

Pacific Press Votes to Move
Davenport Commission Overruled

SPECTRUM

A Quarterly Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 13, Number 3

MORAL CHALLENGES

Prisons and the Prisoner
Oppressed Brothers in the Soviet Union
Apocalypse and the Environment

SPECTRUM

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About This Issue

With so many dramatic and far-reaching events taking place within the denomination, it is easy to overlook the pain and distress in the larger community. Authors in the special section remind Adventists of their responsibilities to God's creatures and His creation. All the writers bring into sharper moral focus parts of God's world that for many of us remain blurred. Chuck Scriven conducted his roundtable discussion soon after returning from the Soviet Union. Tom Dybdahl describes a mission he undertook as a part of his Christian discipleship. It required his taking a leave of absence from a senior editorial post with a large publishing firm. Barry Casey shares reflections he presented in a slightly different form to the national conference of the Association of Adventist Forums held in September 1982, long before questions about protection of

the American environment led to conflicts between the executive and legislative branches of the United States government.

The other articles in this issue deal with topics that also pose moral challenges. What are the moral standards demanded of denominational leadership if they are to maintain the trust of members? Do members of the Adventist church have a right to know? If so, on what principled grounds can leadership justifiably withhold information? Do individuals employed by the church have rights to privacy even in their conduct of official church business? Does Christian morality suggest ways that discipline should and should not be carried out? In this issue the last question is explored in depth by Pastor James Londis. Other essays provide information about recent developments within the church that give rise to the wide range of questions now troubling the church. In subsequent issues of SPECTRUM we will return to the disciplinary actions now under way and the questions they raise.

—The Editors

The General Conference Overrules Commission On Davenport Disclosure

by Bonnie Dwyer

When the General Conference Committee on Thursday, February 24, 1983, reversed its action of the previous month and voted 51 to 14 “not to proceed with the previously proposed plan of publishing in the *Adventist Review* the names of individuals in certain disciplinary categories,” the Davenport affair moved from a financial scandal to an open debate about authority in the Adventist Church. The General Conference Committee voted as it did despite the fact that the President’s Review Commission, with a majority of lay members, four days before had unanimously voted to stand by its recommendation to disclose to the full membership the names of those receiving the most severe levels of discipline.

The General Conference Committee action did say that General Conference/North American Division Officers would, in personal representations, recommend disciplinary action to relevant boards and committees, and “if appropriate action is not taken by the respective governing body, the General Conference Committee may

request a meeting of the respective constituency in order to place the matter before that body.” The General Conference Committee voted on the recommendation of the General Conference Officers, which includes the president, treasurer, secretary, and all vice presidents, associate treasurers, and associate secretaries of the General Conference—some 24 people.

In addition to differing with the commission on the publication of names, the officers significantly altered the commission’s distribution of names into different disciplinary categories. The most notable instances were the reduction of those who should be removed or transferred from office from 19 to nine, the non-disclosure of any retired people’s names no matter how serious their infractions, and more than doubling—from 40 to 81—the number of people who were cleared completely.

Two days after the General Conference Committee took its vote, Neal C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, on Sabbath afternoon February 26, explained in person at Andrews University and on tape over the Adventist Radio Network that the General Conference had decided that it should inform local and union conference executive committees of misconduct. The General Conference would rely on those

Bonnie Dwyer is a graduate student in journalism at the California State University at Fullerton. This report was written with the assistance of other *Spectrum* editors and writers.

committees to discipline their own officers. Wilson told his Pioneer Memorial Church audience that the leadership of the church did not want to establish a precedent for using publication of names in the *Adventist Review* as a form of discipline—like putting “a person’s name in the post office among the ten most wanted criminals in the country.” He stressed that the commission, while a superb group, had not had the benefit of hearing directly the testimony of men named by the commission as he and Charles E. Bradford, vice president for North America, had had.

On the Adventist Radio Network (broadcasting remarks he had made to the General Conference Committee two days before), Wilson justified not disclosing names to the membership generally because “I am very concerned about the effect it will have on the morale of leadership in the North American Division . . . If we were to destroy the morale of leadership we would be in very deep trouble.” Bradford was also heard on the broadcast addressing the General Conference Committee. “Actual discipline, as the president said, of workers and employees is properly in the hands of the executive committees and controlling boards.” Bradford added that “We do not want to create a situation where it is the General Conference versus the field. We don’t need that.”

