

Update on Davenport
Adventists Face Homosexuality

SPECTRUM

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MISSION AND MISSIONS

Converting Entire Peoples
The Church Growth Movement
Adventists and Indochinese Refugees
SAWS Expands Its Focus

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About This Issue

Several authors in this issue reflect on the mission of the church. They differ concerning the pace and scope of the denomination's attempt to make conversions to Adventism. Articles by other authors report on specific missions Adventists are actually undertaking. The Seventh-day Adventist World Service (SAWS) has expanded its self-definition to include much more than disaster relief. An Adventist businessman has established a lay organization responding specifically to the needs of Indo-Chinese refugees pouring into Thailand. Working with either organization Adventist volunteers are confronting the

grim realities of problems that are global in scale, such as hunger, terrorism and forced migration.

An editorial title appears for the first time in this issue of SPECTRUM. Bonnie Dwyer has agreed to be News Editor for the journal (as well as *Forum*, the AAF newsletter). A graduate of Loma Linda University, Dwyer was formerly editor of *La Sierra Today* and public information officer for the La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University. Currently she is completing a graduate degree in journalism from the California State University at Fullerton. The journal is already benefiting from her skills and enthusiasm.

Mission and Missions

Converting Entire Peoples

by Gottfried Oosterwal

In fulfilling our missionary task as Seventh-day Adventists, we must attend to what I call the six pillars of mission: the God who sends, the church that is sent, the message and specific task, the purpose and objectives, the target audience, and the ways and means of accomplishing the task. We have traditionally given great attention to the special message; recently we have reflected considerably on the ways and means of accomplishing the task. The other pillars, however, are largely forgotten in our thinking, especially pillar number five, the target audience, the very object of God's mission. It is on this pillar that I wish to focus the remarks that follow.¹

Unequivocally, Scripture identifies the object of our mission as the *world* (John 3:16, 17; II Cor. 5:19-21; Matt. 28:18-20), the whole world in its variety of tribes and tongues and nations and people (Rev. 14:6), of men and women and children in their plurality of needs and values and ways of thinking; the

world with its many different cultures and religions and ideologies, its large metropolitan centers and isolated villages. To reach these different groups of people, the church must consider carefully the particular context and circumstance in which these groups live and work and exist. That was a hallmark of Christ's own ministry on earth. He met the people where they were, always considering the wants of the time and the place.² It also figured prominently in the life and work of the Apostle Paul (see I Cor. 9:19-22). "He varied his manner of labor," Mrs. White writes, "always shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed."³

We are touching here on one of the most crucial issues in Adventist world mission today: our need of a thorough understanding of the particular needs and hurts of those who are the recipients of the gospel, in the context of their particular culture and religion and upbringing and socioeconomic conditions. As Mrs. White once put it: "In order to lead souls to Jesus, there must be . . . a study of the human mind."⁴ "We also must learn to adapt our labors to the condition of the people — to meet men where they are. . . . God's workmen . . . must not be men of one idea, stereotyped in their manner of work-

Gottfried Oosterwal, the director of the Mission Institute at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, presented an earlier version of this article to the 1981 Annual Council. He is the author of *Mission: Possible* and numerous scholarly articles.

ing. They must be able to vary their efforts, to meet the needs of the people under different circumstances and conditions."⁵ This requires more than developing a variety of strategies for *presenting* our message. In addition, we must consider carefully and prayerfully what message best fits the diverse times and cultural contexts we meet, so that people will hear it and recognize it as "Good News" indeed. As Ellen White has put it: "That which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago."⁶ The point is that in order for the message of Revelation 14:6-12 to be heard and received by "every nation and tribe and language and people," it must be lived and proclaimed in ways which people of different cultures and conditions can understand and accept.

This calls for a greater emphasis on pillar number five; it calls for a new way of looking at the world into which God has sent us. Traditionally, we have thought of the target audience in terms of countries or numbers of persons to be reached. We say, for instance, that the Adventist church has been established in 191 out of the 221 (or 223) countries of the world, leaving some 30 more to reach before we attain our goal of proclaiming the message to the whole world. This is a nice way of assessing the tremendous progress of Adventist mission in the world, and truly a sign of the miraculous power of God in the world. But is it the biblical way?

We say, too, that the Adventist church has a membership of nearly four million believers, and that every year some 350,000 new members are being added, or (nearly) one thousand souls a day. Then we say that this is still not adequate, since some 150 million people are being added every year to the world population. We thus assess well the magnitude of our unfinished task, but in so doing are we looking at the world in the biblical way?

The answer is "no." In fact, the Bible describes the world as the object of God's mission, not in terms of countries or individual persons, but in terms of distinct groups, communities or peoples.⁷ And this calls for a

people-centered approach in mission, in which the different groups, in the context of their particular needs and hurts and culture and behavior, become as groups the object of our mission. Christ Himself commissioned us to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19; 24:14; Luke 24:47). This term *ethnos*, commonly translated "nation," does not denote in the first place a geographical area or a political unit, but a "people-group." It is an anthropological term that stands for a particular people, characterized by its own culture, values, religion, language, social structure and traditions. A better translation of Matthew 28:19 would be therefore: "Go then to all peoples, everywhere, and make them my disciples" — the translation given, indeed, in the Good News Bible. Likewise, the three angels' message is to go, as Revelation 14 suggests, to every kingroup (tribe, clan, kindred, family), and language group (tongue), and every other category of people such as religious groups, classes, ethnic groups, etc., which make up our world's population of 4.7 billion people.

It is this people-centered approach in mission, rooted in a more biblical way of looking at the world as the objective of God's mission, that offers hope for finishing God's work in this generation.

What is the basis of such hope? Besides the clear biblical mandate, there is, first of all, the evidence of this people-centered approach in the effective mission work of the early Christian church. Second, there is the evidence from mission history. The Christianization of the world in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was mainly a result of whole people-groups reaching out to the gospel and accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Third, research on church growth in mission has clearly shown that rapid advance of the gospel and large accessions to the faith are the result of *people-movements* and of a church's ability to incorporate whole villages, tribes, or other social groups into their communion of faith.⁸ Finally, and most significantly of all, we live in a time again today when everywhere whole groups of people are (suddenly) becoming receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Reports of such people-movements towards Christ abound from

Burma to Brazil and from Ghana to New Guinea. They have challenged Adventist mission in Indonesia and South India, in Northern Thailand and West Iran, in Rwanda and in Zaire, in Mexico and in Peru. God's last movements to finish His work on earth will be, we say, very rapid ones. Our failure to reap the large harvests God has already prepared accounts in part for why the work of God is not being finished now. A thorough understanding of the peoples of the world and their particular needs, in the context of their cultural conditions and level of readiness for the gospel, is an indispensable condition of all effective evangelism and church growth.

What strategies should be developed based on this insight? **First**, we should prepare a list — for the different divisions of the church — of all the people-groups now without an effective Adventist evangelistic presence: Who are these people? Where are they located? How many are there in the groups? What are the elements that distinguish and unify them as a group (religion, language, ethnicity, values, culture, etc.)? What kind of contact, if any, have they had with Christianity? How open, or resistant, are they to religious change, or to the Advent message in particular, and why?

Most of this information is already available through the *Unreached Peoples Program* at the Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center of World Vision International; the *World Christian Encyclopedia* of 1980, edited by David B. Barrett; the *Unreached Peoples Profiles*, prepared by C. Peter Wagner and Edward R. Dayton; and the many collections of ethnological surveys, such as the *Human Relations Area Files*, or the twenty-one volume series on *Peoples of the Earth*.

Second, we should establish a need-profile on these peoples to guide us in the development of particular methods and ways of reaching them with the Advent message. Both *felt* needs and the *observed* needs should be included in this profile. **Third**, we should select a number of unreached peoples who are showing (some) receptivity toward the Adventist church and its message, make a careful study of their

customs and culture, their values and social structure, and begin an effort to win them as groups. We should do this in the light of their particular conditions, i.e., without demanding of them that they must cross social and cultural boundaries in order to become a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. (Graduate students from Adventist universities could be an enormous workforce, together with many retirees and volunteers).

Fourth, we should prepare and train missionaries on a worldwide scale for their work of communicating the gospel cross-culturally in their home countries and abroad. This includes both career and "tent-making" missionaries, volunteers and professionals, older people and younger ones, all according to their specific gifts. Especially an *Adventist Youth Service Corps* could accomplish great things in this respect. It is estimated that our world today consists

"The people-centered approach in mission first of all makes finishing God's work in this generation a distinct possibility."

of some 25,000 distinct people-groups. Missiological research indicates that it would take an average of four missionaries per group to evangelize the world. That amounts to a hundred-thousand missionaries, a number that is definitely within the range of our church's spiritual and financial and administrative resources. After all, a hundred-thousand missionaries means only one out of every forty believers, or only 2.5 percent of our total world membership. Research on church growth in missions has shown that churches can marshal and mobilize up to 10 percent of their membership in effective evangelistic outreach! So, what are we waiting for?

Fifth, we should set clear goals for church planting and the evangelization of these unreached people-groups, work out plans and

organizational structures to accomplish these goals, and consider the best ways and means to do so. **Sixth**, we should develop a procedure whereby the work can be constantly evaluated, plans and courses of action can be corrected, and new and unexpected opportunities can be used for an unprecedented advance of God's work in the whole world.

What are some of the advantages — and disadvantages — of this people-centered approach in mission? Starting with the latter, there is first of all the newness of the whole idea, however biblical it may be, of defining the object of our mission in terms of unreached people-groups. Our current missionary thinking and terminology, as well as policies and practices, do not help us in this respect; indeed, they would be, in many ways, an obstacle to quick implementation of this new strategy.

Second, our western way of thinking does not prepare us for a people-centered approach in mission. It is rooted in the humanistic notion that man is, in essence, a self-existent, individual being, whose worth and value and dignity are determined by his or her individual self. Our approach to evangelism, therefore, has been the winning of individuals, one by one, with great emphasis on individual conversion, private devotion and personal piety and grace. According to scripture, however, man was created, in essence, a communal being, made for fellowship with God and with his neighbor. This group-orientation has been preserved in many cultures and societies of the world. And the group-centered approach becomes thereby a biblical mandate, as well as a practical necessity.

Third, the people-centered approach militates against the much favored "standard-method" concept in Adventist evangelism. This method is rooted in the view that all human beings are basically the same, have

the same essential needs, and can be reached, therefore, by the same means and methods. This view does not deny that people differ in language and custom and culture. But it considers these differences insignificant and of little or no consequence to mission and evangelism. The same "tried and tested" methods that have worked *here* are therefore more or less rigidly applied over *there*. (Do I need to give any examples?) And concepts and plans that have borne no fruit here are discarded as a means of effective evangelism somewhere else. Of course, this "standard-method" has not been without success. But as a means to evangelize the world, it is totally inadequate, in fact doing more harm than good, as examples from our own history and practice of mission in Africa, Asia and Europe clearly indicate.

As to its advantages, the people-centered approach in mission first of all makes finishing God's work in this generation a distinct possibility. It also makes us see the world more as God sees it than we do apart from this approach. Further, it allows us to respond better to the many people-movements toward Christ now arising everywhere, and to incorporate whole groups into the Adventist communion of faith. Another distinct advantage is that the whole church can become involved in cross-cultural mission, since mission is defined by "unreached peoples" within each country, rather than by the country itself. Political boundaries will be much less of an obstacle to mission. Mission work becomes more manageable, and the assessment of our failures and successes in reaching our goals, more realistic. Above all, however, since this approach is more in harmony with the biblical mandate and the practices of the New Testament church, it also appears as "an open door for an effective work" in our time, to make disciples of all peoples everywhere to the glory of God, in preparation for the soon coming of our Lord.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This article is a shortened and slightly altered version of an address given at the 1981 Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Washington, D.C. In earlier publications, and

in the address given at the 1981 Annual Council, I distinguished five pillars. Added has been pillar number four, the goal, purpose and objectives of mission, which before had been included in pillars

number one and three. They do, however, together constitute a pillar and deserve to be studied as such.

2. Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald), pp. 301ff.

3. *Gospel Workers*, p. 300.

4. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 4 (Mountain View: Pacific Press), p. 67.

5. *Gospel Workers*, p. 301.

6. From manuscript 8a, 1888, as printed in A. V. Olson, *Through Crisis to Victory, 1888-1901* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1966), pp. 273, 274.

7. The most significant Hebrew terms for these categories of people — besides 'am (for God's own people) and goy (for those of other religions) — are: 'eretz, a descriptive term for a people-group in its geocultural context (language, customs, social struc-

ture, traditions, area), *lashon*, which stands for a language group, and *mishpachah*, which highlights kinship, family and marriage relations as the binding factors of the group, such as tribe or lineage or kindred or clan. Though the New Testament terms to describe the world as the object of God's mission are more comprehensive, they, too, emphasize that the world is in essence a "mosaic of people groups" which are distinct from each other in respect of culture, ethnic background, kinship, language and social structure.

8. See especially, D. A. McGavran: *Bridges of God* (London: World Dominion Press, 1955); *How Churches Grow: The New Frontiers in Mission* (1959); and *Understanding Church Growth* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

Anatomy of the Church Growth Movement

by Jon Dybdahl

Evangelism is the lifeblood of the Christian church and Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally made it a central part of their mission. However, as W. B. Quigley recently said in *The Ministry*, *Adventists face a crisis in that we no longer seem as excited about evangelism as we once were*. Quigley goes so far as to say that this is more significant, indeed, than recent theological controversy and financial fiasco.¹ One response to a crisis like this is the development of Adventist evangelism models — metaphors or images that suggest a comprehensive approach both to the rationale for evangelism and the methods of the evangelistic enterprise.

The present lack of comprehensive models

Jon Dybdahl, a graduate of Pacific Union College and Andrews University, teaches in the School of Theology, Walla Walla College. He has recently completed his Ph.D. at Fuller Theological Seminary.

splinters our approach to evangelism. On the one hand, some are primarily interested in methods. It is easy for these practitioners to ignore basic questions about the nature of mission in their search for the "right" or "efficient" way to accomplish evangelism. On the other hand, some think constantly about the nature of the mission and message of the church but have disdain for "hands on" evangelism. They may not like present evangelistic methods, but often fail to substitute new ways in place of the old ones.

The function of a model as a comprehensive metaphor is to bring these two concerns together — as they should be. Both — *what the mission is and the method used in carrying it out* — must be examined in light of true biblical theology and ethics. Only when these two vital parts of the totality of evangelism are joined in a model can the wholeness needed in evangelism be attained.

In the following, I examine such a model,

one that over the past few years has become quite influential within Adventism: the church-growth model of evangelism. I will explain the background and main motifs of this model and subject it to brief evaluation. We need to look at it thoughtfully, asking ourselves how much we can or should allow it to influence our evangelism.

The church-growth movement traces its roots to Dr. Donald A. McGavran.² He was born in 1897 of missionary parents in India; after study (including a B.D. from Yale), he was ordained and returned to India in 1923, remaining until 1955. During 1929-1931, a study was conducted in India of 145 mission complexes. One hundred thirty-four had a percentage growth of less than the population. In nine others the growth in adult conversions was 200 percent. McGavran became fascinated and wondered why those nine missions prospered so well.

In 1933, J. Waskom Pickett published *Christian Mass Movements in India*. Pickett directed attention to what we now call a "people movement," or a rapid growth of the church in one ethnic or social group. Subsequently, Pickett and McGavran, with the support of John R. Mott, worked on a study of Christian growth in India.

In 1955, McGavran published *The Bridges of God*, a bombshell for missionaries.³ In this book, he traced the history of people movements from the New Testament to the present and argued that most of the church's growth has not been by individual conversion but by group conversion in people movements. Later the term was changed to "multi-individual" conversion due to the objections individualistic westerners have to focus upon groups. McGavran then began research for his church (Disciples of Christ) and lectured in various colleges and seminaries. In 1960, he set up the Institute of Church Growth at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. Then in 1965, McGavran, with what was to be the core of his faculty, set up the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, which has become the brain center for the church-growth center.

Until 1972, the main thrust of the school was the training of cross-cultural workers,

but many in the United States began to see that the principles used cross-culturally could also often be applied in this country. The movement has since grown tremendously in the American environment through books, seminars, and institutes held all over the country. At present, the "church growth" movement operates, besides its own school at Fuller, a magazine, a press, and various ancillary organizations. It is extremely influential in both cross-cultural and North American evangelism.

The basic conviction of the church-growth school is that it is God's will that His church find the lost and grow.⁴ This basic concept has been buttressed by extensive biblical study to show the pervasiveness of this growth theme in the Old, and especially the New, Testaments. In connection with the growth concept, there is the conviction of the Lordship of Christ, who leads His church into growth, and the responsibility of man who is steward. Both Christ and man are active in mission.

Other notions of the church-growth movement are related to three conceptual contributions of McGavran.⁵ The first is the notion of the people movement. Since research has shown that people tend to be responsive in groups, McGavran says this type of movement should be actively encouraged. The Western emphasis on evangelism as winning individuals is a problem. An emphasis on individualistic conversion makes us blind to the fact that man is social and likes to do things together. The emphasis in evangelism, then, should not be simply on individual decisions but on the winning of groups to Christ. This social group could be a village subgroup or even a tribe. The evangelistic task is not finished with a few individual decisions. The evangelist must plan on reaching the whole group and winning people in groups.

The second main notion is that of the evangelistic opportunity. This idea sees God at work in history leading into growth and could be connected to the Wesleyan concept of prevenient grace in which the Spirit goes before and opens the way. McGavran sees

myriads of evangelistic opportunities today. Some are being taken advantage of, but many are not. He speaks of developing "church-growth eyes," so that these God-given openings may be taken advantage of for God's glory.

This means that to be good stewards of God's gifts, we must formulate clear objectives (i.e., church-growth objectives) that enable us to take advantage of these opportunities. All phases of a church's missions program should be ruthlessly evaluated to see whether or not they are fulfilling their objectives. Anything not contributing to church growth is to be scrapped. As a result of such views, church-growth people often clash with stodgy mission boards.

Further, sound strategy must be developed which will enable the church to take advantage of the evangelistic opportunities God has made available. This strategy must include careful study of all disciplines that would enable us to see these opportunities and devise effective strategies to turn them into church growth. Certainly, anthropology, sociology and psychology help us understand how people and societies operate and, especially, how they are subject to change. Careful research is needed to find out how the church has grown in the past and where, why and how it is growing today. All these methods are needed to penetrate the pious fog and spiritual jargon which so often surround ill-devised evangelistic strategies. Peoples resistant to the gospel are not abandoned, but persons and resources are concentrated on segments of society which God has already made receptive to the gospel.

The third key concept is the difference between discipling and perfecting. These are seen as two basic steps in the process of growth. The first, discipling, refers to a man's turning from his old gods and ways to the true God. It implies a definite step in changing religions, even if understanding is limited. The second step, perfecting, refers to the Christian growth involved after the discipling and this refers to education, nurture and such concepts.

McGavran divides discipling or first-step growth into biological, transfer, and conversion growth. Biological growth refers to

growth through birth into Christian families, while transfer growth comes when people who are already Christians move to a new area. Conversion growth is most crucial to church-growth people. Unless a church is manifesting quite a large measure of conversion growth, it is not healthy. The church-growth school believes all these types are right and necessary. McGavran, however, claims that many concepts of missions emphasize the "perfecting" stage because they have theological biases against "discipling" or convincing people to join the church. On the other hand, some churches which point to their growth may be growing only "biologically" or by "transfer" growth, and are thus not really making progress among nonbelievers.

"All these methods are needed to penetrate the pious fog and spiritual jargon which so often surround ill-devised evangelistic strategies."

The church-growth concept has been progressively widened. It now includes attempts at a reinterpretation of church history, pointing out that church history has been written most often with two biases: an extreme western emphasis and an overstress on theological history and development. Church history, they say, can also be seen as a progressive unfolding of God's worldwide purpose of growth for His church.

A new branch of theology, ethnotheology, has also been developed.⁶ This discipline attempts to marry theology and anthropology. One goal of ethnotheology is to examine basic formulation of Christian theology to discover just which formulations represent something which should be communicated cross-culturally and which are so culturally bound that they should not be used or communicated.

The whole mood of the church growth movement is one of optimism, i.e., the

world can and will be won for Christ. The positive approach is definitely upbeat and catching.

Besides giving us an example of what an evangelism model should look like, there are two other reasons I think it is important to look at the church-growth model. First, it has a wide influence which is constantly growing. A majority of books on missions found in evangelical bookstores and used in seminaries to teach missions originate from this school of thought. The scholarly American Society of Missiology, which is now a member society of the Council on the Study of Religion, along with its journal, *Missiology*, have heavy contingents of "church growth" advocates. Hundreds of graduate degrees in missiology have been given in the last 15 years by the School of World Missions and Institute of Church Growth of Fuller Theological Seminary. The church-growth movement is the force to be reckoned with on the evangelical mission scene.

The second reason is that Seventh-day Adventists are subject to a growing influence from the church-growth school, although this influence is often unnoticed or unacknowledged. Long-range programs of evangelism such as those of the Far Eastern Division and the North Pacific Union Conference are examples of this. The doctor of ministry program at Andrews University under the directorship of Arnold Kurtz, who has studied this movement, incorporates many church-growth concepts. The current evangelistic programs of our church which emphasize varied long-range programs are, I suspect, derivatives (perhaps second- or third-hand) of the church-growth movement. Some of the leaders and planners of evangelistic outreach in America have studied the church-growth model and its concepts.

Passages which deal with mission strategy and planning in Gottfried Oosterwal's influential book, *Mission: Possible*, echo in many places church-growth terminology and concepts. Examples of this are his emphasis on growth percentages and figures and his distinctions between biological and conversion

growth.⁷ His concern with establishing priorities and then the hint that probably more money should be sent to benefit the many in those "ripe" areas where the Holy Spirit is at work, rather than in distributing money to all areas evenly, are illustrations of the same practice.⁸ These ideas sound much like the church-growth ideas of the evangelistic opportunity and the setting of specific goals based on population responsiveness.

Since it is influencing Adventist thought, the strengths and weaknesses of the church-growth movement should be examined. One of the valuable emphases in the church-growth model is its attempt to develop a truly bibliothological model which can be practically applied. Part of its impact, I believe, stems from its comprehensive approach which first builds a biblical and theological rationale and then proceeds to spell out in detail what this means in practical evangelistic methodology. Whether we agree completely with what has been done or not, we can at least notice that an attempt has been made to develop a model which deals with the wholeness of evangelism and missions. We, as Adventists, must ask ourselves if we have made the same attempt.

A second contribution of the movement has been the valuable practical insight into the impact on the field of overseas missions endeavors. Bridges of God and subsequent works virtually demolished, in many areas, the old "mission station approach" which gathered individual converts into missionary dominated enclaves and isolated them from society at large. Missionaries gained courage to reach out to whole social groups and villages and to try to win them as groups. Church-growth research has also caused many evangelical mission organizations to seriously evaluate their programs and methods and to avoid some of the old methods and mythologies surrounding missions. It is now doing the same in America.

A third area where church growth can be given bouquets is its influence in stirring up interest in and enthusiasm for the church's mission, both here and abroad. This comes at a time when commitment to overseas missions has definitely been waning on the part

of many mainline Protestants. Overseas missionaries are on the decline in these churches. Departments of mission in many prestigious schools are either tottering or have fallen. By contrast, the church-growth movements, standing in direct opposition to this declining commitment to overseas missions, have been growing rapidly in the number of teachers devoted to it and students under its influence.

