Lawsuits and the Church

Charles Wittschiebe on Sex and Adventism

Beyond Verbal Inspiration

SPECTRUM

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CHINA AND VIETNAM: MISSION AND REVOLUTION

Eyewitness Reports From China

The Last 15 Days in Saigon

Plus Commentary: How Many Tragedies?

SPECTRUM

Association of Adventist Forums

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In This Issue

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About This Issue

Someone has said that the church exists by mission as fire exists by burning. If that is true, it is hard to imagine any body of Christians paying too much attention to its missionary task. Jesus himself said that the goal of history —what Christians believe to be a commonwealth of togetherness embracing the whole creation— cannot be reached unless the Gospel of the kingdom has been "preached throughout the whole world."

This is something Seventh-day Adventists have taken very seriously. Preparing for the Second Coming by preaching the Gospel has always been a fundamental concern for our church; indeed, we define ourselves as a missionary movement.

So it is altogether appropriate that in this issue of SPECTRUM, we once again turn a diagnostic eye upon the work of Adventist mission. The special section, "China and Vietnam: Mission and Revolution," fills up half of this magazine, and includes two reports which, though written many years ago and considered controversial ever since, are now published for the first time.

Elvin Benton brings a kind of double competence to the discussion of lawsuits and church discipline he has written for this issue. He is not only a trained lawyer, but also was present in Vienna when this matter was considered at last summer's General Conference session. The article (along with the boxed modest proposal that accompanies it) is another instance of this magazine's commitment to deal, not only with topics of scholarly and aesthetic interest, but also with church history as it is being made.

Besides these articles, there is poetry, an interview of author Charles Wittschiebe on the subject of sex, and a discussion of that touchstone in Adventist theological debate, the question of revelation and the Bible. We hope you profit from all of it, and invite you to comment critically on any of the articles. As you can see on page 61, we publish letters from readers.

With this issue, we welcome Roberta J. Moore to the Board of Editors of SPECTRUM. Professor of journalism at Loma Linda University, she has written for numerous publications both inside and outside the church.

The Editors

Lawsuits and the Church: Notes on the Vienna Decision

by Elvin Benton

A grieving Apostle Paul listed the vices of his "beloved children," the Corinthian Christians. Among their offenses was their leaning toward litigation. "When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? . . . I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?" I Cor. 6:1, 5, 6, R.S.V.

A growing twentieth-century Adventist proclivity for adversary proceedings sent a substantial muster of church leaders to the 1975 General Conference session in Vienna with a proposal to permit the church to censure or disfellowship those who seek legal redress of their grievances outside the doors of the church.

The history of the proposed ban on litigation by members does not seem to be very complicated. From Adventist fruitsellers and accountants to General Conference officers, all seem to believe that the current lawsuit by Merikay Silver against the Pacific Press had something to do with the urgency that attended the introduction of the proposed amendment. It probably would not be fair, however, to assume that *Silver v. Pacific Press* started it all. According to W. Duncan Eva, a General Conference vice-president and chairman of the Church Manual Committee, the issue of the standing of those church members who litigate against other church members has been under consideration "at least for two years that I know about—I've been here for two years now."

New material concerning litigation proposed for addition to the *Church Manual* came in two parts—both to be added to Chapter 13, entitled "Church Discipline." The first was a two-paragraph explanatory introduction to the problem of litigation, which previously had not been specifically dealt with in the *Manual.* Its text:

> *Litigation.*—The Lord has placed within the church all necessary means for settling differences between individual members and between members and the church or its institutions. There is therefore no need for recourse to secular courts of law: the church's own procedures for appeal and redress are adequate for all situations, being based on inspired counsel. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (I Cor. 6:1). "To it (the church) the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity and order."

Elvin Benton is a member of the Maryland Bar and director of the religious liberty department of the Columbia Union Conference. His law degree is from the American University.

—Testimonies, Vol. 7, p. 263. "When troubles arise in the church we should not go for help to lawyers not of our faith."—*Undated MS* No. 112. "Contentions, strife and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the cause of truth."—*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, pp. 242, 243. "I call upon you in the name of Christ to withdraw the suit you have begun (against a denominational institution) and never bring another into court."—*Letter 301,* 1905 (see also pp. 222-226).

In the light of this clear counsel, any member who persists in taking legal action against the church shall be rightly subject to the discipline of the church.

The second proposed part had the stinger in it, for it was designed as an addition to the short existing list of offenses under the heading "Reasons for Which Members Shall Be Disciplined." Its wording was disarmingly brief:

7. Instigating or continuing legal action against the church or any of its organizations or institutions, contrary to Biblical and Ellen G. White counsels.

The regular Church Manual Committee of the General Conference comprises 24 General Conference personnel, many of them officers and all of them ordained ministers. For the session at Vienna, a "standing" Church Manual Committee of 39 was elected by the delegates, all but one ordained ministers.

Significantly, however, it is not so much the Church Manual Committee as the General Conference administration that, in fact, originates and sponsors revisions. According to committee chairman Eva, "the Church Manual Committee really doesn't decide what's going to go into the *Church Manual.* It's given its instructions and directions by the General Conference Committee or by the officers . . . but it doesn't initiate too many matters itself."

General Conference officers chair the sessions at which such proposals are presented. The strength of their influence is thus multiplied by their having a significant voice in proposing amendments and by their leading the delegates in consideration of adopting the measures.

The significance of any amendments to the *Church Manaul* cannot be overemphasized. The *Church Manual* is more than an advisory handbook. It is a rule book that claims the highest earthly credential, setting forth the fundamentals and regulations of the church with the authority of the body's claim to heaven-sent mandate—approval by the General Conference in session.

It was not always thus. A committee of the General Conference appointed in the early 1880s to study the possibility of publishing a manual reported unanimously that they believed "it would seem to many like the formation of a creed or discipline other than the Bible." General Conference President George I. Butler wrote in an 1883 *Review and Herald* article, "Better make some mistakes and learn the profitable lessons thereby, than to have our way marked up for us by others and the judgment have a small field to reason and consider." His prediction that "it is probable that it [suggestion of a church manual] will never be brought up again" proved that Butler was no clairvoyant, for after repeated attempts the proponents of a rule book prevailed and the *Church Manual* was published in 1932.

"It appears that taking exception to the Church Manual *may be considered, at worst, tantamount to questioning the will of the Deity. At the very least, it must be regarded as an affront to the authority of the church."*

There were then and still are dissenters from the *Church Manual* approach to church discipline. Some see in it a desire to mimic "worldly" churches. Others simply believe, as did President Butler, that rules tend to hinder the development of the divine gifts of conscience and reason.

Church Manual changes are not made lightly. The 1946 General Conference session adopted the resolution that "all changes or revisions of policy that are to be made in the *Manual* shall be authorized by a General Conference session." That such authority is not to be frivolously disregarded is made plain by an unequivocal 1909 statement by Ellen White, quoted in the preface to the current *Church Manual:*

> When, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body.

It appears, then, that taking exception to the mandate of the *Church Manual* may be considered, at worst, tantamount to questioning the will of the Deity. At the very least, a challenge to the validity of a *Church Manual* provision must be regarded as an affront to the authority of the church.

The procedural handling of the proposed amendments at the Vienna session suffered from the press of time and produced what seemed to some delegates a contradictory result. Part one, comprising the explanatory paragraphs, was referred back for another five years of study without being adopted while part two, the provision by which members can be disfellowshiped, was voted into the pages of the *Church Manual.* The minutes of the session are less than complete. Some background may be helpful.

The day after the two proposed provisions on litigation were distributed in mimeographed form to the delegates, but before either provision had been formally presented on the floor, a recommendation came from the General Conference officers that "it would not be wise to proceed with this statement because it is somewhat inadequate." Questions had arisen as to the

The Role of Men in the Church

Betty Stirling, director of research for the General Conference Board of Higher Education and professor of sociology at Loma Linda University, offers the following modest proposal:

Recent Annual Councils have recorded actions on the "Role of Women in the Church," and the Biblical Research Institute is currently conducting a special study on the subject. But there has been considerable neglect of the role of men in the church. To remedy this omission, it is

RECOMMENDED, 1. To rewrite paragraphs 4, 5 and 7 of the Annual Council 1973 action which will then read as follows:

4. That the emphasis of the report upon the priesthood of all believers, both men and women, and the necessity of involving the total resources of the Church for the rapid completion of the gospel commission be accepted.

5. That the primacy of the married man's role in the home and family, as repeatedly emphasized in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, begin to be recognized and emphasized at all levels of the Church, in harmony with counsel such as the following from the Spirit of Prophecy:

"The father should not excuse himself from his part in the work of educating his children for life and immortality. He must share in the responsibility. There is obligation for both father and mother. There must be love and respect manifested by the parents for one another, if they would see these qualities developed in their children."—*Adventist Home,* p. 216.

"The work of making home happy does not rest upon the mother alone. Fathers have an important part to act."—*Adventist Home,* p. 211.

"Fathers . . . combine affection with authority, kindness and sympathy with firm restraint. Give some of your leisure hours to your children; become acquainted with them; associate with them in their work and in their sports, and win their confidence."—*Adventist Home,* p. 222.

capacity of the church to deal with issues such as insurance claims, in which litigation appears to be the only way to solve problems that may have begun as issues between church members. Elder Eva, relaying the wishes of the General Conference officers, addressed the chair with the suggestion "that the session refer this matter of litigation, going to law with one another, to the General Conference committee for further study and the preparation of a statement that will cover the whole area satisfactorily. It is something that will take quite a while and will have to be studied from a legal point of view as well as from the church's point of view, and I would like to move that we do this, Mr. Chairman." The minutes of the proceedings record that "there followed a discussion of other situations which might involve litigation after which the recommendation to refer was voted."

Some delegates believed that this action put to rest the whole matter of litigation for the 1975 session. Their belief was short-lived, however, for the very next item presented for consideration was the section providing for imposition of church discipline upon members who litigate against church entities. Some delegates were perplexed to hear business meeting chairman B. E. Seton, a General Conference associate secretary, observe that the litigation provision "is new material which would be brought into harmony with some of the thinking of this morning. It does seem that we could vote on this now even though the general matter of church discipline, litigation and related topics are to be considered further for possible action at the session in 1980. The work we have done on

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"In most families there are children of various ages, some of whom need not only the attention and wise discipline of the mother but also the sterner, yet affectionate, influence of the father. *Few fathers consider this matter in its due importance.* They fall into neglect of their own duty and thus heap grievous burdens upon the mother, at the same time feeling at liberty to criticize and condemn her actions according to their judgment."—*Adventist Home,* p. 224.

"The father, as the head of his own household, should understand how to train his children for usefulness and duty. This is his special work, *above every other. . . . If he is engaged in business which almost wholly closes the door of usefulness to his family, he should seek other employment which will not prevent him from devoting some time to his children."—Adventist Home,* p. 221. (Italics supplied.)

7. That in areas still receptive to such action, there be continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing such married men to pastoral-evangelistic work, and that the appropriate missionary credentials/licenses be granted them.

2. To record our opinion that because the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world church which includes in its fellowship peoples of all nations and cultures and both sexes, and because a survey of its various divisions reveals that the time is ripe and opportune, therefore, in the interest of the world unity of the church, a moratorium be declared on the ordaining of married men and fathers to the gospel ministry.

3. To request the new President's Executive Advisory (see below) to arrange for a continuing study of the theological and practical implications of the ordination of men, especially married men and fathers, to the gospel ministry. (Noting especially the example of Paul, who felt it much better for gospel workers to be as he was, i.e., single.)

4. To request the new President's Executive Advisory to arrange also for further study of the election of married men and fathers to local church offices which require ordination, and that division committees exercise discretion in any special cases that may arise before a definitive position has been adopted.

It is further

RECOMMENDED, To refer to a newly formed President's Executive Advisory (consisting entirely of women holding professional positions in the church) for further study, additional suggestions regarding the role of married men in the church.

these matters at this session should be helpful to the church and guide members in this important area of Christian morality. I believe that with these words the intent of the recommendation should be clear."

The intent apparently was not so clear, however, for the minutes record that "there followed a discussion concerning the need for immediate action on the matter of litigation. It was moved to refer paragraph 7 [the litigation provision] back to the Church Manual committee but it was voted down. The recommendation as presented was voted."

There was to be one more attempt to send the controversial ban back for more seasoning. On the last Friday afternoon of the session, business meeting chairman W. Duncan Eva agreed to give brief consideration to inclusion of five added words so that the provision would read: "instigating or continuing legal action *against another church member or* against the church or any of its organizations or institutions, contrary to Biblical and Ellen G. White counsels." Several delegates expressed renewed concern for the wisdom of the whole provision. Finally, one of them drew the issue to a head: "Since the large paragraph on litigation [the introductory section] was referred back for more study of what types of litigation are legitimate, and since this provision has some of the same weaknesses and ambiguities, I believe, Mr. Chairman, there is enough confusion here to move that it be removed from the list to be added to the *Church Manual* and be referred back for further study." The motion lost, the five new words were added, and a refined new offense was added to the list of what the *Church Manual* calls "grievous sins for which members shall be subject to church discipline."

During the first few weeks following the close of the Vienna session, there was widespread expression of concern over potential enforcement of the new provision. Letters to General Conference administrators pointed out dangers inherent in seeking to deny to church members free access to judicial relief of legitimate grievances. Adventist attorneys and at least one federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission lawyer have expressed grave concern for what lies ahead. One gray-haired union conference departmental director wondered out loud whether "the brethren may not have caught more fish in that net than they cast it for," and offered the irreverent opinion that Pandora's box may be easy to shut by comparison.

Perhaps the extent of controversy over the new provision will be directly proportional to the vigor with which it is applied by local congregations, which have exclusive authority to administer the discipline it incurs. There is already ample indication that substantive differences of opinion exist as to how the provision may legitimately be applied. Interpretations of the phrase "contrary to Biblical and Ellen G. White counsels" could be widely disparate. One pastor could construe it to mean that *any* litigation against other members or church entities is contrary to the cited counsels and thus a man-

"One man wondered out loud whether 'the brethren may not have caught more fish in that net than they cast it for,' and offered the irreverent opinion that Pandora's box may be easy to shut by comparison."

date for discipline. Another might insist that it was meant to qualify the forbidden litigation to include only that which would be contrary to such counsel, with the implication that some kinds of litigation were not intended to fall under the church's disfavor at all. If that construction prevails, it will open the equally difficult question of who is responsible for deciding where the dividing line shall be drawn between permissible and forbidden.

Concern of General Conference officers and others over enforcement has had one tangible result. Upon recommendation by the "Home and Overseas Officers and Union Presidents," the 1975 Annual Council in mid-October voted to append a footnote to the controversial paragraph 7 in the printing of the *Church Manual.* Designed to avoid denominational embarrassment, the text of the footnote discourages frivolous application of the litigation provision:

At the 52nd Session of the General Conference in Vienna, Austria, when this section of the *Church Manual* was revised, the church was seeking to reaffirm its commitment to the desirability of the settlement of problems that might be taken to civil courts, within the guidelines given by Paul in 1 Cor. 6:1-7 and as appearing also in Spirit of Prophecy counsels. For this reason, it was considered necessary by the Session that this paragraph should stand as it appears here in this section on reasons for disciplining church members. However, it was also considered necessary that further study be given to the whole question of litigation between church members and between church members and the church and/or its organizations or institutions and vice versa. The Session therefore took action asking the General Conference Committee to arrange for such study with a view to the inclusion in the *Church Manual* of a fuller statement on litigation. When adopted, this statement will probably be included at a place other than this section on the reasons for disciplining church members.

It is considered that under these circumstances church boards considering discipline of members under paragraph 7, would be unwise not to seek the counsel of the conference/mission president before decisions for recommendation to the church business meeting are taken.

If answers to some perplexing problems have been thought out, they have not been given wide publication. Some such questions are these:

1. Does there exist adequate procedure within the church for the resolution of differences between one member and another, and between a member and the church organization in any of its entities?

It is conceded by General Conference leaders that *formal* adjudicative process in the church structure is absent at worst or rudimentary at best. Unlike the Jewish system out of which Paul and many other Christians in the first century had only recently come, modern Christendom does not lay militant claim to the right of settling secular differences among its members. It lays only passive claim to meaningful resolution of disputes without recourse to secular courts. Even conferences and denominational institutions have been known to instigate legal action against church members, demonstrating that if there is adequate redress procedure within the church, it is either not widely known or simply ignored. It should not be surprising, then, that church members have occasionally brought lawsuits against the church in one form or another without realizing the gravity of their offense.

2. What, if any, is the legitimate forum for challenge to the validity of the newly adopted provision concerning litigation by church members?

While actions of the General Conference in session enjoy a strong presumption of validity, asserted in the 1909 Ellen White statement quoted earlier, the door to challenge appears to be left open a small crack by an action of the General Conference session of 1877:

> Resolved, that the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction, and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, *unless they can be shown to conflict with the word of God and the rights of individual conscience.* (Emphasis added)

Without asserting or implying that the provision on litigation "conflict[s] with the word of God and the rights of individual conscience" or that anyone should try to show that it does, it is probably fair to assume that the volume of hostile response to its adoption suggests the possibility of such a challenge. A church member who honestly believes that even the General Conference in session has made a mistake should not, it appears, be summarily turned away for lack of a forum before which to present, in an orderly way, evidence relevant to the validity of the session's action. Inquiry to several denominational administrators regarding mechanisms for challenge brought only the generalized recommendations that to "bring the matter to the attention of the leading brethren" or "talk to the leadership of the church" would be an appropriate approach. Certainly, as in the matter of settling differences that might otherwise lead to litigation, an available orderly process for being heard

would reduce the temptation to destructive criticism or disorderly caviling.

3. How should the new litigation provision be applied to those members who have already instigated litigation which could be considered "contrary to Biblical and Ellen G. White counsels?"

Elder W. Duncan Eva's response to that question called for application of fairness. "A law made after I have committed a certain act should not be used to condemn me for that act," Elder Eva asserted. "I think this principle ought to be recognized by us." Attorney Warren L. Johns, recently appointed general counsel for the General Conference, concurred with Elder Eva's belief that to apply a new regulation to an old offense would have too much of an *ex post facto* connotation to be fair.

4. How does the rule discouraging litigation relate to other teachings of the church in relation to suits among brethren?

It is fair to say that the formal and informal tenets of the church discourage recourse to law—even church law—for the resolution of disputes. The Seventh-day Adventist *Bible Commentary's* illumination of I Cor. 6:6 observes that "it was bad enough for brethren to quarrel to the extent that they could not be reconciled to one another and must take their troubles to court, but it was much worse to go to a court composed of 'unbelievers.'" The *Commentary* recognizes, however, as apparently did the Apostle Paul, that the church had at least a limited duty to provide adjudication for its members' disputes. If the church fails to provide such a process or abstains from executing it, the *Commentary*, still on 1 Cor. 6:6, asserts directly that litigation may not be out of order:

> If a member has brought a matter to the church, and the church declines to exercise its judicial duty, then he has exhausted the possibilities of the procedure Paul here outlines. What he shall do beyond that point is a matter for his individual conscience. Christian leadership through the centuries has never felt clear to declare that a member is a sinner before God, because, under these circumstances, he seeks adjudication of his case before a secular tribunal.

Until a well-defined process of adjudication is set up within the church, it may be difficult to know whether or not one has "exhausted the possibilities of the procedure." In the case of *Silver v. Pacific Press,* for example, the parties differed as to whether or not Press employees had exhausted those possibilities when they had taken their grievances over wages to the manager of the publishing house and the chairman of its board of directors.

In conclusion, it does not appear inappropriate to suggest that the church, by adopting a provision for discipline of those who take their disputes to secular courts, has assumed a strongly implied obligation to provide, promptly, intrachurch processes whereby disagreements between members, and grievances of members against the church organization and its institutions, may be settled.

A forum for the hearing of differences between members should be readily available and composed of competent, fair-minded persons without vested interest in the outcome of the cases being decided. Adventist attorneys could be very useful in the resolution of such differences.

Adjudication of grievances of members against church entities is more complicated and calls for great discretion in the choice of those empowered to make decisions. A common complaint in such cases is that often the final decision is in the hands of one of the parties to the disagreement—sometimes as administrator or administrators of the very church entity against which the complaint is pending. While it is not inherently impossible for such an administrator to attain sufficient objectivity to make a fair decision, it is without question less than the ideal matrix for impartiality.

If the Apostle Paul were writing to Adventists after 19 centuries, it is easy to imagine that he might take us to task, not only for our bellicose and litigious propensities, but also for our slowness to recognize what we can do about it. It may be that the "fault among us" can be corrected more equitably by providing a forum for the calm and deliberate resolution of differences than by disfellowshiping those who, their Christianity notwithstanding, are faced with conflicts that seem to demand disinterested adjudication.

Sex and Adventism: An Interview with Charles Wittschiebe

by Tom Dybdahl and Mike Hanson

The subject of the following interview, Dr. Charles Wittschiebe, taught pastoral care for many years at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Now retired, he lives in North Carolina where he continues to lecture and write. His recent book, God Invented Sex, *is reviewed on page 58 of this magazine.*

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Interviewers: What has been the response to the book?

Wittschiebe: The response to the book has been excellent, in the main. Relatively little criticism, that I know about. It's sold almost 30,000 copies, which by denominational standards is a best seller. The publishers put a postcard in the book asking what people thought about it. They got about an 8 percent response. The normal response is only 3 percent, which again says something.

Many people write and say: "Long overdue." Or: "Wish you would have had something like this out when I got married 20 years ago, 30 years ago." This is a rather common refrain that I've picked up. A few people, of course, are critical, but that is to be expected.

Interviewers: Your book has been referred to as an Adventist sex manual. How does it differ from other books?

Wittschiebe: It differs in that it's not a How-To-Do book, but a How-To-Feel-About book. There is nothing in there about positions, no diagrams, no time schedule for foreplay, no biological data, very little on hygiene, and little on the procedures of contraception. I felt that we ought to have a book that would deal with the feeling tone of sex, rather than the mechanics of it. A man who loves his wife can be a little bit clumsy and have pleasure and give pleasure. If a man doesn't love his wife, he may be just a skilled seducer.

