

Adventist Food Industries: Recent Developments

by Harrison W. John

Ever since Ellen G. White's health reform message of 1863, Seventh-day Adventists have had a "theology" of nutrition advocating the use of such natural foods as fruits, nuts, vegetables, grains and cereals. Ironically, while the health principles of the church have remained essentially the same over the last 117 years, Adventists have gradually accepted the use of certain highly-processed foods such as vegetable proteins and ready-to-eat breakfast cereals. Today, the church, through its food factories in 25 countries around the world, invests millions of dollars to manufacture and market various health-food products.

A few statistics will place the church's international food manufacturing and marketing program in perspective. According to the most recent figures available, total food sales by these Adventist manufacturing and marketing companies around the world amounted to \$188 million in 1979. This is an increase of more than 95 percent over 1974 sales of \$96 million. In 1970, total food sales of \$51 million were reported. Comparing the last two quinquennium periods, 1970-74 and 1975-79, sales were \$357 million and \$686 million respectively, an increase of slightly

over 92 percent. During the 1975-79 period, \$20.5 million was donated by the various food companies to the evangelistic program of the church. It is estimated that Sanitarium Health Food Company of Australia itself contributed about \$10.5 million (Australian dollars) toward this program.

Yet if one asked the average American Seventh-day Adventist about the church's health food industry, one would probably not learn much more than the fact that Loma Linda produces a wide variety of "vegetarian meats" or that Australia has a booming health food business. There are probably few institutions of the church about which so little is known, yet which involve so large a financial investment.

One reason, perhaps, is the difficulty of obtaining detailed financial statistics from World Foods Service, the church's "moth-balled" consulting agency in Washington, D.C., which once coordinated the activities of the ever-expanding food industries network around the world. Eric Howse, former director of World Foods, though cooperative and genial in providing information, could not supply SPECTRUM with meaningful financial statistics, other than some total sales figures, about the various industries. The church's published financial summary, compiled every five years for a General Conference session, does not list food industries as a separate category; rather, the food industries

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are lumped under a category called "Industries," which includes "Foods, etc." This method of listing the financial figures makes it extremely difficult to extricate meaningful data about the food industries from the church's official statistical records. Neither could General Conference treasury officials supply any financial information, though former treasurer Kenneth Emmerson did give SPECTRUM permission to obtain financial summaries from the General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics. However, even there, the kind of detail that SPECTRUM sought was not available.

In fact, there was a gaping hole in the financial records. For example, no financial information is available on the brightest star of the Adventist health food industry — the Sanitarium Health Food Company of Australia.* And therein lies an irony. There is little doubt that Australia has an impressively successful health food operation, but the extent of that success is known by only a few people within the church. Information reluctantly revealed by World Foods Service shows, for example, that in 1978 the Sanitarium Health Food Company had a net gain of \$6 million (Australian), and as of July 1979, total sales for the 1975-1979 quinquennium were \$400 million (Australian).

Sanitarium Foods' most popular product is

*When asked why the Australians were not filing the yearly financial summary (Form FN-49) required of all other food factories, the director of archives and statistics, Don Yost, said: "We are receiving all the financial data we are authorized to receive." Rudolph Reinhard, a retired assistant treasurer of the General Conference, told SPECTRUM that the reason the Australians do not file a financial summary is that Australian law and subsequent company policy permits Sanitarium Health Foods to refrain from filing a public statement as a means of protecting confidential information from competitors. An official in the economics section of the Australian Embassy in Washington, D.C., told SPECTRUM that, although some companies are not legally obliged to file public reports if the industry they serve is small, or if public disclosure would harm the industry, he was surprised that the breakfast-cereal industry in Australia would fall in that category. Willis J. Hackett, former General Conference vice president and adviser to World Foods Service, says that Sanitarium Health Foods provides a status report to the Australasian Division, and that the Division should be the contact point for information. SPECTRUM made several unsuccessful attempts to contact Frank Craig, president of Sanitarium Health Foods.

a ready-to-eat breakfast cereal called "Weet Bix," which is number one in total sales for a single breakfast cereal brand in Australia. Kellogg's Corn Flakes is number two, though in total sales of all breakfast cereal brands sold, Kellogg maintains the number one position because of its wider variety of products. Yet, Sanitarium Foods is number two in total breakfast cereal sales. In New Zealand, however, Sanitarium Foods is the front-runner in total breakfast cereal sales, having bought out its main rival, Nabisco.