Another positive impact of the movement has been its readiness to make use of research in the social sciences. Anthropology and sociology, in particular, have been harnessed to help guide the mission enterprise. Church-growth people do not hesitate to do sociological research to find out how, where, and why churches grow and to use concepts of social change to help them understand conversion. Such an endeavor may go too far at times, but it has, I think, been a useful enterprise and opened the eyes of the church to new possibilities.

There are, on the other hand, certain things I question about the church-growth movement. I certainly wonder if the concept of growth is a legitimate theological center. Even though growth is certainly a part of biblical teaching, I think the motif of the kingdom of God is a much more central concept in the teaching of Jesus. Wouldn't such a concept also be useable in a model for evangelism? Where does the concept of growth ultimately lead? What kind of eschatology does the church-growth movement espouse? McGavran does not say a lot about these questions, but one gets the impression that ultimately the church will grow to include *all* and that a happy millennial reign of peace will hold sway here. This is hardly an acceptable view to Adventists!

One must also question the two-stage process of "Christianizing." Is not a certain part of discipling the perfecting process? Does the one who comes to Christ come blind to all ethical and rational implications? The two-stage concept seems to be at odds with the

wholeness of biblical anthropology and perhaps makes it easier to accept a painless, pale shadow of the gospel in order to disciple people easily.

Because of its very practical and methodological nature, the movement faces another danger. It seems very possible (and indeed it has happened) that people take over practical, anthropological, and sociological insights from the church-growth movement and use them as a "spiritual technology" without a real understanding of the context out of which they grew and the theological guidelines needed for their use. The whole endeavor then degenerates into simply a more sophisticated technique for getting "souls" into institutional churches. At this point, the church-growth model becomes merely church-growth methodology and thus loses its distinctive character as Christian. It could just as well be a methodology for Elk's Lodge growth as for church growth.

One final question about the church-growth movement has to do with its importation into North America. I wonder if the transfer of concepts from the cross-cultural endeavors in Asia and elsewhere to the United States has been completely successful. For example, the idea of a people movement, which was discussed earlier, can be fairly easily visualized as taking place in, say, a subcaste in India, but in highly individualistic, mobile American society it does not seem quite so insightful. Most of the original church-growth thinkers are primarily cross-cultural missionaries. I don't think those who have transplanted the concepts of these men to western society have been able to translate all the movement's key insights in a meaningful way.

We have found the church-growth model helpful in certain ways and inadequate in others. Perhaps this evaluation can also serve as a plea for further effort in constructing other models, ones truly adequate to Adventist theology and practice and able to inspire us anew in our missionary task.

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3. Donald A. McGavran, *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Mission* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955).

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6. Charles H. Kraft, "Towards a Christian Ethnotheology," in *God, Man, and Church Growth*, pp. 109-126.

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With All Deliberate Speed: A Study of Pace in Mission

by Bill Knott

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."¹

Few passages of Scripture are as central to the consciousness and mission of the Christian church as is Matthew 28:18-20. Within Christianity, there is indeed virtual unanimity in the belief that these few lines, often called "The Great Commission," constitute the authentic will of Jesus for His church. The thesis of this essay is that these lines — particularly the phrase translated "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" — have significant implications for the

task of the Adventist church in the world and for the pace at which that mission should proceed.

One of the dilemmas confronting the missionary church concerns what we might term the "temporal" dimension of Christ's commission to His disciples. All work in this world must be accomplished in a framework of time: the length of time allotted to a task inevitably shapes the character of the working and the form of the product produced. A major task demanded in a quarter-hour will probably be wrongly-paced and poorly done. A 15-minute job spread over half a day will invite shoddiness of work and a leisurely attitude on the part of the laborer. Similar points hold for Christian mission. This mission must proceed, not only from the divine word of command, but also at a divinely-appointed pace in keeping with the character of the task given by the Lord.

A brief survey of Christian thought about mission reveals at least two contrasting views of the relationship of mission to time, and

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from the earliest years of the church, both gained a following that could appeal with apparently equal validity to the words of Jesus. For want of better terminology, we will here call them the "eschatologically urgent" and the "educative" perspectives on the pace of mission. The discussion that follows is not meant to suggest that either perspective remained entirely outside the pale of the other's influence — they did, after all, profess allegiance to a common, coming Lord — but to sketch the major features of their differences and the distinct implication of each for methodology in mission.

The position here labeled "eschatologically urgent" draws its authority from mis-

"Christ's commandments to His disciples require both a change of behavior and a change of attitude, which can be achieved only over the passage of time."

sionary instruction to the disciples recorded in Matthew 10:1-15, Mark 6:7-13, and Luke 9:1-6. In all three synoptic versions these instructions, apparently given in conjunction with the choice of the 12 disciples, require, among other things, an urgency that compels the disciples to shake quickly from their feet the dust of any town that will not receive them.

From this commission, and augmented by an intense longing for the personal advent of their Lord, many have deduced a methodology of mission that insists on the clarity of the call to repentance, the intensity of the personal witness to Jesus Christ, and the mobility of the messenger. There can be no status quo in a mission environment radicalized by the urgent Christ, whose words ever ring in true disciples' ears — "Go ye, Go ye." Stress is laid upon the fact of

proclamation rather than its results.²

One important modern spokesman for this time-urgent view of mission is the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, faithfully delineates the lifestyle and task of those whom Christ calls to follow Him. His chapter on "The Work" contains a passage worth citing at some length. Commenting on the commission Jesus gives His disciples, Bonhoeffer writes:

As soon as they set foot in the house or city, they must come straight to the point. Time is precious, and multitudes are still waiting for the message of the gospel. . . . Their proclamation is clear and concise. They simply announce that the kingdom of God has drawn nigh, and summon men to repentance and faith. They come with the full authority of Jesus of Nazareth, they deliver a command and make an offer with the support of the highest credentials. And that is all. The whole message is staggering in its simplicity and clarity, and since the cause brooks no delay, there is no need for them to enter into any further discussion to clear the ground or to persuade their hearers. The King stands at the door, and he may come in at any moment. Will you bow down and humbly receive him, or do you want him to destroy you in his wrath? Those who have ears to hear have heard all there is to hear. They cannot detain the messengers any longer, for they must be off to the next city. If, however, men refuse to hear, they have lost their chance, the time of grace is passed, and they have pronounced their own doom. "Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4:7). That is evangelical preaching. Is this ruthless speed? Nothing could be more ruthless than to make men think there is still plenty of time to mend their ways. To tell men that the cause is urgent, and that the kingdom of God is at hand is the most charitable and merciful act we can perform, the most joyous news we can bring. The messenger cannot wait and repeat it to every man in his own language. God's language is clear enough. It is not for the messenger to decide who will hear and who will not, for only God

knows who is "worthy"; and those who are worthy will hear the Word when the disciple proclaims it. . . . To refuse to believe in the gospel is the worst sin imaginable, and if that happens the messengers can do nothing but leave the place.³

Bonhoeffer's understanding of the pace of Christian mission will seem attractive to any church weary of decades of seeing the gospel encumbered with ever-changing social and political goals. His view of the gospel message as capable of ready communication and immediate reception by its hearers will seem attractive, too, to those weary of the excesses of Christian theologizing and philosophizing. And there is, indeed, an appeal in Bonhoeffer's vision of mission that no one fully awake to the needs of the church can deny.

But this vision, however appealing, must still be measured against the standard of the commission given by the resurrected Christ to the band of His disciples. And in light of this commission the point at which Bonhoeffer's view may be faulted is this: it fails to pay sufficient attention to that phrase of the Great Commission which reads, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

In saying that mission involves making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them, Christ was also giving, if only indirectly, an indication of the pace at which mission should proceed. Baptizing a disciple requires only minutes, but teaching that disciple to observe all things commanded by the Lord — that is, to practice them — implies a significant amount of time. We are confronted here, in fact, with a vision of mission that will greatly slow the time-urgent mission already discussed.

Bonhoeffer is amply serious about Christ's command to go forth and labor. Still the passage quoted seems open to the charge of being less concerned with the salvation of others than with the accomplishment of the task of proclamation. The relationship between the missionary and the hearers implied in the passage appears to be primarily a speaker-audience relationship, rather than the relationship of a witness to neighbors

whom he loves.

To Bonhoeffer's rhetorical question, "Is this ruthless speed?" I am inclined to answer "yes," particularly in light of the patiently educative manner in which the Lord of all mission went about preparing His disciples for their task. As Gottfried Oosterwal has so cogently summarized it, "Jesus called His disciples as representatives of all Israel, trained them, instructed them, and then sent them out — but not immediately — in all directions unto the remotest ends of the earth."⁴

Some who emphasize eschatological urgency may fear making the investment of time required by an emphasis on the continuing growth of the disciple. But such an attitude implies that "going" is more important than "teaching," that covering territory is of greater importance than the flowering of the gospel in a given locale. But what grounds are there for such an attitude?

If we stress *teaching* as a vital part of the Gospel Commission, we discover a pace for mission well suited to a serious belief in the importance of Christ's ethic in the modern world. If we stress *going* to the detriment of stress on teaching, we may find ourselves in the ashamed position of the runner Ahimaaz, who could only testify to having witnessed a great and puzzling tumult. The gospel deserves better than this.

Teaching all men to observe what Christ has commanded requires a pace for mission which proceeds at the rate of individual character growth, of personal assimilation of truth into the life of the believer. Christ's commandments to His disciples require both a change of behavior and a change of attitude, which can be achieved only over the passage of time.

When, for example, the missionary takes seriously the command of Jesus to teach the practice of love of enemies, he must, at the very least, qualify notions of eschatologically-urgent mission. What genuine love of the enemy can there be which does not proceed, at least in part, from the modeling of Christ-like love seen in the daily life of the missionary?

If prayer is to become for the convert something more than the substitution of the

Lord's Prayer for his previous magical incantation, it will owe largely to his having seen the positive results of a continuing prayer-consciousness in the example of the missionary.

In a similar manner, the Christian's proper relation to material things will only become credible to the person who has seen, in the experience of the missionary, the joyous freedom that accompanies total dependence on the benevolence of the Father.

All these lessons demand the investment of significant time and the continuing presence of the teacher-missionary with the learners. They back up, in other words, the claim that the Great Commission requires an educative pace for mission endeavor.

A further implication of Christ's directive to teach the observance of His commandments is the necessity of the missionary's being present long enough to verify that a given group of converts has grasped the life-changing message he has delivered and is well along the road to Christian community. The missionary who leaves a string of unevaluated groups of converts in his wake may be satisfying a personal desire, but he is leaving them to reap the whirlwind he has sown. Oosterwal observes:

The history of mission clearly shows that when the gospel spreads too rapidly — without a proper organization which guards the Biblical truth and which follows up its proclamation — distortions, falsehoods, and misinterpretations result. For this very reason God, at times, had to prevent His own followers from expanding into certain areas or from going too quickly.⁵

On the wider scale of denominational mission, this consciousness of a divinely-appointed pace for mission could place a check upon the increasing fascination with numerical growth that is evident in the

Adventist church today. While the writings of Donald MacGavran and other evangelicals are bringing this theme into greater prominence in scholarly circles in the church, there is a native Adventist triumphalism which seizes upon the "one thousand a day" passages in Ellen White's writings as a standard by which to measure the apparent missionary success of the church.

Yet alarming apostasy rates in mission areas where frenetic activity has recently been the norm testify again to the necessity of matching a mission pace to the missionary message. These disturbing figures must be seen as being as much the responsibility of the church's mission program as any special activity on the part of the devil to siphon off new converts. Only when we own the problem as well as the program that may have produced it will we be ready to consider a pace for missions more suited to the message we proclaim.

To adopt a more educative pace for mission does not, in any sense, require the Adventist church to abandon its eschatological vision. The kingdom is not prevented from coming because Christians take the necessary time to acquaint new converts with the claims Jesus makes on their lives. Indeed, it may be argued that the "quality" of Christian resulting from an educative pace in mission will be a far more valuable instrument in the Lord's hand for the proclamation of the gospel than will any number of eager but unstable enthusiasts fascinated by the prospect of imminent translation.

Neither does this pace for mission relegate the church to the position of being chiefly an agent for social and political change by reason of its greater involvement with the daily life of its members. While the gospel will have an impact on society, establishing more stable roots in community need not divert the church from its essentially spiritual mission.

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SAWS Expands Its Focus

by Harrison W. John

An earthquake strikes southern Italy. Seventh-day Adventist World Service, Inc. (SAWS) is there with 45 tons of warm clothing, blankets, food, and gas heaters, all valued at nearly \$170,000. Over 500,000 refugees from Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia) flee toward Thailand. SAWS is there with thousands of tons of rice, fish, cooking oil, and hundreds of medical volunteers. Unsettled social and political conditions in Zimbabwe disrupt local agricultural production, and SAWS is there with 29 tons of food a month and seed packets which allow the people to resume their normal farming practices. A devastating fire engulfs the cities of Mandalay and Taundwingyi in Burma, and SAWS is there with clothing for 30,000 people, 200 tents, 1,000 blankets, and medicines worth \$20,000. In Dominica, SAWS builds 110 homes for people whose shelters were damaged by Hurricane David.

These activities are merely random examples of the literally scores of projects SAWS sponsors throughout the world every year.

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According to unaudited figures released by SAWS, in 1980 the agency assisted 45 countries besides the United States with some 43.7 million pounds of supplies. The total value of food, clothing, bedding, medical supplies and equipment, cash, and other miscellaneous help amounted to \$15.2 million, with food accounting for more than 50 percent of the total aid. Countries receiving the most aid were Peru, Chili, Haiti, the Philippines and Brazil.

Only a small (but important) portion of the SAWS budget is provided by the Adventist church. Of SAWS' 1980 budget of \$15 million, just \$1 million was received via the annual Disaster and Famine Relief Offering collected by Adventist churches throughout the world. More than half of SAWS' budget is funded through grants from the United States Agency for International Development (AID). In 1980, SAWS received \$6.1 million in food aid from the U.S. government under its PL 480 or Food for Peace program; another \$3 million was provided in ocean freight reimbursement for the food to be shipped to recipient countries. Between 1960 and 1980, AID provided SAWS with \$15,978,300 in grants. This government assistance has enabled SAWS to expand its services as an emergency relief supplier and to

support long-term development projects, especially in less-developed countries.

Most Adventists associate SAWS with disaster relief, but Executive Director Richard O'Ffill reports that in recent years emergency aid has been just a small part of SAWS' work. Most of their work is now "developmental," that is, projects designed to help people help themselves. Recent efforts include an agricultural demonstration project in Zimbabwe to teach people in rural areas how to grow food in poor, sandy soil; a dental clinic in Zaire; a drinking water project in Zambia; and child-care clinics in Peru.

A brief history of SAWS shows its evolution from an agency providing only disaster relief to an agency focusing primarily on developmental needs. Seventh-day Adventists were giving disaster and famine relief as early as 1919, when special offerings were collected in churches to help members affected by the destruction of World War I. Soon this type of relief work spread, and in 1922 the church was sending aid to Russia. In 1923, famine victims in China were aided. And in 1927, the church was involved in helping victims of the great Mississippi River flood.

When World War II devastated much of Europe, the church provided relief aid and helped refugees settle in the United States. Warehouses were established in 1944 and 1945 in New York and San Francisco to receive and process materials for overseas shipment. In the early 1950s, Adventists helped orphans and homeless children in Korea with clothing, food, and other supplies. By this time, the church's relief efforts had burgeoned into such a massive operation that leaders felt a separate agency should be established.

In November 1956, the Adventist church officially incorporated a welfare and relief agency in Washington, D.C., under the name of Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Relief Service, inc. The purpose of the organization was to "undertake, promote, develop and carry on charitable, or educational work; to carry on national and international relief among peoples of all nations . . . to aid in the

spiritual, moral and physical rehabilitation of victims of war or other disaster . . . and to carry on reconstruction by providing technical services, funds, supplies, and equipment for the restoration, construction, and installation of schools, libraries, orphanages, hospitals, health centers, industrial plants, and agricultural projects."

In the early days after its incorporation, SAWS maintained a close tie with the Department of Lay Activities, now called Community Services in the United States. For example, at one time the Community Services director, Carl Guenther, was also the executive secretary of SAWS, and the director of SAWS reported directly to him. So Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service, Inc., while existing as a separate legal corporation, continued to be very closely administered by Community Services. As the sphere of activities conducted by SAWS expanded even further, church leaders recognized that the corporation was not a mere extension of Community Services, and that it had a much broader scope than providing emergency relief. Thus, in January 1973, the name of the organization was changed to Seventh-day Adventist World Service, Inc.

The "new" SAWS now became further involved in some rather large and significant programs in developing countries. Since this expansion involved liaisons with foreign governments and international organizations, as well as the custodianship of enormous resources, the General Conference in 1978 administratively recognized SAWS as a full-fledged service organization, set apart from the Community Services function and directly responsible to the General Conference Committee as a separate corporation. This was an important step because by now SAWS was growing at an amazing rate. In 1977 it had provided about \$3 million worth of aid; that figure rose to almost \$8 million by 1979 and topped \$15 million by 1980.

The present-day emphasis of SAWS is in such areas as preventative health, agricultural development, community organization, sanitation, and maternal-child health programs. Much of this work is done at the local

level quite independent of traditional Adventist church institutions. Often SAWS will employ nutritionists, community development experts, social workers, and public health nurses, all working at the grass-roots level. Anything they help build, such as a clinic, is not a SAWS institution but a local institution, and not necessarily a *church* institution.

“SAWS does not see itself as an evangelistic arm of the church. Its goal is not to convert people to become members of the Adventist church.”

As a result, SAWS does not see itself as an evangelistic arm of the church. **Its goal is not to convert people to become members of the Adventist church.** Rather, on a particular project, the objective may be to reduce the incidence of malnutrition among children under five, or to increase agricultural production in a particular village. When that goal is reached, the project is over.

One example of this is a massive Malnourished Child program SAWS sponsored in Chile for about 15 years. The program was serving about 100,000 malnourished children when specialists decided that it had achieved its purpose, and it was transferred to the government of Chile's Maternal and Child Health Program under the Ministry of Health. Another example comes from Chad, where SAWS initiated an irrigation project to help local farmers increase crop yields on about 60 acres of semiarid land. According to O'Fall, the project was so successful that farmers making about \$100 a year before the project was started were making \$600-800 per year when the project was fully underway. When civil strife struck Chad, the foreign workers connected with the project had to leave, but it continued to thrive under local control for 6 to 8 months before it was shut down by antiestablishment elements in

the country.

Of all the projects sponsored by SAWS, perhaps one of the most novel was a Clothing for Work project in Kulabo, Zambia. Here, SAWS provided a local community of handicapped lepers with old clothing to build new houses for themselves. The clothing was bartered for construction materials such as reeds and sticks. The advantage of the project is that without any cash being involved, the people were able to get new homes and clothes, and at the same time make their community a much more pleasant and healthful place in which to live. The district governor of the Republic of Zambia was so impressed with the project that he wrote a thank-you letter to the SAWS director for Zambia.

Another significant project in which SAWS became involved in October 1979 was a refugee-relief program on the border of Thailand and Kampuchea. Refugees fleeing from civil war in Kampuchea suffered from various kinds of health problems such as malaria, pulmonary disease, malnutrition, acute anemias, and intestinal disorders. SAWS flew in medical volunteers and obtained medical supplies from the International Committee of the Red Cross. At one point, SAWS volunteers were operating five field hospitals where they worked about 15 hours a day, seven days a week. This massive health-care project seemed inadequate compared to the needs of the refugee camps. But SAWS officials report that at one point in the project, in at least one camp of 30,000 people, the mortality rate was reduced from 35 people a day to six per day. Adventist churches throughout the world contributed one million dollars for this work, and the General Conference assigned two full-time staff people to coordinate the flow of medical personnel from their local posts to Thailand.

In late 1981, the U.S. Department of State awarded SAWS a \$750,000 grant to continue its work there. This is the first significant non-Adventist contribution to SAWS for the Thai project. The relief program there seems to have become a semipermanent operation, and SAWS continues as one of the major relief organizations still providing support for the refugee project.

While the Kampuchean program has claimed a great deal of attention from SAWS, one of the most exciting projects just launched is a proposal to develop community programs in agriculture, family health, and nutrition in 16 different countries. With matching funds provided by AID, SAWS will work within the framework of Adventist institutions to reach out to neighboring communities. Operations are expected to begin during 1982 in the following regions and countries: Africa — Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe; Asia — Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; Latin America/Caribbean — Bolivia, Haiti, Honduras, and Jamaica; Pacific — Papua-New Guinea, Philippines, and Sarawak. Under terms of a three-year contract with AID, SAWS is providing \$2.1 million for the project, while AID is matching this amount with another \$1.2 million.

Based on statistics issued by the World Health Organization and other health agencies, SAWS decided that the greatest needs in these targeted countries are programs for health; nutrition, family planning, sanitation, hygiene, and child care, coupled with programs to help communities grow and preserve foods for a balanced and nutritious diet. Specifically, SAWS hopes to provide the following health and economic services, mainly in rural areas: (1) Improvement in environmental and sanitary conditions; (2) A more adequate diet to control malnutrition in children under five; (3) Better-trained medical, health, and agricultural extension personnel to provide services and education at the grass-roots level; and (4) Assistance in developing small businesses designed to encourage farmers to grow more food.

SAWS will not attempt to cover each of these areas in all 16 targeted countries. Rather, after close coordination with the host government, SAWS will provide the kind of service most needed in that particular nation. For example, in Bangladesh, sanitation and nutrition are major problems. SAWS will attempt to provide health and nutrition education, hold cooking and food-preserving demonstrations, and conduct classes in child care through four existing Adventist institu-

tions in that country. In Jamaica, the Andrews Memorial Hospital in Kingston has developed plans to extend its health education outreach into the slum areas of that city. Students from the school of nursing will be trained to conduct classes in health, nutrition, sanitation, and maternal child care. In Burundi, one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, steps will be taken to increase the food supply for communities near Kivoga College, an Adventist institution in Bujumbura. In Kenya, rural health care workers will be trained either at Kendu Bay Hospital or a nearby high school. These workers are expected to expand the preventive activities of 13 dispensaries operated by the church in Kenya. This program has the enthusiastic support of the government's Ministry of Health.

Their goal is that at the end of the three-year project, a minimum of 40 communities surrounding 47 Adventist institutions in 13 countries will have community health outreach programs focusing on nutrition, sanitation, and general health principles. In addition, at least 30 communities in the vicinity of 38 Adventist educational institutions in all 16 countries are expected to have community health outreach programs or agricultural extension programs focusing on better

“Since government aid is so closely intertwined with the broader, more complex issues of U. S. foreign and economic policy, does SAWS, and by association, the Adventist church, run the risk of being branded as an instrument of the American government?”

methods of growing garden vegetables and legumes rich in proteins. Also, SAWS hopes that a minimum of 10 areas will have small community projects utilizing appropriate

technology to preserve seasonal foods or produce food byproducts through coordination with the church's food manufacturing component, World Foods Service.

By working in smaller communities, SAWS hopes to expand its influence. As Milton Nebblett, deputy executive director of SAWS, states: "Our hypothesis is that we can make the communities around our healthcare and educational facilities the most health-conscious and good-health motivated people in the entire country and through them carry the message of good health to all the people of the country."