However, I don't see why Adventists couldn't read some well-selected manuals that are not written for pornographic or for sensational reasons. Some of them are very reliable and sound and worth reading. If Adventists got only five or six helpful hints from a book like that, it would be worth reading.

Interviewers: Which group or groups have had the most positive reactions to the book?

Wittschiebe: It seems to go right across the spectrum. I get comments from young people saying they like it very much—especially young wives, young husbands. I've also had comments from medical people, from people in the middle years and later years. One of the oldest persons

Tom Dybdahl is press aid on the congressional staff of Representative Ned Pattison (D.-N.Y.). Mike Hanson is pastor of the Mount Pisgah Academy church.

who asked me about her sex problem was a woman of 79. Sex doesn't have to stop even at that age. She was actively faced with a problem at 79. And I have gotten 30 to 40 percent of my mail from older people over 60.

Interviewers: What criticism have you had on the book?

Wittschiebe: Very little. I have been attacked much more in my public speaking. At one church on the west coast, I was attacked as though I was presenting a worldly viewpoint that was practically pagan. Someone wrote to the president of the university. They don't usually write me. They write somebody else. But within the week, I got a request from that same church for permission to use these tapes for the ministers in the whole conference, which indicates how things balance out.

"Take the celibacy system. It is a horrible thing to try to impose on people. And we have a few Adventists who are trying to do that today. One man recently talked to a group of conference workers and advocated gradually abstaining from sex."

Interviewers: As yet, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not really developed a theology of sex. What is your thinking on this matter?

Wittschiebe: Well, I feel that we have grossly neglected this whole area. Only recently are we putting out a book for our schools that includes the reproductive system. And the Devil, you see, through the ages, has not only attacked the Sabbath and mutilated it, but he has also attacked marriage and sex with great success. The Devil has always been able to use sex to cause trouble, either by having people act loosely and carelessly, or by having them say there should be no sex.

Take the celibacy system. It is a horrible thing to try to impose on people. And we have a few Adventists who are trying to do that today. One man recently talked to a group of conference workers and advocated gradually abstaining from sex. I think this is a heresy of major proportions.

Furthermore, we need the theology of sex to answer some questions about certain areas. Artificial insemination, for example, or what constitutes adultery. Is it only intercourse between a man and a woman who are not supposed to be having it? Or can it include perverted forms of intercourse within a marriage?

A theology of sex is certainly, it seems to me, as much needed as a theology of recreation, of diet, or of dress. If we don't talk positively and constructively here, we're always on the defensive. We're retreating from the Devil. We don't give our youngsters a way of life and thinking that's positive.

At the Andrews University Centennial, when I spoke on Friday evening about Adventist youth and the sexual revolution, at the last minute I got the inspiration of asking these young people to stand and made a dedication to God that they would conduct their sex lives in a way to please Him. A great number stood. It was the first time I've ever tried that. It was heartwarming to see this.

I'm not sure that it wouldn't be good to do this more often. The Devil is asking for their loyalty and he's getting it—on the part of many. Why not present God properly here and His love for them? As I tell the young people, the only restrictions He puts down are adultery and fornication, and with our people, masturbation. Within these limits, He says: "I want to have you enjoy sex all your lives after you are married."

In the Song of Solomon is a beautiful illustration of how deeply God is pleased with the physical attraction between two people. Too often it looks as though the Devil invented sex, and so God says: "You mustn't enjoy it." Too often that is how it has been portrayed.

Interviewers: In what ways do you feel that the book has been of benefit to the Adventist Church?

Wittschiebe: I think it's doing some good in the sense that it's bringing the topic out into the open where we can look at it. This brings sex back into its important level as part of the prefall creation of God. It's bringing it into more intelligent relationship with the mores of the world, and helping us contrast what we believe as against what they believe.

In that sense, I think it will do a service. And if it stimulates ultimately the calling of a conference on marriage and sex and related topics—which I feel that we urgently need—I think it will have done a great deal of good.

Interviewers: How would you describe the general attitude toward sex in the Adventist Church today?

Wittschiebe: Here you're asking for an opinion that would require a pretty thorough sampling of a lot of people, which we don't have. But generally, I think we have been somewhat too conservative in our handling of this. This is one topic people don't seem to want to take care of.

Another thing, I think, is that we have made anybody who works in this field a little nervous because he might be subject to attack. If you go into this field, you have to expect to be criticized. You would not be attacked for supporting motherhood, you know, or for supporting righteousness by faith, or better Sabbathkeeping. But when you specifically go into this field, you touch nerve spots, especially in people who are sensitive or neurotic about this. They react to what they consider to be a danger. You set them off and they attack you rationally and logically. But many times the basis of their attack is emotional. It involves an area of their own lives that they have never been quite able to face comfortably. But they don't see this and you can't always bring it to their attention. They feel you're imputing something to them unfairly.

But as I've gone around the country and talked on this subject, I feel that there is a basically healthy view there—pretty balanced. But many people still feel guilty about what is really a normal, happy expression of sex. Many Adventists feel this because of their upbringing. You know, they were taught to believe that sex was dirty and nice people indulge in it only in a dark room, partly clothed, and then with reluctance and regret and apologies. Then we have another group that is very liberal. But we have more, I think, who are struggling with neurotic inhibition.

Interviewers: Among other aspects of sexuality, the book deals with various aberrations and perversions. Is this becoming a serious problem within the church?

Wittschiebe: I don't think I would say there is a developing problem. I think it has been present to some degree always among us—but hidden from view. Now we have more homosexuality coming to light. This has been present through the years, from my knowledge of schools and people. It probably is increasing because of the worsening condition of the emotional climate of many homes. Homosexuality—in the current view—comes out of the emotional scarring of young people in their homes. That being the case, the more damaged homes you have, the more chance for increased homosexuality.

Now our church, I think, has been behind in knowing how to deal with people with these troubles. We've made them think that the message was not for them. That homosexuality was the unpardonable sin. And they could only get help from the Lord if they quit. But we haven't helped them to quit or told them how to quit. We haven't even told them how they got that way. And some homosexuals are pretty much preconditioned this way in their 11th, 12th, or 13th year of life. How much responsibility do you put on a youngster that age for moving in that direction? Do you see what I mean? Then when he's 18 or 19 we say: "Oh, he's a homosexual," as though he had chosen to be that kind of person. And he may not have. I mean, we must have compassion and sympathy for these people and yet still hold up the Biblical principles. In other words, we must mix therapy with evangelism, and therapy with pastoring.

"You would not be attacked for supporting motherhood. But when you talk about sex, you touch nerve spots, especially in people who are sensitive or neurotic about this. Many times the basis of their attack is emotional."

Interviewers: Was the book written for any special group?

Wittschiebe: It was written primarily for those who are married and those contemplating

marriage. But I think it's very much in order for college young people and even for seniors in academy. Young people can handle this book more easily than some of the older people. Much of what's in the book young people are comfortable with, including those of college and academy age. And I understand that they're reading it.

Interviewers: What is being done with the royalties from the book?

Wittschiebe: The royalties of the book are going into a fund to assist Seminary students who don't have enough funds to complete their ministerial training. I don't want people to think I chose the subject because it would mean a source of income for me, because of its notoriety or its popularity. I want people to know that the more it sells, the more money will go into the fund for the students, and not into my pocket.

CHINA AND VIETNAM: MISSION AND REVOLUTION

I. Introduction

The following cluster of articles narrate how Communist revolutions in China and Vietnam brought important changes to the Seventh-day Adventist communities in those areas; they also analyze the significance of those changes for Adventism in Asia and other developing nations. The articles about China were written six to seven years after the victory of Chinese Communist forces in 1949. The account of how Adventists in Vietnam responded to the imminent capture of Saigon was written shortly after the fall of that city this year.

It is startling that the authors, all of them eyewitnesses to the events and conditions they describe, focus on the same issues. Consequently, while the articles provide interesting historical information, they also suggest how that information might affect our present understanding of Adventist mission.

For years, the articles about China have circulated privately. This is the first time they have been printed. They came to SPECTRUM from Pastor S. J. Lee, one of the authors, in response to queries from editors about the accuracy of a secondary account of the Adventist church in Communist China submitted for publication to SPECTRUM.

Pastor Lee has been employed by the Seventh-day Adventist church for over 50 years. During that time, he served as treasurer and business manager of the Chinese Signs of the Times Publishing House and the Shanghai Sanitarium and Hospital, and also as assistant treasurer of the China Division. After the Communist victory in 1949, Pastor Lee became treasurer of the entire China Division until 1957 when he was permitted by the government to leave. He brought with him his account of the events following the Communist take-over.

Subsequently, he became president of the Malaya Mission of Seventh-day Adventists and

most recently, at an age when most workers would be enjoying retirement, he has been auditor (and sometimes acting treasurer and acting secretary) of the South China Island Union Mission, with headquarters in Taiwan.

The analysis of the events recounted in Pastor Lee's narrative was written by his friend and colleague, Pastor David Lin, when they were still working together in China. For those acquainted with Adventist mission in China, Pastor Lin has become an ideal of heroic faith.

The son of a Chinese government official, David Lin attended the Peking American School, the Adventist China Training Institute and then traveled to the United States to study at Pacific Union College, from which he received a B.A. in theology in 1941. He became active in the Voice of Prophecy, returning to China in 1946, just after World War II, to establish a radio ministry there.

When the American Adventists left in 1949, David Lin resisted their pleas to leave with them and remained to serve as secretary of the China Division during the time Pastor Lee was treasurer. Pastor Lee reported this year from Taiwan that

> David is still in labor camp. His 15 years of hard labor were up last year and he was offered freedom on condition that he would give up his faith and would no longer preach Jesus Christ. While in camp, he had managed to convert a few of his fellow prisoners and had baptized them. For this, he was sent to Shanghai for punishment. He refused to accept the conditions and as a result he is still held in camp.

Pastor Lee has expressed unequivocally his wish that both his own article and that of David Lin be published. Given the fact that Pastor Lee was with David Lin when he wrote his analysis and that Pastor Lee, from his posts in the Far East, has remained informed of David Lin's status, the editors believe that Pastor Lee is in the best position to decide Pastor Lin's desires concerning publication. In February of this year Pastor Lee repeated what he said before.

> About the aricles written by David Lin and me, you have my full permission to print them if you see fit to do so. . . . There is nothing in the articles written by David or by me that would jeopardize his or anyone else's safety now. . . .
>
> I might tell you a little about how David wrote those articles and why he did it. He was not instigated by the Communist authorities to do so as some have accused him of. When he learned that I had applied for permission to leave China for Singapore, he urged me to be sure to warn our people (the leaders of our work) everywhere to avoid the

The following is excerpted from a letter by S. J. Lee to Roy Branson, dated May 11, 1975: "The information you desire to know about China today can be very briefly stated. Ever since the cultural revolution in China, our contacts with our people in China have been cut off and we have had no contacts with them ever since.

From information that has trickled through, we have learned that there are no organized churches existing anywhere in the mainland; that only in larger cities are churches to be found with only a few elderly people and some children in attendance. The young people do not attend church services any longer. In some areas, worship is not permitted while elsewhere worship in the homes is allowed, but no dissemination of religion is permitted outside the home. This condition differs in places. Some of our overseas Chinese friends who have returned to the mainland for visits all tell different stories; some have told of finding small groups meeting together on Sabbaths, while others reported that they cannot even find any of our former believers.

As far as organization is concerned, there just is no more. The Communists have been successful so far in carrying out their avowed determination to stamp out religion. . . . The fate of others than David Lin who have been imprisoned is still unknown. Our believers in Hong Kong have not been able to get any news from their relatives in the mainland about church activities. As a matter of fact, they do not dare to write about it. So this is all I can tell you about what goes on in China today."

mistakes that had been made in China and that brought about so many problems and hard feelings by the nationals against the missionaries, and to be forewarned as to what would happen to the Church if and when the Communists took over other countries. . . .

SPECTRUM is honored to print the reports of both Pastor Lin and Pastor Lee.

Similarities between conditions in China when it became Communist and those in South Vietnam when its government surrendered to Communist forces have been noted by none other than Pastor Lee himself. According to Dr. Bruce Branson's account, Pastor Lee made the comparison in a letter he wrote to Adventist clergy and members just before the fall of Saigon.

Interestingly, Dr. Branson, one of the very last Adventists to leave South Vietnam this year, is the grandson of W. H. Branson, the last missionary president of the China Division, and one of the last Americans to evacuate Shanghai in 1949. He is associate professor of surgery at the Loma Linda University School of Medicine and chief of surgical services at the University Medical Center. In the autumn of 1973, he spent three months as the initial faculty member sent by the Loma Linda School of Medicine to establish its affiliation with South Vietnamese medical schools and with the newly acquired Saigon Adventist Hospital.

The final article in the cluster discusses Adventism in Asia and was written by Gottfried Oosterwal, chairman of the Department of Mission at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University. His comments are based on unique training and experience. Having received a doctor's degree in theology and anthropology from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, Dr. Oosterwal for several years headed the Adventist mission in the Indonesian part of New Guinea. In addition to establishing churches and a mission school, he discovered several new tribes. In many scholarly anthropological journals and monographs, Dr. Oosterwal has analyzed the social and belief systems of these tribes.

His experience in the Pacific and Far East continued with his becoming dean of the School of Religion at Philippine Union College and visiting professor at the University of the Philippines. Since going to the seminary, Dr. Oosterwal has lectured and written extensively on the Seventh-day Adventist theology of mission. He has contributed frequently to SPECTRUM and written the book, *Mission Possible.* Dr. Oosterwal discusses the implication of the events in China and Vietnam after spending several months visiting Adventist institutions, clergy and lay members throughout the Far Eastern Division in the autumn of 1974.

The Editors

II. Adventism in China: The Communist Takeover

by S. J. Lee

The year 1951 was a turning point for Seventh-day Adventists in China. The Communist liberation ushered in a new experience not only for Adventists but also for Christians of every denomination. All religious organizations, Catholic and Protestant, severed their connections with foreign missionaries and embarked on a program of self-support, self-administration and self-propagation—the "Three-Self Movement." In churches throughout China, missionaries were denounced for raising a wall between Christians and non-Christians, for teaching the Chinese people to be unpatriotic, and for serving as spies and foreign agents.

The first inkling of change came in May 1951, when the government's Bureau of Religious Affairs summoned leaders of every denomination to Peking for a one-week meeting. The first two days of the session were devoted to speeches by leading government officials on the traitorous activities of foreign missionaries from the time of the Opium War in 1840 down to the present. After the speeches, the participants broke into groups to discuss the hypocritical activities of missionaries, and then listened to a series of "denunciation meetings" by representatives of the YMCA, YWCA and various denominations. At the close of the meeting, it was resolved to inform all Christians, as well as the non-Christian public, of the facts that had been revealed during the week. Adventist representatives at the meeting included Brethren Hsu Hwa, Tan Hsin Hsu, H. C. Shen, Lee Su Liang, Ho Ping Duan, Chen Ming and myself. None of us took part in the accusations.

A month or so after this meeting, Brother Hsu Hwa received a telephone call to report immediately to the Office of the Bureau of Religious Affairs. On arrival, he learned of plans to hold a public "accusation meeting" the following day. Along with the heads of every denomination in Shanghai, he was required to start at once writing out accusations to be read the next day. He later reported that he had been detained from morning till late in the afternoon without even a lunch break. The next day, Christians of every persuasion were asked to meet in the Canidrome, and many attended without knowing the nature of the meeting. The accusations made that day were broadcast to the world. We learned weeks afterwards that Elder W. H. Branson, the last foreign president of the China Division, was sick and fasted for two days after hearing Hsu Hwa's accusations (which Brother Hsu claimed had been doctored by the officials).

Following this session in the Canidrome, the various denominational leaders were to conduct similar accusation meetings throughout the country, starting with mission headquarters and the principal churches of Shanghai. A schedule of meetings was drawn up, with the Adventists appearing in the middle of the list and being responsible for only one meeting. But shortly after the list was issued, a sudden change occurred. Instead of being in the middle of the schedule, the Adventists now appeared at the top. Instead of holding one meeting, they were to hold three. Instead of denouncing their foreign missionaries, they were to accuse their Chinese leaders. The reason for these changes, we learned later, was the fear of other denominations of being first. They wanted the Adventists to be the scapegoat, reasoning that our church, with a publishing house in Shanghai and

churches, schools and hospitals scattered all over the country, and being part of a worldwide organization, would be the ideal denomination to lead out in the proposed reforms. This plan received ready support from radicals within our ranks like Nan Hsiang Chien, a typesetter in the publishing house and the chairman of the Press Workers' Union, and Peng Hsien Seng, chairman of the Students' Union. The authorities approved this plan.

Now all attention focused on the Adventists. The government and the Three-Self Movement Committee selected experienced men and women from the YMCA, the YWCA and other Christian organizations to train our students and workers in conducting accusation meetings. By this time, the students from our China Training Institute (C.T.I.) in Chiao Tou Tseng were encamped in the Ningkuo Road compound, the division headquarters. Allied with them were the publishing house workers (who by now had stopped working), former colporteurs and virtually the entire staff of the China Division—all now under the direction and control of specially trained men and women known as the "Accusation Committee." The press compound became emergency headquarters, with press workers guarding the compound entrances and even the doors to the main office building. When we, the accused, went to the office building to be lectured or questioned, we had to show the guards special written permits.

For a couple of months, the entire mornings were spent listening to lectures and collecting information to be used against us and the foreign missionaries. Bulletin boards at the division office and publishing house publicized the crimes and misdeeds allegedly perpetrated by us and the foreigners. Ironically, the workers gathered around these bulletin boards to read the morning news just before meeting in the chapel for worship. At the close of chapel, they went immediately to their rooms to continue gathering information against us.

The accusation meetings were held during August and September 1951. The first one, held at the Range Road Church, was for the China Training Institute; and the students accused David Lin, H. C. Shen and Ho Ping Duan. The second one, held at the church of another denomination to provide more seating space, was for the Signs Publishing House. The accused were Hsu Hwa, Lee Su Liang and Gia Shou Dz, the superintendent. At these two meetings, the accused brethren were arraigned on the platform like criminals before the bar of justice. The ceremonies opened with Communist songs blaring over radio sets belonging to the Voice of Prophecy, and shouts for punishment and even death for the accused often interrupted the proceedings. At intervals, the audience yelled Communist slogans like "Long live Mao Tse Tung and the Communist Party." Songs especially composed for the occasion ridiculed and made fun of the accused. At the second meeting, the police took precautions to protect the accused from possible bodily harm.

"Brother Tai and another former worker were stripped of their clothes, shoes and socks and made to kneel on the cold, cement floor while being accused. Then they were taken to prison."

The third accusation meeting took place in October in a non-Adventist church with a seating capacity of over 3,000. Here the Chinese Adventist leaders were to be arraigned in what was hailed as the biggest affair of the year. Events did not turn out as expected, however, because the accusers feared they might make an unfavorable impression on visitors from other denominations. Instead of accusing all the Chinese leaders, they selected four—Hsu Hwa, David Lin, Lee Su Liang and H. C. Shen—who remained in police custody at division headquarters for their own protection. (We learned afterward of plans to attack the accused, so that the police could intervene and arrest the church leaders.) The Accusation Committee withdrew charges against Chen Ming, Tan Hsin Hsu and me on the basis of insufficient evidence. Ho Ping Duan, Gia Shou Dz and Dr. Paul Lee made public confessions.

Every day, except Saturdays, for almost three months, the accused ministers remained confined to an office of the Signs Publishing House

from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. During this time, they were required to write out confessions about themselves since they were nine years old. The authorities particularly wanted any evidence that might be used against foreign governments or secret agents. Before the close of 1955, millions of Chinese men and women passed through a similar ordeal.

While the four accused brethren were preparing their confessions, the rest of us also were writing about ourselves and our activities. Whenever I was at the office, guards would drop in now and then or watch me through the windows. They searched everything taken out of the building. At night, a guard watched my house, and my wife and I were always shadowed when we went to town. When this farce was over, friendly workers told us of all that had gone on behind our backs, including plots to harm us. Thank God for His intervention on our behalf and for blocking the devilish plans of our enemies.

Those of us in Shanghai fared better than those accused elsewhere. In Hankow, where he was taken from Shanghai, Brother A. F. Tai and another former worker were stripped of their clothes, shoes and socks and made to kneel on the cold cement floor (during winter) while being accused. At the conclusion of the proceedings, they were taken to prison, where they remained for an entire year without trial.

Near the end of October 1951, a special three-day meeting was convened at division headquarters for the purpose of appointing new division officers. Those invited to attend included some publishing house workers, students and a few older ministers. Nan Hsiang Chien, the typesetter, chaired the meeting, run jointly by the government and the Three-Self Movement Committee. Delegates appointed a new division committee composed of several members of the Three-Self Movement Committee, a handful of radical students and publishing house workers, two or three ordained ministers, one woman evangelist and the division office janitor. Nan Hsiang Chien was elected division chairman (president).

The delegates passed several resolutions: to pledge allegiance to the government and the Communist Party, to support the volunteers fighting with the North Koreans, to adopt and promulgate the Three-Self Movement program, to abolish the China Division Working Policy and to excommunicate the four accused church leaders. At the banquet celebrating the close of the meeting, alcohol, cigarettes and unclean foods were freely served. The new division chairman freely indulged in these things and soon had a goodly number of colleagues at the division headquarters following his example. The practice also spread to other places.

Those attending the meeting condemned strict Sabbath observance and the church's dietary restrictions as the poisonous teachings of the American missionaries, not in harmony with the Bible. This action received the strong support of representatives of the Three-Self Movement Committee. The writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White and Adventist hymnbooks at the publishing house and division headquarters were destroyed. Several of our leading ministers gave up their copies of Mrs. White's books with their allegedly imperialistic and poisonous teachings.

By the time the accusation meetings were over, practically all who had taken an active part in them had given up the truth, and the denomination was split in two. The progressives wanted to throw off all restrictions and adopt the modern outlook on religious matters. The diehards rejected all the new teachings and refused to listen to any politics preached from the pulpit, which the government required. The *old* church members tended to side with the latter group, while many young workers and ministers joined the former group.