The Australians run such a smooth operation that church leaders, recognizing their superb managerial and marketing expertise, have invited them to help struggling Adventist food companies in other parts of the world, including Britain and the United States.

In October 1979, the Northern Europe-West Africa Division and the British Union requested Sanitarium Health Foods of Australia to take over the management of the ailing Granose Foods facility in England, which has been a consistent moneyloser. Figures for 1975-1978 show that Granose Foods had a net operating loss totaling over \$406,000 for the four-year period. As a result, the total net worth of the company *decreased* from \$331,902 in 1975 to \$113,515 in 1978. The real situation of the company, however, was far more pathetic, since the company had received an appropriation (presumably from the British Union) of about \$95,000 in 1977. Without that appropriation, the total net worth of the company in 1978 would have been a mere \$19,000.

While more recent figures are not available, published reports show that perhaps the Australians are already making an impact as a result of the changeover. Manager Keith Adair of Granose reported in a recent issue of the *Adventist Review* that the company had a 20 percent increase in sales during 1979 for a total of \$2.9 million. No further financial details were provided, so the real picture is left to speculation. Nevertheless, according to Adair, the company employs 55 regular workers, 48 part-time workers, and 12 students. It manufactures 28 food products, the

major one being a breakfast cereal called "Sunny Bisk." It also manufactures various brands of meat analogs or vegetable proteins.

With the innovative Australians at the helm, the company hopes to gain an entrée into the large British grocery chains, which are very competitive and selective. While the Australians have proved themselves "down under," church officials will be monitoring with interest their attempts to financially straighten out Granose Foods and Loma Linda.

April 1, 1980, was a momentous date in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist health-food industry in America. On that date, without much fanfare and hardly a ripple of reaction, the management and control of Loma Linda Foods was quietly transferred to the Sanitarium Health Food Company of Australia. Although many North American church members probably gave this development little thought, it can be seen as a symbolic reminder of a kind of mild paralysis that had affected one of North America's proudest institutions.

Even church administrators, who naturally prefer to present denominational shortcomings in the best possible light, have hinted at some problems that plagued Loma Linda Foods (LLF). Willis J. Hackett, LLF board chairman (now retired), in reporting the merger via the *Adventist Review* in February 1980, noted that Loma Linda Foods had "more than doubled" its annual sales over the last three years. Yet, he added, expansion funds, operating capital, and equipment funds needed for continued growth were not available. The Australians, with their managerial, marketing, and research expertise, will help to enlarge and advance Loma Linda Foods, he said.

L. Delmer Wood, former president of Loma Linda Foods, agrees, saying that the merger will give financial strength to the company in a way the church in North America could not do. In a telephone interview, Wood said that since the Australians generate much of their capital from the "gentiles," or non-Adventist sources, the church would feel more comfortable in utilizing these funds rather than tapping the till of hard-earned offering income provided by

church members. He noted that the Australians will conduct a "serious investigation" into the feasibility of promoting Loma Linda's breakfast cereal product in a market which is "very tough" to crack.

Whereas Wood spoke diplomatically even though he was leaving his job as president of the company — obviously as a result of the merger — Eric Howse, former director of World Foods Service, described the situation more forthrightly. The changeover was basically a "rescue effort" to make LLF a more significant and viable operation, he said. Loma Linda lacked the marketing expertise to penetrate the large national supermarket chains; it did not have enough new capital to expand the business; and furthermore, LLF management was not prepared to risk new capital in a business that was not financially secure.