SAWS officials are justifiably proud and excited about this new type of outreach, but at press time an AID official told SPEC-TRUM that for fiscal year 1981, ending September 1982, the project will receive only \$379,000 because of slashes in the agency's budget. According to SAWS' projections, it was expecting to receive \$601,000 in the first year of the project. What effect this budgetary constriction will have on the project is unclear at this time.

Whatever the outcome, SAWS' experience in these 16 countries will likely lead to a greater involvement in other AID-funded projects in the future. This deeper involvement raises questions about a close relationship with a government agency which openly acknowledges that one of the purposes of its existence is to further the foreign policy objectives of the United States. As an AID press release points out, assistance provided by the agency is "regarded as a tool of U.S. foreign policy," and "is essential to the economic and security interests of the United States."

In numerous government documents the same refrain is heard. For example, in the June 24, 1981, issue of AID's biweekly newsletter, "World Development Letter," a question on foreign aid is answered this way: "Progress in the Third World serves the U.S. national interest. Apart from our traditional humanitarian concerns, as these nations develop they become bigger customers for our farms and industries; they become bigger markets for American investments and more accessible sources of raw materials essential

to our economy and our national defense."

The aid program is further justified because U.S. exports to developing countries have tripled in the past five years, and about two million American jobs depend on exports to the Third World. Further, all the funds for the Food for Peace program are spent in the United States. And by law, 50 percent of all food shipped to foreign countries under this program must be transported in U.S. ships.

Since government aid is so closely intertwined with the broader, more complex issues of U.S. foreign and economic policy, does SAWS, and by association, the Adventist church, run the risk of being branded as an instrument of the American government? Richard O'Ffill says "no." He sees SAWS' arrangement with AID as being merely contractual in nature. In his view, SAWS enters into a conventional three-year contract on most AID projects. If there were any indication that the government was using SAWS to further its own interests in any way that would be detrimental to SAWS' interests, we could immediately cut off the relationship, he says. He also likes to look at the issue from another viewpoint: If SAWS can be considered to be used by the U.S. government for its own purposes, one could just as well argue that SAWS is using the U.S. government to further its own aims and objectives, which are simply to help people in need. SAWS, he says, has no ulterior motive in providing aid or relief but to participate in helping make people whole again. In that sense, while SAWS operates as a nonsectarian, non-proselytizing agency, providing help regardless of color, creed, race, or religion, it is, in a sense, the very essence of Christianity, O'Ffill notes.

The U.S. government, on the other hand, views SAWS not as a religious agency but as an effective means of channelling government aid on a people-to-people level where government-to-government contact is not always possible. Thomas Fox, director of AID's Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation, says that agencies like SAWS are chosen for their nonsectarian stance, and if they do attempt to use AID-funded programs as a means to convert people, the funding would be immediately stopped.

Besides the general issue of SAWS acting as an intermediary for U.S. foreign aid, a more specific area in which SAWS may be vulnerable to criticism is its role as a pipeline for shipping U.S. food aid abroad. Almost every aspect of the U.S. food aid program has been questioned.¹ The Food for Work program has been attacked by some because they say it encourages people to work at low levels of productivity. Critics of this kind of aid, in which people in less-developed countries (LDCs) work on various kinds of community projects in return for food, claim that the incentive for work is reduced when people work for food instead of cash.

Other critics say that the flooding of local communities with cheap foreign grain upsets the balance of local markets and discourages farmers from growing local crops. (This has happened in the villages of Kampuchea which surround the area where international relief agencies such as SAWS are providing food assistance to refugees along the Thai/Kampuchea border.) In some cases, critics say food goes mainly to the well-to-do or is used as a political tool by the ruling elites to control various groups so as to solidify their own positions; in other cases, much of the food never reaches the really needy people in the rural areas. Finally, there are ideological arguments concerning AID made against the food aid program by some. They say AID provides support to right-wing totalitarian regimes which oppress civilian populations. Is SAWS by extension supporting such ideologies and should it?

It is difficult to refute these critics, because too often what they are saying is absolutely correct. One response is that the issues are so convoluted and complex that if we get bogged down in ideological debates and administrative boondoggles, we are neglecting the immediate needs of millions of desperate people. Theoretically, AID uses SAWS as a channel for supplying humanitarian aid in those countries that have official government approval to receive help. That allows for a range of choices, though certain countries like Cuba and Poland are definitely off-limits. And all food provided to SAWS under the PL 480 program is Title II aid; it is *donated*

to the host country, unlike Title I aid which is *sold* to friendly governments at concessional prices. Presumably, the difference between the two is that Title I aid can be used to gain political leverage with the host country, while Title II aid is donated for sheer humanitarian reasons (though friendly nations tend to get more donations).

But even this distinction sometimes gets blurred. One on-the-scene observer in Kampuchea reports that the exiled Pol Pot seems to be receiving aid from the Thais and the

"In the midst of this confusion, Richard O'Ffill says: We don't know the difference in the political ideologies of the people. All we know is that they are in desperate need."

Chinese, as well as indirect aid from the Americans. This is the same person whose regime is believed to have mercilessly massacred and tortured thousands of Kampuchean civilians. Now because he provides a kind of foil for the present Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin regime, he seems to enjoy a kind of dubious favor with the West and its allies. In the midst of this confusion, Richard O'Ffill says: We don't know the difference in the political ideologies of the people. All we know is that they are in desperate need.

Despite SAWS' good intentions, questions persist. Close involvement with any government's programs inevitably means identification with that government. At the same time, working hand-in-hand with repressive regimes can arouse local resentment and opposition. One option, which is followed by some church service organizations, including the Mennonite Central Committee, is to refuse direct support from any government.

The Adventist church seems to have accepted quite easily the idea that a church-related organization like SAWS may receive

government funding. Yet this issue has concerned another large recipient of government aid — the Catholic church. In 1981, the Maryknoll General Council of the Maryknoll Fathers in Maryknoll, New York, commissioned a study by the Washington-based Center of Concern on government funding for religious private voluntary organizations.² The 200-page study concluded that there is “no one answer to the question of government funding applicable for all organizations in all situations.”

The study did, however, suggest that religious private voluntary organizations (PVOs) consider the following major guidelines before reaching a decision on accepting government funds: (1) Define yourself, your mission, your worldview. (2) Analyze your perception of U.S. foreign policy and the role of AID within that policy. (3) Evaluate the social, economic, and political context in which you will be working. (4) Involve the local people and PVO field staff in the decision-making process. (5) Assess the impact of AID funding on your PVO's internal structures. (6) Establish protective clauses in the grant letter of agreement if AID funding is accepted. (7) Influence the U.S. government and hold the PVO Community accountable.

Certainly, these are thought-provoking guidelines. They outline the complex nature of church-state relations, while focusing on the need for a defined policy. For SAWS, further specific questions arise. What will be the effect on the church's witness, especially

in those Adventist institutions which will be receiving AID funding? In some foreign countries, Adventist institutions consider their witnessing ministry to be a sort of *raison d'être*. Will they feel hampered in their witnessing by the restrictions in SAWS' contract with the U.S. government? Other implications follow: Will a greater dependence on government assistance affect the church's resolve to increase appropriations to SAWS? Will dependence on government funding weaken the desire of individual church members to support SAWS with larger donations since they may feel that the church is managing all right without their “drop-in-the-bucket”?

But for some, these issues are secondary. There is a world in desperate need of help. And the needs are increasing. The U.S. government's *Global 2000 Report* states that world population will grow from 4 billion in 1975 to 6.35 billion in 2000. The gross national product per capita in the populous nations of South Asia is expected to remain below \$200 per year (in 1975 dollars), and the year 2000, per capita food consumption is expected to decline below present inadequate levels.

In the face of such tremendous needs, what are the alternatives for an agency like SAWS? To millions of hungry, homeless, disease-ridden people, political ideology means little or nothing. What is important is a chance to live dignified, healthy lives. The challenge for SAWS is to continue providing that chance in the most effective way possible.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins, “World Hunger: Ten Myths,” reprinted in Social Issues Resources Series, *Food*, 2 (1981), #21.

2. “Religious Private Voluntary Organizations and

the Question of Government Funding.” For a copy, write PROBE Third World Studies, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545. The price of this publication is \$12.

Massacre at Sea

by Roy Branson

One evening last year a Cambodian resistance leader slipped quietly into the living room of an Adventist minister in Bangkok. Out of his leather shoulder bag this soft-spoken, Paris-educated intellectual took the equivalent of \$10,000 in Thai money and placed it on the minister's desk. It was a donation from his father, the head of one of the three groups competing to reclaim Cambodia. The funds were to help continue relief activities for the Kampuchean refugees congregated in camps for which this exiled leader and his father felt responsible.

The relief agency led by Adventists, but independent of the Seventh-day Adventist church, used the money directly to meet the basic, essential needs of the refugees. But the board of the organization wrestled with the question of whether they should put its efforts into helping refugees in the camps loyal to noncommunist Kampuchean exile leaders, or provide services among all three of the principal Kampuchean exile groups, including that dominated by Pol Pot, the former Communist leader of Kampuchea whose ruthless policies are said to have cost millions their lives.

A few months before, in 1981, the managers of Adventist hospitals in Thailand re-

ceived a report from CARE containing a startling proposal. The author, a 1979 graduate of the Loma Linda University School of Medicine, suggested that the Adventists might accept the responsibility for providing medical services to Vietnamese refugee women that a group of French Catholic physicians already actively treating refugees refused to furnish. Dr. Nguyet Mehlert, who had spent two months in the refugee camp in Songkhla, Southern Thailand, at the end of 1980, provided the most reliable analysis yet written of gang rapes by Thai fishermen of the women fleeing from Vietnam by boat across the Gulf of Thailand (see pages 28-29). When the rape victims were examined in camp and treated for venereal disease, a significant number were found to be pregnant. The Catholic physicians responsible for health care in the Songkhla camp refused to perform abortions. Because of Dr. Mehlert's reference to Adventist medical facilities in Thailand and the prominence of the Bangkok Adventist Hospital in the country, the Adventists were confronted with the issue of whether or not they would agree to abort the pregnancies of the raped Vietnamese women. They decided to perform the abortions. According to *Adventist Health Ministry*, published by the General Conference Department of Health and Temperance (Sept.-Oct., 1981, p. 8), medical personnel from the Haadyai Mission Hospital drove a dental bus 16 miles every Thursday to the Songkhla refugee camp to screen

Roy Branson, the editor of SPECTRUM, holds graduate degrees from Harvard University and the University of Chicago. He recently spent time in Thailand investigating the plight of Indochinese refugees.

rape victims for pregnancy and perform necessary abortions. When "the unavailability of the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) physicians to follow up emergency cases" became clear, "a special permission from the provisional governor's office was acquired to be able to perform the procedure in the hospital."

These and other important questions confront Adventists active in Thailand responding to one of the major problems of our time: the continuing flow of refugees across national borders. In Indochina alone, over a million people have fled their homes since 1975. More than any other country, Thailand has allowed refugees to cross its boundaries and camps to be established where they have been fed, clothed and treated before going on to permanent residences in other countries.

By providing medical, dental, nursing and educational skills, Adventists have helped refugees in many of those Thai refugee camps. While **Volunteers International** (see pages 30-31) and the Adventist hospitals in Thailand have recruited and coordinated the activities of scores of Adventists, the Seventh-day Adventist World Service (SAWS) has probably been the avenue for the greatest number of Adventists who have helped the refugees. Over 320 people have been able to assist refugees in Thailand through SAWS. At any given time SAWS provides 25 medically related professionals to clinics and hospitals in as many as eight refugee camps. The volunteers come from Australia, Canada, the Philippines, and the United States for a minimum stay of one month.

While Adventists have been clear that they should help the Indochinese suffering from a variety of forces beyond their control, Adventists involved in assisting the refugees have puzzled over whether they have any responsibility to help prevent people from being victimized in the first place. More specifically, it has been hard for some not to notice that thousands of refugees from Vietnam have died before reaching the refugee camps. Those who survived have often suffered barbarous treatment at the hands of marauding Thai fishermen. Some Adventists

have wondered if their resources and energy should extend beyond caring for victims, to helping prevent the atrocities refugees have endured (see pages 29-30).

It is impossible to know how many of the refugees who set out from southern Vietnam for Thailand and Malaysia since 1975 have died at sea, but those who have interviewed survivors vary in their estimates from 50,000 to over 450,000 deaths. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has the ultimate responsibility for supervising the refugee camps, reports that during a trip that should last three to four days, 80 percent of the refugees who survive have been attacked by fishermen an average of three to four times before reaching shore. Dr. Mehlert's CARE report concerning rape noted one case when a nine-year-old was raped, and several when eleven- and twelve-year-old girls suffered gang rapes. Her research revealed that women 15-20 years of age faced a 60 percent chance of being raped, not once but up to 40, 50, or more times.

The treatment endured by the women is barely possible to contemplate (see pages 28-29). Koh Kra is an uninhabited island of three and a half square miles of rock and jungle, bounded by white coral beaches, off the coast of southern Thailand. Until the spring of 1981, Thai fishermen hunted refugee women on that island. According to the UNHCR, one female refugee was severely burned when southern Thai fishermen, attempting to flush her out, set fire to the hillside where she was hiding. Another cowered for days in a cave, waist deep in water, until crabs had torn the skin and much of the flesh away from her legs. By October 1980, 160 refugees had died on that island alone. The total no doubt went well beyond 200 before a detail of six to eight marines was stationed on the island in the spring of 1981 and halted the carnage.

In April of this year two girls were seized at night from their drifting refugee boat by two fishermen who threw them into the water and hauled them back to their Thai trawler. After two days and one night of raping, the fishermen took a large piece of canvas and made a bag. To give it some bouyancy, they

tied plastic bottles around the throat of the bag. The second night the fishermen put the girls in the bag up to their necks and tossed them into the water. All night the girls managed to float with their heads above water. At daybreak another fishing boat discovered the girls, retrieved them from the Gulf, and took them to a police station on shore.

The end of the terrorism is not in sight. Boats continue to set out from Vietnam headed for Thailand, and increasingly a more distant Malaysia. The longer journeys prolong the refugees' vulnerability to attacks. The number of arrivals by boat from Vietnam in 1981 was 74,754, according to the UNHCR, only 1,000 fewer than the year before. A large and continuing reservoir of potential boat people remains in Vietnam. The number of persons incarcerated in re-education camps there may be as few as the 50,000 claimed by the Vietnamese government or as many as the 200,000 estimated by Western observers. If those confined are not allowed to hold jobs when they are released from these camps, they and their families become prime candidates for attempts to cross the Gulf of Thailand.

Some Adventists in the United States involved in helping the refugees almost despair when government officials seem to be preoccupied with devising means of deterring the boat people, rather than stopping acts of piracy against the thousands of Vietnamese who continue to sail from their country each month. Indeed, Secretary of State Haig's Advisory Panel on the Indochinese Refugee Problem reported in the fall of 1981 that it has received a serious but shocking suggestion: the United States should "diminish efforts to control piracy in the Thai Gulf," because "high rates of piracy might conceivably deter refugees from fleeing by boat." The panel rejected the proposal, but subsequently the United States government did stop its six months support for a Thai experiment in combating piracy, and on September 21, 1981, even that ineffective effort was disbanded by the Thai navy. While the UNHCR is trying to raise \$3.5 million to finance another antipiracy program, as of

March 1, 1982, there is no organized program on the part of any government or international organization attempting to reduce pirate attacks against the unarmed boat people.

What is the responsibility of concerned Adventists? Certainly they can contribute their money to refugee relief and volunteer to spend a minimum of a month working in a refugee camp in Thailand. Also, Adventists who remain in this country can help individual refugees and their families.

But should Adventists do more? Would it be appropriate for those who are concerned (not the denomination itself) to call for the United States government to issue an authoritative report informing the public concerning piracy against refugees in the Gulf of Thailand and the South China Sea? What about arguing that the United States, which got many Vietnamese involved in supporting its side in the Vietnamese war, has a special obligation to mobilize efforts to combat acts of piracy against the boat people, a significant number of whom are identified with Americans or the regime defeated by the present government? Is there a general obligation to present harm if it can be accomplished?

Adventists have contributed a great amount of money, time and energy to help Indochinese refugees who have already been victimized. It is worth pondering whether Adventists have a further responsibility to help prevent future acts of barbarism against these refugees. Those who wish to urge the United States, specifically, to assume greater responsibility for responding to what can only be called a massacre of unarmed civilians on the high seas can write to Congressman Stephan Solarz, Chairman, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C.; or to Senator Alan K. Simpson, Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, D.C. As of March 1982, neither chairman had ever scheduled hearings on the matter of piracy against Vietnamese refugees nor had their committees released reports on the subjects informing the public of the problem.

Adventist Layman Helps Indochinese Refugees

by Gene M. Daffern

Robert Bainum eased his white Chevrolet into the congested traffic on the capital beltway circling Washington, D.C. He ignored the traffic that hot day in August 1979. Instead, he listened intently to a taped sermon about an Asian Holocaust. He was stunned when he heard the pastor say that each month thousands of Vietnamese refugees were dying in the Gulf of Thailand. By the time he reached his home in Silver Spring, Maryland, Bainum had decided that he must go to Southeast Asia and help rescue the "boat people."

For two months, though, he stalled. Bainum, a Seventh-day Adventist businessman, did not want to leave his thriving business and his wife and five grown children for an extended and dangerous mission. Then in October of 1979, while in Los Angeles on a business trip, Bainum decided once again that he must go. That day he purchased a ticket and stepped onto a jet headed toward Bangkok. He had no well-defined plan, no organization to back him.

Nevertheless, during the next two years, Bainum's accomplishments would far exceed his dreams. He would work as a volunteer in Thailand, not once, but six times, raise over \$900,000 for refugee relief — donating a considerable amount himself. Most impor-

tantly, he would found two refugee relief organizations that would send over 200 volunteers into Thailand. And, yes, he would even rescue hundreds of boat people. In the course of these events, Robert Bainum would become an example of Adventist activism and philanthropy.

When Bainum, in October 1979, boarded the plane in Los Angeles headed for Bangkok, he wasn't certain how he would help. He thought he might charter a boat and sail with it to rescue refugees on floundering boats. Pirates were plentiful, stealing refugees' money, gold and jewels, often ramming and sinking their boats. He had been told that refugees on 80 percent of all boats that were attempting the 300-mile crossing of the Gulf of Thailand were subjected to robbery, rape or murder. But he says, "I was much more worried about what would happen to me if I didn't answer the call within me than what would happen to me if I did answer it."

Arriving in Bangkok, Bainum sought out people involved in existing relief organizations. He was told of the great needs of the Cambodian refugees, the "land people" who were fleeing across Thailand's eastern border, sometimes at the rate of 10,000 per day. Having no good plan of his own to rescue boat people, Bainum, instead, volunteered his services to the Seventh-day Adventist World Service (SAWS) regional office in Bangkok. Pastor Dick Hall, then SAWS Southeast Asia director, gave Bainum the job of supervising the organization of an 80-bed

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SAWS hospital in the Khao I Dang Refugee Camp. The refugee camp, eight miles from the Cambodian border, is the largest in Thailand and, at one time, was populated by more than 100,000 refugees.

Bainum, a successful businessman since he was graduated from Columbia Union College in 1948, knew how to organize. For 10 years he had run businesses in housing construction and real estate. Then he had begun building nursing homes. Today he is owner and administrator of the Fairfax Nursing Center, a 200-bed, 40-apartment nursing home in Fairfax, Virginia, and one of the major stockholders of Manor Care, a corporation with 60 nursing centers, based in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Bainum spent several weeks recruiting workers, securing construction material — “liberating” it from United Nations red tape — supervising construction, and outfitting the hospital with beds and supplies. Because he had seen to it that a dirt walkway crossed from the road to the SAWS medical unit, important visitors usually inspected the SAWS hospital instead of the other hospitals in the camp. Among the visitors were the sister of the king of Thailand; General Wheeler, the chairman of the United States

Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Leonard Woodcock, U.S. ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

Since Pastor Hall had asked Bainum to find a way to get food inside Cambodia, Bainum asked every important visitor how he could manage to take supplies into Cambodia. Ambassador Woodcock referred Bainum to an aide who put Dick Hall in touch with people who knew how to cross the border. One night Hall and Bainum drove 17 miles through the jungle on a tractor, accompanied by armed guards and a Cambodian guide. At the border they were met by 40 soldiers of the noncommunist Khmer Serei who provided protection from the occupying Vietnamese communists and the communist Khmer Rouge who were fighting for control of the region. The Khmer Serei soldiers helped them haul food, clothing and medical supplies to Sok Sonn, a village of about 5,000 starving persons, situated just inside Cambodia. Hall and Bainum met with Sonn Sann, the leader of the Khmer Serei and former prime minister of Cambodia under Prince Sihanouk. He was grateful for what they had done and later entrusted them with \$10,000 to bring more food to the village. The men were shocked by what they saw in

Loma Linda Medical Graduate Studies Plight of Boat People

The most detailed description of violent attacks, including rape, against women among the boat people comes from a CARE report by Nguyet Mehlert, M.D. The report has been cited in government documents and magazines such as *Newsweek*. Because Dr. Mehlert is not only a physician, but a female, Vietnamese refugee herself, victims of rape provided her with more information on the problem than has been collected by anyone else.

What is not so well known is that Dr. Mehlert graduated from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine in 1979,

and that her report was instrumental in getting Adventists involved in providing special medical care for rape victims among the boat people.

Nguyet escaped from Saigon in 1975, with the help of American physicians at the Saigon Adventist Hospital, where she was taking part of her medical school training. In the United States she made her way to Loma Linda University where the physicians who had helped her were members of the medical school faculty. After marrying Calvin Mehlert, whom she had known in Vietnam as a State Department officer, she took a year's internship at the Washington

Sok Sonn and made plans to continue supplying the village.

Before returning to the United States, Bainum met Jerry Aitken, a SAWS volunteer in Thailand on a one-month leave from his tree surgery business in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and hired him to keep Sok Sonn supplied with food. Aitken, an Adventist who had been a missionary to Thailand for five years before returning to the United States, speaks Thai fluently. His one-month leave in Thailand has stretched beyond two years and he is still in Thailand as one of the directors of a refugee relief organization Bainum was to found.

The trip to Asia, the first of many, was a turning point for Bainum. "I reached the point in my life where I decided I had enough money and didn't need to make any more, adding money to money. I decided to use my talent as an administrator and manager for the good of people less fortunate than myself. I believe it is necessary to share the wealth I have. In fact, I feel that it's very difficult for me to remain a Christian and not share — especially when half the world is hungry and in need of basic shelter. To be a rich Christian

in an age of hunger is almost impossible."

While in Thailand, Bainum was told by Red Cross and United Nations workers that there were only a few operating trucks in Cambodia, making it extremely difficult to distribute the UN food that was being airlifted into Phnom Penh, the capital. Back in the United States, Bainum offered SAWS headquarters in Washington, D.C., \$200,000 if SAWS would purchase trucks to transport the food. The director of SAWS at that time told him that trucks were not needed in the capital of Cambodia, but offered to accept the donation for unrestricted use.

Undeterred, Bainum, one Sunday morning, made the same offer to the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. Twenty-seven people supported the project, calling it Church of the Savior — International Good Neighbors (COSIGN).