Much of what happened might not have occurred had not the authorities brought about 100 C.T.I. students down to Shanghai. These students had begun "reorganizing" the college shortly after a resident government cadre organized a Students' Union. This cadre came down to Shanghai with the students. The most radical student was Peng Hsien Sheng, chairman of the Students' Union. Like many of the radicals, he was the son of an old-time worker and had been dismissed from the college the previous year for misconduct and radical thinking. At the request of a respected missionary and family friend, the school had given him another trial. But he had only used this opportunity to seek vengeance against the school and the China Division.

Shortly after the students arrived in Shanghai, they occupied the offices of the China Division and disrupted a meeting of the division committee. They pasted slogans on the walls calling for a purge of the denomination and a cleansing of the church of all rubbish. "Down with foreign imperialism," "Long live Mao Tse Tung and the Communist Party," they read. The students presented us with a list of demands and then barred the door to the committee room until late in the afternoon, not even letting us out for lunch.

The Division Committee during these days worked under great strain and severe handicaps. Many workers became discouraged as a result of insufficient funds to pay salaries, exorbitant taxes and constant government interference. Committee discussions leaked out and were used by workers and students against us. At the last few meetings of the committee, hardly anyone spoke, and the three officers were forced to make almost all decisions. Office personnel grew increasingly restless. Many lost their trust in God and took government positions in exchange for taking part in the accusations. Most of these later abandoned their faith altogether.

"Today [1957] the buildings in which the church invested 40 percent of its funds, and the missionaries' houses which consumed another 43.5 percent, are in the hands of God's enemies. Only the churches remain."

Through 1957, the China Division continued to operate with division and union headquarters at their traditional locations. But the unions lost most of their former usefulness. Instead of carrying out division policy, as they once had done, they began taking their orders from the government. Lack of funds restricted travel and made stationery and postage stamps a luxury. The division office itself turned into a mouthpiece of the government and the Three-Self Movement Committee, and contributed nothing toward improving conditions in the church.

Of all the unions, the Central China should have remained the strongest, but today [1957] there remains nothing of which to be proud. The work has gone to pieces and few old-time workers remain. Radical students and workers have wreaked havoc on the field. Dr. Li Tien Hsi lost his life after being accused by the staff of the Wuhan Sanitarium of stealing medicines and supplies and shipping them out to Singapore. He was gagged and shot without ever having a chance to defend himself. Later, when his wife convinced the Peking authorities to investigate the death of her husband, it was discovered that the doctor had been falsely accused. (He had been charged with stealing property several times the combined value of all hospital equipment and supplies!) To compensate for this miscarriage of justice, the government elevated him to the rank of martyr of the revolution, gave his widow a job, and educated his children.

Following the Communist take-over, severe restrictions were imposed on church activities throughout China. Pastoral visits and home Bible studies were prohibited, and in some rural areas church services were banned altogether. However, by the close of 1954, when the turmoil of land reform and purges of counterrevolutionaries were ending, many restrictions were lifted. Services resumed and church workers traveled about freely. By that time self-support, self-administration and self-propagation were firmly established and promoted in the local churches.

For many years, the Communist government was very suspicious of Seventh-day Adventists. Some of our leading workers and students had reported that the church was a secret service organization whose missionaries served as agents of the United States. When Elder Branson moved to Washington, D.C., and assumed the General Conference presidency, it was said that he had gone to the capital to head up the worldwide network of agents and to be close to the State Department. The police eventually made a thorough investigation of all charges against us and concluded that our church was a purely religious organization. The police officer who examined David Lin decided that Brother Lin was not a secret agent but only a very backward fellow who needed to catch up.

And officials of the Bureau of Religious Affairs told Pastor Shan Lo Tien that there was nothing wrong with me, except that I was still pro-American.

Pastors Chen Ming, David Lin and I were the last Adventists called in for police questioning. Between June and December 1956, Brother Chen had four interviews, David Lin more than six, and I nine, each lasting from two to four hours. In addition to our verbal replies, we had to submit written documentation. The interrogators were especially eager to know about my activities in Hong Kong after the liberation and about what went on at division meetings. Practically every Adventist in China was thoroughly questioned, and some were confined for months or even years. My own son was once questioned from 7 p.m. until 2 a.m. about my work and visits to Hong Kong.

After the liberation, the Communist government continued to operate all hospitals, clinics and schools. The denomination was able to retain use of churches, workers' quarters and other essential buildings, but had to turn over all other property to the government. Today [1957] all the fine, large buildings in which the church invested about 40 percent of its funds, and all the missionaries' houses which consumed another 45.3 percent, are in the hands of God's enemies. They stand as a monument to the former wealth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in China. The churches and chapels, which represent only 2.3 percent of the denomination's investment, remain in the hands of God's people. These buildings, many in a state of disrepair, stand as a monument to God. What irony!

In January 1951, the China Division had about one-fourth of the year's operating budget available in cash and readily convertible assets. About one-third of these funds was deposited in banks and two-thirds remained in the division office safe, having been placed there at the outbreak of the Korean War in case the banks failed. This proved to be fortunate, because our other assets were frozen by the government.

Much of the cash, however, was diverted to the hundred-odd students who came down from C.T.I. and camped on division grounds. For the six months they remained, we were forced to provide them with food and expenses. Frequently, they spent their allowances on entertainment and propaganda work—and then complained that they did not have enough money for food.

The press workers, after joining the Workers' Union, were a constant source of irritation and trouble. At the close of 1949, they demanded salary increases and a three-month bonus, and a year later they demanded still another raise. The division committee was then in session and appointed several representatives to negotiate with the workers. After wasting two full days, we finally had to agree to their terms, which took another large slice of division funds.

I could write at length about the hardships and suffering of our faithful workers, but will not do so. Their lot can better be imagined than told.

About mid-1952 David Lin, Lee Su Liang and I, together with our wives, formed a small business to make slide rules. We wanted to keep ourselves occupied and make a living. We resolved to employ as many loyal Sabbath-keepers as possible and to assist faithful workers struggling to carry on the work. The Lord prospered our efforts, and we were able to do as we had resolved.

We all agreed that David Lin should spend half his time translating Ellen G. White's "Conflict of the Ages" series, while my wife and I would continue giving Bible studies and visiting English-speaking believers, whose church had been closed in late 1951.

All went well until some of the workers we had befriended reported to the police that our business was a cover for underground missionary activity. Before long, the police were making friendly visits to the house where we worked and asking discreetly why so-and-so was not at his job, etc. When Brother Lin was obliged to quit working, Mrs. Lee and I continued to support him and his assistant Chen Ming in their work of translation. Despite many difficulties, the two men persevered. Several times, the police went straight to David Lin's room and examined all of his writings and books, but they never stopped him or seriously interfered with his work.

The youth of the Central Shanghai Church at Changshu Road actively cooperated in holding Young People's Missionary Volunteer meet-

ings, revivals and youth conventions. Their zeal spread throughout the country, and by 1955 youth meetings were being conducted in all churches. The young people gave Bible studies, conducted Sabbath afternoon meetings, and publicized the translations of Mrs. White's writings in the local churches. Before long, the church members were contributing generously to the publication of these translations in mimeograph form for circulation among believers. The young people worked from early morning till late at night copying the translations and preparing stencils, eager that these works be placed in the hands of members.

Their activities antagonized the officers of the China Division and the East China Union, who asked the Three-Self Movement Committee, the Bureau of Religious Affairs and the police to help stop this work. As a result, all activities at the Changshu Road Church ended and the young men and women were ordered to go home. It was announced that David Lin and his associates would be prosecuted for secretly subsidizing and circulating poisonous matter. Thus, the translation of Mrs. White's books came to a temporary stop. But, just before the police ordered the post office to confiscate all her books, the completed "Conflict of the Ages" series had been mailed out.

Because of his translating work, David Lin was branded the ringleader of the anti-revolutionary clique. When he refused to condemn Mrs. White and her writings as imperialistic and poisonous, he incurred the wrath of the Three-Self Movement Committee, which called him the most dangerous man in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Brother Lin had gone to America for his training and had served on the staff of the YMCA since returning to China.

Just when things looked the darkest and everyone felt that David Lin and others would certainly be arrested, a very influential Christian member of the Three-Self Movement Committee, a bishop of another denomination, arose to defend us. He pointed out to the authorities that there was nothing wrong with Mrs. White's writings and that it was not against the law to translate any book, religious or secular. David Lin's only transgression was that he had circulated his translations through the mail without first having obtained permission from the authorities. Consequently, the police dropped the case and later returned all confiscated books.

At a recent meeting of the China Division [circa 1957], Pastor Liu Chang Li, superintendent of the Manchurian Union, testified that the authorities in Shanyang had read all of Mrs. White's works and pronounced them excellent. There would be no problem, they said, in circulating her writings in Manchuria. Furthermore, they declared that Seventh-day Adventists, unlike other denominations, had truth that did not change with the times; that is, they still taught and observed what Mrs. White taught years ago.

From the time I joined the work in China in the late 1920s, I heard of plans to have the "Conflict of the Ages" series translated and published in Chinese. Yet *The Great Controversy* was the only book published before the liberation, and only half of it. Twenty years were spent translating and editing *The Desire of Ages;* but when it finally appeared in Hong Kong in 1956, it was of no benefit to our members on the mainland.

"Because of his translating work, David Lin was branded the ringleader of the anti-revolutionary clique. When he refused to condemn Mrs. White and her writings, he was called the most dangerous man in the church."

What could not be accomplished in times of prosperity—with men, money, and our own publishing house—was achieved in a time of adversity, hardship and danger. In China today [1957] the ten bound mimeographed volumes of "The Conflict of the Ages" series are in the hands of a limited number of members, and there is a great demand for more copies. According to the testimony of our workers, which I heard before leaving Shanghai, many have found in these books an immense wealth of spiritual food. Had they been available before the liberation, they no doubt would have given our

workers the courage to go through the testing time and would have provided them with much-needed sermon material, which they were forced to obtain from the literature of other denominations.

Why were the "Conflict" volumes never published in Chinese? The answer is very enlightening: "There is no profit to the Publishing House from the publication and sale of these books." This was the explanation given by an old American missionary to China who once sat on the board of the Signs Publishing House in Shanghai. The loss of our publishing house, with all of its personnel, equipment and stock, was no loss to the cause of God in China.

I close with another question: What literature are we giving our workers and members in colonial lands today?

III. Years of Heartbreak: Lessons for Mission by A China Insider

by David Lin

About ten years ago, I left the United States and set out with a group of missionaries for China. It was just after the Second World War; I had been away from the China field for about nine years. Like many other recruits, I was young and inexperienced but looked forward to doing great things in the mission field.

The unexpected developments of the following years have been packed with stirring and sometimes heartbreaking experiences. No better statement can be applied to this period of trial than the words, "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house." And true to the words of our Lord, the house that was founded upon the rock fell not, but the house built on sand fell, and "great was the fall of it."

For some time, I have felt that the hard-earned lessons of these years should be shared with others who might face similar situations. It might help them to avoid the mistakes made by others in the past. While it is true that we should never say a word of discouragement, it is equally true that we should never call a mistake a success. A common failing among us has been to lean toward blind optimism and to minimize our own shortcomings. But if we could judge ourselves by what we might have become if we had fully followed our Lord, we would rend our hearts in repentance.

In the past, much has been written concerning the necessary qualifications of the foreign missionary, such as adaptability, humility and tact. It is, therefore, not necessary to repeat these admonitions. It is my purpose to apply these general qualifications to concrete problems and suggest practical methods which might help to get us out of the rut most of us are in.

On the rising tide of nationalism that has engulfed the colonial world, China was the first great experiment. A people that had long been under the yoke of feudalism and imperialist exploitation asserted their independence and took their rightful place in the family of nations. Other countries followed in China's wake. Hence, what happened to Adventist missions in China could be repeated more or less after the same pattern in other former colonial areas.

We do well to take Paul's principle to heart. When he started to build, he first laid the only sure foundation, "which is Jesus Christ." Perhaps every missionary will claim that he had

done the same, but the fact is that many of those who had a hand in laying the foundation in China did not lay it right. It is clear that many of our believers, especially our institutional workers, never made Jesus Christ the foundation of their lives. Simply stated, they never were really converted.

A typical instance involved the staff of the Shanghai Sanitarium and Clinic. When the new administration took over, it took pains to assure all the workers that their religious convictions would be fully respected. But at the very first banquet to celebrate the occasion, the entire staff, with very few exceptions, did not entertain the least scruples over eating swine's flesh and drinking the social cup. Only four workers requested Sabbath privileges. And what lesson do we learn from this? Simply stated: build insitutions only as fast as you can build Christian character.

The medical work in China seems to have begun in regular Seventh-day Adventist fashion, and we should give due credit to its important part as an entering wedge in the early phases of mission endeavor. However, it appears to have gradually undergone a process of change which weaned it from its high and holy mission. The medical personnel looked upon their work more as a professional career than a divine calling. Many of the Chinese doctors came from non-Adventist medical schools to work as interns. They had not the least beginnings of a Christian experience, let alone the vision of medical missionaries. Many of them complied with the requirement to be baptized; others were less hypocritical. The same was true of the nurses. They came mainly for a professional education, and most of them meekly submitted to indoctrination and baptism; but inasmuch as most of them did not even pray themselves, they were naturally not able to pray with their patients.

In the Range Road Clinic, one girl was honest enough to refuse baptism because she did not really believe, and she was consequently discharged. This was in 1948, when the missionaries were still in charge, and shows how religious intolerance can rear its ugly head even in an Adventist institution as well as revealing the sad state into which the medical work in China had already degenerated. By 1948, all of the 13 sanitariums in this field were financially independent but spiritually dead. So, as soon as the foreign staff pulled out, their separation from the mission organization was inevitable. The lesson is clear: don't build hospitals faster than you can make real medical missionaries.

The fate of the publishing work teaches the same lesson. The pioneers evidently started out with a glorious vision of building a publishing house to compare with the Review and Herald and Pacific Press. So the money was laid out and the buildings put up and machinery installed. But where were the men? They had to be Seventh-day Adventists; so we hear the same story of men hurrying to be baptized in order to qualify for a job. The result? When mission funds stopped, everybody threw the Sabbath overboard. The only exception was an insignificant old bindery worker who was never much in anyone's notice, but who was nevertheless in touch with God. He insisted on keeping the Sabbath, and the new management respected him for it. He is working and keeping the Sabbath to this day.

Another failing of our publishing work was a strange lack of spiritual vision. In the fifty-odd years of this phase of our work, the Ellen G. White books never received due emphasis. Aside from the *Signs* magazine, the colporteurs were taught to sell health books, and more health books. We grant that health reform is important, but it is certainly out of place when it crowds out the Advent message as presented in such important works as *Great Controversy* and other books. In all these years, the "Conflict of the Ages" series has never had a chance to reach the reading public in China. In 1936, one church member who could not read English noticed a few translated passages from *The Desire of Ages*

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in a magazine. He was so well impressed that he wrote several times to ask that we publish the entire volume in Chinese. Every time the reply was that the book was a poor financial risk, so we were not planning to publish it.

Many English-speaking Adventists could hardly think of being deprived of *The Desire of Ages* and *Great Controversy*. These books make strong Adventists wherever they are read, and are indispensable to the training of well-informed and spirit-filled evangelists. Yet, Chinese Seventh-day Adventists have not received the strengthening influence of these volumes, and even the ministers have never possessed these precious aids. It was in the mind of God to provide His people with the Gift of Prophecy, but narrow-minded and shortsighted men have stood in its way.

Like other phases of our work, the educational work has had its successes as well as its failings. The successful side may be seen in the young people who are still striving to hold aloft the torch of truth in the face of most difficult circumstances. Like Daniel and his three companions, there remain a few young people of sterling character to remind us that God is never without witnesses. But we wish there were more. We wish that more of the hundreds of young people who were brought up in our schools were true Christians today. We wish again that we had invested more money in translating, publishing, distributing and promoting the *Testimonies* and preaching the message, and less money in school buildings.

When we were rehabilitating the school at Chiaotoutseng in 1947, someone suggested we save money by building the houses out of mud. The suggestion was laughed out of court. But the result is that the expensive buildings put up at that time did not serve us more than three years, so they might as well have been put into publishing the Ellen G. White writings and building Christian character. But, actually, we were putting gold into the school buildings and mud into the character building. With very few exceptions, the China Training Institute faculty and student body of 1950-1951 are no longer practicing Seventh-day Adventists. The same is true of our other schools.

But coming back to the brighter side of the picture, we find that the Lord still has His jewels among the young people. At the very time when older workers were cautiously toning down the third angel's message and preaching smooth things to avoid controversy, God was inspiring a group of young people with the spirit and power of Elijah to boldly proclaim His testimony. Like the early Advent messengers, they were impelled to work and pray by the Spirit of God. Almost instinctively, they knew that what the people needed was the counsel of Ellen White. So what had been withheld from the people for the past 50 years was now to come to them in a manner peculiar to the mysterious workings of divine Providence. What a group of shrewd board members once turned down as a poor financial risk, a few young "hotheads" took up as a divine commission.

Without a dollar of regular income, they stepped out in naked faith. Their only reward was the blessings of God and the appreciation of those who received the mimeographed portions of the Ellen White writings. Letters and funds started coming in from all quarters to pay for the expense. The people were thirsting for these messages, and it was at last coming to them through the self-sacrificing labor of a few consecrated young people. In the space of two brief years, the entire "Conflict of the Ages" series was published in mimeograph form (only *Acts of the Apostles* appeared in print), and more than 3,000 volumes were distributed to those who wanted them. But, for all this, the young people received no regular pay. They are still poor in this world's goods, but rich in spiritual endowments. "For the first time," said one observer, "we see some hope for the cause of God in China, because we are beginning to see manifest the

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spirit of true sacrifice."

The local church seems to have been the most neglected portion of the Lord's vineyard, and for this reason it was least affected by the upheaval which gave the top-heavy administrative structure a major shakedown. The emphasis on putting up big institutions, office buildings and missionary residences and the neglect of building meeting places for congregations is seen in the fact that the cost of churches and chapels amounted to only 2.3 percent of the total denominational investment in China. Missionary residences amounted to 40 percent of the total and the remaining 57.7 percent was invested in sanitariums, schools and office buildings. And now the 2.3 percent investment in churches and chapels has turned out to be the most useful part in the long run, as the other 97.7 percent has been either rented out or taken over by other organizations.

But the inadequacy of the 2.3 percent is showing up everywhere. Due to shortsighted mission policy in the past, many chapels were built of cheap material and poorly situated. Hence, the crying need for repairs. Many congregations are still meeting in rented buildings.

The Central Shanghai church is a good example of our city churches. Before 1948, the congregation always met in the YMCA chapel, but when Fordyce Detamore came to Shanghai, the China Division built a temporary tabernacle for his meetings. It was hastily erected, and the contractor was told it was needed for only one year. Yet, after eight years it is still serving as a church building, and naturally calls for frequent repairs. Considering the millions of dollars of missions appropriations put into China since VJ day, this building stands as a symbol of the wrong emphasis of administrative policy in mission affairs.

Before leaving China, a certain missionary took pains to convince me that the church in China could never be self-supporting. His reasoning ran something like this: Most of our members are poor Chinese farmers, who can barely support their own families, let alone provide the half million U.S. dollars a year required to "operate" the China Division. So, he concluded, this field must continue to receive regular appropriations from the General Conference.

The fallacy of this line of reasoning is now apparent. First, it did not take into account the rapidly changing conditions all around him, and it failed to see that the day was soon coming when no more mission appropriations would be coming this way. Secondly, it did not recognize that the half million dollars a year absorbed by the China Division (not including the missionary payroll) was mostly being put into a bag with holes, and that most of the conference workers, departmental secretaries and institutional employees were not indispensable to the existence and growth of the local congregations, which can sometimes even get along fairly well without a minister. Thirdly, it underestimated the ability of the Chinese farmer to finance his own church, and fourthly, it forgot that with God all things are possible.

It is no exaggeration to say that in the last few years of their existence the union and local mission organizations and the China Division staff were fast becoming a dead weight in the cause of God. With but few exceptions, all this administrative setup did was to draw a monthly salary and take up a few inches of space in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook.* When their salary stopped, the workers forgot all about the third angel's message and looked every man to his own affairs.

The most deplorable case is the West China Union Mission, which I visited early in 1951. At that time, the administration was in the process of disintegration, and there was no way to prevent it. It was heartbreaking to see how the workers squabbled over little benefits. When I attempted to renew in them a love for the message by conducting a series of Bible studies, they just sat there and stared. I later found out that the West China Union was a hastily put up affair to begin with. Those responsible for its organization hurriedly baptized a few welcome newcomers and hired them as workers to put up a semblance of an organization made in the mission field.

I am not being cynical; neither do I wish to belittle the efforts of another. But we must never make these mistakes again. We must not deceive ourselves and others with such surface work just for the sake of a little glory. It will all show up in due time. And it is no use trying to put the blame on changing circumstances.

Fortunately, the West China Union Mission is

the worst case. Now to turn to the best. The South Chekiang (usually called Wenshow) Mission is a working miracle. Unlike the West China Union which had the privilege of entertaining a large number of foreign missionaries during the war years, the Wenchow Mission saw comparatively few missionaries. But to this day it is the only local mission which has a working organization with regular income, regular reports, regular conferences, centralized control of finances and an active ministry. Its constituency is mostly made up of farmers, not the poverty-stricken type mentioned earlier, but enterprising and energetic ones who pay a regular tithe, keep their churches in repair, and can even purchase or build new ones. According to our latest reports, there are more than 40 organized churches in this little mission, and the membership totals more than 2,000, while another 2,000 attend church regularly but are not yet baptized. In 1949, the membership was 1,048. In these brief years of progress, this mission has baptized hundreds of new converts, kept their meeting places in repair, and acquired two new church buildings, while in the process of building another one this year. And this was all in the tense atmosphere of land reform and rural organization.