Howse's assessment seems to be borne out

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when one looks at audited financial reports of the company obtained from the General Conference Archives. Although detailed sales breakdowns were not available, the record shows that over a four-year period from 1975 to 1978, the company's total net worth had *decreased* by over \$300,000 — from \$457,937 in 1975 to \$128,958 in 1978. While earned operating income (not including appropriations) during the four-year period rose from \$8.9 million in 1975 to \$11.7 million in 1978, the company had net operating losses of over \$1.3 million — \$637,000 in 1975, \$366,000 in 1976, and \$390,000 in 1978; in 1977, a gain of \$84,000 was reported.

In addition to this erratic and less-than-acceptable financial situation, the company was unable to penetrate significantly the highly competitive arena of the large super-

market chains, even though, according to figures provided by World Foods Service (WFS), 80 percent of Loma Linda's 15 varieties of vegetable proteins, three soymilk products, five gravy, and four cereal products are marketed through brokers, while only 20 percent of the products are marketed through denominational outlets. This is in sharp contrast to the Australian strategy, which allows for 99.5 percent of all products manufactured by Sanitarium Foods in its 18 factories to be marketed through wholesalers, and only one-half percent to be marketed through denominational outlets.

The Australian company has become a model for the Adventist health food industry. From a very small beginning in 1897 when 20 cases of various health foods were imported from Battle Creek, Michigan, and sold to denominational workers, the company has grown into a network of 18 factories and 73 retail shops with a work force of over 1,400 regular employees and 100 students. The retail stores have served over 41 million customers during the last five years. The company has captured about 20 percent of the total corn flakes market in Australia, sells its products aggressively in New Zealand, has spread its boundaries to New Guinea, England, and the United States, and has so impressed General Conference officials that the function of World Foods Service as an entity has, at least for the present, been transferred from international headquarters in Washington, D.C., to Sanitarium Health Foods.

At the Dallas General Conference session, no replacement was provided for Eric Howse, who has retired. The rationale, as explained by Willis J. Hackett, is that rather than trying to concentrate much of the coordinating functions of the food industry network in the hands of one man in Washington, it would be more effective to have the Australians, with their extensive technical and marketing know-how, provide, on a demand basis, any necessary consultation. Another explanation given is that this may have been part of an overall effort to cut down the administrative bureaucracy of the

General Conference. But the most plausible explanation seems to be that Howse's replacement would have had to come from the Australian company because it seems to be the only present source of knowledgeable, capable administrators in the health food field. Since Sanitarium Foods' extension into Britain and the United States has siphoned off some of its top administrators, it cannot at this time spare further talent for a Washington desk job.

For now, the functions of World Foods Service will be carried on by the Australians on an assignment basis, and coordination will be provided through the office of the president of the General Conference. The plan is to reinstitute World Foods Service at a later time after the situation at Granose and Loma Linda stabilizes and the Australians can return those institutions to local control.

At both Loma Linda Foods and Granose, the Australians are expected to put a strong emphasis on the sale of breakfast cereals. Loma Linda's emphasis up to now has been on the production of vegetable proteins, an area in which the Australians themselves have not made much progress in terms of penetrating the non-Adventist market. Since both Australia and the United States are heavy meat-producing countries, the sale of vegetable proteins has not been very popular.

Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, however, are well accepted in both countries. United States per capita consumption of wheat breakfast cereals is 2.9 pounds a year, according to the latest department of agriculture statistics; in addition, the 1978 retail value of ready-to-eat cereal shipments in the United States was \$2.4 billion, as reported in a market analysis provided to SPECTRUM by Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith, which sees a possibility of a long-term growth rate of about 3 percent or more in this market. The Merrill Lynch report shows that the Kellogg Company of Battle Creek leads in American sales of breakfast cereals with 42 percent of the total market, followed by General Mills at 20 percent, General Foods at 15 percent and Quaker Oats at about 9 percent. The remaining 14 percent of the breakfast cereal market is shared by such food giants as Ralston-Purina and Nabisco. It is

probably this segment of the market that the Australians will have to penetrate before they can make a dent in the breakfast cereal market in the United States.