That same Sabbath very different views were also being expressed. In the Loma Linda University Church, Jack Provonsha, chairman of the department of ethics at Loma Linda University and a member of the commission, devoted both of his hour-long Sabbath School class sessions to the reversal General Conference Committee’s concerning publication of names. First, he mentioned that according to the wording of the promise of secrecy he and all other commission members had signed, “the only thing I can’t talk about is names.” Provonsha went on to say that in its last meeting with

the General Conference Officers the preceding Sunday and Monday, February 20–21, the commission had been willing to endorse forms of disclosure to the membership other than publication in the *Adventist Review*, as long as the findings of the commission were “made available to people who care enough to want to find out what happened and have questions in their minds.” Some report from the commission “has to be available to the church,” he said, “to reassure members that the church is not concealing anything, and to clear the names of the innocent.” He insisted that some people would benefit from having the truth put out.

Emmerson considered the redistribution of names into different disciplinary categories a substantial alteration of the commission’s recommendations.

Provonsha noted that some lay people had become so disillusioned that they had agreed to put their tithe into a common trust fund until church leaders re-established their credibility. But he advocated a different approach. He was convinced that “the real power of the church is the loyalty, commitments of the members sitting in the pew. They are the ones who provide the money.” And yet, he told his class, “you didn’t elect the General Conference president. You didn’t even elect the people who elected the General Conference president. In fact, you didn’t even elect the people who elected the people who elected the General Conference president.” Provonsha then made a strong call (which he repeated the next Sabbath afternoon in the Orlando Central Church in Florida) for the laity to organize until “lay voices will be involved in selection of officers in policy-making functions of the church all the way from the bottom clear to the top.”

The same Sabbath as Wilson's presentation at Andrews University and Provonsha's Sabbath School class at Loma Linda, Kenneth Emmerson, the immediate past treasurer of the General Conference—and a member of the President's Review Commission—spoke publicly in College Place, Washington, of his agony at the decision of the General Conference Committee. Emmerson, now a General Conference field secretary, agreed that publication of names in the *Adventist Review* should not set a precedent, but said that the magnitude of the Davenport scandal, with some of the men involved serving in different conferences and unions, and reports of the problem appearing across the country and overseas, had convinced the commission that only disclosure of names to the membership as a whole would convince church members that leadership was seriously cleaning house. Furthermore, there were serious problems in only disclosing names to local and union conference executive committees. In some cases committee members who were conference employees would be faced with having to transfer or fire their own superiors.

Emmerson, like Provonsha, reported that the commission did not wish to be vindictive and had discussed with the General Conference Officers ways of disseminating the findings of the commission other than in the pages of the *Adventist Review*. However, the officers had simply not wished to make any names available to the general church membership. He also considered the redistribution of names into different disciplinary categories a substantial alteration of the commission's recommendations, particularly the reduction of the number of those who should be removed or transferred from their posts.

The two commissioners who quickly spoke out seem to have had an impact. Monday evening, February 28, the board of

the Loma Linda University Church—the largest in North America—voted 120 to 3 to instruct delegates to the approaching Southeastern California Conference constituency meeting that—prior to their attending the April 17 session—the delegates must be assured that none of the local and union conference officials at the session were included on the list of people the President's Review Commission had recommended for discipline. Subsequently, delegates from the various churches in the Loma Linda area gathered and agreed to recommend to the April Southeastern California Conference constituency meeting that it adopt a resolution "that study be given to the possibility of eliminating the union level of administration from the church structure."

In addition to a separate letter from the department of theology, over two-thirds of the full-time faculty on the Walla Walla College campus signed a letter to Bradford stating that they endorsed full disclosure as originally recommended by the President's Review Commission in order:

- To clear the innocent and those not responsible for church involvement from the numerous rumors rampant in the church;
- To insure equity of discipline within the various responsible committees so that like responsibility receives like discipline;
- To insure that those individuals not presently employed by the church receive rightful discipline as recommended by the President's Commission;
- To prevent those involved from being placed in the future in positions of administrative or financial responsibility;
- To avoid possible conflict of interest arising from the necessity, in some cases, of self-imposed discipline;
- To avoid creating the difficult personal situation whereby colleagues who must work with or under the individuals involved must vote disciplinary action;
- To stifle the charges, now circulating with some emotion, that church leadership is 'covering up' the extent of the scandal,

protecting its own, and simply lying to church members.