While Bainum was and is a Seventh-day Adventist church member, he had previously participated in the Church of the Savior's Jubilee Housing Program, an apartment house cooperative project for the poor in Washington, D.C. "I believe that at the Church of the Savior I really learned to appreciate the real essence of serving God by working with and sharing the suffering of

Adventist Hospital.

Former associates of her husband in the State Department arranged for Nguyet, under the auspices of CARE, to study the problem of rape among the Vietnamese boat people. During her eight-week stay the latter part of 1980 in Songkhla, Southern Thailand, Nguyet examined, treated, or interviewed scores of rape victims. According to Dr. Mehlert's data, women 15-20 years of age among the boat people face a 60 percent chance of being raped, not once but half a dozen, to 40, 50, or more times. Women in 70 percent of the boats suffer rape attacks.

Victims of multiple rape at sea nearly always arrived in Thailand with copious, yellow vaginal discharge, signaling gonorrhea. The women were deeply embarrassed by the odor which is strong and

repulsive and the gathering swarms of flies. Modesty forced them to clutch blankets around themselves, even during hot days. Walking was agony, with their legs having to be spread disgustingly far apart.

As a result of what she learned in her work, Nguyet made several suggestions: the dosage of medicine for treating venereal disease had to be increased to conform to accepted United States standards; a rape counseling program using Vietnamese refugee women themselves needed to be set up; because French Catholic physicians in charge of refugee medical care in Songkhla refused to perform abortions, other groups, such as the Seventh-day Adventists, should be asked to abort pregnancies resulting from rape. All her suggestions were acted upon.

poor and hurting people. Somehow, I learned a lesson there I hadn't learned other places.

"I had begun to wonder about my relationship to my church. I remember that once I brought a black woman to evangelistic services at a church in Maryland: I got scolded for it. And then I tried to bring her son to Vacation Bible School. I also found myself fighting American involvement in the Vietnam War and South Africa's racial policies. I began to wonder, was I a wrong person in the church or was I in the wrong church?"

Bainum took part in the civil rights rallies of Martin Luther King, Jr., on the mall in Washington, D.C., and was active in picketing Dow Chemical for manufacturing napalm used in the Vietnam War. Thus, when Church of the Savior Pastor Gordon Cosby inspired him through his sermon in August 1979, heard while he was driving the

Beltway, Bainum was ready to act.

As it turned out, the newly formed COSIGN was unfortunately unable to supply the desperately needed trucks, because of Cambodian government red tape. COSIGN turned its energies to other relief projects, some of the time combining its efforts with those of SAWS in Thailand. Jerry Aitken became a COSIGN employee and continued to supply food to the village of Sok Sonn which Hall and Bainum had found inside Cambodia. For the next 18 months Aitken, with COSIGN, cooperated with Dick Hall who was still leading SAWS in Thailand. In all, they transported nearly 80 SAWS doctors and nurses across the Cambodian border to Sok Sonn and constructed a makeshift hospital there. Denominational lines blurred: one-third of COSIGN's volunteers were Adventists. Bainum even arranged for a COSIGN office in a building on the Ekamai

Refugee Women Face Pirate Attacks

Even though the following account has been edited from Dr. Mehler's report, the details that remain may offend some readers. But only when the details of the boat journeys are confronted can we grasp the nature of the violence being done every day and night against unarmed refugees in the Gulf of Thailand.

A boat left Rach Gia October 6, 1980, with 78 persons, 17 of them females over 11 years of age. The trip followed the familiar pattern: robberies two days from the Vietnamese shore, followed by raping. October 8, 30 to 40 crewmen from four fishing vessels converged at evening on the motorless Vietnamese boat. Eleven of the Vietnamese women were distributed among the vessels for two hours of gang raping, before being returned to the refugee boat.

A 28-year-old single woman told Dr. Mehler that the fifth day a boatload of particularly large and heavy Thai fishermen started to tow the refugee vessel. Perhaps because she was ill, vomiting, bleeding from the vagina, and half-conscious from being raped two days before by eight men, she was allowed to sleep for a while. She awakened as she was being dragged to the captain's cabin on the fishing boat. She began screaming and kicking. In retaliation the fattest of the fishermen beat her about the face and began strangling her. Somehow she pulled free, ran half the length of the boat, stumbled, fell, and crawled to the stern. From there she managed to hide in the engine room.

The fat fisherman found her and dragged her over to the refugee boat with the help of four others, all of whom proceeded to rape her. She finally pretended to faint, hoping the attacks would stop. The

compound owned by Bangkok Adventist Hospital, 10 miles away.

Furthermore, Bainum was determined that COSIGN not compete with the other relief organizations in Thailand. "We just wanted to fill in the gaps in areas that weren't being taken care of." One of those gaps was the lack of drinking water in the refugee camps and Thai villages. With the influx of thousands of refugees, existing wells quickly dried up as the water table dropped. COSIGN volunteers, led by Aitken, began drilling wells. At first they drilled by hand, using a hand drill devised by Cliff Maberly, an Adventist missionary minister from Australia. In this way nearly 50 wells were dug in six months, not only inside refugee camps, but also in poor Thai villages which were losing their water to the refugees. Two wells were dug in COSIGN's adopted Cambodian village, Sok Sonn, between rounds of shell-

ing from nearby fighting. Eventually, a Japanese Buddhist organization donated \$75,000 for a large well-drilling rig and \$20,000 to operate it. The Quiet Hour radio broadcast added another \$75,000 for operations. Recently, COSIGN received additional funds to purchase a second well-drilling machine.

In June 1980, during Bainum's third trip to Thailand, he acted on his original impulse to help the boat people. He arranged for COSIGN volunteers to move one of the well-drilling machines to the port of Songkhla in Southern Thailand, the location of the main refugee camp for the boat people. Wells were dug inside the camp and in the adjoining communities. Bainum also found a need for English classes. Volunteers taught refugees during their three- to six-month stay in camp, preparing them for immigration to English-speaking countries.

fishermen paused to talk to each other. Suddenly, she felt a hot, slicing pain on her abdomen. Looking down, she saw blood flowing from her navel and her external genitalia. One of the rapists held a bloody knife in his hand. Her screams proved to the fishermen that she had not fainted. They resumed their raping.

By now, one of her legs was somehow caught by a projection on the deck and she could not spread her legs widely enough to satisfy the rapists. Thinking she was still trying to avoid them, one of the rapists took his knife and made parallel cuts on the inside of her thigh. The deck beneath her became slippery with blood. The raping continued with the fat man persisting for unendurable lengths of time. At that point, she did in fact faint.

Some time later she was shocked awake by a pail full of ice water dashed over her whole body. Hoping to avoid further attacks, she crept to the deck of the refugee boat, only to be met by fishermen guards who heaved her back to the Thai boat.

The second day of the orgy her knife wounds were soaked in mercurochrome, as was another refugee's sanitary napkin, which was then placed over her vagina.

Frequently, the fishermen came by and pinched her breasts roughly to see if she could still react. Some removed the sanitary napkin, only to leave when they saw the bloody mess around the vagina.

That evening, one fisherman pulled her over to pails of water, cleaned her with soap, clothed her, pushed her to the rail of the fishing boat, and dropped her back on to the refugee boat being pulled alongside. There, another Thai fisherman rubbed some perfumed liquid on her body and covered her mouth with his hand, forcing her to inhale some kind of aromatic spirit. When she showed signs of reviving, the fishermen gathered around. Four of them recommenced raping her. Finally, she reached a state of collapse and was left naked and moaning on the cabin floor.

The other 10 females were raped in similarly brutal fashion, except for the knifings. Apart from the 28-year-old, a girl of 13 was raped more than any other victim because of her desirably young age. When the fishermen left, they abducted two of the women and took them to Koh Kra Island, where they endured still further gang rapes. Finally, a UNHCR boat rescued them from the island.

In Songkhla, Bainum daily saw the victims of Thailand's fishermen-pirates crowding into the camp. Firsthand, he heard the stories of robbery, rape, and murder. When he returned to Washington, Bainum suggested that COSIGN sponsor a rescue boat. He was so concerned about the violence against the unarmed refugees, he said, that he thought that he would be willing for the rescue boat to be armed, prepared to conduct citizen arrests of pirates, if necessary. The proposal not only failed to be approved, but the meeting of the COSIGN board broke up in some disarray.

While continuing to lend his support to COSIGN, Bainum decided to form yet another organization — **Volunteers International** — which he felt could be more flexible and could provide less costly ways to send volunteers to Thailand. The key concept of the organization is that every volunteer pays his own expenses for a minimum of a month. If volunteers agree to assume the \$13 a day it takes to support themselves, including food, local transportation, lodging, and incidentals, Volunteers International will arrange with U.S. airline companies to fly the volunteers to Thailand free of charge.

Since its organization in October 1980, Volunteers International, a nonprofit, tax-exempt foundation with an annual budget of \$600,000, has been headed by Robert Bainum, president and chairman of a nine-member board. In 1980, Dick Hall left SAWS to become Asian director for Volunteers International and Jerry Aitken departed from COSIGN to become associate director. Three other full-time, salaried employees now work for Volunteers International. Most members of the board are volunteers. Glenn Rounsevell, vice president of the organization, is owner and director of a 12-grade private school in Fairfax, Virginia. He volunteers his time to recruit and interview volunteers. He has traveled to Thailand five times in the last two years, first drilling wells and setting up English schools for COSIGN and later beginning English schools for Volunteers International.

The majority of the foundation's board is

comprised of Adventists. Many of its volunteers have also been members of the denomination, although Volunteers International also welcomes those who are Christians in other denominations, and humanitarians, such as Rounsevell, who is a member of no denomination. The volunteers are placed with other relief groups in Thailand, but also work in the projects run directly by Volunteers International: teaching English, drilling wells, digging reservoirs and operating a mobile dental clinic. Among Adventist institutions, the faculty and students from Union College have responded with notable enthusiasm. As of January 1982, a total of 22 volunteers from across North America were working in three refugee camps, according to Rounsevell.

Some of the projects of Volunteers International have been possible because of a dis-

“ ‘We all have a tremendous amount of power to change things. The longer I live, the more I have found that evil things can be changed when you start to do something about them.’ ”

covery Jerry Aitken made on a business trip to Japan. When he learned that the United States Army was closing one of its hospitals in Japan, he convinced United States officials to give the \$1.5 million worth of hospital equipment, along with several trucks and other vehicles, to the Bangkok Adventist Hospital. The military even agreed to ship the equipment to Bangkok Adventist Hospital at its own expense. In addition to benefiting Bangkok Adventist Hospital, the army surplus included several buses, one of which local Thai officials asked Volunteers International to convert into a mobile dental clinic and outfit with the modern dental equipment from the army hospital. Volunteer dentists recruited by Volunteers International can now extend dental care into not only refugee camps, but poor Thai villages. As a footnote,

Bainum states that over 1,200 persons have become Seventh-day Adventists, baptized by Aitken, an ordained Adventist minister, during the course of his work for the Vietnamese refugees in South Thailand.

In early 1981, Bainum became concerned about the health care of rape victims arriving in the Songkhla Camp. Little attention was being given to the estimated 1,000 rape victims in the camp of 7,000 persons. In March of 1981, Volunteers International sent Bainum and three rape counselors to Songkhla. Candy Spitz, Jackie Miles and Cathy Craigs, all from the Washington, D.C., area, interviewed rape victims and their family members for 10 days and furnished Volunteers International with a written report. The report suggests that a self-help guidebook for the rape victim and her family is needed which would contain a step-by-step procedure to help victims verbalize what they are feeling and experienced. The three women recommended continuing counseling for the three-month period of confinement in the refugee camp and a follow-up system in the United States, such as a national toll-free number to provide referral to a local counselor.

Even after working with three different agencies, including two that he founded, to extend help to thousands of refugees, Bainum still remains concerned about the need that he first heard about from a taped sermon while driving his car that hot Washington day in 1979. He has taken some direct action to assist the boat people who continue to suffer and die in the Gulf of Thailand. He outfitted a 200-foot cruiser with an airplane radio and sent up a Cessna 180 to look for refugee boats. The plane, with its pilot and three spotters, flew out of Malaysia to report refugee boat locations to the rescue cruiser. Unfortunately, the cruiser ran aground on its first voyage. The plane, however, continued

to fly two or three times a week for a month.

The plane spotted refugees in trouble and then radioed for help. Once, a Norwegian freighter was diverted by the plane to a drifting boat and rescued 111 refugees. Another time, 39 women were discovered stranded on a tiny rock island. The plane succeeded in getting a boat to pick up the women who had been victims of gang rape. On another occasion, 60 refugees were spotted in a boat that had been rammed. All were eventually saved. In all, 339 persons were seen by the plane's spotters and rescued.

Later, when the Thai government established an antipiracy unit with two planes and two ships, largely paid for by the United States government, Bainum stopped sending his search plane aloft. Since then, however, the Thai government has stopped its antipiracy program. No planes have flown to locate refugee boats in distress since September 1981, although thousands of Vietnamese escaping Vietnam to find freedom in Thailand and Malaysia risk rape and death on the seas. Bainum now hopes that increasing attention in the United States can be focused on the savage attacks on the boat people and that public opinion will eventually force the United States and other governments to do something effective to stop the piracy.

While Bainum is disappointed that he has not been able to rescue even more refugees, he is grateful to have been able to assist people who want to volunteer to help Asian refugees. Furthermore, he remains optimistic about what Christians can do. "Anytime you complain about something wrong, you usually have the power to change it," he says. "It isn't enough just to feel bad. We all have a tremendous amount of power to change things. The longer I live, the more I have found that evil things can be changed when you start to do something about them."

Adventists Face Homosexuality

by Elvin Benton

Homosexuality — the word itself, the orientation it describes, the lifestyles it can represent — all of these and more are being increasingly acknowledged as urgent questions facing the church.

The denomination is responding in a variety of ways. A large part of the September 1981 issue of *Ministry* was devoted to "Homosexual Healing"; it featured a 10-page interview of Colin Cook by editor Robert Spangler, a three-page study by Raoul Dederen, professor of historical theology at the Seventh-day Adventist seminary, and an editorial by Spangler. The church organization has appropriated major amounts of money to help establish the Quest Learning Center in Reading, Pennsylvania. Headed by Colin Cook, the express purpose of the center is to help homosexuals achieve reorientation. As part of its general study of sexuality, the Biblical Research Institute as of latest reports has assigned a research paper (albeit only one) on the subject of homosexuality.

One of the most intriguing, and in many

ways, significant efforts of administrators to respond to the issue of homosexuality was the approval top church administrators gave to six Adventist scholars and pastors attending a gathering of some 35 homosexuals in early August 1980. The convocation was organized by Kinship, a group which describes itself as "An Organization for Gay Seventh-day Adventists and Their Friends." What Kinship described as a camp meeting was a major event in the long story of Adventist homosexuals. Whoever was the first homosexual Adventist probably kept the fact very quiet for the same reason that most homosexual Adventists still do: his or her church membership would have been in jeopardy if it were known that he or she was gay.

In the mid-'70s, a significant number of homosexuals, currently and formerly Seventh-day Adventists, responded to classified ads placed by a few Adventists in widely circulated gay magazines and newspapers. "Am I the only gay Seventh-day Adventist?" asked one. The response was so overwhelming that the one who placed the ad could not find time to answer all the letters.

Many had assumed that there were no

Elvin Benton, the religious liberty secretary for the Columbia Union, took his law degree at the American University, Washington, D.C.

other Adventist homosexuals and had determined either to hide the fact of their gayness or to leave the church and find a spiritual environment where their homosexuality would not seem to pose a threat to their fellow believers. Some found fellowship in Metropolitan Community Churches which sprang up in larger cities after the first one was founded in the Los Angeles area in the late '60s by Troy Perry. One of Perry's staunchest supporters in beginning the MCC was a former Seventh-day Adventist.

In early January 1977, a handful who had responded to a newspaper ad placed by a gay Adventist met in Palm Desert, California. It was the beginning of Kinship, and by April there were 75 members, a temporary chairman and four committees: membership, educational, social, and spiritual. The new group, largely from southern California, met two Sabbaths a month and also planned social events. A Chicago chapter soon began to thrive, and Kinship leaders had hopes for groups in all parts of the world where there are Adventists.

The organization was incorporated in March 1981 as Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Incorporated. Its mailing list in 10 countries now approaches 500 and includes a broad spectrum of occupations. The ratio of professional people is disproportionately high. A significant number are denominational employees, most of whom, understandably, use pseudonyms in their relationship to Kinship. Almost all are or have been Seventh-day Adventist church members. Several are friends of Adventists and would become church members except for what they perceive to be the church's negative attitude toward their homosexuality.

The idea of having a special camp meeting for homosexual Adventists was born at an early 1980 Kinship board meeting. The possibility of inviting a group of Adventist ministers was conceived shortly thereafter by a Kinship board member, who brought the idea to fruition by careful negotiation with General Conference administrators, who may have thought Kinship was appealing for denominational help to escape from homosexuality. Kinship leaders assert, rather, that they sought only mutual understanding be-

tween the church organization and gay Adventists and deny that any attempt was made to let it appear they were seeking "deliverance" from their orientation.

The spiritual interests of those attending the camp meeting in Arizona surprised many onlookers. "Listen to those gays; they keep singing hymns," marvelled one stranger, a guest at the ranch-style retreat where the camp meeting was held. Considering the stories of disappointment and frustration many of them shared at an evening meeting (see pages 38-46), their continued interest in the church was indeed noteworthy.

The camp meeting was rated a success by most, if not all, who were there. "I can't think of any other experience in my life, on a spiritual level, that has been so important," asserted one. Said another, "It's reaffirmed my faith that God is really watching over us, His children."

The church's authorized representatives, affectionately dubbed "the clergy" by the Kinship members, were Josephine Benton, pastor of the Rockville, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist church; Colin Cook, then a counselor at the Green Hills Health Center in Reading, Pennsylvania, formerly an Adventist pastor in England and America, now director of the Quest Learning Center, also in Reading; James J. C. Cox, then professor of New Testament at the SDA seminary, now president of Avondale College in Australia; Lawrence T. Geraty, Old Testament scholar and professor of archeology and history of antiquity at the seminary; Fritz Guy, professor of theology at the seminary; and James Londis, pastor of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist church in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Three (Cox, Geraty and Guy) were chosen because they were biblical and theological scholars. Two (Benton and Londis) represented pastoral concern. Cook, the only one of the six "clergy" who didn't claim to be "hopelessly heterosexual," was in the unique position of having practiced what he called "compulsive homosexual activity" for most of his adult life and for the immediately past several years having experienced a shift to a

heterosexual lifestyle. Cook, now married and a father, has written in denominational publications (*Insight, Ministry*) on the subject of the gospel's power to "deliver" Christians from homosexual tendencies.

Each of the "clergy" was given a generous amount of time to relate the results of his or her study and observations.

The two pastors, both of whom were familiar with the pain and isolation felt by homosexual members of their congregations, emphasized the need for the church's making an effort to understand gay people before judging the quality of their Christianity. Each had suggestions for relieving the hurt, suspicion and isolation that homosexuals have come to expect.

"What began to be clear was that a simplistic English reading of the few scriptural references to homosexual acts would not suffice to determine the Lord's will for homosexual persons today."

James Londis described what he believed to be a vast pastoral ignorance about homosexual people and their problems. He cited emotional damage as a frequent result of pastoral bungling and noted that many homosexuals have suffered a loss of self-image when their ministers write them off as basically bad. Often, they are suicidal after their pastors condemn them, causing them to believe they are eternally lost. Insensitive pastors often urge gays to marry, said Londis, thus adding to their sense of hopelessness when they know they are not attracted to the opposite sex. Ministers need to be educated, Londis urged, adding that those who have studied the issue in depth should help those who have not.

Josephine Benton related how her experience in pastoring and counseling Adventist homosexuals for seven years had forced her

to ask, "Would God require a whole group of people either to change orientation or be celibate when they didn't choose their orientation, and statistics say perhaps only four percent could change even with extensive counseling?"

"It's so easy for me, a happily married heterosexual, to say, 'You homosexual people must be celibate to be right with God,' " she reflected. Much study had convinced her that, while God was *able* to change anyone in any way, evidence needed to be examined concerning what God in fact does.

Colin Cook's presentation, made early Sabbath morning in a quiet Ponderosa grove near the ranch, was essentially a frank story of his emotional and sexual life. Laced with observations about the power of the gospel to change people, Cook's story was in sharp contrast to the experiences reported by most of the Kinship members who heard him. Cook asserted that everyone is by nature heterosexual, and that homosexual tendencies come from an illusory identity stemming from man's fall. To return to the rejoicing heterosexuality the Maker intended, Cook believes homosexuals must and can find deliverance by a "trained faith-response" through the gospel.

After offering his own experience as evidence of the possibility of change, Cook was queried closely by Kinship members who had "tried everything," including years of prayer, hundreds of hours of psychotherapy, and anointing by elders of the church, all without significant alteration of their emotional and sexual attraction to those of the same gender. Did his "deliverance" happen suddenly, as when Jesus healed lepers? "No," said Cook, "it came gradually and painfully." Is he never attracted to men now? "Sometimes," he admitted freely. Other, even more intimate questions were frankly answered as Cook made it plain that he isn't free from attraction but believes he has been delivered from the power of those attractions.

Cook was patient, even under somewhat aggressive questioning, and asserted acceptance of Kinship and its members while conceding that he believed all homosexual relationships are unhealthy and sinful.

What began to be clear, as the theologians got into their presentations, was that a simplistic English reading of the few scriptural references to homosexual acts would not suffice to determine the Lord's will for homosexual persons today. Indeed, the theologians themselves admitted that until recently they were not well informed. "Abysmally ignorant," one called himself. "Part of the problem" (of misunderstanding gay people), admitted another. All freely conceded that their studies were not yet complete and that some questions might never have absolute answers.

Lawrence Geraty undertook to examine the scriptural references to homosexuality in the area of his expertise — the Old Testament. Pejorative references there to homosexual acts, said Geraty, "may not be so hard to understand, but how they apply can be learned only in the human situation." According to Geraty, the Sodom story, for example, clearly refers to sexual acts, but the acts seem primarily to stem not from homosexual passion but from intent to degrade Lot's angelic visitors to the lowly level of women, who were then considered little more than chattels. Repeated references in both Old and New Testaments condemn Sodom for its inhospitality, said Geraty, while little or no explicit reference is made to its sexual sins.

References to homosexual acts in the Levitical "holiness code" have been read by religious people to make moral judgment against those acts. However, noted Geraty, other parts of the same code, such as rules against sexual intercourse during menstruation and against mixing dissimilar fabrics in the same garment, are substantially ignored. Geraty observed that theologians, arguing that some of the holiness code rules are moral and some only ceremonial, have justified these divisions of the Levitical admonitions, but that a careful biblical scholar wouldn't divide them in this fashion. If any can be ignored, perhaps none should be considered binding.

Geraty's bottom-line conclusion: that the Old Testament *by itself* (without the counsel of the New Testament and a contemporary

theology of sexuality based on the whole testimony of scripture) is not sufficient to settle the question of the morality of homosexual relationships in today's world.

Fritz Guy's concern was for identifying the questions the church must answer in relation to homosexuality. Moral norms, he asserted, should be determined by scripture, but there is also need for empirical evidence about what *is*. Norms are useless in a vacuum.