What effect the Australian preoccupation with breakfast cereals will have on the vegetable protein business remains to be seen. Loma Linda already has established some credibility with its vegetable protein products and seems to be well-positioned for expansion in this market if a demand for such products arises in the country. Yet food analysts are skeptical about any immediate or short-term prospects for growth in the use of vegetable protein and meat analogs by the

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general population. A food scientist with the Food Protein Council, a trade association of several food companies producing textured vegetable proteins (the raw product from which meat analogs are made), told SPECTRUM that a number of food giants such as General Mills, General Foods, Pillsbury, Nabisco, and Procter and Gamble utilize textured vegetable proteins in various food products. Yet they are chiefly used as “meat extenders,” i.e., as supplements to other meat products, a procedure which received the blessing of the department of agriculture in 1971. The same scientist told SPECTRUM that his company, a large manufacturer of textured vegetable proteins, had an opportunity to purchase General Mills’ vegetable protein business about five years ago but did not do so because even though company executives felt the product was good, they “could not see a market in the product for the next 10 to 15 years.” The American public does not seem to be ready for this kind of product at the present time, he said, unless it is for health or religious reasons. Furthermore, the meat analogs are not substantially cheaper than meat so as to provide a price

incentive, he added. Unless a product has mass appeal, with the prospect of subsequent higher volume and lower prices, it is not financially feasible for a company to invest heavily in it.

This view seems to be substantially backed by the experience of Miles Laboratories, which bought out Worthington Foods of Ohio (well-known to Adventists) in 1970 and launched a \$7.5 million television advertising campaign in 1974 to test-market, under the Morningstar Farms label, its Breakfast Links, Breakfast Patties, and Breakfast Slices — substitutes for sausage and ham. *The Wall Street Journal* documented Miles’ “soybean saga” in an October 25, 1977 article. About 10 million American families tried the Morningstar Farms breakfast line in the first 18 months after its introduction in 1974, but sales after that failed to measure up to expectations. By 1977, the *Journal* reported that Miles had chalked up pretax losses of \$33 million on its meat substitute products. One food analyst has remarked: “Changing consumer eating habits is difficult to do in the U.S.” Another added: “Miles is probably 25 years ahead of its time.”

But Loma Linda can wait. It has a steady built-in clientele, which it continues to serve admirably. When, and if, the time comes for this market to expand, Loma Linda should be ready.

The United States experience with soy-protein foods has served as an example to Adventist industries in other countries. For instance, in 1969, both Argentina’s Granix and Brazil’s Superbom wanted to plunge into the vegetable protein market, says Eric Howse. However, he was able to dissuade them from doing so. The companies were in a weak financial position, yet they had excellent products like breakfast cereals and fruit juices which were gaining favorable consumer acceptability. From his past experience with the textured vegetable protein market, Howse knew that such protein products need to be heavily promoted before they can be reasonably successful. His advice to the Argentinians and the Brazilians was

first to develop their existing business and then tackle the more tricky vegetable protein market.

About three years ago, Howse says, they were ready. The demand for vegetable protein products in the area served by the four companies under the umbrella (South American) Division Health Food Company has grown so rapidly that the factories (chiefly in Brazil and Argentina) are currently producing at the rate of 700 tons a year, according to Howse. The demand is caused in part by government-proclaimed "meatless days" instituted in Brazil and Argentina so that those countries can export more meat, he explained.