How did they do it? Where do they get all the money? People who ask such questions are ignorant of the power of God and do not realize how every dollar can be made to go a long way by wise economy. After all, when God inspires His people with holy zeal, there is no way to stop them; and when they have given all the money they can, they still have their labor to offer. That is the way to do it: buy the material and build the church yourself. There is a big difference between this plan and the regular plan followed in other places, where contractors and architects' fees are added to the wages of carpenters, masons and other craftsmen.

This little glimpse of the Wenchow Mission should settle the doubts of many who never believed the China field could be self-supporting. The artificial setup of conference officers and departmental secretaries patterned after the overseas model naturally had to give way to a simpler structure. But the basic unit of the local congregation has required very little adjustment to changing conditions. True, in certain areas, the tithe paid in is barely sufficient to support a preacher; but some congregations pay enough tithe but have no preacher. So what was once regarded as an impossible financial problem is not so serious as the question of preaching talent. Yet, even here the Holy Spirit has supplied the lack. Lately, we have heard from a church in Juyand, Anhwei Province, where the preacher left about a year ago, and the laity bravely carried on. An ordained minister visited them this summer, and baptized 63 members—the result of lay evangelism.

So the problem of support has really solved itself. When annual appropriations were received and regular salaries paid, money was spent freely and sometimes extravagantly. There was much running to and fro; building after building went up. And everybody was busy with committee and board meetings. Everything needed money, and there was plenty of it. Workers constantly clamored for more pay, and the administration was busy studying salary scales, rates of exchange and prices. New arrivals spent about two months getting their freight and baggage cleared through customs, and another month or two getting settled. There was much hustle and bustle and more money spent. Then came the order for evacuation. So the whole process was repeated in reverse. Furniture had to be crated, curios packed, transportation arranged for. When air and train travel did not suffice, why not charter a steamship or a few extra planes? So a few more thousand dollars disappeared into the bottomless pit. In the end, what have we to show? I am beginning to think that the Lord was thoroughly disgusted with our feverish and fruitless ways, and just ordered a general clean-out.

The experience of the last five years has shown that although the China field was deprived of its half-million-dollar annual appropriation, it has suffered no substantial loss in terms of spiritual power. True, many administrative workers and a portion of the ministry have gone out of action, and there have been many apostasies; but they are as the chaff to the wheat. The sifting process has left us with a body of men and women in some respects resembling the people of God during the days following the great disappointment. More than once divine Providence has ordered such differentiating movements among His people. Gideon

and his 300, as well as Jesus and His disciples after the multitude "went back and walked no more with Him," all experienced the disheartening effect of many desertions, but this worked out for their good. Even so today, God is testing us for greater trials to come.

The changed conditions in the China Division demonstrate how, after an administrative and promotional setup has lost its vitality, God can dispense with all such machinery and still have a thriving constituency. The encouraging examples of the operation of the Holy Spirit among the local churches represent the brighter side of the picture, however, and the impression should not be gained that there are no serious problems and deficiencies. While the sudden stoppage of mission appropriations has not caused the loyal members of the ministry to desert their posts, it has caused them serious hardships. In most instances, local tithes and offerings are not sufficient to provide them with a regular living. So they have been forced to do the best they can. Many have either resorted to some other means of livelihood, or let other members of their families do the manual labor. Their heroic experiences would fill many pages if told in full. On the other hand, incompetent preachers have had some shameful experiences.

It should also be pointed out that despite the more encouraging statistical reports from certain parts of the country, it is not to be concluded that all is well with the spiritual state of the church members. It can only be said of them that they meet on the Sabbath for worship and and know that Jesus is coming again. They pray fervently and love each other tenderly. Many of them can testify of how the Lord has healed them of diverse diseases. But the other distinguishing hallmarks of an enlightened Adventist are generally lacking. The people still need much vital instruction which the *Testimonies* are designed to give. Here again we see the importance of placing the Ellen White books in the hands of our people. What God has always regarded as important and indispensable, we should be foremost in promoting.

Having made the foregoing survey and taken stock of the last few years' experience in this part of the world field, I wish to present a few practical pointers to the missionary brotherhood in other parts of the world. While the problems they encounter may not be exactly similar to those we meet in China, the principles involved are the same.

Don't be a mission "chief." There is a tendency to look up to successful leaders with an admiration that tends to spoil them and create wrong relationships. While in the United States, I once heard a minister address a conference president as "chief." Another spoke of a leader as a "dynamic boss." But the Adventist mission should not be ruled by any chiefs or bosses. The fact that "all ye are brethren" must be the ruling principle among us. Jesus is our only Chief and Boss.

We should not only practice this ourselves, but also teach this important lesson. The tendency to look up to frail mortals for guidance is peculiarly marked in the mission field, especially among people who have long lived under colonial rule. The white man has held the colored races under semislavery so long that they automatically refer all decisions of any importance to him. For this reason, the spirit of close comradeship which often exists among fellow-workers in the United States and European countries is largely lacking in the mission fields. This is perhaps one of the most subtle influences that is brought to bear on the missionary recruit after he sets foot on colonial or semicolonial soil. He very soon realizes that he is accorded the position of a little king in his realm. The deference most native workers show for his ideas and decisions, be they good or bad, is definitely gratifying. He unconsciously assumes dictatorial powers, and before long he is issuing orders with an impatient bark in his voice. However, a wise and careful Christian will not allow himself to be

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a mission "chieftain." He will carefully guard his own spirit and instruct the workers under him to do some independent thinking and acting. He should tell them that his stay may be temporary, and they need to learn to assume responsibilities and look to God for guidance. This is the only way to build strong Christian character to weather the storm that is bound to come upon the Advent people everywhere. The missionary must not be a fond nursemaid who takes pride in the way her children cannot get along without her.

Beware of men. As a rule, the foreign missionary encounters more than an average number of sycophants, hypocrites and opportunists. They tell you how good you are and what a rich Christian experience they are having. They are very attentive to your sermons, and profess great love for the truth, and have determined to consecrate their lives to the gospel. In nine cases out of ten, they have been out of work for some time, and very likely they will say it is because of their resolve to keep the Sabbath holy. Sometimes their story is so touching that you are tempted to write an article about them for the *Review* and employ them as mission workers.

But remember, Jesus was not flattered by the prospects of being a popular preacher. If he followed the methods some of us employ today, he could easily have baptized the 5,000 souls whom he fed that day, and sent a thrilling report to the angels in heaven. But he was not satisfied merely with numbers, neither was he anxious to hear the angels cheer. He was here to build Christian character, and strong characters are not made by offering them an easy living. Yet, that is exactly what we have been doing in China, and the result is what might be expected. Despite the words of great things being done, the membership of the Division has fluctuated around the 20,000 figure for the last 20 years.

So beware the flattering tongue and giver of gifts. Remember that a truly converted soul is meek and lowly of heart. He does not strive for notice, thinks not of rank or position, but waits upon the Lord for light and strength. He shuns display and will not stoop to flattery. He is the last to tell others of his own piety, but is ready to rebuke sin in a brother. And for this reason, he is seldom befriended by the average missionary. Sometimes he is disliked and shunned by the missionary because he has dared to speak to him as an equal in the Lord and point out his faults. So we might summarize it thus: beware the sweet and familiar type; befriend the sober and reserved type. I dare not say this holds good in every part of the globe, but it is good counsel in the Orient.

Lay hands hastily on no man. If we are to be careful about accepting new converts, we should be doubly careful about employing them and ordaining them to the ministry. Hands of ordination should be laid only upon men who have proven themselves to be men of character and spiritual insight. They should not only profess to believe the message, but love it, preach it and live it. But sad to say, we have been going by a lower standard.

Take the case of an ordained minister who was a member of the China Training Institute faculty. He had previously rated high in the estimate of the missionaries. When in the course of affairs the institution was take over by the new administration, he was among the first to declare himself no longer a Seventh-day Adventist. Such a radical change on his part was not required of him by the new administration or anyone else, because every Chinese citizen is guaranteed freedom of religious belief by the constitution.

Another report of this kind tells of a minister who made up his mind that the Advent movement had not much of a future, so he would cast in his lot with another denomination. However, after he preached his first sermon to his prospective parishioners, they decided not to hire him, because his mediocre preaching failed to impress them. He, therefore, decided to remain with the Advent movement, where he still stood a chance of receiving a minimum wage. This is the kind of story that makes one feel like weeping and laughing at the same time.

It would not be so disheartening if these were isolated cases. I know five ordained men who have publicly and voluntarily renounced their faith, while the majority of other ordained men, including ministers who have rendered as much as 40 years' service to the denomination, now send their children to school on the Sabbath. What is more revealing, nine out of ten ordained

men are not and seem never to have been active soul winners.

And strange to say, the men and women who are doing things for God today have never had the hand of ordination laid on them. Most of them are not well known to the foreign missionary, but are close friends of Jesus Christ. They are the ones who are quietly winning souls and keeping the torch of truth lifted up. Some of them are poor country preachers who must work with their hands for a living and still put in time tending the flock of God. Some of them are local church elders who love the truth in spite of their limited understanding of the gospel message. This strange situation of the ordained ministry falling into decay and the laity taking up the burden of the work is best illustrated by the fact that while every other union and local mission still preserving a semblance of organization is headed by an ordained man, yet the only local mission which has a working organization and an active ministry is headed by a young man who is not ordained. (The ordained minister formerly in charge had deserted the field.)

Another striking illustration of the fact that the mission organization has more than an average number of self-seeking, ambitious men, while those who truly love the Lord do not easily come into notice, may be drawn from my own experience. During my two brief years as secretary of the China Division, there were many workers who tried through gifts and flattery to get on the friendly side of me. Two workers were especially active in trying to "counsel" and maneuver me. They professed great zeal for the truth. But after the change of government, these two workers eventually quit preaching, gave up the truth and went into business and I found an entirely different group of people around me. Some I had not known before, and most of them were young people. Mission funds had stopped coming, but they wanted to work for God; they were concerned for the prosperity of his cause; they kept the Sabbath and loved his appearing.

Don't give the Devil a second chance. A Chinese worker made the observation that the love and patience of the missionaries are unlimited: no matter what great sin you may have fallen into, you still stand a good chance of being restored. And everybody knows it. In my travels, I have personally come across cases of adulterers, embezzlers and downright apostates holding responsible positions. Some had been dismissed for a season, but eventually restored to favor. Some had been discovered in their sin, but never dealt with.

An ordained man guilty of violating the seventh commandment was dismissed by one missionary but restored by another who did not investigate the case thoroughly but simply believed the man's own denial. This man later completely apostatized. And the strange part of this story is that all during the time the kind-hearted missionary believed the man to be innocent, he was taking care of the child born of adultery, not knowing the truth although it was openly known to the Chinese workers associated with him. This serves to illustrate how the average missionary sometimes lives in compara-

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tive isolation from the great body of native workers and believers, despite his knowledge of the language and his long term of service. It also shows how the love and patience of the missionary can be overdone.

Another case of misplaced love and patience is the experience of a well-meaning fatherly missionary who in 1950 ventured to support an incorrigible student of Chiaotoutseng, and send him back to school after he had been expelled. He had been a nightmare to the faculty, which had unanimously decided on his expulsion. But this foreign missionary who lived in Shanghai and knew little of their problems, sent the student back with a personal guarantee. One missionary's support outweighed the decision of an entire school faculty. And the result? When the missionary eventually left the field, the devil

gladly remained. And when the time came, the problem child guaranteed by an American missionary led a mob of students to Shanghai and started a rumpus that shook the whole Division organization to its foundations.

Now it may be true that a missionary often has a better grasp of the gospel message than those he has come to teach. But when it comes to judging human character, I would sooner accept the unanimous verdict of a group of Chinese workers than trust the judgment of a lone missionary far removed from the scene of trouble.

Do not condone sin. One annoying situation which used to plague most mission administrations was the endless stream of letters accusing this or that worker of different sins. Some of these letters were unfounded exaggerations, but we cannot say this of all such accusations. Every accusation should receive due consideration. False accusers should be reprimanded; true accusations should be followed up; and dealt with wisely and justly.

Due to prevailing conditions, the books of the different stations have not been properly audited for the last 20 years. After liberation, S. J. Lee had a chance to go over the books of the Canton Sanitarium, and I spent a few days auditing the books of the East Szschuan Mission. In both cases, we came across glaring evidences of deliberate false dealing. In 1951, the West China Union treasurer brought his books to Shanghai to be audited, but the books were sodden, and the pages stuck together. He said they got wet on the train. But, even under such unfavorable conditions, the Division auditor discovered irreconcilable discrepencies in the accounts.

In the Division treasury department, during a nationwide anti-corruption campaign initiated by the government, one worker who had served many years and handled much cash, especially in matters involving customs duty, purchases and transportation, voluntarily confessed embezzlement of mission funds. He had made false receipts and altered the figures on the invoices. According to his own confession, the funds stolen by him and the Division cashier amounted to four figures in U.S. currency. While the Division treasurer was not party to this daring thievery, his ignorance of such dishonest dealing going on right under his nose is a fair example of how blind we can all become—just because we trust our brethren and want to think the best of them.

Always uphold the constitution and bylaws. The unfortunate experience of Hsu Hwa, a former Division president, teaches us the lesson that it is never safe to depart from the rules laid down in the constitution and bylaws of our denomination. It is not within the scope of this discussion to recount the incidents that led toward Hsu Hwa's imprisonment on a charge of embezzlement of public funds. The beginnings of the affair are known to the leading brethren already, and later developments may be pieced together here and there. It is the purpose of this discussion to consider the motives that prompted different people to agree to the loan, and the manner in which our brother was drawn into the tempter's snare.

Perhaps the first wrong step taken in this case was in ordaining him to the ministry when he was still manager of a large knitting mill in Shanghai. Before this, he had promised to lay down his responsibilities as manager. But he never made a clean break. For a brief period following his ordination, he was able to give full time to his work as president of the Division, but he retained his managership at the mill and received a manager's pay in addition to mission pay. Thus, he was bearing a double yoke, and it finally got him in trouble. While things went well in the mill, his assistant was able to take care of routine business, but when a labor crisis came, Hsu was soon snowed under. He needed money, and he turned to the Division treasury. Eventually, over $20,000 of General Conference funds were diverted from their intended purpose, in violation of Article XVIII, Section 4 of the constitution and bylaws of the denomination.

It is not necessary here to pass final judgment, neither is this possible at present. No doubt, all those involved in the affair are more or less responsible. But it is clear that since the General Conference brethren understood the loan to represent an investment in commodities offered by Hsu Hwa as security, their motive is not to be impeached. Those in China who sympathized with Hsu's plight and recommended the loan, also believed that his securi-

ties, though insufficient to cover the loan, were dependable, but it seems that they were thinking more of relieving his distress than of guaranteeing the eventual repayment of the loan. As it rests now, the Division never received the promised securities, and Hsu Hwa is in no position to repay the loan in the foreseeable future.

Keep no firearms. With the possible exception of workers who reside in areas infested by wild beasts, missionaries should not carry or keep firearms. We teach our young men to be noncombatants in time of war, so we should not arm ourselves with pistols and revolvers in time in peace.

The files of the Shanghai police department contain the record that in 1946, on his entry to this port, a certain Seventh-day Adventist missionary declared the possession of a revolver. In 1948, when he left the city, he apparently overlooked the need to cancel this registration, so those left in charge of the Division office had to render an account. We were really at a loss to explain this strange anomaly, and had no way of denying the charge that a pistol-packing missionary must be something more than a gospel minister. Nor is this a unique case. We have the

"Our present salary scale in mission lands is not based on citizenship, formal training, living habits, experience, talent, ability or efficiency, but simply on the color of skin. Here we have a clear case of racial discrimination."

personal testimony of a student nurse who worked for a missionary nurse in 1948 that she saw a pistol in one of the trunks belonging to the missionary.

Watch your political views. Every man has a right to his own political views, and we should be careful not for force our views on others. An American missionary may love his America, and for the same reason he ought to teach his converts to love their own countries. Surrounded as we are by many conflicting areas of political thought we should often ask ourselves whether we fully understand every political issue. The American Adventist sees nothing wrong in saluting the stars and stripes and even putting the flag on the rostrum of his church. He is usually proud of his American heritage, and loves to sing patriotic songs. For this same reason, a Chinese Adventist is proud of his country, his flag and his patriots; and the American missionary should not see anything wrong in this or try to stop it. Since we do not believe in the union of church and state, we should not think that only the American political setup is compatible with good religion. And we should not forget that it is the two-horned beast of Revelation 13 that will eventually unite with Romanism to make war with the saints.

Watch your finances. In the eyes of the Chinese workers and believers, the missionaries lived in luxury. This impression is so deep-rooted and widespread that there is no evading it. True, there are also some outstanding examples of self-denial and sacrifice on record, but these are exceptions. According to the writer's observation, this state of affairs may be attributed to three different causes: (1) Extravagant habits, (2) favorable rates of exchange and (3) mission policy.

Perhaps Americans will not deny that they are the most extravagant race in the world. Because of the material abundance prevailing in the United States, people are not accustomed to frugal habits, and this has been carried over into our mission work. The mileage reports, hotel bills, the boat, train and air tickets reported by our workers amount to a staggering sum each year. We do well to ask ourselves, are all these trips really necessary?

Extravagant spending is a stumbling block to our believers. They gain the impression that there is "means enough" in the Lord's treasury, and they feel no burden to support the work with their offerings. That was exactly the case in the China field.

A story circulated in China tells of a missionary recruit who came with his belongings packed in wooded boxes. Some Chinese workers helped him unpack. After uncrating his refrigerator, radio, washing machine, etc., they came to a well-boxed item which promised to be another "thing of beauty." But imagine their surprise when the open box revealed a dilapidated chair

with a broken leg! Now the cost of crating and transporting a chair across the Pacific Ocean would no doubt suffice to buy a score of second-hand chairs with broken legs, but evidently this fact did not enter the mind of this recruit. He must have reasoned that if he left the chair in the United States, he would be minus a chair in China, and the mission board would not pay him for the loss, while they did promise to pay for a certain tonnage of freight and baggage. Little wonder then that the Chinese people have formed the impression that there is "means enough" in the Adventist mission! This particular case seems ridiculous enough, but if we would go over our own records and deal honestly with ourselves we must admit that all of us have been more or less guilty of a similar frame of mind.

As in many parts of the Orient, living costs and prices in China are lower than in the United States. That is, the dollar has a higher purchasing power. And due to cheap labor, the missionary can easily afford one or two domestic servants to do the housekeeping, while his wife can be free to engage in mission service and draw another salary. Now all this seems very good, and a laborer is worthy of his hire. But the result is that although a missionary is paid the same amount of dollars and cents as a worker in the United States, he receives much more in real benefits. Hence, the temptation to spend freely.

During the early thirties, the China Division attempted to compensate for the favorable rate of exchange by applying a lower mission salary figured on the basis of local prices. We feel that this was a step in the right direction, and should not be discarded, even though it was not popular with some people. We believe that whoever proposed such a measure had the interests of the cause at heart, while those who complained were thinking of themselves.

However this whole problem is handled, it seems clear that the line drawn between foreign missionaries and Chinese workers, as far as salary rates are concerned, should be based on something more reasonable than the racial line. For a recognition of racial distinctions is a denial of Christ. Two concrete examples illustrate this point.

In the early thirties, a young woman in Australia applied to Dr. H. W. Miller for admission to the Shanghai Sanitarium School of Nursing. Dr. Miller stipulated that if she was willing to receive the same treatment as the Chinese nurses, she could be admitted. This condition she gladly accepted. During her schooling, she lived with the other students and received the same training. Upon graduation, she was appointed her work, and Dr. Miller intended to pay her a Chinese nurse's salary. The other board members objected, and overrode his decision by voting her a foreign worker's salary—about six times that of her fellows, purely because she belonged to the white race.

In contrast to this incident, we cite the case of an American-born Chinese nurse trained at the Loma Linda School of Nursing. She was an American citizen who never had been to China and in 1946 she applied to the General Conference for mission service in that country. She was told that if she agreed to accept a Chinese nurse's salary, she could go. At the time, she was already employed at the Loma Linda Sanitarium, and if she decided to go, she would have to agree to a drastic cut in her salary. She thought it over and decided against going. Now if every American applicant for mission service were required to take such a salary cut, we suppose there would be only one missionary in the field where there are now 20.

Our present salary scale in mission lands is not based on citizenship, formal training, living habits, experience, talent, ability or efficiency, but simply on the color of skin. Here we have a clear case of racial discrimination, which gives the lie to all the talk about world brotherhood we hear so often repeated. This is wholly foreign to Adventist teaching, and stems directly from the influence of the colonial system. There is nothing in the Bible or the writings of Ellen White to justify a mission policy based on the supposed superiority of the white race. And by the law of action and reaction, racial discrimination is bound to excite strong racial feelings in those discriminated against.

We are not here advocating complete equality of salary among all our workers, but that the plan be placed on a more reasonable basis, so as to be compatible with the high and holy principles which we profess to hold. Many overseas Chinese applicants have failed to pass the cruel test of a painful salary cut. It is really a sort of

penalty inflicted on them for belonging to the Chinese race, which seems to outweigh every other consideration with the mission board. Such a narrow policy would sooner see the cause suffer for lack of qualified workers than recognize the fact that a well-trained Chinese, Filipino, or Negro is of as much value to the Lord's cause as a well-trained white man, and may even possess added advantages and greater competence in his native environment, in which case he would deserve higher pay than a homesick American who may turn out to be a total misfit.

Being closely connected with the colonial system and even partaking of the benefits of extra-territoriality provided for in the "unequal" treaties forced upon colonial and semicolonial countries by the iron fist, the foreign missionary has unconsciously imbibed the spirit of foreign imperialism, which is based on the idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority.

As a people, we are opposed to the exaltation of one human being above another, for our Lord has said, "All ye are brethren." Yet, we have allowed the spirit which permeates the colonial world to mold our thinking and change our attitudes. So what is the result? A master-and-lackey relationship takes the place of brotherly comradeship among the mission workers. The Chinese worker has no initiative or imagination of his own. Every decision is referred to his "superior," and everything done to win his approbation. Is it suprising then that such a lack of self-reliance should reveal its weakness in time of trial?