The Genesis story clearly sets forth a male-female norm for human sexuality, Guy believes. However, he cited research evidence that people do not choose their basic sexual orientation, but that rather they discover it after it has been formed either by heredity (as some very recent research is suggesting) or in very early childhood. For those who discover that they are homosexually oriented, Guy suggested as a goal the highest level of moral behavior of which they are capable. He admitted that to many Adventists, even to some of his fellow theologians, referring to homosexual morality seems a contradiction of terms, "like talking about dry water."

Guy cited some of the questions he believes the church must wrestle with: Is reorientation always possible for a homosexual person? If not, what then? Is celibacy the only acceptable alternative? If so, has the church fairly considered the vast loneliness that mandatory celibacy would bring?

In response to an audience observation that many homosexuals don't have a choice of orientation, Guy acknowledged that "I am what I am, but I am still responsible for my behavior. Even if, for example, I am a 'latent adulterer,' I can't let my feelings at any moment determine my actions." Guy insisted that "anything goes" is not a morality at all; he also admitted that the church may have a pretty difficult time deciding what is acceptable and what isn't, and why.

James Cox began his presentation with a remarkably concise statement that there are no terms either in Old Testament Hebrew or New Testament Greek that precisely equal our English words "homosexuality" or "heterosexuality." In fact, Cox asserted, there is no discussion in scripture of homosexual orientation. While there is men-

tion of certain homosexual *acts* unacceptable in the Christian community, none is defined with sufficient specificity for us to know exactly what is being described. One must understand the context of any scriptural passage, said Cox, before the real meaning of the text can be understood.

Cox pointed to clear New Testament disapproval of some kinds of sexual acts, both homosexual and heterosexual, even if determining exactly what those acts were is difficult. What is clear, Cox maintained, is that sexual acts growing out of lust — misusing people — were patently unacceptable.

Cox closed his presentation by noting that neither Jesus nor Ellen White said anything explicitly about the issue of the morality of homosexuality. Perhaps, Cox suggested, a question worth exploring is how to be sexually responsible.

The camp meeting ended with emotional statements by both “clergy” and Kinship members that much distance between them had been closed and that suspicions had been laid to rest. One Kinship member, a professional who had offered his car for the 100-mile drive from the Phoenix airport to the camp meeting ranch, said, “I prayed they wouldn’t put a clergy in my car. They did, and it was very healing to discover he could understand me. I hope some of the clergy can ride back to Phoenix with me.”

Following the camp meeting, the six “clergy” were invited to an all-day meeting at General Conference headquarters to report to top General Conference officers, the editors of *Ministry* and the *Adventist Review*, and a few selected others. The “clergy’s” three-page typewritten report began with a page of affirming quotations from some of the Kinship members who attended. Then came a one-sentence summation from the “clergy”: “We must add that it was an enlarging and challenging intellectual and spiritual experience for us also.”

Some of the most important impressions the “clergy” reported to the top leadership were of the warmth of the camp meeting’s fellowship and the religious seriousness of the Kinship members who were there. Sev-

eral noted their new awareness of the spirituality of gay Christians and of the pain they have suffered by alienation from the church. The “clergy’s” report listed nine proposals which had been developed during the closing hours of the camp meeting. They were, verbatim:

1. That the officers of BRI (the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference) be asked to set up a special subcommit-

“The consciousness of the church has been raised to recognize the fact that a significant number of its members and former members are gay Christians who have a love for the church and who would like to be Adventists.”

tee to study thoroughly the whole question of homosexuality and the church.

2. That balanced and responsible articles dealing with the biblical, theological and pastoral aspects of said topic be prepared for publication in the *Adventist Review* and *Ministry*.

3. That programs on sex education taught at our academies and colleges, seminaries and extension schools, church seminars and continuing education courses, and the like, include a unit on homosexuality.

4. That balanced and responsible reading lists be prepared for all the levels of education indicated under item 3.

5. That guidelines (similar to those voted by the Fall Councils of 1976 and 1977 with respect to divorce and remarriage) be drawn up for the benefit of pastors, teachers and administrators as they try to handle wisely, graciously and redemptively the particular cases of homosexuality that come under their care.

6. That we identify a number of informed and understanding pastors, teachers, counselors and other professionals, to whom our youth, on discovering that they might have a homosexual orientation, may turn with confidence.

7. That vehicles (such as hotlines) be set up so that youth in our academies, colleges and universities may contact such persons, assured of full confidentiality.

8. That the church recognize Kinship as a vehicle by which other young Seventh-day Adventists, discovering that they have a homosexual orientation, may find the help they seek. (Both the officers and general members of Kinship with whom we have been in contact have assured us that they are (a) opposed to proselytizing and (b) committed to referring those who call on them for help to those professionals who can give them the help they seek.)

9. That Josephine Benton and Lawrence Geraty be asked to serve as chaplains to the Kinship group. (The officers of Kinship have so requested.)

The proposals elicited vigorous discussion, resulting in qualified approval of the first seven and rejection of the last two. The first seven proposals could not be accomplished at once, since some could not be implemented before others were finished.

The last two proposals were rejected because it was felt that approving them would imply denominational recognition of Kinship, a step to which the church leadership was firmly opposed. There was apparent consensus, however, that while the church should not officially appoint denominational employees as chaplains for Kinship, the leadership would not stand in the way of their serving if they so chose and were approved by their employing institutions or organizations.

In the year and a half that has passed since that first camp meeting, much has happened. A second camp meeting, with twice as many in attendance, was held in northern California in August 1981. While the church was not asked to send representatives, five scholars and pastors met with the Kinship group. Reports from those in attendance reveal the same exuberance and optimism that characterized the 1980 camp meeting.

Eight regional Kinship groups have been organized in North America, each with its own director. There is a fast-growing group in

Australia, and Kinship leaders are confident that gay Adventists everywhere will respond when they learn of Kinship's existence. Local chapters have frequent Sabbath meetings, often gathering for potluck meals and afternoon and evening fellowship. A monthly newsletter goes to all members and trusted friends.

The church organization has not been idle. In addition to the preparation of the special *Ministry* issue on homosexuality, church officials at every level are speaking out in support of Colin Cook's Quest Learning Center. The leaders approve of the thesis Cook brought to the Kinship camp meeting, which is also the rationale he provides for his center: Although homosexual practice is sinful, God loves homosexual people and calls them to find their heterosexual identity in Christ through the training of their faith.

To some, the church's actions seem premature. Said one concerned pastor, "They're in over their heads. They've decided the issue without studying it." Several observers, both gay and nongay, wish the church's support could be directed to a more neutral program than Cook's. "We wouldn't mind if he simply offered to help us change, without trying to make it look like that's the only way we can be moral," said a young woman after hearing Cook lecture.

Others applaud the church leadership's apparently firm stand against accepting a gay lifestyle. A number of Kinship leaders and other known homosexuals have been disfellowshipped. One local church considering accepting the transfer of an openly practicing gay member from another Adventist congregation was told by its conference committee that it would almost certainly be dropped from the sisterhood of churches if it accepted the gay member into its fellowship. "Let them (homosexuals) worship somewhere else. We don't want them here," protested a leading layman in a local church. "If the church ever votes to approve homosexual relationships, I'm getting out," said a conference officer.

Certainly the consciousness of the church has been raised to recognize the fact that a significant number of its members and former members are gay Christians who

have a love for the church and who would like to be Adventists.

It is fair to say also that in the question of the morality of loving, committed homosexual relationships, all the good arguments aren't on one side. Careful students

on both sides concede freely that the subject is exceedingly complex and deserves patient and prayerful investigation. Whether or not the issue ever is finally settled, it will be impossible any longer to keep the question in a closet.

Growing Up Gay Adventist

In August 1980, six delegates accredited by the General Conference, including three seminary professors and two pastors, attended a camp meeting at Payson, Arizona, sponsored by SDA Kinship, an organization serving and representing homosexual Adventists. At one meeting the delegates asked Kinship members to tell their personal stories. "Growing Up Gay Adventist" contains excerpts from the accounts, here set down anonymously, of 10 of the 40 members attending. These accounts were chosen to be representative of the whole group.

The membership of Kinship is growing rapidly, now numbering over 300. There are perhaps 20,000 homosexuals with Adventist backgrounds in the U.S. (The number may well be higher: There is reason to think that conservative religious groups, such as Adventists, produce a higher proportion of homosexuals than average.) Many, perhaps the majority, leave the church, finding it too inhospitable an environment. (Half the Kinship members at the camp meeting no longer were attending Adventist churches, though most of these attended other churches such as "Metropolitan Community Churches," which have a particular ministry to homosexuals.) But many others continue in the church, some being very "closeted," even going so far as to bow to pressures to marry in

order to remain hidden; others now live openly and even win their friends to the church. According to Kinship leaders, a significant minority of their members are very active in the church, to the point, indeed, of holding various offices.

— The Editors

Speaker One: I do not ever remember having any sexual attraction toward women at all. As far back as I can remember, I always looked at men and was sexually attracted to them. For a long time, I did not really know the term for someone like me. I did not really know that much about sexuality when I arrived in academy. In my junior year there was a special class in sociology. It was in that class that I learned the name of what I apparently really and truly was. It was not until college, when I took several psychology and sociology classes, that I really began to understand it and began to do some reading on it. However, I never did anything about it sexually as far as actually being with another man until quite some time later. In both academy and college, I had felt several times like going and talking to someone, but I de-

cided there was simply no one that I could discuss the matter with in confidence who would respect that confidence and who would try to help me as an individual and not act like a hellfire-and-brimstone preacher.

Years later, I met a guy who over a period of time became my first lover. A year-and-a-half ago I went home to our family reunion, which I had not been to in about five years. One morning just before going to church, mother and I were talking as we had done for years about this and that and the other thing, when suddenly in the middle of a totally different topic she said, "I've been meaning to ask you a question." I had no idea what was about to come. She said, "Are you one of those California gay people?" I dropped the glass of orange juice that I was drinking. One decision that I had made when I became actively gay was that if anyone ever asked, I would not lie about it. I would not go around carrying a sign, but I would not lie about it since I have never made lying a part of my personality. So I said, "Yes, Mother, I am and have been for quite some time." My mother is normally a very happy-go-lucky type of individual. For the first time in my life, I saw her whole expression, her whole body, change. She began to cry; she began, symbolically, to beat her breast. She muttered a sort of semiquotation from the Bible which says, "It would have been better had you died in the womb than to be what you are now." She went on to state several times how dirty, how degrading, how obscene she felt it was. She has never been able to deal with sexuality very well herself. She felt that I was totally condemned to hellfire and damnation, that she was somehow totally responsible for my being this way, and that because she was responsible for my being gay, and therefore totally lost, that she was totally lost. It was just at this time that we had to leave for church.

We go to a very small church, the same one that she was baptized in, that I was baptized in. I had known everyone there all my life. We arrived there only to find out it was communion day. It was to be the first time that I had ever taken communion since becoming actively gay. I had no idea what to do. I could say "no," and the entire congrega-

tion would know that something was drastically wrong because I usually assisted in communion there. Mother went in and sat down; I went to a side room and prayed. I went out and sat down beside mother and we proceeded with the service. It came to the ordinance of humility, and the person who asked me was the pastor. I, of course, accepted; I had no other choice. Yet during the footwashing, I began to calm down. A peace began to come over me, and I accepted the Lord's promise that if it was His will that I should do it, then I should, and that He would understand and accept me. So I partook of the Lord's Supper. As it began, I reached over and took mother's hand and held it during the entire rest of the service. It is perhaps this one thing that has prevented her from totally disowning me. Somehow, because I lived through that experience, and was not struck dead, she apparently feels that the Lord must be in some way still with me.

Speaker Two: I was confused, and it affected me and the way I behaved socially because I didn't want anybody to know. There were a lot of things I didn't do because I knew I was a homosexual and I was afraid. Like schools — I would have loved to have gone to academy, and my parents would have sent me if I had asked. They sent my brother and my sister, but I didn't go because somebody might find out and I didn't want to risk the shame and all. And then when it came time to go to college, I knew my mother was concerned and she wanted me to go back to an Adventist school. I wanted to be an engineer, so I went to Walla Walla. But I stayed only a short time because I needed help and I wanted help, and I just didn't feel like I could get it there. While counseling was not the only reason why I chose the well-respected secular school I finally went to, it was one of the motivating factors. I went to Walla Walla thinking, "Okay, there will be people there that can help me." But I got there and I didn't know anybody who could help me, and I didn't know how to find somebody to help me. And even if I had, I'm not sure I could have trusted anybody at that time. But I went to the secular school and I

stumbled onto gay people. It was accidental; I guess all of us stumble onto them accidentally. I started to get into their mainstream, but fortunately, I was getting some very good counseling through the school. It was very personal, very private; there were no records or anything, which was good. But it was especially good that the counselor was a Catholic priest who could relate to it not only as a sexual matter but on a religious basis. And he encouraged me. He said that I had a good church, but that he realized that there were special problems — that being gay and being an Adventist was not going to be an easy thing for me.

My family knows now, and they're very supportive, but as far as I know they're the only Adventists who really know that I'm a homosexual. They reacted as I would expect them to. They were not happy at first; they bought me this little box of tapes. I think mother realized that was probably not the thing to do, but they were hoping, they were trying, and I appreciate that. They have been very good, they've accepted me, and my family life with my parents has been so much better since I have been able to say, "This is the real me." You know, "This is the way I really feel." We'd always been on the surface a close family, but I feel that the closeness is more true now that I'm not hiding something from them. I wish I could do that with the rest of the church and be accepted, because I feel like it would probably have a very similar effect.

Speaker Three: I grew up in a staunch Adventist family. My mother had taught in three different Adventist colleges; my father was a church elder, and so forth. When I realized that I was attracted to men, the fact was very horrifying. Indeed, it was a realization that I denied for a long time, because it meant that I was damned. And this showed itself in a number of unfortunate ways. For a start, it meant that for 10 years I was a practicing gay person but I didn't admit the fact to myself — I rejected the identity. It was not what I was, just something that I did. And it meant that I was very lonely because I never entered into a relationship. The reason was

that anybody who I had sex with then knew my terrible secret, so if I saw them coming, I ran the other way. So I never had sex with the same person more than once. You don't develop relationships that way. And it wasn't until I fell in love with somebody that the situation changed. And that was a remarkable transformation.

During this period of 10 years, I tried everything that I could not to be gay. All the things that you're supposed to do. Now I didn't go to any pastor, and wasn't told to do so, but I applied what one was supposed to do, like praying and crying and fasting and generally having a pretty miserable time. And worst of all, I went to the student counselor at the university, who was an exprofessor of psychology and said, "I don't want to be gay. I don't want to do these things that I do. I want to get married. I want to have children." And so he began a course of aversion therapy, and that was one of the most painful things I have ever faced. I responded by becoming very promiscuous and unhappy. Finally, after about six weeks, I broke an appointment and I never went back to him. And then when I saw *him* coming, I ran the other way. But all this was because of a guilt trip laid on me, I believe, by my background. And, of course, there was absolutely nobody to go to for counseling. I faced it alone. It was a very lonely existence.

Speaker Four: I became an Adventist when I was about 11. I went to Adventist schools from eighth grade all the way through college. I was attracted to the boys in academy and not attracted to the girls. But I never did anything in the academy with anybody. I managed to make it through college without seriously dating any girls. I did have some gay experiences, however, and all of them left me feeling very guilty.

My college roommate dated a girl who had a very close-knit family. They noticed that my family had moved and that I was awfully lonely. They sort of adopted me as an honorary family member. I grew very close to them. They were so together. Everybody knew everybody, and when there was a family reunion there must have been 75 people

there, and I was one of the family members.

After I graduated from college without getting married, my exroommate's wife was very concerned about this and kept telling me that if I didn't find an Adventist wife at college, it was going to be very difficult outside and that I'd better hurry up and find somebody. She told me, "You know, I know somebody who has a crush on you." That "somebody" was a member of the family.

"I wish that it would get to the point where a person could be accepted by the membership as a member, as a Christian, without this barrier of being a homosexual and therefore being unapproachable or somebody to be avoided."

And we dated for eight months, at which point the little rumors in the family were suggesting that I either ask her to marry me or let her look elsewhere. I very much wanted to belong to this family. I said, "Okay, I will ask her to marry me." And in the back of my mind there was a little voice that said, "You know that there isn't any attraction there at all, and you know what men and women do when they get married." And I said, "Oh, yes, but that will all change, it will all magically happen the day we get married." I had repressed my true feelings. I had refused to look at the fact that I was attracted to men.

The honeymoon was a disaster. No sexual relationship took place on the honeymoon nor during the three-and-a-half years I was married. This really was a problem. At the end of the marriage, I was something like 75 pounds overweight. I was a televisionaholic and a workaholic. I worked on the average of 60 hours a week, sometimes as much as 80 hours a week, just existing, not really living. My wife would try to discuss our problem about why we weren't relating to each other and when she would, I totally turned in upon myself and would not say a thing. I felt about an inch tall. She would cry. She'd say, "Talk

to me, talk to me, talk to me," and I wouldn't. I'd just sit there, wherever we were, and just draw inside of myself. I don't even think I really heard too much of what she said. I was just totally withdrawn.

Finally, circumstances led to a point where I decided that this just had to stop. I had to face this issue. It had already put me in a state of obesity and mere existence and it had destroyed my wife in the process. And so I finally got the courage to admit to myself that, yes, I was attracted to men. I told my wife and she didn't believe it when I first told her. She said, "Well, is it all right if I go and talk to a marriage counselor?" I said, "Fine." She went to the ministerial staff where there was a pastor who was very good in marital relationships. But he didn't know how to deal with homosexuality. He said, "I have no counsel I can give you."

As a result of all this, I left my wife. She felt very bitter about this whole thing. I went through such turmoil over this that I nearly jumped off a bridge. I had just a few personal belongings. I knew absolutely nobody in the city where I ended up. I think I had \$300 cash, no job, and I checked into a YMCA hotel. It was a month-and-a-half before I got a job. All my money had run out. I was living on peanut butter sandwiches, dried cereal and powdered milk. But during this time, I had the opportunity to go to the Metropolitan Community Church, talk to their ministers and see something totally different from what I'd been taught. My concept of a homosexual had always been this: a homosexual either was a man who ran around in women's clothing and lisped and swished; or a man who stood in a schoolyard with a trench coat and seduced little children; or somebody who, if you were walking down the street, would jump out and rape you right on the spot. And I knew that wasn't me. But what was I, if that wasn't me and I wasn't attracted to women? I found out that all these stereotypes I had learned were totally wrong. It was at this time that I was totally able to give my heart over to Jesus Christ. And you talk about a conversion experience; I really felt Christ come into my life at that time. The change in me wasn't immediate, but a change started then. The

people who knew me three-and-a-half years ago and know me now say, "You're a different person. You are 10 times happier than you were then. Your outlook on life is very positive and everything is totally changed." My relationships with people, both men and women, have really improved.

After I had started accepting myself, I wrote back to my wife and to the family, and I said to them, "You know, I'm really the same person you knew before I got married. And if we knew each other six years before I got married, I really see no reason why we can't associate with each other now. But I got a letter back in the mail that said, "We could no more associate with you than we could associate with a murderer who thought it was all right to kill people." And they stopped all communication with me whatsoever.

Speaker Five: I'm a third-generation Seventh-day Adventist. My ancestors communicated with Mrs. White and I come from a family of ministers, missionaries and nurses. I was 33 and married when I came out. It was to someone with whom I was working and with whom I'd been friends for a year-and-a-half. Gradually, I found out she was a lesbian, and we used to run around after work and at different times. I am presently active in the local church where I am. I don't tell anybody. Some people in the church, I think, know about my being gay, but there's no real place where I fit in church. I'm 41 years old so I don't belong with the youth. I'm a single parent in the Adventist church, so what place is there for me? There's a young married people's club, and they graciously allow people up into the 40s to be in that. But, in what way could I bring my lover, whom I feel married to, to the young married people's club in the Adventist church? I wouldn't want to go to a socially-oriented Adventist group because I've got somebody; I don't need anyone else. But I'm willing to help. I helped paint the building and sweep the floor, and whenever they have a work bee, I'm there; when they need someone to play piano in the children's division, I do that. Every prayer meeting I'm there,

every church service, just because I enjoy being there. I guess I'm a person who has been thinking about spiritual things since I was small, and I just enjoy that. But there's no place for me socially.

Now, if people could accept the fact that I was a lesbian, then yes. That's what makes the difference. If people could accept that, too, then I would feel a lot closer to them. If the people around me would accept my lesbianism, I would relate to them in a different way. But, as it is, I close myself off. So, I wish that it would get to the point where a person could be accepted by the membership as a member, as a Christian, without this barrier of being a homosexual and therefore being unapproachable or somebody to be avoided.

Speaker Six: I have just a couple of things to say. As the lover of an Adventist lesbian, I've had probably a unique experience. We do attend church together; the pastor is aware of our situation. I must admit that our pastor has been kind in every respect, and I really have to give him a lot of credit for that. Initially, he did not know at all how to relate to me. What do you say to the lover of a lesbian? And so, about all he could muster was a "hello," a quick exit and turning red. But, gradually, we began to talk, and he has encouraged me both personally and spiritually and that has met a need for me. Yet even though I feel accepted by him, there is no way for me to identify within the church and so I often feel very isolated. And that's difficult.

Speaker Seven: I'm a fourth-generation Adventist. I knew that I was different from about the age of six, but I didn't know the correct name for what I was. I knew the names of pansy, queer, sissy — all these things that society gives us to grow up with. It was perhaps in the fourth grade that I got my hands on the book called *On Becoming a Man* and found out my condition was very, very bad and I was probably going to be lost eternally unless I could find some way to redeem myself. So I got as involved in the

church as I possibly could. When I was a junior in high school I was the earliten Sabbath school leader. And that's how I got into doing things. I have never been in an adult Sabbath school; I have always been working somewhere.

Later on, I decided that I would have to be asexual in order to be Christian, that I couldn't be homosexual. Needing something to take the place of sex, I turned to the church, and also the school. When I was in school, I was president of my sophomore, junior, and senior classes, and then, after graduating, I started an alumni association and was president of that for three years. I was very active trying to deny that I was sexual, and yet all the time I knew that I was very sexual.

After graduating from La Sierra, I got a job as a youth pastor and then went on to teach school in Hawaii. While there, a student was kicked out. I had always gone to bat for the

“After the conversation ended, I went down to my car, and wrote a letter in the parking lot of the union office requesting that my name be dropped from the church. Fortunately, I didn't have a stamp.”

underdog because I felt I was an underdog. When this student was kicked out, his friends called me on the phone and said, “Would you go talk to the principal and try to get George back in?” This was the third time. I had gone to bat for him twice before. But this time he was being kicked out for having heroin in his room, and there was no way I could justify backing him another time. So I said, “No.” And they said, “Well you have exactly a half-hour before we turn over to the principal a hotel receipt from where you took that drag queen last weekend.” Now up to this time I had never had any sexual encounters with a male. I'd had plenty of offers, but I hadn't ever gone through with any of them. I was still living an asexual life. They had con-

cocted this story to blackmail me into going to bat for this student. I said, “Go ahead. I didn't do it. I have nothing to hide.”