Of the four companies that form part of Division Health Food Company, those in Brazil and Argentina seem to be doing rather well. The Granix factory in Buenos Aires, Argentina, produces such items as breakfast cereals, bread, vegetable proteins and a high-quality multicereal, high-fiber cracker for which there is "a tremendous demand," according to Howse. After visiting the factory earlier this year, Alf Lohne, a general vice president of the General Conference, reported that in order to meet the demand for its various products, Granix keeps its 300 workers busy 24 hours a day in three shifts. He further reported that 40 percent of the company's net gain is passed directly into the church budget with "considerable sums" going to finance evangelism. Expansion plans call for an increase in production by 500 percent, he added. According to the most recent figures available, Granix showed an impressive rise in earned operating income from \$1.2 million in 1976 to \$6.7 million in 1978, with a total net worth increase of over \$2.4 million in 1978, up from \$315,330 in 1976 to \$2,807,441 in 1978.*

The Brazil Factory (Alimenticios Superbom) also seems to be doing an impressive business. The 1978 operating income was a little over \$7 million, as compared to \$4.3 million in 1975, \$5.6 million in 1976, and \$6.8 million in 1977. The total net worth of the company had risen from \$1.8 million in 1975 to over \$3 million in 1978. The factory produces excellent juices, according to Eric Howse, with yearly sales exceeding three

million bottles of grape juice, two million bottles of tomato juice, and two million bottles of pineapple juice. The high-quality juices are served throughout the country, on the airlines and in hotel chains, Howse reported.

But the most unusual feature of the Brazil Food Factory outreach is its chain of three restaurants — two in Sao Paulo and one in Belo Horizonte. By the end of 1980, three more restaurants are expected to open, Howse reported. Although financial figures were not available, church officials note that the restaurants are doing well. One of the Sao Paulo restaurants serves more than 1,000 persons a day, and includes a full-time chaplain on its staff, who generally maintains good public relations with the clientele, and invites them, when appropriate, to attend cooking classes, or Five-Day Plans to Stop Smoking, and even conducts Bible studies, which have resulted in several baptisms.

The two other companies which form part of the Division Health Food network — Superbom (Chile) and Fruitgran (Uruguay) — show a mixed picture. For example, the Chile plant (major products: dehydrated fruit and canned vegetables) reported a 1978 income of only \$11,323, yet had a total net worth of \$260,344 at the end of the year. The Uruguay plant, on the other hand (main products: tomato juice and purée), showed a considerably higher 1978 income than the Chile plant — \$235,187 — but it ended the year with a total net worth deficit of \$26,544.

The newest organization in the western hemisphere is the Inter-American Division Food Company, Coral Gables, Florida. Established in 1977, this umbrella agency now coordinates the functions of four already-operational food factories: Alimentos COLPAC, Sonora, Mexico (1969); Industries COVAC S.A., Alajuela, Costa Rica (1967);

*Recent reports suggest that the Argentinian food processor, Alimentos Granix, has had a remarkably successful 1980. Compared to net profits in 1979 of \$1,055,000, during the first nine months of 1980 profits reached \$1,452,000. This figure, furthermore, does not include the food company's contributions of \$871,000 to the Austral Union and the South American Division.

Productos Icolpan, Medellin, Colombia (1972); and Westico Foods, Ltd., Mandeville, Jamaica (1970). At presstime, the General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics did not have any details on these companies, although the 1978 financial summary for the umbrella company (Inter-American) showed that it had received an appropriation of \$86,200, presumably from the Inter-American Division.

It is in these relatively young factories of the Inter-American Division Food Com-

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pany, however, that experiments have been conducted with wider implications for other areas of the world, especially the less-developed countries. For example, one problem that Adventists have faced in less developed countries is in the production of vegetable protein products within the financial reach of the local population. Realizing this, church administrators voted at the 1976 Annual Council to adopt what was called the “World Foods Service Expansion Program.” Under this program, a fund was to be established “to finance a worldwide program of expansion to countries where serious nutritional problems exist.” According to Eric Howse, this program enabled Adventist health food engineers to develop low-cost machinery employing simple technology for the production of textured vegetable proteins. Where previously the smallest unit for the manufacture of such proteins cost about \$25,000, Adventist technicians were able to bring the cost down to \$15,000, putting the machinery within reach of less wealthy nations. One of these units was erected for the Jamaica plant; others are to be introduced elsewhere.