The diagnosis seems clear enough; what of the remedy? The answer is, the writings of Ellen G. White. This special gift was given to meet the needs of God's people in these last days, when Satan is seeking to overwhelm them with a flood of iniquity. Without the help sent to us through this medium, we are certainly no match for our wily foe. God in His wisdom has foreseen this need, and provided His people with this gift. But, sad to say, the China field has been denied the full advantage of this gift during the past 50 years. True, we have had a few glimpses of its glory, but it certainly has not been accorded the dominant position it once occupied in the early days of the Advent movement. It is high time to let it exercise its power upon the hearts of our people in this part of the world. It should not be made a sideline in mission endeavor.

It should be the chief concern of every worker in the mission field to see to it that the full counsel of God as presented in these writings should be speedily, accurately and forcefully translated into all the major languages of the world, and then quickly published and placed into the hands of our people, in all parts of the globe. Then, if the missionaries are required to leave their field of labor, these books may remain and continue to speak to the people in the name of Jesus.

As I think upon those who have made shipwreck of their faith in the past five years, my heart is wrung with anguish. I have sought for the cause, and come to the conclusion that it is because the lambs of God's flock were denied the strengthening and quickening influence of the testimonies of Ellen White. They needed the solid, basic, heart-searching work which the Holy Spirit can accomplish through these books.

Because the appropriations to the China Division in 1950 failed to provide adequate funds to publish the Ellen White writings, and because the workers were anxious to receive more adequate instruction, the delegates to the 1950 annual meeting passed a resolution calling on every worker in the field to devote one precent of his salary toward a special fund, so that these publications could be speedily made available. But, sad to say, this action did not bear fruit. The Devil stole a march on us. Thousands of volumes of *Gospel Workers* and the *Great Controversy* got as far as the bindery, and volume one of *Selections* was still in the typeroom, when the upheaval came. So let this be a lesson to all: work while it is day.

IV. Saigon Journal: The Last 15 Days

by Bruce Branson

Organized Seventh-day Adventist medical work in Vietnam began in Saigon during 1955, in a remodeled apartment-hotel on one of the busiest intersections. Despite inadequate facilities, scores of physicians and nurses through the years built a reputation for excellence and Christian concern.

During 1973, the facilities of the former United States 3rd Field Army Hospital were made available to Saigon Adventist Hospital, which contracted (with the assistance of Loma Linda University Faculty of the School of Medicine) to provide medical care for the United States embassy and other American personnel, in addition to the usual heavy load of Vietnamese patients.

In April 1975, Dr. Bruce Branson of Loma Linda University was asked to help provide surgical care at Saigon Adventist Hospital during the developing political and military crisis. With him went Dr. James Simpson, a resident in surgery from LLU.

Dr. Branson's account of their experience follows.

On Friday, April 11, Jim Simpson and I arrived at Saigon's Ton Son Nhut airport. From a tour of duty in 1973, I remembered the familiar long lines of military aircraft stretching for miles along the runways. As we neared the arrival terminal, we caught sight of a group of Australian Air Force cargo planes loading Australian embassy effects for evacuation to Sydney. This was the first of many signs of steadily deterioating morale in Saigon.

Harvey Rudisaile, administrator of Saigon Adventist Hospital, filled us in on the situation as he drove us from the airport to the hospital. The collapse of South Vietnam's armies around Hue and Da Nang during the previous few weeks had been so sudden and total a rout that all government services had disintegrated in the general panic. Refugees had begun to trickle into Saigon during the past few days with unbelievably gruesome stories of pillage, rape, executions in public squares and indiscrininate torture by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Communists.

One of our nurses later confirmed Rudisaile's report. She had been working with her husband in Da Nang when the debacle came. Somehow they managed to get on board one of the refugee barges and stood up on the flat deck for three days without food or water before reaching Cam Ranh Bay. Soon, however, it too was overrun by the enemy and the young couple decided to start out on foot for Saigon. They traveled mostly at night, hiding out during the day from the marauding Viet Cong, the rockets and the artillery. Repeatedly, they stumbled over dismembered corpses, heads, arms and legs hacked off. As she relived the horror, tears streamed down her cheeks, and she sobbed, "If they take over Saigon, we'll all be killed. Where can we go?"

Later that evening of our arrival in Saigon,

Jim and I heard Dr. Stewart Shankel, chief medical officer, recount the still-fresh horror of the crash of the Babylift C-5A Galaxy transporting orphans to the U.S. Saigon Adventist Hospital had received all the injured survivors, coated with mud from the rice paddy where they had been thrown free of the plane as it bounced and skidded and finally crunched to a stop with its lower deck and occupants smashed beyond recognition. Our medical staff, including Drs. G. Stevens, William Taylor and G. Wiesseman, were soon joined by other physicians from the embassy who had heard about the crash over the American Services radio and sped to the emergency room to help out. Within two hours, more than 150 patients had been cleaned up and cared for. Their wounds had been sutured, fractures set and casted and beds found for all. After it was all over, Shankel recalled, he finally realized what had seemed so strange: through all the furious activity he never once heard any of the children cry. A few days later a moving letter arrived from defense attaché, Major General H. D. Smith, expressing the gratitude of the U.S. Embassy staff. (See box)

7 April 1975

Mr. Harvey Rudisaile
Seventh-day Adventist Hospital
Saigon, Vietnam

Dear Mr. Rudisaile:

I find it quite difficult to adequately express my personal gratitude and that of my people for the superb medical attention given the surviving victims of the recent air tragedy that deprived us of so many of our friends and the children they were trying to help.

But for the professionalism, devotion and determination of your staff, that tragedy might well have been total in its consequences.

Please accept our undying thanks and our continued good wishes for your continued help to this community.

Gratefully,

(Signed) H. D. SMITH
Major General, U.S.A.
Defense Attaché

For Sabbath School on April 12, the hospital family met together at the hospital chapel which had been constructed by the American Army for the 3rd Field Hospital. Dr. Simpson and I received a warm welcome from Mr. Nghiep, the Vietnamese associate administrator of the hospital. The highlight of the Sabbath School was a report from a South Vietnamese Adventist minister who had just escaped from the Communists in the takeover of Dalat. He and a few believers made their way on foot to the coast, where they hired a boat, but as they were pulling away from the beach, a group of South Vietnamese soldiers came running toward them, brandishing weapons and demanding to be taken on board. Four of the soldiers jumped on, but then the boat was so dangerously overloaded that they turned their weapons back on the other soldiers and prevented them from climbing on board. A very stormy night at sea kept everyone drenched with spray, but the next day they landed at Vung Tau and then made their way to Saigon.

Sabbath afternoon Harvey Rudisaile drove us across the Saigon River to a branch Sabbath School on the road to Bien Hoa, the great Vietnamese Air Force base. The bridge over the river was heavily guarded at both ends and just beyond the bridge was a pair of roadblocks set up half a mile apart, forcing cars to go through a zigzag maze single file and slowing traffic to a crawl. Saigon was obviously preparing for a siege of the city and trying to prevent enemy tanks from using the main road.

A few miles farther out of town we arrived at a disabled veterans' village, where evangelistic meetings had been held a few months before and a church established. We found a church building and a "Lamb Shelter" for the children's Sabbath School. One of the hospital workers was leading the children in a song service as we arrived. It was a moving experience to hear the strains of "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world; red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight; Jesus loves the little children of the world."

On our way back to town through the roadblocks and across the heavily guarded bridge, we wondered how long we would be able to make Sabbath trips out to the village. The city was rife with rumors. Some hoped that a coalition government could be set up which would allow life to go on more or less the way it had been. Others felt President Thieu would never agree to such an arrangement. Most felt that Saigon could hold out under siege for three months or more, especially if the United States Congress voted the $450,000,000 President Ford had requested for humanitarian aid for South Vietnam.

"How we wished we had more Vietnamese Adventist doctors. It was painfully obvious that American medical missionaries, while usually welcome, could rapidly become a liability during periods of rapid political and military change. It brought home to us how important it is to train national professionals."

The military situation, of course, remained critical. The few stragglers from the demolished armies of the North were being kept in segregated camps away from Saigon in order to prevent their shattered morale from spreading to the rest of the army. Communist forces were sweeping down, overrunning province after province, meeting only occasional token resistance. Now, the defenders of the city were outnumbered two to one by forces with superior firepower and weaponry and unlimited captured American supplies and ammunition—and with the scent of victory in their nostrils.

During the previous two weeks, families and wives of all but two of the American missionaries had been sent out of the country to Singapore or the U.S. All the men had then moved for safety into apartments immediately adjacent to the hospital and guards were posted at all street gates night and day. One of the persistent worries was the possiblity of a breakdown in metropolitan control, with civil disorder, rioting and attacks on Americans in the city. The panic in Da Nang had taken an ugly anti-American turn at the last. With an eye toward this contingency, the U.S. embassy in Saigon kept up a steady soothing stream of pronouncements on the American Services radio and in releases to the press, hoping to keep the populace calm.

In a curious and unforeseen way, this policy of the embassy had restricted the options open to the administration of Saigon Adventist Hospital. Just a week before Jim Simpson and I arrived in the city, the medical staff at the hospital had decided, in view of the critical military and political deterioration, that perhaps the time had come to evacuate American personnel while there was still a chance to do so in an orderly fashion. Within a matter of hours, the deputy ambassador and Dr. Dustin, chief medical officer of the U.S. embassy, came out to the hospital and pointed out that any such move would become known immediately throughout the city and inevitably would be interpreted as a sign that the Americans were pulling out, possibly setting off uncontrollable panic. Some expressed the uncomfortable feeling that the embassy was being unduly influenced by President Thieu's policies and that the Saigon Adventist Hospital staff and other Americans in the city were being held, in essence, as hostages by both countries. The staff was assured, however, that if evacuation became necessary, the hospital staff would not be forgotten and that provision would be made for both American and key Vietnamese personnel. When pressed for details, the embassy men became somewhat vague and indefinite, pleading the need for secrecy.

The next morning, Sunday, April 13, was taken up by a busy session of heavy surgery. We worked along with Dr. Hieu, a Vietnamese physician, whose father and grandfather had been murdered by the Communists. He and Dr. Dinh helped cover the emergency room at night, while Dr. Cao worked in the large outpatient clinic along with the other American physicians. The inpatient load was off somewhat; it seemed not many were anxious to undergo elective sergery in such uncertain times.

Along with all other schools in the city, our school of nursing had been closed at the beginning of April. This meant a reduced corps of

nursing staff on the wards, except for a few girls whose families were now behind enemy lines and had nowhere to go. Our regular full-time nursing staff remained stable and loyal through this period. If the Americans should be forced to leave, they and the three Vietnamese physicians would have to run the hospital. How we wished we had more Vietnamese Adventist doctors. It was painfully obvious that American medical missionaries, while usually welcome, could rapidly become a liability during periods of rapid political and military change. It brought home to us how important it is to train national professionals in all areas of the ministerial, educational, publishing and medical work. Americans can always be available for brief periods of consultation, refresher courses, retreats and spiritual and professional brotherhood; but more and more areas of the world are becoming off-limits to the American and European missionary.

In our dilemma, we considered another potential source of help—the clinical faculty of the recently established Minh Duc School of Medicine, sponsored by the World Council of Churches. Their medical students, 16 at a time, were already rotating through Saigon Adventist Hospital for some of their clinical experience and instruction, under an affiliation program Dr. Shankel had helped to work out with their school administration. They would help to continue a Christian orientation and witness, while our chaplain and nursing staff might maintain an Adventist presence. Little did we realize at the time that practically the entire faculty of the Minh Duc Medical School would find a way to escape the country, and what they considered almost certain death at the hands of the Communists.

By the end of our first weekend in Saigon and after a round of conferences with the American and Vietnamese staff, a general concensus was reached concerning the circumstances under which the American staff would evacuate, namely: 1) direct orders from the American embassy; 2) orders from the Southeast Asia Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists or other church authorities; 3) formal representation by three or more responsible officials of our Vietnamese mission national ministers to the effect that our presence might be endangering their lives and their ability to function. Any one or a combination of these eventualities would be a sufficient cause for immediate evacuation from the hospital of all Americans.

As Sunday evening wore on and we got past the nine o'clock curfew, the noise and din of the traffic past the hospital subsided and we all went up to the rooftop veranda of our apartment building to cool off from the heat of the day. Gradually, but with increasing frequency, we began to hear rumbles and thumps, sounding like distant thunder. Sometimes they came as often as every minute or so. We thought perhaps we might be in for a tropical storm, but Shankel assured us that it was only rocket and artillery shells exploding in the distance. It reminded me of the air raids I had gone through in the Middle East during World War II; Dr. Taylor said it reminded him of the troubles in East Africa during the Mau Mau rebellion. And so we fell to comparing wars in other years in other parts of the world. One thing we agreed on: the eerie surface calm that seemed to prevail in the city. By day commerce and trade flourished downtown; by night the city was ablaze with light—not the slightest sign of a blackout, the usual mark of a real war, in my mind. Still, those thumps and rumbles were real enough.

Monday, April 14, was another busy day in the operating room, while the clinic overflowed with outpatients. We were beginning to see a great many functional complaints—headaches, backaches, nervousness, insomnia, a feeling of tightness in the throat, constant fatigue. There were increasingly frequent requests for large amounts of barbiturates and tranquilizers. Finally, one of the nurses tipped me off: people all over town, some even amongst our own Adventist community, were calmly planning to commit suicide, as families, if the Communists should come in. As one young woman told me, "I don't mind dying, but I can't stand the thought of the prolonged torture. If I'm going to have to die, I'd just as soon die in my sleep."

Later that night, about 11:30, the whole city was awakened by a series of loud explosions which rattled windows and shook floors all over town. A dull orange flare rose on the horizon toward the northeast in the direction of Xuan Loc, a provincial town a little over 35 miles

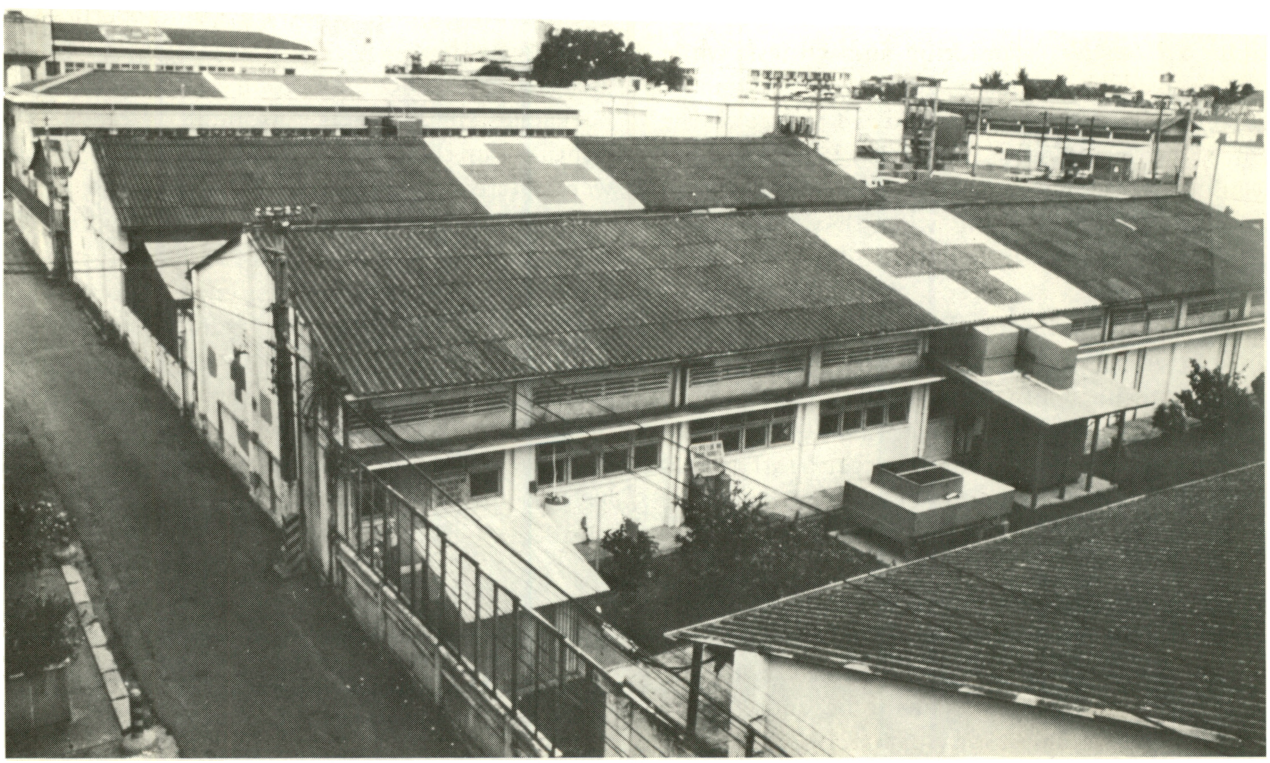
northeast of Saigon where a battle had been raging for several days. The next morning, we discovered that the explosions had actually come from Bien Hoa, 14 miles away on the road to Xuan Loc. Apparently, a series of ammunition dumps had blown up and the word went around that it was the work of Viet Cong infiltrators.

Tuesday, April 15, was a hot, humid day. After morning clinic, I took a hospital car over to the Holt Children's Services, which had been one of the main agencies responsible for the large Babylift flights of the previous two weeks. My wife Betty and many others in the Loma Linda University School of Medicine Women's Auxiliary had been supporting over a hundred mixed American-Vietnamese orphans whose GI fathers had abandoned them. There were recurring reports of mixed-blood orphans in the overrun North being annihilated by the Viet Cong. We hoped we might be able to save some of the children we had been helping and get them out of the country, if their mothers were willing to let them go.

But it was not to be. The South Vietnamese government put a crushing list of requirements on anyone trying to take a child out of the country who had not already been processed through one of the regular agencies. Our Vietnamese pastor helping with the program was also becoming very apprehensive—the Viet Cong had just broadcast a warning that anyone engaged in any way in the adoption of Vietnamese or half-Vietnamese children by Americans would be put on the blacklist for execution. The pastor gave his report vivid emphasis by drawing a savage line across his neck.

We were confronted by a difficult ethical question: would it be right to try to save the children, if in the process we might be risking the lives of the adults left behind? And, in any case, is it better to raise a Vietnamese child as an Adventist in the United States, away from his own culture, or to try to raise him as an Adventist in Vietnam under Communism?

Questions of ethics, questions involving moral decisions, were beginning to crop up all the time. People were beginning to get desperate. One of our most experienced nurses decided she simply *had* to leave. But to get a passport she would need U.S. $10,000 to bribe the appropriate government officials. She had already been given



The former Saigon Seventh-day Adventist Hospital.

enough money for her Pan American plane ticket by a previous missionary surgeon who was trying to help any way he could. But that passport money was impossible. Then she heard that dependents of Americans could get a passport for only $100 bribe—and the rest of her plan took shape at once. One of our American lab technicians agreed to marry her for as long as might be necessary to get her to the United States as an American dependent. Only after the marriage did she find out that it would still take four weeks to get her passport. Would there be that much time?

Meanwhile, the battle for Xuan Loc was reaching a peak. The Saigon *Post* spoke of a great victory, with pictures of scores of Communist dead, but the 11 p.m. BBC news was more ominous. The short wave Radio Nederland from Amsterdam, the BBC, and the Voice of America seemed to be our most reliable and up-to-date sources as to what was happening outside the city. Local papers and radio, including the American Services Network, usually gave out only optimistic news or else remained silent.

"After the meeting, there was a spirited discussion about the conflict between the need for continuing national leadership in Vietnam after the Communist takeover and the nationals' natural anxiety to save their lives and the lives of their children."

The next day, Wednesday, was different. After another heavy morning of surgery and clinics, we had just finished lunch and turned on the radio for the one o'clock news in time to hear the announcement of the fall of Xuan Loc. President Thieu had thrown half the defense force for Saigon into that battle and had lost. Of course, there was still Bien Hoa, the huge airbase 14 miles from Saigon. Perhaps the South could form a new line and hold things stable there for a while longer.

During the afternoon, two of our workers approached me and asked me to adopt their children. They would probably never see the children again, but they preferred that to seeing them shot or reared as Young Communist soldiers. The unspeakable anguish of the parents was hard to take emotionally, particularly as I could hold out little hope. The strong stand by the government would make it impossible to get the children out through the emigration officials, even if one were to resort to bribery.

Prayer meeting that night was a grim affair. For some, there was an oppressive feeling that somehow the Devil had gained the upper hand and there was never going to be an end to the bloodshed and slaughter. But we all prayed that God would give us wisdom to find our way through the perils that surrounded us.

After the meeting, there was a spirited discussion among the American missionaries about the conflict between the need for continuing national leadership in Vietnam after the Communist takeover and the nationals' natural anxiety to save their lives and the lives of their children by finding some way out of the country. During the week, a cable arrived from Elder S. J. Lee in Taiwan, pleading with the national brethren to leave at once and not try to stay on under the Communists. He had been one of the Chinese Adventist ministers left behind when the Communists swept into Shanghai and through his years in prison realized how little he had been able to do for the work. Nearly all the national ministers were either imprisoned or shot. New leaders had to come up from the ranks but, of course, most were forced to go underground.

During the rest of the week, the military situation steadily worsened. Roads to the Delta were cut by the Communists one by one and the main road west toward Cambodia and Thailand was severed. Fresh fruit and vegetables would now be very difficult to get into the city and prices in the market doubled every other day. By Friday, we learned that all American doctors at the University of Saigon Medical School under the American Medical Association overseas program had quietly left on commercial flights. We also learned that Poles, Hungarians and Iranians on the International Commission for Control and Supervision were planning to leave Saigon on the following Tuesday.

In the emergency room, we were beginning to see gunshot wounds in the civilians traveling on roads outside the city. Snipers were coming closer and closer. A power plant on the other side of town was attacked by Communist commandos who then retired with minor casualties. Two reporters came in with their backs covered by shrapnel wounds, sustained while they were crouching in a trench at the battle just outside Bien Hoa. The Voice of America on short wave from San Francisco reported that President Ford and Secretary Kissinger had ordered the evacuation of the 15,000 Americans left in the city . . . .but no word came from the embassy. Dr. Dustin and others hinted at an internecine battle going on within the embassy between the ambassador, holding out for some miracle, and junior officials urging an immediate evacuation of nonessential Americans and big-risk Vietnamese. At the American PX, shelves were practically clean. Prices had been cut in half and then in half again. The Vietnamese piaster was falling in value daily. Any national with any hope of getting out was trying frantically to buy U.S. dollars, some offering miniature gold bars at $60 an ounce, while the going rate on the London market was near $180 an ounce. It was probably the only place in the world where the value of the American dollar was climbing daily.