In about 35 minutes, my phone rang. The principal was calling. He said, “I have a problem.” I replied, “You have a hotel receipt, right?” and he said, “Yes, I do. Did you go there?” “No, I didn't.” “Fine.” We hung up. That was the last time the matter was ever discussed with me. I figured that issue was dead. However, they felt that if there was smoke, there was fire. Though I was not told about it, there was a big investigation — questioning of all the students, both male and female. Nothing could be proved against me; still I was told that I was not going to be rehired. I asked why, and they said, “Well, we think you'd have a better opportunity to find a wife on the mainland than here in Hawaii because there are very few single women your age.” By the end of the school year, I still hadn't been offered a job, even though I had several inquiries from mainland schools. Later, a friend told me he'd overheard the academy principal telling someone who called for a reference concerning me that I was a suspected queer. Those were the terms, my friend said, that were used.

After not receiving a job, I went to Glendale to the union office, where I knew personally the head of education in the Pacific Union. I said, “I would really like to have a school. I have lifelong Adventist credentials, I'm a teacher, I want to teach.” He replied, “With your problem . . .” and I interrupted, “What is my problem?” “You know what your problem is. I don't want to talk about it.” After the conversation ended, I went down to my car, and wrote a letter in the parking lot of the union office requesting that my name be dropped from the church. Fortunately, I didn't have a stamp. When I got home, I tore up the letter. I decided that the Adventist church was stuck with me. I would always be an Adventist. I would stick it out.

Up to this time, I still had never had any sexual experience with anyone, male or female. I decided, here I am, unemployable, it's time I find out for sure. By accident I found where gays in my town meet at night. I went there three weeks in a row, every day,

meeting people, and I finally met a person I felt really comfortable with.

Later on, I came out to my parents. In the first initial shock they were very supportive. After about a week, they got to thinking about it and decided, "You know, this is something that should be prayed about." So they requested that the pastor make an announcement in church. As a result, I came out to the entire church and they have been very supportive.

Speaker Eight: I have a lot to be thankful for to the Adventist church. It has helped me a great deal in my life and I wouldn't have traded it for anything. Although being disfellowshipped is painful in many ways, I look back at it right now and I feel that God put me through that to be a bit more sensitive to others, and I want to use the experience in that way. The local church authorities found out some way or another — I haven't found out how, but they found my name either in a newsletter or some other periodical in connection with Kinship. And it was on that basis and nothing else that they went through with the procedure of disfellowshipping me. The pastor called me up at work on a Thursday evening about eight o'clock and told me that this was going to happen, that he was not going to tolerate anything like this in his church. Fifteen minutes after our conversation ended I was at my mom's house where I was supposed to have dinner. That pastor had already called her and told her everything. Up until this point my mom didn't know anything about my lifestyle. Well, I was later to learn that she had actually known that I was gay since I was a small child, but we had never discussed it. And she told me later that she felt that whenever I got ready to tell her that I would and that she would take it then. But now she was distraught as I walked in the door, completely apart. She was crying and I didn't know really what to do but just kind of calm her. She was angry, not at what she found out about me, but at the way the church had handled the thing.

I would like to see a little bit more acceptance within the church. I had a great time and enjoyed it very much for the almost 12

years I spent as an officer in the youth department, and also the MV society we had in our church, and being a deacon and a choir member and playing the piano and all the things that went with being in the church.

Speaker Nine: I was not raised in the Adventist church. I did not attend any of our schools. I was converted about 10 years ago. Up to that point, I had been living basically an open gay life. I didn't advertise it, but I didn't hide it either. I studied for about a year through the influence of friends and decided to make my decision and was baptized. Unlike most people, I was fortunate in having someone to go to and talk about things, because my lover was my pastor. But about three years later, he was defrocked as he was suspected of being gay. They did not have anything but circumstantial evidence, but nonetheless, they did it, and they did it in such a way that — well, the world wouldn't have done it that way. They wouldn't have been as cruel to him as the church was, including the conference and the secretary at the time. They never once went to the man, never confronted him the way that we're supposed to as Christians, and in fact, as human beings. This thing was dragged out. They brought in lawyers, told him if he would withdraw his name they would drop the whole thing. He did this but they continued it. And it's still being continued today, even though it's been years, and he's no longer in the same area that he lived in. This almost devastated me. I felt at the time that I would leave the church. What else could I do? I resigned my position — at the time I was the head deacon. I started going to another church and there I decided I was no longer going to hide this thing. So I confronted the pastor with the situation. His reaction was, "Well, so what?" We had a beautiful talk that evening for two hours; such discussion continued over time.

Because of my loneliness, I got involved with Kinship in order to make contact with other gay Seventh-day Adventists. I always printed my name, address, and phone number in our newsletter, and I knew that one day I would probably be disfellow-

shipped. I thought I was prepared for it. When it actually happened, it was not the choice of my pastor; it was an order that came direct from the conference president. My pastor, being not yet ordained, had no choice in the matter. He was against the idea, but he had to go through with it. He brought the head elder over. They went through the whole spiel. I was given an ultimatum — either resign or this thing would be taken before the church and everyone would know. This didn't bother me so much as the fact that if I was a known homosexual in that church, in any church, everyone that came to church with me would be suspect. And I had too

“My wife and my pastor went to every business in the community informing them of what I was. I lost half my customers, and for the next three months I got phone calls and letters threatening my life.”

many friends, both nongay and from Kinship, who attended church with me, and I didn't want to place this burden upon them. So I went ahead, after counseling with some other people, and had my name withdrawn. This has hurt a great deal. Even though I thought I was prepared for it, I wasn't.

Nothing has changed in my relationship with God or with the people in the church. Even though more people know about my situation, they are still warm and friendly, and I am fortunate in that respect. This is not true of most other gays, unfortunately. What bothers me the most, I guess, is the contradiction. I am accepted by God but not by His church, and my name has been dropped from the books.

Speaker Ten: I'm probably older than most of the Kinship members. I've been married 24 years. At the time I got married, if you were a Christian, you did not admit to yourself that you could possibly be gay. In

my case, I certainly didn't believe I was getting married simply for a front. I simply lied to myself and said that I could not possibly be gay. I hadn't really had gay experiences, except a couple of things that happened in academy, so I went ahead and got married. I found that organically I could perform. Emotionally, I don't think I was ever satisfied. I think I walked all night at least one night a week for 24 years. About eight years ago, my marriage started going sour and I believe, honestly, it was outside of the sexual thing. About five years ago, our three lovely children had all left, gone away to college or academy, and my wife was working nights. Eventually, one night I had to face myself and say, “The problem with you is that you're gay. If you're ever to love anybody it must be a man.” The realization devastated me and my faith in God at that point, because I knew that I had not chosen to be this way. I had been trying to choose for 20 years to be otherwise.

A few years ago the Sabbath school lessons were on Christian ethics, and a friend of mine, who's a member of Jack Provonsha's class, used to tape the Sabbath school lessons and send them to me. Somehow, approaching the Bible for the first time from an ethical point of view rather than a proof-text point of view, I managed to at least save my sanity at that point. I realized that perhaps God could love me.

Yet I was still living a lie. About a year-and-a-half ago I finally came to complete emotional breakdown and I admitted to my wife and to my pastor that I knew that I was gay. Well, the first response was “You go home and pray about it,” which I knew wasn't going to help. I'd been doing that forever. And then he handed me a whole bunch of books of the sort that were supposed to deal with problems in marriage. It had nothing to do with me and my problem. And within a week I found out that he had announced it to the whole church. He had also called my children and announced it to them. Well, I lived through that, and then they asked me to go see a psychologist, which I did — an Adventist psychologist. A dear lady, I must say. She at least helped me in some respects to regain my personhood,

although she didn't know anything about homosexuals. After five months of weekly 10-hour trips to go through this, and it wasn't doing much good, I finally had to tell my wife and my pastor I could not go back to living a lie. I couldn't do it conscientiously.

This time my wife and my pastor — I live in a very small community of about 5,000 people, very red-necked — went to every business in the community informing them of what I was. I lost half my customers, and for the next three months I got phone calls and letters threatening my life. Three times

shots have been fired through the windshield of my car as I drove along. I've had no more communication with the church, except for the pastor one time coming to say he felt that he'd made a mistake. I've continued to attend church. Only two people from church have spoken to me in over a year. One of those dear ladies, a church board member, called last week to tell me that my name was being removed from the books. They have never contacted me about it. More recently, three elders of the church visited me and asked me to stay away from church altogether.

Church Funds Program for Homosexuals

by Colin D. Cook

In a recent meeting the General Conference President's Advisory Council (PREXAD) decided to extend a three-year grant to Quest Learning Center, a counseling-training center dedicated to helping people find freedom from homosexuality. The decision was made in conjunction with a Columbia Union Conference vote to supply part of the funding for a six-month period with further consideration to be given after six months.

The General Conference hopes that as more and more union conferences are apprised of the work of Quest and become aware of the needs of people with a homosexual struggle, they will become sup-

portive to the grant and help the Quest program to develop nationally.

This decision follows an impressively balanced statement by the 1981 Spring Council of the General Conference, which stated that although "it is not possible for the church to condone practising homosexuality," nor "endorse organizations or individuals . . . who contend that homosexuality be considered an acceptable alternative," nevertheless, "the church must extend compassion and understanding to homosexuals seeking Christ's deliverance, restoration and redemptive grace. It must show concern by making every effort to develop a ministry that will meet their particular needs" (*Adventist Review*, May 21, 1981).

Neal Wilson, president of the General Conference, has led out in encouraging the new financial arrangements. He has named Duncan Eva, special advisor to the president

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and one-time vice president of the General Conference, liaison to the Quest Learning Center.

Wilson and Eva have stated that the Quest method of ministering to the person in homosexuality is the one that the church could legitimately support on biblical and moral grounds.

Quest holds the view (in company with theologians and biblical scholars like Barth, Henry, Von Rad, Dibelius, Conzelmann and others) that homosexual activity is not in harmony with the will of God and that the universal creation-norm is heterosexuality. Nevertheless, Quest holds, the great message of righteousness by faith in Christ brings mercy and hope to all people in homosexuality.

Christ, the Imago Dei, is the restoration of the creation image, in whom all men find their identity by faith. The search for wholeness and heterosexuality within ourselves thus comes to an end. Men and women receive Christ as their image of God, in whom is their wholeness and heterosexuality. As a trained faith grasps this awareness there is a breaking of the power of the homosexual orientation so that freedom from homosexual drive and activity is a real possibility.

Quest, however, does not believe that a change in orientation is a requirement for acceptance with God or entrance into the fellowship of the church. Although deliverance from homosexual activity is the call of God, the healing of the orientation will vary according to growth and is a result of our faith-identity with Christ rather than a way to it. Nevertheless, Quest holds that the orientation may be healed and that all who desire it may realize their inborn, though fallen, heterosexuality, thus opening the way to heterosexual marriage and family.

The Quest program provides a seven-service support to counselees. The weekly Homosexuals Anonymous meeting (a copyrighted and trademarked program) presently has an average of 14 in attendance weekly. Of these, 40 percent are Adventists and 60 percent of other Christian faiths. About 10 of the 14 are from out-of-state, having located in Reading for six months to a year to receive the Quest experience.

The Growth Classes, also held weekly, consist of a lecture in areas like family, friendships, work, recreation, and finance, followed by group discussion and group counseling. The one-on-one counseling covers family history and present experience as it may be reinterpreted and perceived anew through the therapy of the gospel. Four other services involve Host Families, Home Bible Fellowships, Peer-Counseling and Church Community Worship and Fellowship. Assessment of the Quest program by professionals has been very positive. (Charles Neff, medical director of Philhaven Mental Health Facility; Dr. Paul Miller, author of *Peer Counseling in the Church*; and Dr. Richard Lovelace, author of *Homosexuality and the Church*.)

The church funding came about after the writer, who is director of Quest, presented a five-page proposal in March 1981 to the General Conference via Duncan Eva. Eva, once appointed to oversee the matter, contacted Wallace Coe, president of the Columbia Union Conference, and Gordon Henderson, president of the Pennsylvania Conference. They appointed Bryce Pascoe, of the Columbia Union Conference Health Department, and Dr. Paul Smith, chairman of the Pennsylvania Health Foundation, to assist the writer in the development of the organizational arrangements.

The Quest program is not designed to be an institutional development but rather an aid for the churches. Freedom from homosexuality comes as people with homosexuality experience a spirit of love and affirmation within the Christian community. Quest hopes, therefore, to see the development of 200 Homosexuals Anonymous chapters across the country in five years and possibly 1,000 in 10 years. It is also expected that eight regional Quests will develop within that same period to serve the churches.

Already monthly training seminars (Seminars I, II, III) have been developed at Quest to train ministers, other professionals and concerned laity in the content of Homosexuals Anonymous program and the art of leading it (Seminar II). Seminar I, held in circuit, deals with psychological, theological, philosophical and ecclesiological issues in-

volved in homosexuality. Seminar III, also held in Reading along with Seminar II, provides training for Christian counseling in homosexuality.

As a result of a January Seminar II, Union College, in Lincoln, Nebraska, now has the second Homosexuals Anonymous chapter in the country. Arlee Torkelsen, a member of the psychology department at Union College, was responsible for its launching after he was funded by the departments at Union to attend the January seminar.

Accountability by Quest will be maintained through a board of directors meeting monthly and a board of trustees meeting annually. These boards are still in the process of formation. Great care is being taken to find persons who hold a solid and hopeful view of the gospel and who are comfortable with the gospel's relevance to deliverance from the healing of homosexuality. At present, the

board members are being chosen by those directly involved in planning: The director of Quest and the representatives of the conference, union and General Conference. Later, as organization develops, a constituency will appoint the board. Care is being taken to see that the board appointees also fairly represent each union conference and a broad spectrum of concerned thinkers.

The action of the General Conference toward Quest is a response to Christian community concern. The Seventh-day Adventist church now will give support to a healing ministry to people experiencing homosexual orientation. The implications are unquestionably far-reaching for both practical theology and church ministry. However, Quest does not now become the "official" church program for people in homosexuality. There must also be other ways of speaking the same word of hope.

The Davenport Bankruptcy and Recent Litigation

by Tom Dybdahl

After the initial excitement surrounding Dr. Donald John Davenport's filing for bankruptcy, and disclosures that **Adventist organizations had loaned almost \$18 million to the doctor**, the matter disappeared briefly from view. But now it has come roaring back, largely due to a class action suit charging the church and several officials with fraud and financial mismanagement. The suit has also brought attention to certain actions and conflicts that had occurred in the preceeding months.

Following Davenport's bankruptcy declaration in July 1981, a hearing was held at the Federal Court in Los Angeles on September 3, 1981. Approximately 70 people attended, about half of them lawyers. Many of the others were Davenport creditors, curious about the fate of their funds.

At the hearing, Dr. Davenport refused to answer any substantive questions about his finances, claiming Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination on the advice

of his lawyer. However, he did request that his bankruptcy be converted from a chapter 11 filing to chapter 7.*

Davenport's attorney argued for the switch, but four other attorneys spoke in opposition. After briefly considering the request, Judge Barry Russell denied it, suggesting that creditors might have fewer rights under a chapter 7 proceeding and that Davenport's refusal to answer questions might be a block to gathering the necessary information.

Since the bankruptcy filing more than seven months ago, the court-appointed trustee and his staff have been trying to sort out the doctor's finances and to come up with a complete list of his assets and obligations to creditors. **The work has been slowed considerably by Davenport's refusal to cooperate with investigators.** Meanwhile, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that he has sought permission — unsuccessfully — to resume bidding on post office buildings.

*Under federal bankruptcy laws, in a chapter 11 filing, after the debtor's finances are reorganized, he may get back on his feet somewhat, and then creditors will collect more — or perhaps even all — of their money. **With a chapter 7 filing, assets are simply liquidated and the money is divided among the creditors according to a well-delineated line of succession.**

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When the Annual Council met in Washington, D.C., October 6 to 14, 1981, denominational leaders took steps to put the church's financial house in better order and prevent another Davenport-type fiasco. The guidelines on conflict-of-interest were tightened, and Audit Review Committees were set up to check on union and conference financial statements.

In addition, the Annual Council set up an Arbitration Steering Committee to "handle equitable distribution of any assets recovered and provide [a] mechanism for arbitrating any disputes arising between church entities." A report on the action in the *Adventist Review* carefully noted that while the Council had agreed to such a committee, the action was "subject to ratification by church entities." The group was to be headed by Kenneth Emmerson, former General Conference treasurer and now a general field secretary, and composed of officers and lay members from the conferences involved with Davenport, as well as officials from the unions and the General Conference.

Church leaders were fearful that without such a committee there might be legal battles between church institutions with conflicting claims to Davenport's limited assets. For example, Davenport had given first mortgages on the post office at La Sierra, California, as security on loans to three different church institutions, and the doctor did not own the property in the first place.

As voted by the Council, the steering committee was empowered to make final settlements and was required to set up an appeal process. Church organizations did approve the idea, and the committee met three times through the fall and winter.

But the most notable result of discussions about the Davenport matter did not appear in any official report of Council actions. Many leaders felt strongly that if the denomination was to retain the confidence of members in the church's financial dealings, anyone who had money in a revocable trust should be paid on demand, even if the funds had been lost in the Davenport bankruptcy. Further, they believed that interest payments on these funds should continue, even if the money was

gone. After considerable discussion, a consensus developed that this should, indeed, be the church's policy. *It was made clear that if any conference or union could not repay trust monies because of a lack of funds, the General Conference would work out a loan.

Even as it was being struck, however, this consensus was in jeopardy. On September 17, 1981, Gertrude Daniels, an 85-year-old woman from Yamhill, Oregon, had written to the North Pacific Union asking for her money back. Her lengthy letter to Charles F. O'Dell, director of union trust services, detailed her view of how she became involved with the union.

"Church leaders were fearful that without such a committee there might be legal battles between church institutions with conflicting claims to Davenport's limited assets."

In her letter Mrs. Daniels wrote that back in 1970 she had taken money from the sale of her home and from her savings and gone to see Wayne Massengill, then director of North Pacific Union trust services. Rather than simply taking her \$10,000, he convinced her to loan the funds directly to Donald Davenport. She did so with the help of the union, and shortly received a note payable to Gertrude Daniels or the North Pacific Union Conference, which she placed in trust with the union. Over the years, she had some qualms about the safety of her funds, but when she contacted the union she was told that everything was fine.

Mrs. Daniels reported that in 1978 her interest checks began to arrive late. When this happened, she would contact Massengill, and payment would follow soon after. But when her yearly interest for 1980 was late, she contacted the union trust depart-

*This was never officially voted, but several participants called it a "consensus" or a "clear understanding." No announcement of this policy was made to the trustees.

ment by phone and told them that she would like to withdraw all her money. They assured her that it was secure, and in April 1981, she received her interest check, though it was a bit short.

Disaster hit in July. She received a note from the North Pacific Union Conference that Dr. Davenport was in financial trouble, followed quickly by a letter from the bankruptcy court in California saying that her money might be lost. Later that summer, she was further disquieted by reports from a friend that **the union's lawyer could not help her with any claims because to do so would be a conflict of interest.** So she wrote to ask for her money, adding that she was in serious need of cash to take care of some pressing business matters before winter. "I feel bad about having to do and say all the things I have had to in writing this letter," she wrote, "but I knew of no other Christian way to handle the matter and getting the money that is rightfully mine returned to me." Copies of the letter were sent to General Conference President Neal Wilson and the General Conference Insurance Company in Riverside, California.

According to Mrs. Daniels, nearly two months passed before she received a phone call from the North Pacific Union, suggesting that she see the union's attorney, John Spencer Stewart. A meeting was arranged for late November. About the same time, she received a letter from A. J. Patzer on behalf of President Wilson.

Patzer's letter reflected the consensus that had come out of Annual Council. **"It is our consistent position that those who entrusted money with the church will get their money back. Church leaders have a sacred responsibility to live up to those responsibilities and return the funds."** Then he added: "It is our suggestion that at such a time, you need money, that you contact your conference office."

So Mrs. Daniels met with Stewart. But she reported that after reviewing her situation, he washed his hands of the matter. He told her that the money was gone and that she had no claim on the union. Mrs. Daniels then contacted Ernest Ching, an Adventist attorney from Tustin, California, who was al-

ready representing a number of Davenport creditors.

Another retired trustor, 87-year-old Arthur Blumenshein of Arch Cape, Oregon, was having a somewhat similar experience. After Davenport's collapse, he was worried about the \$60,000 that he had placed in trust with the North Pacific Union which had then been loaned to the doctor. After pondering the matter, he called Ching. On October 23, 1981, Ching sent a letter to O'Dell, director of the North Pacific Union trust services, on behalf of Mr. Blumenshein, asking for the money plus interest. A response was requested within 10 days.

O'Dell did not respond, but Ching received a call from Stewart in early November, asking for more time to study the situation. Shortly thereafter, Ching said, he received a letter saying the union would give the problem further consideration, but that they did not see things quite the way he did.

Based on these responses, Ching decided to act. **On December 16, he sent out a 30-day notice letter to the North Pacific Union Conference, to each of its conferences, and to the General Conference, stating that he intended to file suit on behalf of the trustors who had lost funds in the Davenport bankruptcy.***

Ching received no response from the General Conference, and only another phone call from Stewart, saying again that the union was looking into the matter. An official from the Washington Conference wrote to say only that his conference should not be named in the suit. So **on January 22, 1982, Ching filed suit on behalf of Gertrude Daniels, Arthur Blumenshein, Helen Black and others similarly situated.**

Meanwhile, the arbitration panel was having problems of its own. Not only was the group struggling to prevent suits among church entities, it soon faced another problem — how to handle insurance claims. Some unions and conferences were considering filing suit against the **General Conference In-**

*The 30-day notice period is required by Oregon law to provide time for the potential defendants to remedy the problem, and thus avoid the suit.

insurance Company (called Gencon Risk Management Service) to try to collect for their losses.

Two Gencon policies were of particular importance. Church officials were covered by Directors and Officers Liability, as well as Trustees Errors and Omissions Liability. There were clear limitations on these policies, however. The directors and officers liability covered only individuals, not organizations. And virtually all Davenport loans had been committee decisions. And the errors and omissions liability was a third-party coverage, and it was unclear whether this policy would make up investment losses. Under this coverage, if a conference or union had lost money, they could probably not collect from the insurance company directly. But if a third party sued a church organization, and won, the errors and omissions policy might be used to cover the loss.

“The suit also alleged that the defendants had committed fraud and securities violations, and that trust funds had been ‘laundered’ through Dr. Davenport so they might be used for operating costs.”

Because of this somewhat tricky situation, there were widespread suggestions that the North Pacific Union Conference (which had loaned some \$6.4 million to Davenport) was deliberately refusing to follow the consensus agreement and return revocable trust monies in an effort to force a suit. The logic was obvious: if they honored the understanding, the Union would have to pay the money; if they lost a suit, there was a chance the insurance company might pay.

Indeed, the whole Davenport matter was putting pressure on the church's insurance company. On January 4, 1982, the president of Gencon, Charles O. Frederick, wrote a five-page letter to the presidents and treasurers of all conferences and institutions in the North American Division, setting forth his

views on Davenport-related claims. The letter was not authorized by General Conference officers, and it took some of them by surprise.

