 percent in 1930 to 20 percent in 1970, the percentage of the workers in North America increased from 38 percent to 47 percent. At the same time, the percentage of Adventist workers in overseas fields decreased from 62 percent in 1930 to 53 percent in 1973. And every year the gap is becoming wider and wider.

Lack of funds prevents Adventist mission in many areas in the world field from reaping the harvests that the Spirit so abundantly has already prepared. But the crisis is not caused so much by a lack of giving per se, as by our pattern of spending it. While we are enriching ourselves by adding more specialized institutions, more elaborate programs, more expensive buildings at home, God's work in many areas of the world is seriously stagnated. For instance: From 1965 to 1970 over 10,000 workers were added in North America, an increase of 12 percent. At the same time, the number of workers outside of North America *dropped* from 37,337 to 36,618, an actual decrease of nearly 2 percent. And that at a time when a veritable church explosion was going on. Not only is the pastoral care and nurture of the churches seriously threatened, but hundreds of well-prepared and well-equipped potential indigenous leaders have to seek employment outside of the denomination, or they leave their own countries to come to the United States. All this is causing serious stagnation in the advance of Adventist mission today. If this trend could only be reversed, there could be a hundred workers in the field where there is only one today.

It is possible, indeed, to accomplish the work God has entrusted to us in this generation. The rapid increase of population, the revival of the world religions and the rise of new ones, the mushrooming of the cities, the process of secularization, the closing of doors and the rising of inflation are really no problems to a church that is wholly committed to the task of world mission. A church so committed will be prepared to adapt its structures, the spending of its money and the deployment of its personnel and resources for that supreme goal. But this means that after a hundred years the battle of Adventist mission has to start in our own backyard.

\*Fortunately, by the end of the year (1973), the mission offerings in North America showed a total increase of 12.5 percent over the previous year (1972). At the same time, however, the mission offerings in the world field showed an increase of 19 percent!

# 'Adventist Thought at Its Best'

Reviewed by James J. Londis

*God Is With Us*  
by Jack W. Provonsha  
Review and Herald, 157 pp., \$3.50

**G**od Is With Us by Jack Provonsha is the most sophisticated statement of Adventist theology made to the secular mind in recent years. Framed by glimpses into Provonsha's personal religious journey, the picture of a God who accompanies man is sketched in increasing detail through each chapter. Philosophical and theological (rather than confessional and exegetical) in its approach, the book is nevertheless Adventist thought at its best. Unfamiliar terminology and freshly crafted concepts may give some the illusion of heresy, but heresy is not present. On the contrary, there is a refreshing absence of the jargon found in many of our books written for the non-Adventist audience. This is a book for both the biblically oriented as well as the unchurched.

Each chapter will yield new insights to the reader unacquainted with Provonsha's thought and style. God, man, creation, the Sabbath, sin,

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atonement and the Second Advent are explicated from their theological depths. For example, rather than rehearsing the biblical "proofs" for the Sabbath, *God Is With Us* focuses on its importance as a "symbol," an "event-window" that opens out towards a God of creativity and holiness and love and freedom. In the chapter on sin, Provonsha employs psychological insights to create his "self-perpetuating wheel of sin," a concept modern in its formulation and true to Scripture.

While the book does not deal extensively with the epistemological issues in religion, Provonsha's comments are accurate as far as I am concerned. There is no talk of any "certainty" that removes the possibility of error. The inferential nature of knowledge precludes that. One only has the assurance of "faith" that engenders humility before the truth.

Provonsha's own humility before the great questions may be seen in his chapter on evil and suffering. His views, suggestive and helpful, do not attempt to account for all the difficulties in a Christian theodicy. On the contrary, Provonsha is content to rest the problem in the conviction that the God of love suffers with us and will bring an end to it all at the best possible moment.

I found "But Few Are Chosen"—the chapter on election and the church—full of insights. Prophets and prophetic movements are delineated as those who speak to God's people, who speak to those "of integrity and compassion . . .

regardless of their obvious labels.” (p. 55) Those who utter prophetic messages must rely on symbols to identify themselves (hence the garb, manners, etc., of prophets) and call attention to their work. What is not said, but may be inferred, is that this is the reason for some of the more controversial discussions about “standards” in Adventist history. While many of them may be “mores” rather than “morals,” they have served the function for our movement that camel’s hair served for John the Baptist. The only weakness in the chapter is its silence concerning our rationale for “missions” if we speak to “God’s people.”

My only real complaint about the book is Provonsha’s tendency in places to graze difficult and important issues, utter a soupçon, and go on with the reader left tantalized. For example, he says that “the truly free action is a comparative rarity even at the human level. The behaviorists are correct—almost.” (p. 52) Now, being a dyed-in-the-wool Christian humanist, I am not content with that statement as it stands. It may not have the implications I think, but I don’t know that without further elaboration from Provonsha.

Here is another: “To be loving, an action must always be appropriate to the needs of the *moment*.” (p. 75, italics mine) I looked for some qualifier to this argument for some kind of contextualism in Christian ethics, but there is none. Does Provonsha mean to say that long-range needs are unimportant or subordinate to immediate ones? I doubt it, but the brevity of the discussion disallows the possibility of answering anticipated questions.

And, finally, in his very instructive chapter on the Second Coming, Provonsha suggests that one reason for the delay of Christ’s coming may be that one of the major preconditions suggested by the Bible has not existed until now—the gospel to the whole world. “Never before has it been possible for issues to be really universal in scope . . . It is now technically possible for virtually every man, woman and child on earth

to experience any event or issue simultaneously. Communications technology has placed every man in everybody else’s backyard . . . And this is what is most different about our day.

“Think, if you will, about it, and you will understand how truly significant that fact is. The things our fathers looked for were quite impossible in their day, however ignorant they were of that fact. But they are not impossible in ours.” (pp. 145-46)

What are the theological implications of claiming that a lack of technology has delayed the coming of Christ? I am not even sure that this notion can be harmonized with what appear to be his views on mission (the ones I wish he had elaborated on). I realize that a book this size cannot be expected to cover all the issues in depth, but these issues are too important not to receive more space.

Yet, the book is so rich and so well done that these criticisms are minor—almost petty. After reading it the first time, I had to see what kind of impact it would make on sophisticated non-Adventist friends of mine. One couple—the wife a former Adventist and the husband a former Christian Scientist—wrote and told me that for the first time the significance of the Sabbath opened up to them (her in particular). The realization that one must maintain a healthy agnosticism about some issues in faith lifted a major obstacle to faith in her mind, for she had always thought “faith” called for certainty about everything, a certainty that always eluded her.

Even their values were shifting. Time after time the book exposes the superficiality of modern values and it made the both of them realize that pleasure could not sustain the weight of living a purposeful existence. While it is true that “one couple does not an evangelistic audience make,” I am encouraged to send it to others. Jack Provonsha has rendered a real service to the church with this work. It deserves a wide and enthusiastic reading by Adventists and non-Adventists alike.