Friday night flares and tracer bullets from the far side of Ton Son Nhut airport were heavier than usual and the roar of helicopters and fighter planes overhead was nearly continuous. Now and then small arms fire from the other side of town would erupt briefly. It was clear that we were surrounded and that the enemy was very close. What was holding off the final attack?

On April 19 during Sabbath School, I was called to the emergency room for a long-distance phone call from Dr. David Hinshaw, dean of the School of Medicine at Loma Linda. He wondered if we were getting accurate information as to the military situation and whether we realized how precarious our situation really was. He was particularly alarmed because the U.S. Congress had made it clear there would be no permission for any American troops to go in to save Saigon.

Wives and families of our American missionaries were understandably becoming most anxious about the safety of their men in Saigon. There had been consultation with division headquarters in Singapore and a decision had been reached that the Loma Linda contingent should leave as soon as possible; in an orderly fashion we were to turn the hospital over to the Vietnamese. I told Dr. Hinshaw that we were rapidly coming to a similar conclusion and that we would leave as soon as we could make proper arrangements.

Sabbath afternoon, Dr. Dustin came over from the embassy and told us we should plan immediately to cut our staff down to two doctors and that even those two should be ready to leave in a very few days. Then he asked for an anesthesia mask and drugs. We must have had very puzzled expressions on our faces as he walked out the door carrying the equipment, but he gave no explanation. Suddenly, we all remembered how fond he was of his pair of pet dachshunds. There was no way he could take them with him, but at least they wouldn't suffer.

Sunday, April 20, Elders R. S. Watts and Don Roth flew in from the union office in Singapore and confirmed the union and division decision reported by Dr. Hinshaw, to cut down on the staff as rapidly as possible. After a brief meeting, it was decided to go by stages. Dr. Shankel and Dr. William Taylor would go with the first group. The two went over to the American Defense Attache Office (DAO) at Ton Son Nhut airport to check out a rumor that an American airlift had actually begun. They soon came back with the news that any American and any dependents of Americans could go over to the airport and sign up for air transportation to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. Vietnamese passports and exit visas would not be required. Then we remembered the nurse who had married the American—a bona fide dependent! The husband had already left the previous week, but Dr. Taylor offered to be her escort, while Dr. Shankel offered to sign on several of the student nurses as his dependents.

We clustered around to scrutinize the required affidavit: "I, an American citizen, Passport No. _____, hereby certify that the following named persons are my dependents and that I will assume all financial responsibility for

their travel and resettlement costs." No proof of adoption or marriage was required and we soon found that the term "dependent" was very loosely defined and rarely investigated. How many could each American take? That, too, proved to be a very flexible matter. Now would come the harrowing decisions as to which Vietnamese should go. Over the weekend, several Americans who had previously worked at

"Suddenly, they refused to let Judge Hao aboard. I began shouting loudly in English that he was to go with me and thrust my American passport under the policeman's nose. The crowd kept pushing us against the open door of the bus. Finally, the policeman gave up. It was a close call."

the hospital returned to Vietnam on their own to try to see if they could help with the evacuation; Dr. Terry Schmunk, formerly in charge of the dental clinic, was one, and Dr. Fred Lowe, a recent graduate of the medical school at Loma Linda, also came over to try to get his mother-in-law and the rest of his wife's family. Every American passport would help.

On Monday, April 21, Elder Watts, president of the Union Mission, met with the hospital medical and administrative staff and with Pastor Giao, the newly elected president of the local mission. The question to be decided was the future of the church's health care program in Vietnam. In view of the necessity for the Americans to leave, much of the responsibility would now rest with our Vietnamese leaders. We asked them to give an answer by the following morning, so that the doctors would know how to plan in discharging patients from the hospital, if necessary.

Later, Elder Watts reported on his visit to the embassy where he had been told that Vietnamese employees should set up a telephone communication network, manned 24 hours a day, so as to be able to reach the entire community of Adventists and hospital workers who might be slated for evacuation. Everyone should be packed and ready to leave on one hour's notice. Accordingly, telephones in the hospital administrator's office immediately became a command post, manned round the clock.

During the day, we received a call from the embassy requesting that any patients in the hospital who were Americans should be sent by air ambulance through their Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) system to the Philippines. We had several patients in this category and when we found that we could send two nursing attendants with each patient, Jim Simpson took on the task of assigning Vietnamese in white uniforms to go with the patients. There was no shortage of volunteers, but before long we were running short of patients with whom we could send out refugee attendants. As time went on, though, inventive minds would find a way around this difficulty.

That night Fred Lowe said he had arranged for his family group to leave the next day, but there were more than he could comfortably handle through the lines at the airport so since I was not on emergency call at the hospital the following day I agreed to go with him. We arranged to take Judge Hao and his family. The judge had a son in medical school at Loma Linda and people with relatives in America were generally agreed to face great risk from the Communists.

So the nest morning we all drove over to Ton Son Nhut airport. When we got to the main gate, we discovered the Vietnamese police were making everyone get out of their cars while checking their identity cards, before allowing them on busses to the DAO compound for processing. They let Fred Lowe and his group on the bus and then the women in my party, but suddenly they refused to let the judge board. I showed the armed policeman my affidavit indicating all the names listed as Branson dependents, but he shouted menacingly at the judge and shoved him away. In desperation, I wedged myself between them, began shouting loudly in English that he was to go with me and thrust my American passport under the policeman's nose. The crush of the crowd behind kept pushing us all more and more tightly against the open door of the bus until finally, in frustration, the policeman gave up and allowed the judge and me to squeeze onto the bus. It was a close call.

The rest of the morning was spent going through the long lines of Americans with their Vietnamese dependents out in the broiling tropical sun inside the relative safety of the DAP compound. We had to clear the names through various consular officials and then through the airplane passenger manifest. There was plenty of time to get a little better acquainted with the judge. He had originally fled from the North and in beautiful French he mused about what future he might be facing in America. As chief judge of the appeals court in Saigon, he was a symbol of the best in Vietnamese society. Now he would probably have to depend for a living on his eldest daughter, a dentist who was with us.

I thought back to the evening a few days before when some of us from the hospital had been invited to the judge's home for dinner. We had had a delicious multicourse meal of Vietnamese food, superbly prepared and served on beautiful china, in a room furnished with exquisite lacquered furniture covered by silk brocade. But now his home, his car, his position all had to be left behind.

During the day, the Vietnamese mission leaders came back with the decision that they would like to try to keep the hospital going a little while longer, but at a reduced occupancy, handling only emergencies. They also quite sensibly stated that with all the pressures of the siege, they felt they could function more efficiently if they did not have to worry about the safety of their wives and children. So Don Roth from the division office in Singapore volunteered to escort them to the Philippines. Since the group included three pregnant women, two nurses volunteered to go along, just in case there might be an obstetrical emergency.

Wednesday evening Don and his group of 36 went by hospital ambulance over to Ton Son Nhut and went through the same gruelling hours of processing we had experienced the day before. Finally, they got on the bus to the waiting airplane. A policeman got on board, saw one of the teen-aged sons of the mission president, and motioned for him to come forward. He looked over the boy's identity card, found that he was of military age, smiled knowingly at Roth, then motioned the boy back to his seat. As the bus approached the aircraft, an ARVN soldier got on and, standing next to Roth, said in perfect English, "U.S. money for the policeman and me or else the boy does not get on the plane." Don quickly produced a U.S. $10 bill—and with a smart salute the soldier waved them all on board the plane.

Meanwhile, I returned to the hospital. George Wiesseman, Jim Simpson and I, the only remaining American physicians, were discharging as many patients as we could and transferring the others to nearby Vietnamese hospitals. We were

Waiting for the plane at Ton Son Nhut Airport on the night of the exodus.

able to get our in-patient count down from 120 to about 60, a more manageable level for the three of us to handle, along with the three Vietnamese doctors.

One of our biggest problems was how to cope with the continual pleas by hospital employees for help in getting them and their families out of the country. Every few steps down the corridor someone would ask, "Please, Doctor, can you help me to live, can you save my children?" Jim was getting as many out as he could through the MEDEVAC system, but it was slow going. And if each American tried to hand-process eight to ten apiece through the lines at the DAO, it would take days and days.

But we didn't have that much time. The news came through that the air base at Bien Hoa had fallen to the enemy, and that infiltrators were just a few miles on the other side of Ton Son Nhut airport.

Early Thursday morning, April 24, I was awakened by two Vietnamese doctors. They said they had contacted an American who promised to get both of them with their families through the lines at the airport and onto an evacuation plane. They said goodbye and left immediately. I found Elder Watts and we quickly realized there would now be no chance of trying to keep the hospital going without any Vietnamese physicians. During the previous night, the mission folk had worked out a list of 175 workers and families who should have top priority, should it become necessary to evacuate. The choices were an agony. A bit of Scripture came to mind—"One shall be taken and the other left." It was like a parable of the last days.

The final moment of decision came and Elder Watts went down to the embassy to see if he could get permission for those Americans left at the hospital to take out the 175 Vietnamese as a group. Within a matter of hours, he had the following letter:

"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN 24 April 1975

The attached manifests are dependents of individuals who have been closely associated with U.S. Forces. Because of this close association with us, their lives may be endangered.

(Signed) H. D. SMITH, JR.
Major General, U.S.A.
Defense Attaché"

It was the same General Smith who had written the April 7 letter after the Babylift air tragedy. We were beginning now to see answers to our prayers and a way to help get out the Vietnamese whose lives were in so much danger.

All Thursday we discharged patients and finally got down to six; these were transferred the next morning. No patients would be abandoned or left uncared for. But it was a melancholy experience to walk through ward after ward, through the operating room and the intensive care unit, and see no patients, no nurses. It was the end of an era. Mr. Nghiep, the associate administrator, closed the gates of the hospital and guards were posted around it to forestall looting and rioting.

Late Thursday afternoon the largest MEDEVAC contingent was sent out. MEDEVAC control officers had contacted us to say they had colleagues in Saigon who were collecting a group of patients, physicians and nurses from another hospital to be sent to the Philippines. There were not enough patients to go around, so some of the others agreed to let us put on casts and bandages, hook up unconnected intravenous solutions and form a realistic group of "casualties" to make it easier to get through the Vietnamese police at the gates to Ton Son Nhut airport. At 6 p.m , they roared out of the hospital gates with sirens screaming and red lights flashing in a ten-ambulance cavalcade with eight "patients" and attendants in each vehicle. Altogether, during those last two or three days, Jim Simpson took out over 100 people through the MEDEVAC route who might not have been saved any other way. We were reminded of

"During the previous night, the mission folk had worked out a list of 175 workers and families who should have top priority, should it become necessary to evacuate. The choices were agony. A bit of Scripture came to mind—'One shall be taken and the other left.' It was like a parable of the last days."

Rahab and the stalks of flax she used to hide the spies in Jericho, and we were comforted by Paul's inclusion of Rahab's name among the list of those whose faith would save them.

By 8 p.m., the 175 on the list had gathered at the dispatching area of the hospital. We had waited till after curfew time to lessen the chances of being held up by crowds at the gates of the airport. There were poignant farewells to relatives staying behind; then as soon as each ambulance was loaded, an American would climb in beside the driver, ready to wave his magic passport to the guards at the airport gates.

By 10 p.m , we had all arrived at our staging area in the DAO compound. It was a stretch of concrete sidewalk about 200 feet long which had been reserved for our exclusive use. Soon fatigue set in and one by one we stretched out on the concrete, heads on bags or suitcases, and tried to sleep. Thousands of people were waiting in the DAO area for their turn to come up on the passenger lists. Hours passed and it was high noon of Friday, April 25, the next day, before we finally boarded the bus to go out to the C-141 Starlifter that would take us to Guam. Planes had been coming in and leaving hour after hour, night and day and the crews were becoming fatigued but to all of us they seemed kind, strong and reassuring.

There were a few bucket seats, but most of the 180 or so on our plane sat on blankets on the metal floor, as the huge rear cargo door clanged shut and was secured. During the steep lift-off, we all began to slide toward the rear, but outstretched hands from those in the bucket seats along the sides kept us from piling up in a heap. On many of the planes, the side doors were kept open until the planes had reached 20,000 feet, while a marine stood with an automatic rifle, ready to shoot out tracer flares if he saw any heat-seeking missiles aimed toward a plane's hot jet engines, in the hope that the flares would decoy the missiles away from the plane. None of the planes were shot down.

We were cheered that so many of our high risk national mission workers had been saved, yet our hearts ached for those left behind. For them, too, a new life has begun under radically changed conditions.

Although Saigon Adventist Hospital is no more, the good that its workers did through the years will live on in the hearts of those who caught a glimpse of the tender regard and love of the Great Physician.

Aboard the C-141 Starlifter on the way to Guam from Saigon.

V. How Many Tragedies? A Commentary

by Gottfried Oosterwal

At the time when the People's Republic of China was formed, the China Division of Seventh-day Adventists had a membership of some 20,000 believers, spread over 285 churches and 254 companies. There were also 15 training schools, 12 sanitariums and hospitals, two dispensaries and two publishing houses. Twenty-five years later, none of these institutions, and very few churches or companies of Adventist believers remain.

Why? Was it because of persecution or religious intolerance by the new regime? That is only one part of the answer, Elder David Lin tells us. A much more powerful factor, in his eyes, has been the very nature of Seventh-day Adventist mission work in China. His view deserves serious consideration.

Since Adventist mission work today is still basically guided by the same policy that Pastor Lin has so vehemently rejected, the danger is not at all imaginary that "what has happened to Adventist missions in China could be repeated more or less after the same pattern in other (former) colonial areas." The aim of the report, says Lin, is to help "to avoid the mistakes made by others in the past." All this takes on a much greater significance in light of the "Time of Trouble" that will soon come over all Adventist churches and believers, in Asia and Africa, as well as in the Americas, Europe and Australasia. What kind of mission work could best prepare us for that time of trouble? What are the lessons from China—and Vietnam—for the church today and its work of mission in the immediate future?

When David Lin's report was first received—in December of 1956—Adventist church and mission leaders rejected it as being "written under duress," "to satisfy the accusation committee" and "as a propaganda pamphlet for the Communist regime." This negative attitude prevailed even after Pastor S. J. Lee came out of China saying that he had been with David Lin when he wrote his report, had discussed it with him at length, and that none of the "suspicions" about Pastor Lin's statement were true. David Lin wrote the document after he had been cleared by the police, and it did not prevent them from later arresting and rearresting him. The testimony of his work and life, and that of S. J. Lee, are a solid basis for accepting David Lin's report for what it is: an honest attempt by a respected Adventist leader* to help the church learn from its past mistakes.

The time is more than ripe for the church as a whole to engage also in an honest self-evaluation of Adventist mission. The issues raised by David Lin are no longer confined to our work in China or Vietnam; they live in the minds of workers and members everywhere. If we fail to take stock of past mistakes now, the tragedies of the China and Vietnam experiences will be repeated, only on a much larger scale.

*David Lin was elected secretary of the China Division in 1950 and put in charge of our radio and MV work. S. J. Lee served as the division treasurer.

The strategies of Adventist mission receiving the greatest criticism are: 1) taking institutions and church structures developed in America and in the West, and transplanting them to Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania; 2) relying primarily on such institutions and established church structures to build the church in those areas.

The picture one gets of the Adventist Church in China is that it was never really rooted in Chinese soil. To this day, the same can be said of most of our work in Asia. Hospitals are established that are patterned after western models: the same specialization of the physicians, nurses and staff; the same facilities and equipment; the same pattern of individualized care and orientation toward curative medicine. But this kind of health care in the West came at the end of a long process. Transplanting such institutions to China or Vietnam or any area in the developing countries of the world where 60-70 percent of the people still die from malaria, hookworm, amebiasis, trachoma, yaws, diarrhea, filariasis, pneumonia, schistosomiasis, dysentery and influenza is like finishing the roof before the house has been built. The result is that 90 percent of Adventist medical work is concentrated in hospitals rather than in dealing with the truly basic health needs of the millions in the developing nations: sanitation and hygiene, polluted drinking water and malnutrition, disease-infested environment and disease-promoting acquired habits. All the larger Adventist hospitals, moreover, employ a very high percentage of non-Adventist nurses and physicians, which makes it difficult for these institutions to become wholly evangelistic in their orientation.

The same applies to many of our schools. David Lin—and others—have raised the question: Where are the many thousands of students who have gone through our schools? They were trained in many branches of science and education for which American schools were well known. But since these schools were not really rooted in the basic needs of Asian society, they tended towards elitism, alienated the students from their surroundings, and failed to prepare the students for being Christians in their own environment. It is noteworthy that so many of the educated and of the young in the church gave up their faith, whereas the uneducated and the older members by and large remained loyal to Adventist principles.

Our publishing houses similarly failed, Lin says. Concern for profits prevented them from producing the kind of literature most needed. Copying American models produced a lot of translations from American books and pamphlets, but not the literature needed for the Asian mind. Though much has been improved since Lin wrote regarding the production of literature for our own members, especially the writings of Ellen G. White, Adventist mission in Asia is still suffering from the fact that no publications have been prepared that reach out to the hundreds of millions of Buddhists, Confucianists and Muslims, for whom these publishing houses ought to have been established in the first place.

"Mission work means planting, not transplanting; the laying of new foundations, not the moving of institutions. To the Asian people, the institutions were part of the culture of the foreigner. This has led to stagnation in mission work and created a strong anti-church feeling."

As a result of this kind of mission work, the church has remained alien to the Asian soil. Mission work means, in the first place, planting, and not transplanting; the laying of new foundations, not the moving of institutions. To the Asian people, the institutions were part of the culture of the foreigner. This has led not only to a stagnation in mission work; it has also created a rather strong antichurch feeling because of the close association between these western institutions and imperialism.

The recent events in South Vietnam have brought that clearly to the fore. When the first negotiations between Adventist church leaders and the U.S. government began about the mission's take-over of the Third Field Hospital, our Vietnamese church leaders wrote a rather strong and extremely well-reasoned letter to the union, with copies to the division and the General Conference, urging the brethren not to

take over the hospital. That was in December of 1972!

Though many good reasons were given in the letter, the one elaborated at great length was that:

> SDA s, by this act of succeeding the U.S. Army in operating the Third Field Hospital, may be misunderstood as tools of the U.S. government. This misunderstanding may have an impact not only on our work in Vietnam, but also on the work of our church in countries behind iron curtains as well. Religions have been regarded by the public . . . as tools of political forces—Catholics are accused as tools of French colonists, and Protestants, of American imperialists. We might be mistaken by both foes and friends as continuing the Third Field Hospital, under a new guise, in the new phase. . . . The aforementioned misconception of the people may have an adverse effect on the attitude of the masses toward our evangelical mission. They may question our objectives. The peculiar experience of the Vietnamese people in their long history of foreign domination makes them highly suspicious of religions of foreign origin. More than once we have been labelled as pro-Americans. This move of ours may appear to substantiate their so far groundless suspicion. Our act, while well meant, may have an appearance of evil.

The letter concluded "that it would not be very beneficial to our cause to be allured into this deal with the U.S. government." This was not a statement by some radical extremists, but by responsible and experienced national leaders, whose only concern was the advance of God's mission in their country. But 15 years after David Lin wrote his report, we still had not grasped the importance of his words. How many other tragedies must follow before we shall see clearly that the transplantation of western institutions does not help the church? Institutions ought to be built according to the needs and mission focus of local believers.

This leads to David Lin's second criticism: that the weakness of Adventism in China was a result of putting the establishment of institutions ahead of building and nourishing local churches themselves. He describes the overemphasis on institutions as a "short-sighted mission policy."

David Lin is right in stressing that the church is not, in the first place, programs or structures, institutions or organization. The church is people, believers. The aim of all mission, therefore, must be to win people to Christ and to plant churches. Organization and structures should grow out of the needs of these people and churches; their need to be strengthened in the faith and to be better prepared to carry out their own mission. That is how the Adventist church organization and departmental structures gradually developed in North America.

In overseas mission, however, the policy has been to start first with these structures and organizations already developed in the West and then let the local churches grow around them. The result of putting primary emphasis on institutions is a very top-heavy administrative structure, continuing and heavy financial dependence on the sending churches, and a lack of missionary development at the grass-roots level. It is true that institutions do give the church continuity and depth. But they do not lead to many conversions or create strong mission churches. Church structures and institutions, therefore, should be built on converted Christians and missionary churches, not the other way around, as has been a practice. Emphasizing institutions has had the advantage of creating uniformity in our worldwide work, and easy control by a central authority, factors that have greatly contributed to the strength of Adventist world mission. But the disadvantages of this missionary methodology far outweigh the advantages, as we can learn not only from our experience in China but also by looking at our present work in all of Asia.

If institutions grow out of the need of the believers and the churches in the given area, the mission fields will be self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. It may be true that for a while mission fields developed from the grass roots up may have little to report in office buildings, departmental organizations and large institutions, but the result will be a church firmly rooted in the life and work of believers, particularly lay believers. A church established in this way will be able to rely solely on God and His Word. Such a church will be able to stand firm when the floods rise and the storms come.

Between red giants
and churning atoms
Einstein and David
sit at a table
tessellated for their brief meeting.

Both make moves that mean most
in understanding their position.

David looks to his left, his face reflecting red;
he cups the king: "Doctor, I can go no further."
Above David's head Einstein splits his view through a mirror
and sees spinning and seething.
"How is it," asks David, "that your eyes sparkle?"
"How is it," responds Einstein, "that your head is crowned?"

A curved light passes
and they must end their playing.
The pieces are left for the next players
and both spirits return through fields of wave
to the cloud that gave them.