In highly charged language, Frederick wrote that “in spite of the approximate \$23,000,000 potential investment loss, the church still cannot discipline itself and is headed full throttle down the road toward disastrous litigation between conferences, between conferences and church officers, and between conferences and the church-owned insurance company.” He argued that the insurance policies written by Gencon were not meant to cover church investment losses. He recommended that another arbitration board be established to solve the financial problems between conferences and avoid litigation. In his view, the existing committee members “cannot possibly function as an arbitration board,” and might face allegations that they were “engaged in a cover-up scheme to protect their own selfish or individual interests.”

Frederick made it clear that if any conferences or unions tried to sue Gencon to collect for their losses, the company would fight the claims. However, he suggested that the church “cannot afford to pay the legal fees, which are already astronomical.” He recounted at length the benefits that Gencon had brought to the church and what a disaster it would be if the company were threatened. He closed with a flourish:

If the feedback we have received from the field is correct, it would seem to indicate that the constituency and the majority of church administrators not involved with Davenport are opposed to having the International Insurance Company pick up the tab at their expense. . . . Also, this feedback indicates that greediness for the all-mighty dollar is the source of our trouble with Davenport investments. Also, greediness towards the insurance company for recovery of uninsured losses, without due respect to business ethics and the moral concept of contractual provisions in the insurance policies, is responsible for turning the church toward the entanglement of litigation which may end in disaster. Even the Gentiles know that this may be a disastrous course for the church to

follow. Personally, I hope the brethren will see the light of day and avoid further complications and unnecessary legal expense.

Again, time has almost run out and positive action must be immediately taken to turn the "Davenport Express" around and avoid unspeakable adverse publicity for our church.

While many people felt that Frederick was overstating the case considerably, there were insurance problems. So the arbitration steering committee, at a January 26 meeting in Thousand Oaks, California, set up a second subcommittee on insurance matters to examine claims that had been rejected by Gencon. And this steering committee is working on a policy for dealing with insurance claims from the conferences in a way that will be acceptable to all parties concerned, including Gencon and any other underwriters involved. The goal is to avoid costly litigation among jurisdictions and institutions of the church.

At the same meeting, the consensus on repayment that came out of Annual Council may have been put back together. The North Pacific Union Conference apparently agreed to honor claims from those whose revocable trust monies had been lost to Dr. Davenport. If the union had followed the policy earlier, this suit would never have been brought. It was a bit late.

The class action suit, case #A8201 00413, was filed January 22 in the Oregon Circuit Court for Multnomah County (Portland). Named as defendants were the North Pacific Union Conference and its legal arm, the North Pacific Union Conference Association, as well as all the conferences in the union and their associations, the North American Division and its corporation, and the General Conference and its corporation. Individuals named were former General Conference president Robert Pierson, current president Neal Wilson, Wayne Massengill and Charles O'Dell, former and current directors of North Pacific Union Trust Services, and James Hopps, in-house attorney for the North Pacific Union Conference.

The 19-page complaint was a class action suit on behalf of "all individuals who invested funds with Donald J. Davenport upon the advice and with the assistance of the defendants" and then put their promissory notes in trust with the church, as well as those "whose funds were placed in trust with the North Pacific Union Conference Association and whose funds were thereupon invested with Donald J. Davenport." The plaintiffs asked for \$10 million actual damages and \$23 million punitive damages.

The complaint charged that the defendants had breached their fiduciary duties by — among other things — having conflict of interest, failing to adequately check the security of the loans, and not informing the plaintiffs of the substantial risks involved. The suit also alleged that the defendants had committed fraud and securities violations, and that trust funds had been "laundered" through Dr. Davenport so they might be used for operating costs. Attached to the complaint were five pages of requests for production of documents from the organizations and individuals named.

As with other church-related court cases, the issue of whether the suit should have been brought at all raised almost as many questions as the issues covered by the suit itself. Here were three Seventh-day Adventists, represented by an Adventist lawyer, suing their church. And there could be no doubt that the suit would cause the church additional public embarrassment.

The plaintiff's lawyer, Ernest Ching, felt that he had no option. Although he represented more than 30 of Davenport's creditors, he stated emphatically that he had "never received anything in writing from the General Conference or their general counsel" about the case. Further, he said that none of his clients had received any notification about the arbitration process that was underway or the apparent policy on repayment of trust monies.

In informal contacts with other Adventist lawyers, Ching said he had made it clear that "under certain conditions" he would be willing to work with an arbitration panel. Subsequently, he was invited to a meeting with church lawyers in December 1981 to discuss

setting up such a group. But shortly before the scheduled time, the meeting was postponed. Since then, neither side has taken the initiative to organize a meeting.

"I don't know what else I could have done," Ching said. "We were getting virtually no response from the church. There was no mechanism set up to resolve the impasse, and no effort made to set one up." He used the case of Mrs. Daniels as an example. "When she was refused payment by the North Pacific Union Conference, she was told only that she had no claim. Nothing was mentioned about an arbitration board or possible appeal."

Finally, Ching felt that he had to file suit soon or the statute of limitations might run out on some of his clients. Davenport's business affairs were highly irregular in many cases, and the doctor had been delinquent on some of his obligations for months or even years. Once the statute of limitations on fraud had expired, creditors would have no legal claim. Ching also saw the suit as a mechanism to get the facts of the situation to all individuals who had trust funds that had been loaned to Davenport, and to insure that they all were treated fairly.

The General Conference was named in the suit for two reasons, Ching said. First, he felt that — despite their warnings about Davenport — the General Conference did have some responsibility. They had audited the North Pacific Union Conference's books, and knew that some investment guidelines had not been followed. If the guidelines had been enforced, there would have been security for all loans. Second, he hoped that the General Conference might be more responsive than the North Pacific Union Conference.

But the litigious climate that had resulted from the Davenport bankruptcy troubled many General Conference leaders. In the February 4, 1982, issue of the *Adventist Review*, Neal Wilson's "From the President" column was titled "Adventists and Litiga-

tion." He did not refer specifically to the Davenport fiasco, but it clearly was the catalyst for his comments.

Wilson pointed out that one of the "deplorable practices" Paul condemned in the Corinthians was taking their disputes to court. He quoted Paul's appeal from I Corinthians 6: "When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? . . . To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you."

After reviewing the excuses sometimes used for court actions, he asked: "What is the right thing for me to do when I have been, or think I have been, wronged: Do I take seriously the principles outlined in Scripture and the counsel Ellen White gives on how to settle matters, or do I yield to the ways of the world?" He answered: "If there is any other alternative, the court is no place for a Christian." And he raised the point that lawsuits may not only be ill-advised, they may also be sinful. "You can win a court case and lose your soul."

In spite of his strong words, Wilson had left the door slightly ajar with the clause "if there is any other alternative." As the class action suit drags on, honest people will certainly disagree about whether alternatives existed, and about what options might have been pursued.

But one thing is not in doubt. The Davenport affair has brought considerable disrepute to the church, and it continues to do so. The church's goal in this crisis should not be to simply weather the storm, cut its losses, and try to tighten guidelines. The goal should be to develop structures that provide for more openness and accountability, in financial as well as theological matters. Changes like these involve risk, but might have nipped the Davenport disaster in the bud. If we can develop such structures, we will have purchased something valuable with our lost dollars.

Decisions

A Situationist View?

John Brunt. *Decisions: How to Use Biblical Guidelines When Making Decisions*. 96 pp. Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1979. \$4.50 (paper).

reviewed by Daniel Augsburger

When asked about moral issues, Christians commonly answer simply, "Do what the Bible says!" But on closer examination, the Bible says nothing on many topics, on others, seems to give conflicting answers (e.g., on divorce), and on still others offers opinions that appear to be time and culture conditioned (e.g., on the status of women in the New Testament). In the light of such difficulties, it is a pity that so little has been written on the role of the Bible in ethical decisions, and to make bad matters worse, that so much of what is available is written in technical language or appears in journals that the average person is unlikely ever to use. For those reasons, one will appreciate doubly the simplicity, the clarity, and the brevity of Brunt's book. It is an easily read but always thought-provoking work that meets a real need.

Brunt's thesis is that the Bible is relevant to modern problems, but that the determination to obey God's will is not sufficient. It

must be accompanied by moral insight and reflection. Because of his central assertion that to obey is not enough, it would be very easy to misunderstand Brunt. The reader, therefore, should finish the book before passing judgment, because many statements of the first chapters are only clarified fully in later pages.

Scripture, Brunt asserts, has two main roles — it shapes the values and principles by which we live, and it guides our critical reflection when we face a specific problem (p. 76). Brunt discusses his thesis in the setting of the gospel and the relationship that it creates between God and man and devotes helpful chapters to the value of the law and the biblical narratives in guiding or facilitating the process of decision. In the last chapter, he illustrates his method and clearly reveals the degree to which he seeks to be practical and simple.

What for many readers will be a serious flaw in Brunt's work appears most clearly in the last chapter. To demonstrate his method; he asks whether milk-vending machines should be closed on Sabbath in Seventh-day Adventist dormitories — one of those perennial Sabbath-keeping issues. The author gathers all the applicable material from the Bible and suggests after each text a set of questions that should lead to the solution of the problem. Brunt, however, does not reveal the "proper" answer, which would be contrary to his approach to ethical decisions. But faced with that long series of questions, the average reader will likely feel terribly frustrated, so much the more so when the

Daniel Augsburger, who teaches in the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, took his doctorate in French from the University of Michigan and his doctorate in church history at the University of Strassburg.

author says that all those texts must first be studied carefully in their original setting.

Obviously, equally conscientious readers will give different answers to the questions suggested by Brunt, and this leads us to ask ourselves whether the author relativizes all ethical decisions. The author provides his own answer: "By the Good News of God's grace our actions acquire a certain relativity — *not* the kind which says that since all things are relative, it doesn't really matter what you do. Not at all. But what *is* of ultimate significance is not our specific decisions and acts, *as such*, but the way that our actions express our response to God" (p. 17). If Brunt is right that it is not our specific decisions and acts, *as such*, but the attitude they express that carries ultimate significance, then one may well question the worth of spending so much time trying to reach the "right" solution. Is not Brunt forced to accept the situationist answer that any loving act is right?

Undeniably, we find situationist consonances in *Decisions* (pp. 25, 32), but does he go so far in that path as to say that it may become advisable to break one of the commandments? Brunt denies that categorically (p. 56), and in the chapter "Summary" he rejects several other models of moral decision, for example, the "just obey" model, the "do what Jesus would do" model, and the "do what the Spirit commands" model. Yet, one may wonder what substantial difference there is between his approach and situationism.

The real role of the law for Brunt is not so much to dictate actions but to shape our understanding of ourselves and the world around us (p. 59). That internalization of the law will protect us from rationalizing any act, good or bad, as an application of the principle behind the command. The law, therefore, primarily serves an educative function (p. 60).

Does Brunt rely too much on man's rational capacity to decide what is right? Is the ethical decision really logical, or is it not rather intuitive, depending more upon character, mind, and emotion than intellect? Jesus said: "You shall love . . . with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind," thus calling for the involvement of

the total being in the ethical response. Adventists traditionally have placed little stock in conscience, choosing rather to emphasize the duty to obey all the commandments. However, is not that capacity to set values on actions, even if it appears to be more reliable in what it condemns than what it permits, a vital aspect of the image of God in man? The promise of the new covenant is the law written on the heart, rather than the capacity to wrestle with the law in the book, for when the intuitive process is baffled, reason finds itself helplessly torn between many solutions. Thus, Brunt's emphasis on the influence of the law in determining our values may be more valuable than his effort to show how "to think through" a decision. *Decisions* should be read by many, for it cannot help but challenge certain misconceptions and help one to understand better what is involved in an ethical decision.

A 'Thinking' Posture?

John Brunt. *Decisions: How to Use Biblical Guidelines When Making Decisions*. 96 pp. Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1979. \$4.50 (paper).

reviewed by Ricky E. Williams

John Brunt, in *Decisions*, is as insightful about how *not* to use the Bible in making decisions as he is about how *to* use it. In fact, the book likely frustrates the many readers who choose a book like this to help them find "absolute" answers. Brunt is aware of this potential frustration, but is justifiably nonapologetic, since what the reader gains instead of neat answers is still very worthwhile.

The first half of the book attacks the decision-making philosophy or methodology of the stereotypical Adventist (if such a person exists). Brunt basically uses a straightforward, didactic approach to ac-

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comply with this, but occasionally resorts to tongue-in-cheek statements such as, "After all, our own weak and sinful reason is hardly competent to show us what to do" (p. 24). The book powerfully, but professionally, asserts that it is balderdash to believe that we do not use "our weak and sinful reason," regardless of the manner in which we use the Bible as an aid. The reader quickly discerns that the book defends a "thinking" posture. Such statements as "responsible Christian action varies with time, place, culture," may be hard for some to hear who prefer not only a God, but also answers that are changeless through the ages. Brunt presents a landslide of opinion from Ellen White recommending abstinence from the flipping of coins to obtain important answers. Unfortunately, he is strangely silent on the story of Gideon — a narrative that frequently forms the backbone for many Adventists who make decisions via "fleece testing."

One weakness of the book is the paucity of overt discussion regarding the power of the Holy Spirit to aid in making decisions. One might have the impression that it is reason, and reason alone, that can help us understand the biblical passages. In a quiet way, the book establishes a pattern that supports the work of the Holy Spirit, but Brunt could have enlightened the reader about the role that conscience performs.

For the most part, Brunt lucidly presents his material and exhibits a gift for finding illustrations that are particularly apropos to his abstract discourse. Not only does he use excellent examples from the Bible, but his selection of illustrative material from

common-day events contributes to the reader's comprehension.

Late in the book the reader does discover that there are indeed "rules" to follow when looking at Bible examples. The methodology or "rules" include such insights as: "before we ask, 'What is the relevance of the passage for my problem?' we must first ask, 'What was the biblical writer trying to say in *his* circumstance?' Before we inquire what a passage of Scripture *means* for us we must ask what it originally *meant* for the author and those to whom he wrote" (p. 67). We can then follow up with questions that lead to personal insight: "To what extent is the issue confronting me similar to and/or different from that addressed in the text? To what extent can we generalize the story? Are there inherent principles that I should consider in my case?" (p. 69). Alas, for some, the work of chasing down the answers to these appropriate questions will seem too monumental, but for those who persist, the book ends with practical, contemporary examples.

The book reminds us that God understands our weaknesses and continuously loves us, and that we present our choices as a response to His love rather than as a necessity for salvation. One comes away from the book with an increased desire to refrain from passing judgment on the decisions of others, which in itself makes the book valuable reading. As Brunt says, "the Bible is relevant for our decision-making not only as it helps us make particular choices but also as it transforms the character or the kind of person we are, for that, in turn, conditions all the future decisions that we make" (p. 66).

Responses

On Waldenses, Soviet Union and Other Issues

A Problem of Records

To the Editors: I read with interest Donald Casebolt's article "Ellen White, the Waldenses, and Historical Interpretation." I also reread the chapter "The Waldenses" in *The Great Controversy*. I have some observations.

I believe it is apparent that favorable records of the opponents of Rome are few, and this seems to be especially true of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. Concerning the Waldenses, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "The origins of the movement begun by Valdes are obscure. The sources are few, mostly of late date and largely hostile, since they are from Catholic writers or inquisition records."¹ It further suggests that there were variations of belief and practice among the Waldenses.

Casebolt faults Mrs. White for saying the Waldenses "saw the plan of salvation clearly revealed."² He wonders how they could merit such "glowing words" from a prophet. We might note here that an ancient prophet quoted God as saying, "I have found a man after My own heart who will do all My will."³ We accept this evaluation, knowing all the while that the man was a liar, a murderer, an adulterer, and a polygamist. Surely David was a man after God's own heart and he did God's will — yet we wouldn't try to make everything he did fit this picture.

Mrs. White speaks of Huss and Jerome as being "faithful light-bearers" and of Luther as a "righteous man standing upon the sure foundation of the Word of God."⁴ If these three men could come today requesting baptism, would we baptize them? Not, I am sure, until they straightened out their doctrine. It may seem unlikely that they should deserve glowing words of praise from the pen of a prophet — yet when they are immersed in their time and world, we see that they, along with some of the Waldenses and many others as well, were true reformers. They didn't see all that we see, or understand all that we understand, but with eyes heavenward and with a faith that risked everything, they kept the light burning amid midnight darkness. They were God's people, preserving His truth for generations to follow, preserving it in the face of fierce and bitter opposition.

Casebolt makes the assertion that Mrs. White ascribes a one-thousand-year history to the Waldenses. From volume 4 of *The Spirit of Prophecy*, he quotes her as saying "behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains . . . the Waldenses found a hiding-place. . . . Here for a thousand years they

maintained their ancient faith. . . ."⁵ It is my opinion that the paragraph that contains this statement does not demand that "the Waldenses" be the antecedent of "they." I think the antecedent is found in the sentences which were omitted in the SPECTRUM quotation. The complete quotation reads: "Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains — in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed — the Waldenses found a hiding-place. Here the lamp of truth was kept burning during the long night that descended upon Christendom. Here for a thousand years they maintained their ancient faith."⁶

I do not believe it was the purpose of this paragraph to date the Waldenses. There were other places in the chapter where it would have been more natural to do that. The intent of this paragraph is to show that "the persecuted and oppressed" (among whom were the Waldenses) have in all ages found refuge in the bulwarks of the mountains and that this was especially true during a thousand years of papal supremacy.

My conclusion that this was the intent of the author is based on the idea that the whole, "the persecuted and oppressed," is greater than a part, "the Waldenses." This conclusion is sharpened by her wording of this paragraph in *The Great Controversy* where (seemingly to clarify her former statement), she replaced "they" with "witnesses," making the last sentence to read: "Here [in the bulwarks of the mountains] for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith."⁷

Casebolt suggests that Mrs. White was misinformed when she speaks of the witness to the truth by the Waldenses and a similar witness by their "brethren" the Albigenses. Since their beliefs were divergent, Casebolt concludes that they could not be brethren, nor could they bear a similar witness to the truth. From the context, it is evident that Mrs. White is not speaking of similar witness to the truth borne by teaching, preaching, or published Bible doctrines. The similarity I find expressed on pages 271 and 272 of *The Great Controversy* is not the similarity of belief, but of sacrifice. Mrs. White is showing how France had "crucified Christ in the person of His saints," and secondarily she is describing the heroic witness borne by Protestants as they gave their all for the Word of God. The Waldenses "laid down their lives"; the Albigenses were "put to death with horrible tortures"; the Huguenots "poured out their blood." The various Protestant groups were, I conclude, "brethren," not necessarily in agreement of beliefs, or even in cooperation. Theirs was a fellowship of suffering. They were brethren in the witness of their shed blood.

There seems to be little doubt that Mrs. White used the

writings of historians in the compilation of her writings, but Casebolt's article failed to convince me that her comments about the Waldenses contain "clear-out, gross historical errors."

C. B. Harris
Calexico Mission School
Calexico, California

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1971, vol. 23, p. 149.
2. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1911), p. 72, quoted in *SPECTRUM* (February, 1981), p. 39.
3. 1 Samuel 13:14 and Acts 13:22.
4. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 115 and 160.
5. *SPECTRUM*, p. 38.
6. Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, pp. 70-71.
7. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 66.

Poor Scholarship?

To the Editors: One stands somewhat aghast to see a journal which claims to be intellectual and scholarly in content filled with charges and assertions based on poor scholarship such as mostly comprises the article by Donald Casebolt, "Ellen White, the Waldenses, and Historical Interpretation" (Vol. 11, No. 3).

We are all aware that one can find conflicting historical opinions and accounts. It is not always easy to determine which account is exaggerating or distorting history, either in ignorance or with an ulterior motive, and which is presenting a factual account. A quick surface survey may give one a false impression if one is examining only biased sources. As an example of surface skimming let us consider the claim that the Waldenses originated with Peter Waldo of comparatively recent times, as stated by Donald Casebolt. It is most interesting to note that we find records of Catholic origin for just such assertions, of course with a self-serving purpose. The Catholics hated these dissenting groups fiercely, recognizing them as very antagonistic and threatening to Catholic concepts.

One point to keep in mind is that the Roman church classed all these dissenting groups as one, and used their names interchangeably. At this time we generally refer to all of them by the general term, "Waldenses." Benedict stated it this way: "Whenever, therefore, in the following sketches, the terms Berensarians, Petrobrussians, Henricians, Arnoldists, Waldenses, Albigenses, Leonists, or the poor men of Lyons, Lollards, Cathari, etc., occur, it must be understood that they intend a people, who agreed in certain leading principles, however they might differ in some smaller matters, and that all of them were, by the Catholics, comprehended under the general name of Waldenses."¹

The Catholics did everything they could to reduce the impact of the Waldenses, including trying to remove their historical validity. B. G. Wilkinson notes that Bishop Bossuet, a papal antagonist of the Waldenses, attempted to date their origin at about 1160. "With almost undetectable shrewdness he analyzed every item of history which he thought might give the Waldenses an early origin, and then drew his false conclusions."² Mosheim states, "This writer certainly did not go to the sources, and being influenced by party zeal, he was willing to make mistakes."³

A former Waldensian minister who apostatized and became antagonistic to his former friends gives three reasons

why their faith was pernicious. "First, because it is of longer duration; for some say that it hath endured from the time of Pope Sylvester; others from the time of the apostles; second, because it is more general. For there is scarcely any country wherein this sect is not. Third, because when all other sects beget horror in the hearers by the outrageousness of their blasphemies against God, this of the Leonists hath a great appearance of piety: because they live justly before men and believe all things rightly concerning God and all the articles which are contained in the creed; only they blaspheme the Church of Rome and the clergy."⁴

Here are a couple of quotations which show the antiquity of the Waldenses. Dr. Faber states: "Now this district, on the eastern side of the Cottian Alps, is the precise country of the Vallenses (Waldenses). Hither their ancestors retired during the persecutions of the second and third and fourth centuries: here providentially secluded from the world, they retained the precise doctrines and practices of the primitive church endeared to them by suffering and exile."⁵

According to Alexis Muston, "The patois of the Vaudois valleys has a radical structure far more regular than the Piedmontese idiom. The origin of this patois was anterior to the growth of Italian and French — antecedent even to the Romance language, whose earliest documents exhibit still more analogy with the present language of the Vaudois mountaineers, than with that of the troubadours of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The existence of this patois is of itself proof of the high antiquity of these mountaineers, and of their constant preservation from foreign intermixture and changes. Their popular idiom is a precious monument."⁶

These points seem to me to be pertinent to any truly scholarly dissertation or paper about the Waldenses.

Raymond O. Whitley
John Swartzel
Adventist Research and
Development Association
Portland, Oregon

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, vol. 1, pp. 112, 113.
2. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, p. 220.
3. Mosheim, *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, b. 3, cent. 9, pt. 2, ch. 5, par. 4, note 5.
4. Saccho, *Contra Waldenses*, found in *Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, vol. 25, p. 264.
5. Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, pp. 293, 294.
6. Muston, *The Israel of the Alps*, vol. 2, p. 406.