Another development under the expan-

sion program was the introduction of a soymilk product via the Mexican food factory, according to Howse. He explained that packaging of products is always a problem where refrigeration facilities are poor. Adventist food technologists developed a soymilk product packaged in liquid form in an inexpensive plastic bag. But the problem of spoilage and of short shelf life remained.

Further testing and experimenting, which took researchers as far away as Germany, resulted in a highly protein-efficient powdered soymilk product that could be stored in a cardboard carton and had a shelf life of six months. The manufacturing breakthrough had come. Now it was time to expand the market. In May-June of 1979, the Adventist Health Education unit in Cairo, Egypt, began the production of powdered soymilk, utilizing locally-grown soybeans. No statistics about sales of the product were available, though Howse reported that the milk seems to be gaining favorable acceptance with the local community since Egypt faces a regular shortage of fresh milk, and the prospects of importing milk do not seem good. In fact, he said, efforts are underway to produce a similar product in Colombia and a number of other developing countries.

Another product that Adventist food researchers are investigating is a specially-formulated “textured soy cutlet,” which can be used quite effectively, Howse explained, with the kinds of native foods used in many developing countries. The cutlet is proving to be very compatible in such food items as Ghanaian soups and East Indian curries, Howse said.

While the developing countries continue to challenge the Adventist church’s health food industry to provide nutritious, inexpensive foods, the more industrialized nations of Europe also provide a market for the sale of the church’s health-food products. For example, the Germany company DEVAU-GE had the highest earned operating income (\$12.2 million) of all Adventist companies (outside Australia) for 1978. Other high European income earners during 1978 were Nutana (Denmark), \$7.6 million;

Granose Foods Ltd. (United Kingdom), \$1.8 million; PHAG (Switzerland), \$1.3 million; Esdakost (Sweden), \$1.2 million; and Pur-Aliment (France), \$1.1 million. However, three of these companies — Granose, PHAG, and Nutana — also showed operating losses during the same year. Granose lost about \$295,000; PHAG, \$196,500; and Nutana, \$5,903. Of these three companies, PHAG showed a total 1978 net worth deficit of \$39,985. There were only two other Adventist companies which showed similar net worth deficits in 1978 — Fruitgran (Uruguay), \$26,544; and National True Foods Ltd. of South Africa, \$7,435.

Altogether, there are nine European food facilities, according to information obtained from the General Conference archives. Of the nine, DE-VAU-GE of Germany, Granose of England, and Nutana of Denmark manufacture some of their own products. The other six are only marketing organizations, i.e., they do not manufacture products. The marketing organizations are Esdakost (Sweden); Dagens Kost (Norway); Finn-Nutana (Finland); Pur-Aliment (France); the Australian Food Company, (Austria) and PHAG (Switzerland). Some of these marketing organizations are small — Finn-Nutana has only one employee officially listed on its staff; Pur-Aliment has 12; PHAG, 15. However, these companies provide a marketing outlet for the European manufacturing companies. For example, PHAG of Switzerland and Pur-Aliment of France are distributing the DE-VAU-GE products under their own labels. Esdakost of Sweden, Dagens Kost of Norway, and Finn-Nutana of Finland provide a convenient outlet for Nutana, the Danish production and marketing facility. This cooperative agreement seems to pay off for the manufacturing facilities. Nutana, the Danish company, for instance, reports a relatively substantial business with a ten-fold increase in sales over the past six years, and 1979 sales of over \$10 million, according to a March 1980 report in the *Adventist Review*. Audited financial statements show a rise in earned operating income from \$1.6 million in 1975 to \$7.6 million in 1978; total net worth of the company also showed a healthy gain from