Bruce Hallal

Kernels packed with neighboring snow
Blurred in motion of erosion
Slide, ice to iced flagstone.
Frost crystal, glinting, glances
From the window
Fighting the fading man
Who wipes the fog again, and his glasses.
He scans glazed pavement
And knows the children see shroud
Siftings of snows in matted hair,
Shifting rivulets of powder
In creases surrounding eyes;
Winds bleat old men's speech
Years' drifting muffles hearing.
Quiet, the wrinkled man watches
The cloud creep on glass, wonders when
He must wipe clear
Mists of breath.

Geoffrey Stafford

Last year a student missionary in Ponape in the Caroline Islands, Bruce Hallal is finishing his senior year at Atlantic Union College.

Geoffrey Stafford, a graduate of Atlantic Union College, is setting up a ceramics business in Waimea, Hawaii.

Revelation and the Bible: Beyond Verbal Inspiration

by Herold Weiss

One of the major pastimes in our church is to talk about revelation, the doctrine of how God is manifest to his people, without paying attention to the Bible. It is not at all difficult to sound grandiloquent and propound abstract notions about revelation. One may even quote a text of Scripture here and there to provide a scaffold for the building of such verbal edifices. The problem with most of these verbal structures is that they are useless because the Bible does not feel at home in them.

It would seem to me that to understand the Christian revelation one must place it squarely within the biblical framework. One may not, in other words, talk about a Christian revelation without taking seriously the historical context that brought about the Bible. Any discussion of biblical revelation that is not anchored in that historical process is idle talk. Common practice, however, seems to state a doctrine of revelation that safely isolates the Bible from the rest of the world's objects. Afterwards, it studies the Bible in terms of presuppositions imposed on it.

The fact is that the Bible as a book can and must be studied as any other book. Ecclesiastical attempts to prevent scholars from investigating the process that brought about the Bible—starting with oral traditions in earliest antiquity and ending with canonization in the Council of Trent—are based on false distinctions and false fears.

The scholars of the Renaissance gave impetus to the application of literary, grammatical and historical criteria in order to establish the authorship, purpose, style and circumstances of a piece of writing. In their struggle with Rome, the Reformers of the 16th century found this most helpful. For example, by the application of such criteria the *Donations of Constantine* were proven not to have been written by Constantine. The value of these criteria was thus early established within Protestantism.

Later on, however, when scholars tried to apply the same criteria to the Christian documents of the first century, the Protestant ecclesiastical authorities reacted by declaring the first century off limits. Documents of any other Christian century could be submitted to such criteria but documents from the first century were not to be touched in this way. This ecclesiastical distinction was certainly artificial and in practice could not be maintained.

The basic fear behind this distinction was also false. If, when objectively examined, the *Donations of Constantine* turn out not to have

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been written by Constantine, they may be declared spurious. But if, when objectively examined, the traditional view about the authorship of a New Testament book cannot be maintained with certainty, that book *cannot* be declared spurious or uninspired. For revelation is a divine act, not a human accomplishment. What revelation claims and what objective criteria establish are two different things. Objective criteria can neither prove nor disprove the claims of revelation. The fear of the objective study of the process by which the Bible came about is certainly founded on false assumptions.

When the ecclesiastical authorities of the 17th century realized that they could not effectively keep the Christian documents of the first century away from scholars, they reacted dogmatically with the doctrine of verbal inspiration. This doctrine has been expressed in different ways, some of which, because of their mechanical models, seem rather crude. But whether the doctrine is theoretically expressed or just assumed in practice, its basic concern is the same, namely, to declare God the author of the Bible, and thereby, it would seem, to minimize the role of His human instrumentalities. Verbal inspiration means that the Bible has one Author. The trouble is that the application of historical, grammatical and literary criteria to the study of the Bible has demonstrated precisely that it is impossible to lump all the books of the Bible under one author.

Biblical scholarship has clearly demonstrated the idiosyncracies of the men who wrote the Bible, and in this way has demolished the doctrine of verbal inspiration. It is now impossible for any doctrine of biblical revelation to bypass the communities and the men who wrote the Bible. As a result, the Bible, as a book, like any other object that exists in the world of men, cannot be declared immortal or infallible. Any doctrine of biblical revelation that wants to take the Bible seriously must also take this fact seriously. To make infallibility a necessary condition for revelation is to make an object of the world a divine object. It is to make the Bible an idol.

The confrontation between orthodoxy and biblical scholarship was, to a large degree, the result of two different ways of defending the Bible from attacks upon it. Orthodoxy defended the Bible against Rationalism and Science in medieval terms. Scholasticism had considered the sciences to be closed bodies of knowledge, their limits clearly established by theology—the queen of the sciences. The business of scientists was not to discover but to show how everything within their sphere of interest harmonizes and agrees with what is known already through the Bible and theology. In terms of such a deductive, scholastic methodology, orthodoxy came up with the dogma of verbal inspiration.

In its defense of the Bible, biblical scholarship also went astray—because it conceived reason to be a value superior to, and independent of, revelation. Biblical scholarship, therefore, tried to demonstrate that the Bible was reasonable (rather than, as its critics charged, a compilation of myths and legends fit only for the imagination of children). In the process, biblical scholarship substituted the Bible for faith. Instead of the Bible's being the place where the Call and the Demand of God may be heard, it became a place (among many others, of course) where the universal truths of reason were exemplified.

"Verbal inspiration means that the Bible has one Author. The trouble is that application of historical, grammatical and literary criteria to the study of the Bible has demonstrated that it is impossible to lump all the books of the Bible under one author."

Trying to benefit from the mistakes of the past, biblical scholarship in the 20th century has been struggling to allow the Bible to play its proper role. On the one hand, it wishes to allow the Bible to speak its own truth—not the truth of reason, or history, or science. On the other, it recognizes that the Bible is not the object of faith, but the expression of faith. This means that the relationship between faith and truth has been redefined.

The traditional view—that both faith and truth deal essentially with information—became

problematic when the information of faith (supposedly given by revelation) and the information acquired by the scientific method stood against each other. Romanticism, in the form of 19th century Liberalism, came to the rescue by safely confining religious matters within the realm of "feeling" and allowing culture to go on with the building of civilization. But under these circumstances religion turned into impotent individualism and a triumphant culture inevitably became idolatrous and proclaimed its own gods. But this arrangement could not last, and now the truce is over because faith cannot surrender to any idol.

We must now consider briefly the concepts of faith and reason. The basic problem with the traditional understandings of faith is that they more or less localize faith within one of the human qualities. Faith has been understood as a function of the mind, or of the will, or of feeling.[1] But these are intellectualistic, voluntaristic, or subjective distortions of faith. Faith does not have to do with a part of man and his humanity. It is an act of the whole self, as Schleiermacher strenuously argued. Faith is just as much involved with the whole of man as is his rationality.

If reason is not understood as a tool of logic, but as the source of meaning and structure—that which makes it possible for humans to understand their existence as "selves"—then reason is the basis for language and freedom and that which makes human life possible. It is what allows for human responsiblity and, therefore, for the actualization of moral commands in our lives.

When reason is understood this way, it can be said that faith and reason are coexistent. Reason is a precondition for faith, and a faith that wishes to deny reason would be a dehumanizing force. But still, reason is finite and must be aware of its limits. Faith is the fulfillment, the transcendence of reason. Man as man is conscious of his potential infinitude, and this awareness drives reason beyond its limits for its own fulfillment.

When reason is limited to the finite, it is arbitrarily contained—contrary to the aspirations that are essential in man as human. When faith is limited to belief in historical, scientific or philosophical propositions, it is deprived of its essential element: the transcendent.

This apparent digression from the question of revelation was necessary in order to bring two important theological considerations into view. First, it must be said that the nature of man and, therefore, reason and faith, are distorted by the human condition in sin. Reason is distorted in practice because of irrational and demonic forces within us, and faith becomes idolatrous because men are not secure enough to risk everything on God. Secondly, it must be stated that the relationship between faith and reason must be established by revelation rather than by an analysis of man. As a matter of fact, revelation enters the human condition as the conqueror of man's limitations within his corrupted condition in sin.

Man's existence is characterized by his finitude. He is confined within time and space. He dies. This is his basic limitation, from which other limitations, such as his imperfect knowledge of reality, follow.

Man's death has not only primary but also ultimate significance when considered from a theological perspective. For death is not just the end of biological functions in one member of the species, it it also the alienation of a person from God.

The biblical idea of revelation has meaning only when considered within this framework. If, as we must indeed maintain, Christ is the final and complete revelation of God to man, it would be a caricature of His mission to say that He came to earth to bring us information. As a matter of fact, it would not only be a caricature, it would be to affirm the most ancient and resilient of all heresies: Gnosticism. It would be to bind Christ to knowledge about the cosmos and to claim that this knowledge is the way of salvation.

Christ did not come to earth for the purpose of bringing to man information. Even though He communicated through words that had a cognitive content, His basic purpose was to give man life. This must be affirmed radically. Knowledge about life is not enough when the enemy to be conquered is not ignorance but death. The basic characteristic of knowledge, after all, is that it does not possess the thing it knows. Though knowledge possesses concepts about life, it does not automatically possess life itself. So if revelation is to be the power that allows man to tran-

scend his limit, death, then revelation must bring to man the power of life itself triumphing over death. Indeed, if we grant this, and are also willing to allow the New Testament to determine our understanding, we cannot but conclude that what revelation deals with it essentially the power of life itself.[2] What revelation communicates is a New Being, a New Creature. Revelation integrates man's reason and anchors his life in God Himself.

This is not to say that the anchoring of human life in God ignores the cognitive faculties of man. It is to say, rather, that revelation has to do with more than knowledge. To limit revelation to knowledge and to deny to revelation any knowledge are equally misconceptions. What I am concerned with is to establish what is primary in revelation.

In receiving life from God, man's intellect also receives new life. It certainly receives a new perspective from which to look at and understand life and the universe. But this may mean that one is now more critical than before of any and all descriptions of life and the universe. It does not mean that one can now look at life and the universe as if one were the Creator. We need to remember that God's questions to Job are still in effect.[3] And that God's answer to Job did not give him a new vision of how the physical or moral universe operates. It rather brought Job to a new repentance in the presence of the God of the Whirlwind.

It would be helpful here to remember that the intellectualistic understanding of knowledge forgets the experiential understanding of knowledge typical of the Hebrews. The biblical mentality had not yet made the philosophical distinction between act and thought. To know was to be dynamically engaged with the thing or the person known. Amos, for example, insists that his people must "know their God." But he does not provide them with any new information, neither does he illuminate for them theoretically the niceties of His being. Rather, he works out the implications of God's being in terms of practical obedience immediately relevant to their situation.

A theologian who today studies the book of Amos in order to recover the "basic principles" that transcend the concrete counsels of the prophet does not thereby arrive at the mind of God. In the process of separating thought from life, the immediacy of the Word of God is lost. Any modern description of Amos' concept of God cannot claim to be the eternal distillation of truth. As a description, it is an ideology that is informed as much by the modern theologian's presuppositions as by Amos' own.

Enough has been said to make clear that I do not understand revelation to be essentially the communication of divine information given by the Spirit to the writers of the Bible; nor do I consider faith to be the acceptance of this information. Revelation, rather, is, first of all, a divine disclosure that creates a community in which life expresses this revelation in symbols of action, imagination and thought under the guidance of prophets.

It is in this way that revelation communicates new life and conquers the internal conflicts between reason and faith in man's sinful condition. Revelation is an event in which God becomes manifest and in which people respond wholeheartedly so that their given conditions in religion and culture are changed radically.

God's action is not meant primarily to take care of man's ignorance. Revelation does not compete with science as a way of acquiring knowledge of the universe. It does not provide man with information above and beyond that which he may obtain from other sources. Rather, revelation breaks down man's limits in terms of his real and concrete situation in sin. Revelation changes man's situation *qualitatively*. If the content of revelation were only knowledge, it would change man's situation only *quantitatively*.

Faith is reason responding to revelation and, therefore, faith is actualized not in thought but in life. That is, faith is reason fulfilling itself beyond the life of thought alone. In revelation there is, therefore, no possible conflict between reason and faith; both are grasped by revelation and both are held together under its life-giving power.

Realistically, however, it must be said that revelation is given, or happens, to man in his state of corrupted faith and corrupted rationality. And while it conquers the corrupted condition, it does not, of course, remove it entirely.

This is a key point, for it means that revelation can never be a sure possession of man. And

any attempt to identify God's revelation with any one particular description of it, even in the pages of the Bible, fails to recognize the inability of human reason and faith to totally capture the living God. Moreover, if any such description of the revelation is given ultimate validity, it may become more of a hindrance than a help in man's search for God. The significance given to it tends to attract the believer's attention to himself—in this way distracting him from God. In other words, any description of the revelation that is given ultimate validity tends to become an idol. But revelation is precisely God's intervention to *save* men from their idols. God's purpose in revelation is to provide man with the basis for life in Himself.

A careful study of the Bible will maintain an infinite, qualitative distinction between God and the book. The gap between the two cannot be closed by an act of the will or an act of the mind. God and a book cannot be equated. Neither can the Word of God and a book be

"To equate God's Word with a book is the work of a corrupted faith that sets up for itself an idol. . . . Nothing on earth is the ultimate expression of God. To make the Bible such is idolatry."

equated. To do that is to ignore the fact that God does not freeze Himself in any form. God is the Living God and the God of the living. To equate God's Word with a book is the work of a corrupted faith that sets up for itself an idol. The words of the book are the words of the prophets which only tangentially reflect the Word of God. Nothing on earth is the ultimate expression of God. To make the Bible such is bibliolatry, just another form of idolatry.

A doctrine of revelation may be arrived at either dogmatically, in terms of an ideal, or empirically, in terms of a careful study of how the Bible came about and what it actually deals with. It must be understood, however, that in either case the result is a human exercise in understanding a *process.* In an attempt to understand the process, I would like now to describe its different aspects.

Broadly speaking, the whole process—man's role as well as God's—may be described as revelation, since it may be argued that no revelation has taken place until the intended recipient has understood it. In a more technical sense, however, revelation refers to the actual God-disclosure. It suggests the disclosing of that which was veiled. And the important thing to see is that when God reveals, he does not disclose *something:* things, words, a book. He unveils *Himself* by acting on behalf of people. People experience, or witness, His Being or His action. For God to reveal Himself, no word need be spoken. Even in a prophetic vision the words of God are the words of the prophet: each prophet imposes his own style and his own vocabulary on the lips of God. God reveals Himself, then, by acting on selves; there is no book in between.

Inspiration is the next step in the process. God's action needs to be interpreted, and inspiration is the working of God's Spirit with a personality so that the significance of God's action may not be lost. The inspired person—called a prophet—testifies that the action was not the result of just human or natural agencies, but that through them God was at work. He introduces words into the process. Grammar, style, cultural setting, needs of the audience, purpose for testifying, personal biases, human conditions—all of these factors enter into the formulation of what the prophet says under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Here the prophet's faith and reason are joined. Both revelation and inspiration take place outside and prior to the Bible.

At the foundation of the words of the prophet are found the action of God and the prophet's response in faith. He has seen God in action. He is witnessing. He is confessing.

The authority of the Bible is not the authority of the book itself, but the authority of the God to whom it bears witness. In matters of faith, the believer's authority is not the Bible, but the God of the Bible who lives and acts and thinks outside and prior to the Bible. The believer who resorts to the Bible in order to defend his faith is really doing this only to defend the way in which he expresses his faith in God. The Bible cannot be appealed to, for example, in order to prove or defend the existence of God. God is the Bible's presupposition. This shows that the authority of the Bible on matters of faith depends on the recognition of the authority of the God of the Bible.

Archaelogy and history may prove the Bible to be reliable historically, but that is not all that believers claim for it. To make the Bible normative in matters of science or history is to make the Bible obsolete. The Bible is normative for faith because it represents the struggle of faith against idolatry. The Bible has normative force in matters of faith not because the mind of God is encapsulated in it, but because it represents the triumph of God over every idol.

It would be ironic, indeed, if in the name of the Bible a mere ideology were said to represent the mind of God. The Bible testifies to God's activity, but any human understanding of this activity is limited by human conceptions that are conditioned by time and space. For faith, it is tragic to confuse matters of faith with matters of belief.

The truth of faith transcends the facts of the stories in the Bible. Belief in the historical validity of the biblical stories should not be confused with faith. For matters of belief are subject to historical and literary verification, and can be established with more or less probability. It is not a matter of faith to decide who wrote I Kings, II Chronicles, Jeremiah, or the Epistle to the Galatians. It is not a matter of faith to determine the difference between the first 11 chapters of Genesis and the rest of the book or the first ten chapters of II Corinthians and the rest of the epistle. Faith can ascertain that Jesus is the Christ, but it cannot ascertain the historical conditions surrounding Jesus, the Christ. Faith is certain of an event in history that has transformed history for the faithful. A particular version of an event in history is subject to change without notice if new evidence should come to light. The Gospels unashamedly report different versions of the same historical events. All of them are equally valid vehicles for the confessing of faith. A faith that feels bound to defend a particular version of an event has become idolatrous. It is no longer faith, but ideology. To make the authority of the Bible dependent upon its scientific or historical accuracy is to misunderstand what it is all about, and to ignore the process by which it came about.

It has been said that the message of the Bible is summed up in its first four words, "In the beginning God . . ," and the rest is commentary. Biblical man begins with the affirmation that God is. He does not affirm this by means of concepts and categories that suggest an objectively detached observer. Instead, he tells a personal story. He affirms his participation in life. And his story means much more than what is says. His story is a symbol of his faith.

The truth of faith cannot be uttered in any other way than in symbol and metaphor. The language of the Bible is the language of metaphors: The People, The Covenant, The Tree, The Crown, The Bread, The Wind, The Vine, The Way, Reconciliation, Justification, Sanctification, Redemption. The truth of the Bible is the truth of God Himself, the Truth of Eternal Life.

FOOTNOTES

1. It is quite unfair to ascribe to F. Schleiermacher this understanding of feeling. It became true of his later followers. By the word "feeling," Schleiermacher was trying to describe the bedrock upon which human existence is built, that which is "unconditioned."

2. For full exegtical support, see R. Bultmann, "The Concept of Revelation in the New Testament," in *Existence and Faith,* edited by Shubert Ogden.

3. Job 38-41.

A Reply to Dr. Weiss

by Frederick E. J. Harder

Dr. Herold Weiss begins by identifying a very real obstacle to fruitful discussion of the doctrine of revelation, namely, the formulation of a theory that grows out of presuppositions rather than out of an inductive study of Scripture. He is concerned primarily with those concepts of revelation which have their origin in a quest for absolutist authority. Equal concern, however, must be maintained for those attitudes

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toward revelation which originate in a desire to have no authority. For if the former results in safely isolating "the Bible from the rest of the world's objects," the latter makes no distinction between the Bible and "any other book." Both positions begin with certain presuppositions, and neither develops a doctrine with which the Bible can be harmonized without resort to procrustean interpretation. If, as is stated in the final sentence of the article, "The truth of the Bible is the truth of God Himself, the truth of Eternal Life," the Bible must be treated as being in some sense unique.

Weiss rightly observes that "fear of the objective study of the process by which the Bible came about is certainly founded upon false assumptions." However, scholars do not always agree as to which data are objective or on how they are to be interpreted. For example: when we read in Genesis 14:14 that Abram and his men pursued the four kings "as far as Dan," and then find in Joshua 19:47 that "Dan" was called "Leshem" prior to the Canaanite conquest under Joshua, the obvious conclusion is that the Genesis statement was not written in its present form prior to the Canaanite conquest. The data are clear, and the interpretation logical. On the other hand, when we read in Daniel 8:20-22 that Babylon was to be followed by the kingdoms of Media and Persia which, in turn, would be destroyed by the king of Greece, whose kingdom later would be divided into four, must we follow the same logic and conclude that this was written after the designated kingdoms had held power and, in turn, been superseded? The answer depends on one's presuppositions about divine foreknowledge and the process of revelation. If one assumes that there is no such thing as true foreknowledge, he must date the prophecies of Daniel after the fact, in which case they are history written in the guise of predictive prophecy. On the other hand, if one believes that "there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known . . . what will be in the latter days," he can accept these as the predictions they purport to be. The linguistic reasons for dating the book of Daniel in the Hellenistic Period (insofar as they are "objective") may then be interpreted as indicating a later revision of an earlier work without calling into question the integrity of its substance.

The quarrel with much biblical criticism—whether it be textual, historical, literary, etc.—is not with the "objective" data it uncovers but rather with the naturalist presuppositions which too often underlie the method, *e.g.,* an *a priori* rejection of miracle and the supernatural. Surely, "the Bible does not feel at home" with these anymore than it does among any other unbiblical presuppositions. If the verbal inspirationist is guilty of minimizing the role of human instrumentalities in the revelatory process, then the higher critic too often is guilty of minimizing the action of God in the process. Just as 17th century orthodoxy developed a dogma of verbal inspiration so 19th century liberalism reduced divine revelation to the level of human discovery.

"He is concerned with those concepts of revelation which have their origin in a quest for absolutist authority. We must be equally concerned for those attitudes which have their origin in the desire for no authority."

Dr. Weiss summarizes the problems by several assertions:

"Christ is the final and complete revelation of God to man."

"Even though He communicated through words that had a cognitive content, His basic purpose was to give man life."

"Revelation . . . is first of all a divine disclosure that creates community in which life expresses this revelation in symbols of action, imagination and thought under the guidance of prophets."

"It is in this way that revelation communicates new life and conquers the internal conflicts between reason and faith in man's sinful condition. Revelation is an event in which God becomes manifest and in which people respond wholeheartedly so that their given conditions in religion and culture are changed radically."

All of these declarations should be kept in

mind when reading Weiss's denials that revelation provides man with information above and beyond that which he may obtain from other sources. He is emphasizing the impact that divine revelation has on the receptive human heart rather than dealing with the avenues through which revelation may make that impact. These avenues necessarily are cognitive, for there are no others.

Ellen White frequently spoke of the relationship between knowledge and life. The following excerpts are merely representative of many other similar statements:

"Christ is the truth. His words are truth, and they have a deeper significance than appears on the surface, and a value beyond their unpretending appearance. Minds that are quickened by the Holy Spirit will discern the value of these words."