Casebolt Replies

I first heard the argument that Mr. Harris raises in regard to the antecedent of "they" about three years ago via C. M. Maxwell. Implicit in this argument is the admission that Waldensian history does *not* extend to the first centuries A.D. Mr. Harris, by citing the *Britannica* as an authority for the fact that the Waldenses *did* begin with Valdes [=Peter Waldo ca. 1170 A.D.], evidently realizes this, while Whitley and Swartzel do not. Evidence within Mrs. White's Waldenses chapter indicates that she did not realize this either, and thus contradicts the interpretation which Harris wishes to give the word "they." This evidence includes (1) several other phrases which distinctly show that Mrs. White believed in the great antiquity of the Waldenses: a) she speaks of them resisting the papacy "for centuries"; b) she states

that "theirs was not a faith newly received"; and c) she asserts that "through ages of darkness . . . there were Waldenses . . . who kept the true Sabbath." (2) The title of the chapter and subject of discussion is "The Waldenses," not persecuted groups in general. (3) The placement and function of this chapter within the book is to fill the thousand year gap between "Persecution in the First Centuries" and the time of Reformation precursors. (4) The phrase "persecuted and oppressed" is a parentheses, not the focus of emphasis within the sentence, and thus "the Waldenses" is the closest and most likely antecedent. (5) The original statement parallels a statement by Wylie who most certainly did believe in a great Waldensian antiquity. The later slight change in wording in no way affects the above overwhelming contextual evidence. No one denies that Mrs. White was entirely misinformed regarding the Albigenses' actual doctrine. Why deny that she erred as to the Waldenses' antiquity on the basis of a phrase interpreted out of context?

The interpretation that the Waldenses and Albigenses were brethren — in suffering — is artificial. The Moslems suffered from the Catholic crusades and were not brethren of either Waldenses or Albigenses. Mrs. White clearly stated that the Albigenses preserved the "true faith" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 97) and gave "witness to the truth" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 271) when they obviously did not, as I originally stated.

Harris contradicts both himself and Mrs. White when he faults my criticism of her for stating that the Waldenses "saw the plan of salvation clearly revealed." First, he agrees with Mrs. White's assessment, then admits that the Waldenses "didn't see all that we see." How clearly did they see, then? Mrs. White credits them with keeping Sabbath, rejecting salvation by works, and in general likens them to the apostolic church. Apart from paraphrasing Wylie and Andrews, her main original contribution to the chapter is a long panegyric on the Waldensian gospel ministry on justification by faith alone. This is what Mrs. White meant by "clearly revealed," yet as my article points out, the Waldenses did think that works and alms played a role in salvation, were uneasy with the concept of Christ as their "sole justification," and did not keep the Sabbath.

I stated in my original article that along with Wylie "other Protestant historians of his time" believed in the great antiquity of the Waldenses. Now Whitley and Swartzel, mainly on the basis of quotations from precisely such historians, charge with "poor scholarship" and "surface skimming." I have read most of the sources they mention, and on the points in question, these sources are unreliable. In particular, Faber has not a shred of historical evidence to support the assertion he makes which they quote. For example, with all the time and resources that L.E. Froom had available in writing *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, the best argument in favor of a great Waldensian antiquity he could raise was the concept that the Waldenses absorbed other older dissident groups in their spread during the thirteenth century. This is analogous to claiming that Seventh-day Adventists existed prior to the mid-nineteenth century on the basis that some of its adherents were members of older church groups such as Seventh Day Baptists or Methodists. Yet even he admits that there are problems in the theory that the Waldenses literally descended from early-era Christians and prefers to see their succession in spiritual terms. In any case, there is no mention of the Waldenses prior to the late twelfth century in any primary source material, regardless of the nineteenth-century historians quoted by Whitley and Schwartzel.

Don Casebolt
Roseburg, Oregon

Adventists in the Soviet Union

To the Editors: Your issue on the Soviet Union was very interesting and informative. Just as a reflection on the Shelkov issue, I would like to quote one portion of my interview with M. P. Kulakov and N. A. Zukaluk for the January 1981 issue of *Znaki Czasu* (*Signs of the Times*) in Poland. I visited officially the Soviet Union in September 1980 and in October 1980 and both Russian leaders have visited Poland. Following are two questions and answers from that conversation, which, I hope, will interest your readers:

Q. *Western mass media have recently reported information that there are arrests among Seventh-day Adventists [in the USSR]. What is the real situation?*

N. A. Zukaluk: I can say that in recent years there have been no arrests among Seventh-day Adventists. If there were arrests at all, they did not deal with our believers.

Q. *There was a specific mention about 84-year-old Shelkov. Who was he?*

N. A. Zukaluk: Oldrich Sladek, president of the Czechoslovakian Union, whom I was with in September of last year, was able to speak with a son-in-law and daughter of Shelkov. He himself asked whether Shelkov was an Adventist. The answer he received was that not only wasn't he an Adventist, but that he even wasn't a believer, nor a Christian. He was arrested, not for religious reasons, but for his antistate activities and sharing of false propaganda.

You may want to share this with SPECTRUM readers. Facts presented in your magazine differ somewhat from the above-mentioned statements.

Ray Dabrowski
Editor
Znaki Czasu

Amnesty International Help

To the Editors: I would like to tell you a little about Arseny Stepanovich Matsyuk, the Seventh-day Adventist who is our group's prisoner of conscience. Arseny Matsyuk is one of five Seventh-day Adventists who were arrested on July 17, 1980, for distributing "unofficial" religious literature, i.e., literature not printed and distributed by the Soviet government. These people were distributing a bulletin of the "breakaway" Adventist sect called "Open Letter, number 12," published, we think, by the Seventh-day Adventists' unofficial publishing house called "The True Witness."

All the five prisoners belong to the breakaway Seventh-day Adventist sect in the USSR. Breakaway Adventists do not accept the Soviet state's stringent restrictions on organized religious activity. Those Adventists (and likewise Baptists and Pentecostals) who accept the state's guidelines for religious practices are allowed to worship in congregations which are registered with the authorities. They do so at the cost of not being able to give organized religious instruction to their children and having to submit

to other official interference in their choice of ministers and the content of their sermons. Adventists who refuse to accept these restrictions are not allowed to register their congregations and are in an illegal position. Arsenty Matsyuk refused to accept them and, in consequence, has been imprisoned for well over a year. We think that he is now in what the Soviet's call a Camp for Common Criminals.

If you know of any people who might be willing to write to the Soviet authorities on Arsenty Matsyuk's behalf, would you kindly give them the following address:

SSSR
Ukrainskaya SSR
Zhitomirskaya oblast
g. Zhitomir
Oblastnaya Prokuratura
Prokuroru

The correct salutation is: "Dear Mr. Procurator:"

This is the address of the procurator of the Zhitomir region of the USSR, the region in which Arsenty Matsyuk was arrested. The procurator is an exceedingly important official, and we are concentrating our appeals on Matsyuk's behalf to him.

Any letters addressed to the procurator should be extremely polite and should express concern that Arsenty Matsyuk has been imprisoned because he gave expression to his religion's beliefs. The letters should not contain religious expressions. Our idea is to let the Soviet authorities know that all sorts of people everywhere are concerned about Matsyuk's well-being.

Kim McCormick
Amnesty International
Group 56
26 Locust Avenue
Lexington, Massachusetts 02173

SPECTRUM readers may wish to circulate petitions that will be sent to the procurator. These petitions are available from Ms. McCormick, who will mail them to the USSR. The Editors.

Foundation Helps Adventists

To the Editors: Readers of your issue on Adventism in Russia may be interested in the work of the Christian Forum Reserch* Foundation which is being organized. As God leads, the foundation will study the plight of Adventists under repressive governments and will cooperate with other organizations in publicizing instances of oppression.

We also hope to provide encouragement and assistance to those facing persecution or discrimination, including supplying Bibles and Adventist literature where they are forbidden or difficult to obtain.

The foundation has applied for, and expects to receive, tax-deductible status. Full financial disclosure will be made annually. Anyone interested in further information should send a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Christian Forum Reserch Foundation, 1111 Fairgrounds Road, Grand Rapids, MN 55744.

Sidney Reiners.

*This spelling is correct.

On Openness of God

To the Editors: Thank you so much for printing two very different reactions to Richard Rice's book, *The Openness of God*. Once again, *SPECTRUM* has lived up to its name by publishing an array of alternatives which can only enrich our conversations and enhance our lives.

If I had to choose between them, I'd side with the reviewer who suggested that Rice didn't go far enough, instead of with the reviewer who implied that Rice went too far. But there is a third way of viewing Rice's work and this is to see it as a genuine flowering of true Adventism. This is how the matter presently appears to me.

Richard Rice, like every modern Seventh-day Adventist, has been profoundly influenced by Ellen White (1827-1915). Ellen White, in turn, was deeply influenced by the teachings of John Wesley (1703-1791). And John Wesley was greatly influenced by the views of Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), who persuasively argued that the ideas of John Calvin (1509-1564) regarding the relationships between God and humanity were neither biblical nor reasonable. Indeed, the Remonstrants, as the followers of Arminius called themselves, were condemned by the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) because they remonstrated against five central beliefs of Calvinism then and now: (1) God predestines some for salvation and some for damnation; (2) Christ lived and died only for those previously predestined to be saved; (3) the Holy Spirit is truly effective only among those predestined for salvation; (4) those whom God has elected to be saved cannot resist God's mercy; and (5) these persons ultimately will be saved irrespective of their personal decisions. By protesting these doctrines, Arminius and his followers contended for a more "open" view of God. And, it must be remembered, many theological descendants of the Remonstrants have given everything, sometimes even surrendering life itself, for their more scriptural and rational view of God.

The Openness of God does not merely expound and explain the views of Arminius, Wesley, and White, because it is written by a theologian rather than an historian. Instead, it identifies the central aspects of the Arminian alternative to Calvinism and articulates the logical assumptions and implications of this option. True, Arminius and Wesley resisted the logical consequences of their own understandings of God with respect to the question of divine foreknowledge. It is somewhat less certain that this is the case with Ellen White as evidenced by her unembarrassed assertion that God's promises and threatenings are conditional. But the important point is that Rice has done exactly what we ask our systematic theologians to do. He has surveyed our theological heritage and identified an emphasis which appears to be of continuing importance. He has pondered this emphasis until he can see at least some of its assumptions and implications. And he has eloquently related these results of reflection to practical existence. What more could we possibly desire?

I agree that no mere mortal knows enough to say exactly what God does and does not know. But I also agree that the doctrine of absolute divine foreknowledge has been linked in Protestantism, both historically and logically, with doctrines that every Seventh-day Adventist rightly rejects.

There is room, therefore, for Rice's book which dares to take the logical implications of our theological inheritance seriously.

David R. Larson
Christian Ethics
Loma Linda University

Book Fills Real Need

To the Editors: I would like to disagree with Hollibert Phillips' review of *The Openness of God*. Phillips belittles the central issue of the book by asking: "What is this turning point, this bit of logic, upon which so much is made to depend? It is the claim that 'the idea of absolute foreknowledge excludes creaturely freedom.'" Having thus dismissed any who agree with this as only "purportedly logical," Phillips states that if we persist in seeing a problem here, we must be confused. "God's foreknowledge," he declares, "or anyone's for that matter, imposes no causal necessity whatever on any state of affairs that is fore-known."

It is argued that John's freedom is intact even though, having chosen to buy a Lincoln yesterday, he cannot today choose to have done differently. By implication God's foreknowledge is thus the same as our knowledge of what we did yesterday. However this example offers no solution to the dilemma so carefully addressed by Rice. For if John cannot today choose to change his behavior of yesterday, then John is not free with respect to his behavior of yesterday. And it follows that if God's foreknowledge operates in this way, then we are not free with regard to our behavior of tomorrow. Not if freedom means the ability to change or choose to do differently.

Rice's attempt to resolve this basic contradiction has filled a real need.

Karen W. Hallock
Renton, Washington

A Theological Achievement

To the Editors: George L. Goodwin speaks of a contradiction between Richard Rice's view that there is an assured outcome to the course of human events and his concurrent view of authentic human freedom. In doing so, Goodwin fails to do justice to Rice's insistence that while God does not know in advance precisely how any individual will morally act, His wisdom and power are such that He can respond to whatever choices men make in such a manner that His will ultimately triumphs.

One needs to read Rice's book in its entirety to fully appreciate the skill and ingenuity with which he meets the many objections which can be raised to his position. Whether or not he disposes of all of them is of course arguable, but *The Openness of God* is an extraordinary theological achievement well worth the thoughtful reader's attention.

Reo M. Christenson
Miami University

Misinformation?

To the Editors: I was rather appalled at the misinformation that you presented in the article, "Must the Crisis Continue?" in your February, 1981 (Vol. 11, No. 3) issue. The Board of Good News Unlimited did vote to support selected ministers who were defrocked over the gospel, and so far we have only supported ministers in our area who have been deprived of their source of livelihood. As a Board, we felt this action was a neighborly act that any responsible Christian would have taken.

Your statement, "Kime holds gospel meetings in his Sacramento home on a weekly basis for another group of 120," is certainly a misstatement. In the last two years we have held exactly two meetings in our home for gospel groups. One was a meeting where 120 may have attended. At another, a month later, there may have been forty or fifty.

Your next statement, "that so far, he is far more interested in promoting separate church organization than his friend Ford is" is even more farfetched. Dr. Ford and I have always been in agreement on the issue of separate church organization. We both plan to maintain membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church unless thrown out, which may not be in the far-too-distant future if this sort of misinformed, inflammatory journalism continues.

Yours for more responsible journalism before SPECTRUM develops a major credibility gap.

Zane R. Kime, MD
Chairman, Board of Directors
Good News Unlimited

SPECTRUM regrets the misstatement on meetings in Dr. Kime's home. One of our reporters misunderstood a comment made by Dr. Kime in a telephone interview. We stand by the other statement protested by Dr. Kime. On the basis of conversations with close associates of Dr. Kime, we believe that the statement was accurate when written, though Dr. Kime has since changed his views. There was nothing "farfetched" or "inflammatory" in the observation that (at the time the article was written) Dr. Kime seemed "more interested" in encouraging the gospel fellowship movement that did Dr. Ford.

Health Care Report

To the Editors: The SPECTRUM (Vol. 11, No. 4) article on "The New Adventist Health Care Corporations" gave what I feel is an erroneous impression. The contention "that the disparity between hospital corporation salaries and denominational wages is one of the most sensitive problems raised by the formation of Adventist health care corporations" seems a bit biased. To imply that the four regional Adventist health care corporations are responsible for making or demanding community salaries for people in their hospitals is not true. These community salaries have been, and would continue to be paid, whether or not there was an Adventist Health System.

Second, the fact that hospitals are labeled "big business" seems to be another bias. Hospitals today are a big business,

but if one consider the assets and large sums of money spent by the church's schools, conferences, and other entities, the church too is big business. Let us not fool ourselves into thinking that the church and its hospitals are different because the hospitals are being forced by competition, regulations, and their need for survival, to be run as sound businesses.

The Adventist Health System is still the "right arm" of the church. By working together, we are able to reach more people than ever before, providing them with quality health care through a compassionate commitment to people. It is this commitment, to people and their communities, which has made the Adventist Health system respected both inside and outside the church.

David L. Gray
Director of Communication
Adventist Health System North

Against Reason?

To the Editors: I appreciate SPECTRUM more with each issue. It truly presents a spectrum of viewpoints, which, though I may not agree with all, I find interesting, helpful and informative. **In its present function I believe SPECTRUM is standing in the tradition of the early years of the Review far better than does the current Adventist Review.** The current narrow editorial policy which is admittedly followed by the *Adventist Review* is a far cry from the early editorial policy of that paper under James White's leadership.

SPECTRUM Vol. 11, No. 3, was a good case in point. While I am sure the letter by H. N. Sheffield, M.D., which you entitled "Against Reason," found some responsive chords in many of our hearts, yet few of us would choose to take the stance that Rome took against Galileo. Faith and reason need not be antagonists, nor mutually exclusive.

Arlin Baldwin
Mariposa, California

Value of Questioning

To the Editors: My heart goes out to Dr. Sheffield, whose deeply significant letter reflects the feeling of many thoughtful but loyal Seventh-day Adventists. He reveals an honesty and a faith much needed by all of us at this time of crisis.

May I suggest to him that the painful surgery the church is undergoing (and each of us in particular) is not necessarily as destructive as it seems. Scripture warns us that "everything which can be shaken will be shaken in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Heb. 12:27). Goethe affirmed that "the struggle between belief and unbelief is the only thing in the memoirs of humanity worth considering."

Much of the emotional upset we share is a result of two things in particular — first, a superstitious view of how God operates in inspiration, and second, a similarly erroneous understanding of how He works in providence. We have forgotten, for example, that wherever sin exists, so must error — however holy the heart or institution. We are demanding better bread than can be made of grain. Elton Trueblood has a word for us: "It is as much evil to say that

we know the truth perfectly as it is to say that there is no truth to know."

All honest doubt has a quasi-religious or at least a moral character about it, because it shows an overriding concern for the truth. Those who do not care tremendously about the truth do not bother to doubt, for doubt entails work. The dangerous man is not the man who doubts, but the man who does not care. (D. Elton Trueblood, *Philosophy of Religion* [New York, 1957], pp. 45-46).

God is not really terribly concerned about our having everything "sewn up." He is more interested in developing sons and daughters who will hold His hand in the darkness and count that walking with Him at midnight over a moorless sea is privilege indeed.

But none of this should be understood as advocating an extreme agnosticism. There are things we can and should know — that He, Christ, is there as surely as we are here; that He has spoken forgiveness and comfort through inspired messengers; that right and wrong are eternal realities; that He has a purpose in every movement launched by those seeking to please Him; that He has His way in the whirlwind and begins His greatest works (like creation) with chaos. There is such a thing as the wreck of a bursting seed, and if we live amidst such wreckage let us rejoice that the flower and fruit will come inevitably. I, for one, thank God for His leading into the Advent message, and my boyhood experience of finding Christ through Ellen G. White leads me to praise Him though He has not yet sundered all gordian knots of intellectual difficulty.

Desmond Ford
Auburn, California

Celebrating Adventism

To The Editors: I wanted to thank Roy Branson for his very thoughtful and articulate editorial ("Celebrating the Adventist Experience") in the September SPECTRUM. Since marrying into a strong Adventist family last fall, I have been simultaneously impressed and bemused by the level of theological discussion all around me. I've been quietly trying to clarify and define the issues for myself, without asking questions which would label me an "outsider." By managing to be both basic and thorough, Roy's editorial helped me achieve a quantum jump in my understanding of "the Adventist experience."

One of the questions I have been asking is asked, in a slightly larger context, by Roy: Why aren't more Adventists expending a greater portion of their formidable energies in explaining Adventism to their friends and neighbors? Intramural discussion is fine, but any organization flourishes or withers in direct proportion to its ability to attract new people who are reasonably bright, open-minded and willing to contribute time, talents or funds. It would seem to me that SPECTRUM could be an ideal vehicle for communicating Adventist concerns and objectives to a larger audience, and scholars like Dr. Branson who are able to reach that audience are invaluable. Roy, we "outsiders" thank you.

Albert S. Farver
The Pacific Institute
Washington, D.C./Seattle, Wash.

Editorial a Blessing

To the Editors: I do not often add to your incoming mail, but my reading of the latest issue of SPECTRUM prompts me to add to your fan mail!

Your editorial, "Celebrating the Adventist Experience" brought this reader a blessing, a reassurance and a hope that we shall come out of present traumas a little wiser than at our entering in. Your analysis of the Adventist experience impresses me as being wise, positive, and heartening. I have been blessed by its insights, by its calm analysis, and quiet assurances. I am also cheered by its stimuli, the challenges you pose to Adventist artists of several different types, and am encouraged as I think of Alan Collins' accomplishments and what some of our musicians are doing (in spite of the abysmal levels of official taste!).

I would breathe a hearty though regretful "Amen" to the sentence "The besetting sin of Adventism today is preoccupation with itself." There still ring in my ears, after many decades, the words of a non-Adventist father as I showed him around the grounds and buildings of Helderberg College some three decades ago — "The trouble with you Adventists is you're so d--- smug!" That smote me, and I have never forgotten its unpalatable truth. I hope your appeal for a broader outlook will be heeded.

Thanking you for SPECTRUM, of which I am a faithful and appreciative reader, and wishing you God's own blessing in all areas of life.

B.E. Seton
Etowah, North Carolina

Third World Perspective

To the Editors: Your issue on "The Church and Its Future" (Vol. 12, No. 1) was very timely — especially for the North American scene. I emphasize the last phrase because that is where the focus of attention of most of the issues of SPECTRUM lies.

It is, therefore, not surprising that throughout the issue there is no extended discussion or concern for the social dimension of theological understanding and ecclesiology in the Third World. The closest the discussion came to this was Roy Branson's editorial, which devoted the whole of three lines to SAWS' agricultural projects in Chad, Haiti and Zimbabwe.

This was, however, overshadowed by Fritz Guy's reaction to social theology. He asserts that "it is not the business of Adventist theology to propose specific political or economic reforms" (p. 11, cf. p. 12). We ask: Are these not moral problems? Did not the ancient prophets and the New Testament, particularly Jesus and James, treat them thus? Did not these prophetic voices propose the very reforms which Guy advocates we not agitate for?

Perspectives such as this (of which Guy's is but one example) do say something about our theological reflection: it is still Western and Northern in its outlook — even though the shift in the Christian population is Southern.

Adventist theology must respond to problems and perplexities of contemporary society (cf. Guy, p. 7). Therefore, what does our theology have to say concerning poverty? How does it address itself to oppression — a major

motif in the Bible, but which is left out of the theological categories of traditional Christianity?

Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid
Department of Religion and Theology
West Indies College

On Prophetic Minority

To the Editors: I have no quarrel with Prof. Provonsha's definition of the Adventist "remnant" mission as that of a Prophetic Minority within the Church Universal, in either its invisible or visible forms. Indeed, I found his diagram quite helpful. But with such a promising beginning to the article, 'tis a pity it never quite got around to stating just what it is that a prophet does which would distinguish his activity as prophetic.

Surely, if this Prophetic Minority is to play the central role in the denouement of earth's history that Prof. Provonsha hopes it will, serving as "a catalytic presence around which the remnant become visible as a testimony to their trust in a trustworthy God," it will not be because of this minority's peculiar habits of dress, diet or deportment during moments of leisure. Quite true, John the Baptist wore camel's hair and, in contrast to our Lord, adhered to a stringent diet. These distinguished John all right, but they did not distinguish him as a prophet. Neither was he distinguished as such because he spoke loudly to draw attention, or even because he spoke disinterestedly. John was a prophet for the single reason that he spoke the *Word of God* preparing the way for the Lord.

This consideration naturally leads one back to the chief question now facing the church, which the author's analysis falls short of answering: What is to form the *content* of this prophetic message to the Church Universal and the world? Any other question serves only to obscure the real one. Is it to be the three angels' messages or the gospel as preached by Dr. Ford? Or perhaps, as it is becoming increasingly fashionable to suggest, our prophetic message should consist of a thundering against the evils of our time — war, poverty, racism, oppression — at the risk, of course, of mimicking the holy fools who have brought the National Council of Churches so much recent scorn. The church will have to decide which or witness its prophetic voice fragment into Babylonish confusion.

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Correction

The editors wish to make note of two errors in the last issue of SPECTRUM, Vol. 12, No. 2. The last paragraph of Alden Thompson's "Theological Consultation II" was mistakenly printed in the wrong location. The last paragraph on page 50 should be read as preceding the last paragraph on page 49.

A typographical error in Walter Utt's review of *Omega* may also cause confusion. On page 59 the line that now reads "no where does he mention she" should read "no where does he mention who." We apologize to our authors and readers for any misunderstanding or inconvenience that may have arisen due to these errors.

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