\$382,293 in 1975 to \$1.2 million in 1978. During the four years under review, 1975-78, the only negative report came in 1978, when the company showed an operating loss of \$5,903. Yet gains were reported in previous years as follows: 1977 (\$324,000); 1976 (\$412,366); and 1975 (\$14,075). With an establishment date of 1897, Nutana shares with the Sanitarium Health Food Company of Australia the honor of being among the oldest Adventist health food industries. The company employs over 100 people and markets more than 400 products through more than 2,000 stores all over Denmark. The main products are vegetable proteins, as well as a high-quality margarine. In addition, the company imports Loma Linda's soymilk, which it packages under its own brand. While a vegetarian restaurant in Copenhagen reports a marginal business, according to Eric Howse, it does provide contact with people, he said.

This article has treated Adventist health food institutions in a somewhat non-traditional way by probing into facts in financial areas that church officials sometimes feel uncomfortable about revealing. After all, the church is a religious institution, they say, and our institutions should not be judged solely by secular financial standards. Ellen White has provided sufficient counsel in support of this view, cautioning the church about handling its food industries as a purely commercial enterprise. A few statements outline her views:*

. . . We are not to bend our energies to the establishment of food stores and food factories merely to supply people with temporal food and make money. . . (p. 69).

In the food business there is a snare for all who engage in it without realizing their danger. . . . No overburdening commercialism is to be brought into it . . . (p. 70).

. . . Better results will be seen if we devote our energies largely to the work of educating the people how to prepare simple,

*All quotes are from *The Health Food Ministry* (A compilation prepared by the Ellen G. White Publications, Washington, D.C., 1970).

healthful foods in their own homes, instead of spending our entire time in the manufacture and sale of foods which involve a large investment of means . . . (p. 86).

In view of such statements, Adventist health food administrators face a rather delicate situation in trying to maintain the proper balance between profits and religious goals. Obviously, the industries cannot operate with perpetual deficits. Nor can they be governed like the traditional corporation where the “bottom line” is the all-important consideration.

Although Adventist health food companies are not large by industry standards, they do involve substantial outlay of capital and human resources. One thing that seems clear in light of this is that the health food companies should be more open to the scrutiny of those who have a stake in these institutions — the constituency of the church. Presently, the managerial and financial accountability of these institutions is left in the hands of a select group of individuals and committees. The few public financial reports of these institutions are virtually meaningless, and the seeming paranoias about releasing financial information unnecessary.

In addition to financial accountability, another concern, voiced by numerous church members (denominational workers as well as laypeople) in discussions with this writer, has to do with the church’s emphasis on developing vegetable protein products. The concern focuses on these points: that meat substitutes are highly-processed, perhaps unnecessarily laden with salt, perhaps too protein-efficient for our needs,

and too expensive. The problem about even bringing up this issue is that the church has slowly drifted into such a heavy involvement in this area that even to discuss it may be anathema. To sidestep the vegetable protein issue, though, would be dishonest. Perhaps health food administrators ought to explain to the membership the church’s deep involvement in the production of these foods and how this development can be harmonized with the counsel of Ellen White, who stressed the importance of the use of “simple, inexpensive, wholesome foods.”

Another area of concern is the human contact and evangelical outreach that our industries are expected to provide through the development of a restaurant ministry. The church is doing this effectively in some areas of the world, particularly Australia and South America, but this aspect needs to be expanded more vigorously in other parts of the world.

The most drastic need, however, is the production of appropriate food products for use in developing countries. A start was made by the World Foods Service Expansion Fund, and that work must continue. The division leadership of the world fields in these developing countries must be convinced about the need for a viable food program; they must see the priority for this outreach. Perhaps, as a result of growing indigenous leadership in these divisions, we may see some changes.

The Adventist health food program has had, in sum, an interesting pattern of growth and development, but it seems that the greatest challenge to the church in this area may still lie ahead of us.