". . . The acceptance of truth will make every receiver a child of God, an heir of heaven. Truth that is cherished in the heart is not a cold, dead letter, but a living power."

"Truth is sacred, divine. It is stronger and more powerful than anything else in the formation of a character after the likeness of Christ."

"We must have more than an intellectual belief in the truth. . . .When truth is held as truth only by the conscience, when the heart is not stimulated and made receptive, only the mind is affected. But when the truth is received as truth by the heart, it has passed through the conscience, aand has captivated the soul with its pure principles. It is placed in the heart by the Holy Spirit, who reveals its beauty to the mind, that its transforming power may be seen in the character."[1]

Perhaps the foregoing is summarized in one brief statement: "A right knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent is eternal life to all who believe."[2] Certainly, those who have experienced revelatory phenomena most clearly have described them in cognitive terms. How else could they communicate meaningfully with respect to them? If communication of such experiences is not important to the revelatory experiences of others, what is the value of the Bible? A dichotomy between truth about God and union with God exists only if truth remains at the informational level. It disappears when one responds to it with his whole being.

To hold that revelation is the self-disclosure of God for the purpose of drawing man into a personal saving relation is meaningless unless the Christology of the New Testament is in fact true. Among the various views of revelation is the common agreement that God has disclosed something. It would seem that any doctrine of revelation which is placed "squarely within the biblical framework" must hold that it is a means by which a personal God imparts to individual persons (and to some persons much more clearly than to others) truths, meaning, values, purposes and an awareness of His divine presence.

In the first chapter of John, some categorical assertions are made:

"In the beginning was the Word."

"The Word was with God."

"The Word was God."

"All things were made through Him."

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

"To all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become the children of God."

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

It is legitimate to ask whether these are statements of fact or not. It is legitimate to ask this even though no answer, either affirmative or negative, can be empirically substantiated. If the question be asked of a Christian by a non-Christian, an equivocal answer is not adequate. It is not enough to say, "There are faith statements which are true for me but may not be true for you." At the operational level of everyday life, these assertions either give true information, or they are falsehoods.

The plea that Dr. Weiss makes is that we not ignore the general presuppositions underlying all knowledge as we approach the Bible. He asks that we develop a doctrine of divine revelation based on what the Bible actually says, and he suggests that in order to determine this, one must start with an historical and critical examination of the Bible. Such examination of any particular passage will include a determination of the text and of its literary form, a search into the historical situation in which it was written, a determination of the meaning which the words had for the original author, and an interpretation of the passage in the light of its total context. In addition, an Old Testament passage

must be studied with the Old Testament as its background. He insists that the Bible may be understood correctly only when the best procedures of historical and textual criticism are combined with faith.

The process of revelation must be understood as an antidote against the extremist position which would degrade the prophet to little more than a magnetic tape on which God dictated His messages. Weiss is very close to the position Ellen White took when he says: "At the foundation of the words of the prophet are found the action of God and the prophet's response in faith. He has seen God in action. He is witnessing. He is confessing."

Compare the following statements:

"God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. . . ."

"It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. . . . The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of man are the word of God."[3]

Weiss points out that 17th century orthodoxy was challenged by 18th and 19th century rationalism and science. He also indicates that 19th century biblical scholarship went astray in its exalting of reason as a value superior to and independent of revelation. However, it it questionable that a synthesis can be achieved satisfactorily by emphasizing a dichotomy between *knowledge* of life and life, or between a *concept* of death and death. Although these are not synonymous terms, knowledge and concept are preparatory for the experiential reality, and this is an essential function of revelation. Furthermore, to say that "for God to reveal Himself no word need be spoken," is not to say that God never reveals Himself through words.

Weiss's emphasis on human faculties involved in the communication of revelation suggests the need for fuller recognition of the important human elements in the process of receiving and recording revelatory disclosures. Caution is due in the tendency to take an all-or-nothing, black-or-white attitude toward any claim to divine guidance. Ellen White recognized the limitations on revelation inherent in the recipient's imperfect understanding, in his lack of skill in expression, in his circumscribed experience, and in the limitations of human language and concepts. This surely implies a grey area in all revelatory experiences and in any records of them. "The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought."[4] It is likely that many of the problems which arise in regard to the use of Scripture or any other revelatory literature are attributable to our failure to recognize this principle.

Ongoing dialogue about the doctrine of revelation is an imperative for our church at this time. Likewise, an intensified and broadened study of Scripture is an absolute necessity in these days when research in all areas of knowledge is adding so enormously to humanity's fund of information.

Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventists have tended toward the rather rigid position of John Calvin. Although official publications deny acceptance of the dogma of verbal inspiration, frequently there is a lack of understanding as to the full implication of this denial and a failure to replace it with a more consistent, realistic position. We cannot with impunity continue to ignore the problems involved. There needs to be a frank recognition of issues accompanied by courageous effort toward their solution.

FOOTNOTES

1. "The Truth as It Is in Jesus - No. 1," *Review and Herald,* 76 (February 14, 1899), No. 7, p. 97.
2. "Denouncing the Pharisees," *Review and Herald,* 75 (February 22, 1898), No. 8, p. 117.
3. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages,* Book 1, p. 21.
4. *Ibid.,* p. 22.

A Pioneering Book About Sex

Review by Larry M. Lewis

God Invented Sex
by Charles Wittschiebe
Southern Publishing Association, 256 pp., $5.95

One purpose of the Anvil Series, according to the publishers, is to "push back the frontiers of Adventist thought. . . ." Charles Wittschiebe's *God Invented Sex* certainly is such a pioneering work. When, before, have we had on the shelves of the local Adventist Book Center a book that touches on abortion, adultery, masturbation, homosexuality, contraceptives and the most intimate sexual problems between husbands and wives?

Sexuality is so critically related to our life experience that we may well wonder why we have for so long abandoned the topic to the publishers of sex manuals and other assorted erotica. Whatever the reasons, it is a pleasure to read this book, which deals with so many delicate subjects in such a candid and balanced way.

When I was a student of Charles Wittschiebe, I generally found him at his best in informal give-and-take. Perhaps this is why he chose to use the question-and-answer approach in this book. Since the questions are from real people who ask things most of us would like to know about, the book makes fascinating reading. You may even find yourself wondering what will come next—will it possibly be about. . .? Often it is, and Wittschiebe's answer is as unblushing and direct as the question.

The question-answer format does have hazards, however. Perhaps others will wish as I did that the author had included one chapter outlining his basic assumptions in a comprehensive way. This would have been a good balance to the bits and pieces which sometimes even seem to contradict each other. For instance, in one place Wittschiebe argues that human anatomy vindicates the legitimacy of sexual passion. If God designed men and women to have a sexual relationship, how then, he asks, "Can one question the drive and emotional force that motivate it?" Yet, elsewhere he criticizes sexuality that becomes a mere biological outlet for the release of sexual tension, and adds that "plain passion reduces marriage to its lowest terms, a situation intolerable to any sensitive spouse."

It seems contradictory to use the argument from design to justify sexual relationships and then say that a married couple should not give way to sexual passion. Moreover, if it is intolerable to let sex be a mere biological outlet for the release of sexual tension, why does he encourage the use of fancy nighties, perfumes, music or "anything that increases the pleasure of the sexual experience"? Is it not possible that such aphrodisiacs could increase sexual tension and encourage a rather elemental sexual passion?

In several sensitive areas, Wittschiebe, with rather disturbing results, juxtaposes the counsel of Ellen White alongside that of modern writers. An example is the section on masturbation. He quotes extensively from Ellen White as well as from other writers of her time who strongly opposed masturbation. Then he gives the opposing thinking of more recent and very credible authorities. He sides with Ellen White, of course, but since he can give no supporting data for her position, the reader who wishes to harmonize modern scientific thinking with the inspired writings is left in a dilemma. Wittschiebe con-

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cedes there is a problem and makes an appeal for more study of the topic. But the overall result is to bring into question Ellen White's counsel.

The most disturbing aspect of the book is the author's penchant for making statements without giving support from other literature. One example is the discussion of sexual differences between men and women. Men, according to Wittschiebe, more easily detach sex from love, desire it more often (and in unusual places and at unconventional hours), and seemingly are more given to animal passions. Women are supposedly lower-geared in sex, adjust to marriage easier, are less often tempted to abandon their children, and generally less sexually aberrant. References for these observations would have been useful since they seem to be contradicted by some recent research. Examples of other questionable statements are his assertion that men who beat their wives were spoiled when they were children, always getting their own way, and that children almost always do better when they have at least one brother or sister as they grow up.

There are other troubling things about his book, such as the stories of almost miraculous cures of serious marital problems after a single counseling session. Nevertheless, we can be grateful for a book that cautions against either embracing a too-liberal standard or retreating into a puritanical stance that denies any place for sexuality in the life of a Christian.

Here-and-Now

Review by Charles Scriven

Calculated Goodness
by Sakae Kubo
Southern Publishing Assn., 128 pp., $3.95

In this book (another in the Southern Publishing Association's Anvil Series) the writer offers brief, readable meditations on 16 Bible passages. The book has an ethical tone—as suggested by the title—though it is by no means a treatise in ethics, nor even limited to that field. This is a collection of pieces, an anthology whose unifying element is not a subject matter so much as a form: each chapter begins with a New Testament text, then explains, in simple, nontechnical prose its meaning for today.

The author of the book succeeds just where (for Adventists) it is so easy to fail: in relating the Gospel to the here-and-now as well as to the then-and-there. Perhaps the best evidence of this is chapter six, entitled "In Christ There Is No East or West." Here Sakae Kubo, who is seminary librarian and professor of New Testament at Andrews University, ventures into largely uncharted territory. I mean largely uncharted by us: with remarks on "the equality of the races" he strays into social ethics, an area of Judaeo-Christian thought we are usually admonished to stay away from.

What Kubo says specifically about race belongs to what tradition we do have in this field: from our denomination's beginnings there have been some (including Ellen White) who opposed racism and slavery from the conviction that all are one in Christ. But in developing the theme of the chapter, Kubo finds it necessary to ruminate on the broader subject of the role of the church in society. Hence these sentences, which, for a book produced by a denominational publisher, are, it seems to me, striking:

"The church must serve as the conscience of society and the nation."

"How sad that the church cannot speak out boldly on the Biblical message of love and brotherhood for fear it might be political!"

"If the gospel does not deal with social relationships, then it is an emasculated gospel."

I take these sentences to be a call for "prophecy" in the classical Hebrew sense, that is, for religious criticism of those values and institutions that perpetuate suffering and oppression in the world. In America, where the praise of flag and ruler is practically required etiquette, it is infinitely easy to pass over such sentences without even noticing what they say. It will be too bad if readers of Kubo's book do this, since the "spirit of prophecy"—what we feel proud to possess—must surely become a style of life among us, not just a memory of Ellen White. The ancient prophets thundered against commonplace injustices and pain, and in the fine, long chapter

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on race you see a small, but significant, recovery of this spirit in a contemporary Adventist writer.

The chapter on race is by far the longest, and one of the best, in the book. Of the other chapters, the weakest is the second, in which the author deals with the New Testament assertion that Jesus was "tempted as we are, yet without sinning." I am baffled, as I believe most people are, by the mysteries that attend this subject. And I have to say that one mystery Kubo tries to clear up in this chapter is as baffling now as it was before I read his book. Having quoted Ellen White's statement that Jesus lacked "the propensities of sin," he asks, "If Christ did not have inherent sinful propensities such as you and I, the descendants of Adam, have, how can Hebrews 4:15 maintain that He was tempted in all points like as we are?"

Then, following a writer named A. B. Bruce, Kubo distinguishes a temptation that may arise from "inherent sinful nature" from one that may come from "an external cause." An example of the former is the temptation to forsake one's true calling based on vanity and ambition. An example of the latter is the temptation to forsake one's true calling based on the clear perception that the way will be "rough, thorny and steep." But how could such a perception bring temptation to someone who had no "inherent propensity" to cowardice? I don't think it could. And so Kubo's question, it seems to me, remains unanswered.

My point is that some mysteries had best be acknowledged to be just that, mysteries. Our energies are better spent figuring out the *meaning for life* of Bible theology than trying to explain the (from the human perspective) unexplainable. How does Hebrews 4:15 express hope for humanity? That is what matters most, and the chapter would have succeeded had it stayed with this question and steered away from the obscure theologizing.

The 15 other chapters are very helpful, even a joy to read. In all of them there is a sensitivity to human problems, a simplicity of style, and an appeal to heart that leave the reader with the sense of having had a genuinely devotional experience. (The essays might well be shared aloud with the adult members of your family, though they would not be suited to children.)

An attractive feature of the book is the author's use of illustration. Twice in "I Am the Way," a chapter marking Christianity as a relationship with the divine, not adherence to intellectual truths, Kubo uses the kind of empty, aprocryphal-sounding stories you find in books of sermon illustrations. But mainly the illustrations make their points in a telling way, and are often drawn from the great works of literature. Among the writers quoted are Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Maupassant, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Dickens and Somerset Maugham. It is really quite refreshing.

The chapter entitled "Law for Man, Not Man for the Law," distinguishes the person-centered ethics of Jesus from the legalistic ethics that puts persons in the background. This is another example of the ethical tone of many of the chapters. In some chapters as in the one on the temptations, the author veers away from the ethical to the theological. In "God Is for Us," for example, he talks about the meaning of God's grace, and in "The Peace of Christ" he reflects on the experience of salvation.

As a collection of meditations, the book is good, very worth reading, and I happily recommend it. More than this, it is another of the recent signs of hope that Adventist publishers are trying to break away from business-as-usual, and that, too, is something to be happy about.

Letters from Readers

To the board of editors of SPECTRUM: The article on the wedding ring (Spring-Summer, 1974) implied that it is the cause of considerable controversy, that not wearing one had caused embarrassment to many people, and that it may be an obstacle to more successful evangelism. Reference is also made to certain Spirit of Prophecy statements.

I believe that principles presented in the writings of Ellen White should not be taken lightly. There are basic reasons for these counsels which we would do well to consider. I make bold to share with the readers of this magazine some conclusions that I have reached based on my study and experience.

First, is the wedding ring jewelry? And if so, should it be treated in harmony with the clear statements regarding adornment? No doubt some wedding rings should be so classified. But probably the majority are not. They are just simple gold bands.

Second, is there any reason, then, why I, as a minister, should not perform a ring ceremony? My answer has always been, "Yes, there is." Here are some of my reasons:

Marriage should be a solemn, heaven-blessed union of two lives. If such is the case, the minister correctly declares, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." If it is God who joins a man and woman in holy matrimony, what right does any minister have to say, ". . . with this *ring* I thee wed?" Candidates preparing for baptism, when asked which commandment such a statement brings into question, invariably tell me, "Why, the first. . . ." Conscientiously, I cannot be a part of such a ceremony.

It will be argued that the ring is only a *symbol.* I ask, is it a God-given symbol? What is its origin? Its history is ancient, pagan in origin, and later associated with the vestal virgins of questionable reputation in ancient Greece. The custom found its way into the Catholic church along with other relics of pagan practice. Here are a few of these relics listed by Cardinal Newman: ". . . incense, lamps and candles . . . holy water . . . sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, *the ring in marriage* . . . images at a later date . . . are *all* of pagan origin and sanctified by their adoption into the church."[1]

Surely, God does not need the assistance of paganism to provide a *symbol* of this sacred union. No, the wedding ring is not jewelry. It has a past even more tarnished than this. It has come to us through the same channel as Sunday worship, which we reject as counterfeit, since it takes glory from our God as Creator. How can we consistently reject one pagan-given custom, and then accept the other?

With this background, let us examine again the Spirit of Prophecy statement regarding the wedding ring. "Some have a burden, feeling that ministers' wives should wear the marriage band. *All this is unnecessary."* She further states that true Christian character and proper modest conduct will make ladies "secure anywhere." And adds that if this disregard of custom "occasions remarks, it is no good reason for adopting it." "I feel *deeply* over this *leavening process"* which is "conformity to custom and fashion." Then she states, ". . . not one penny should be spent" for this circlet of gold. Her clear instruction to our missionaries is, ". . . the wearing of a wedding ring will not increase their influence one jot or tittle."[2]

From personal experience I know this to be true. We have lived in many places for many years where the wedding ring is "custom." Today, not even hotel managers bother to look, for they have found that a ring may be worn by anyone, married or not, and many times is.

I have not found the wedding ring to be a big hurdle to soul winning, nor do I present this subject to new candidates with "dread" as was implied in the recent article. Nor have I seen any evidence that in lands where it is customary to wear a wedding ring and where it is not discussed with candidates for baptism, that the winning of souls is made easier. The reaction of new members joining us and finding that the truths they have accepted are not always prac-

ticed by the members—this is a major hurdle to successful soul winning.

Inspiriation expresses concern and calls this practice "a leavening process" and "conformity to the world's customs and fashions," —something that is not needed. God is consistent. He does not need any pagan practices to symbolize anything. His truth is based on unchanging principles, in a changing world. I know of no case where this custom ever held a marriage together. Do you?

S. L. Folkenberg
Stewardship Secretary
Euro-Africa Division

1. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* pp. 359, 360. (Italics mine)
2. Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 160, 161. (Italics mine)

To the board of editors of SPECTRUM: The articles in the two double issues of SPECTRUM (volume 6) are sincerely appreciated for their forthright account of serious problems with fundamentalist theology that should have been resolved long ago. I applaud and thank the many writers for putting their views on the line so clearly. I am with them all of the way.

I am firmly convinced that the Church must reexamine her established doctrines relating to all of the sciences that are now being disputed, and update them as necessary if the Church is to grow as it should in an intellectual culture.

Untenable doctrinal positions foster varying degrees of spiritual confusion in the thinking of many individuals; lessen their confidence in the leadership of the Church; and inevitably weaken their faith. This is because outdated positions not only in themselves produce stumbling blocks on the pathway toward a strong faith, but tragically, they often cast doubt on related and properly stated positions.

Arthur J. Peterson
Mercer Island, Washington

To the board of editors of SPECTRUM: Although Richard and Stephen Ritland would probably like everyone to believe that their article "The fossil forests of the Yellowstone region" (SPECTRUM, Vol. 6, Nos. 1 and 2) is the final answer, anyone informed at all on this controversial issue should realize that it is only the introductory first chapter. The Ritlands appear to be trying to tell us that the interpretation of trees in position of growth has been so completely verified as to immediately mark any dissenter an ignoramus. This amounts to smooth politics but poor science. After six years of research on Yellowstone's fossil forests, I can state categorically that the picture is not as clear as they have tried to paint. Alternate interpretations are not only possible, but almost seem to be demanded due to the accumulating weight of evidence. The Ritlands have done us all a great service, however, by so clearly stating the problem. I am encouraged by this move because as someone has said, "A problem well stated is already half solved."

SPECTRUM is a journal established (in part) "to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject" with an effort to "ensure accurate scholarship." In regard to the Yellowstone fossil forests, it has not yet met these objectives.

Lanny H. Fisk
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To the board of editors of SPECTRUM: "The Fossil Forests of the Yellowstone Region," by Richard M. Ritland and Stephen L. Ritland, will be evaluated by many in the scientific community of our church as the most significant article yet to appear in SPECTRUM. The straightforward nature of the evidence and its well-documented, lucid presentation cannot fail to impress the thoughtful reader, even one lacking formal scientific training. The presence of more than forty levels of fossil stumps in their original position of growth, bearing unmistakable evidence of sequential cycles of reforestation and destruction by volcanic action, point directly toward an obvious conclusion: Forms of life have been present on our planet far longer than 6000 years. This conclusion is further substantiated by the presence of thousands of feet of fossil-bearing strata beneath the fossil forests. It is also strongly supported by numerous other converging lines of evidence so abundant, so diverse and so reliable that our church must no longer ignore, evade, or discredit them.

As the authors eloquently admonish, we must

carefully distinguish between scientific speculation and scientific fact. The quality of the evidence in support of a long chronology of life approaches that which demonstrates the Copernican model of the solar system. Indeed, Galileo, in his contest with the Inquisition, had less certain data. Seventh-day Adventist scientists of our Geoscience Research Institute, men of integrity and ability, have carefully explored numerous leads in at attempt to interpret the evidence in support of our traditional understanding of Genesis. Although they have presented valuable data bearing on such subjects as the highly improbable nature of the spontaneous generation of life, or some inconsistencies in classical geological time scales, they have not uncovered a shred of evidence to support a short chronology. Rather, they have been obliged in all honesty to present strong evidence, including that from the fossil forests, for a long one. The rafting theory, an attempt to compress the fossil forest data into a short time span, is shown to be untenable.

This evidence for a long chronology perplexes many Seventh-day Adventists because of its seeming threat to a number of truths we cherish—the doctrine of God as Creator, the dignity of the origin of man, the foundation of the Sabbath, and the inspiration of the Bible and of Ellen White. Those of us with scientific training may feel this conflict even more keenly than others; we cannot with integrity dismiss either the evidence or the inspired record.

It is, of course, self-evident that truth cannot contradict itself. The contradiction is apparent only because of the incompleteness of our understanding. Such apparent contradictions are common during a learning process and provide a healthy stimulus to it. For example, physicists at the turn of the century were in considerable disagreement over the results of photoelectric effect experiments which seemed to contradict the well-established wave theory of light. The conflict resulted in intense and careful investigation leading to the conclusion that light does indeed exhibit both a particle and a wave nature. The history of science is replete with such controversies and resulting growth spurts of knowledge. One of the truly unique contributions of our church to theology, the doctrine of the sanctuary, was born after the anguish and travail of 1844. Our present dilemma concerning creationism can also lead to a growth experience. We must examine not only the scientific evidence but also our understanding of the Bible to discover whether we have misread Genesis as our spiritual forefathers misread Daniel.

I believe we have virtually exhausted the possibilities of fitting the scientific evidence into our traditional chronology and must accept the "responsibility of facing the issues and the hard decisions that the times demand of conservative Christians." In our review of Genesis, for example, we must avoid overliteralization. We must remember that excessively literal interpretations of such texts as Ps. 93:1 or Eccl. 1:4, 5 contributed to the opposition by the established church in Galileo's day to his view of the Copernican model of the solar system.

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