Much of the outrage at not being given the commission's report stemmed from the perception of members that the president of the General Conference to rely fully on the commission's recommendations. To restore trust among lay people, from whom the church's income is derived, Wilson announced in the *Adventist Review* that the majority of the 15-person commission he had appointed were lay people: two judges, two accountants, a banker, a businessman, a lawyer, and a stockbroker. The seven denominational employees included three General Conference officers, including the treasurer (and chairman of the commission) and the secretary of the General Conference. In six months, the commission was to complete the task of analyzing the extensive, over-600-page report of the independent legal firm of Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher and the well-known firm of auditors, Ernst and Whinney. Their work, and the fees of the law firm retained by the General Conference insurance company, came to \$1.5 million.

According to a report by Neal Wilson, the commission, in its deliberations, addressed several questions.

- Were there indications of carelessness or dereliction of duty on the part of those who served as trust, financial, or executive officers?
- Did any of those charged with fiduciary responsibility fail to take what are considered necessary and prudent precautions to protect the good name of the church and its financial integrity as required by General Conference policy?
- Was there evidence of neglect or disregard of the fiscal policies of the church?
- Does the record show failure to demand a proper title search and secure title insurance in order to make sure that the interests of the church were protected by a first trust deed of trust or a first mortgage position?
- Were large sums of money ever paid out as a loan solely on the strength of a decision made by several officers and before having collateral security in hand? Were loan proposals generally brought to the Association Board of Trustees or Investment Committee for approval prior to, or after, the completion of a transaction?
- Did those in positions of responsibility promote Davenport loans and influence church entities or church members to become financially involved?
- Did those who served as trust or financial or executive officers have a personal loan or investment at the same time as an entity for which they were responsible also had a business relationship with Davenport?
- Did anyone in leadership receive what might be considered excessive interest on his loan or an interest rate that was above that which was received by the church entity for which he had responsibility?
- Did individuals receive back the full amount of their loans from Davenport, or even recover a portion of them, at a time when the church entity for which they were responsible failed in getting their loans returned by Davenport?
- Were there individuals who seemed to enjoy a "preferred club" relationship with Davenport?
- Were there indications of any conflict of interest?
- Were individuals involved in such activities over an extended period of time and/or did they exert a major degree of influence within their respective organizations?

The commission organized itself into committees to review names. Each committee brought its recommendations to the entire commission. After discussion, the commission came to unanimous conclusions

concerning the proper level of discipline for every name.

On January 4, 1983, the commission gathered in Washington to give their findings to the General Conference Officers. They had reviewed 163 names. Twenty-eight needed to be investigated further. The commission recommended that 56 men should be sent a private letter (48 of censure and eight of reprimand), the lowest level of discipline. All those receiving more severe discipline (41 in all) would have their names published in the *Adventist Review*. Twenty-two were to receive public letters of censure, the next most severe level of discipline. Fifteen, in addition to receiving public letters of censure, should be removed from posts of financial, trust, or administrative management. The highest level of punishment included four names. In addition to public letters of censure, their denominational employment would be terminated. Of this last group, the commission recommended that the credentials of two ministers be removed and that reimbursement be sought from one.

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At the January 4 meeting, the General Conference Officers voted to accept in principle the commission's recommendations, with the understanding that after Wilson and Bradford had talked to all those to be disciplined, recommended changes would be discussed with the commission. One week later, Bradford, who had been out of town at its previous meeting, urged

the officers to rescind their approval of the recommendation to print names of people to be disciplined. The officers refused to overturn their previous vote although Bradford told the officers that he was totally opposed to publishing any names. On January 22, Wilson told some 2,000 people crowded into the Loma Linda University Church for a Sabbath afternoon of questions and answers that he intended to implement the commission's findings. Outlining what that would entail, he said that it would be the most sweeping disciplinary action ever attempted within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The audience left reassured.

Two days later, on Monday, January 24, the union presidents in the North American Division gathered in Washington for a special meeting. They had seen Wilson and a few of the General Conference Officers in a hastily arranged meeting on the nineteenth in Southern California, but there had not been sufficient time for a full exchange of views. Now, in a session chaired by Bradford, the union presidents had the opportunity to express their opinions to Wilson, all the available vice presidents and secretary of the General Conference, the treasurer, and the officers of the General Conference assigned to North America. The president of the Lake Union, a member of the President's Review Commission, and the president of the Canadian Union did not speak. All the other union presidents argued vigorously against the publication of names. Some members of the President's Review Commission wonder if this was not a crucial event in changing the minds of the General Conference Officers concerning disclosure.

Wilson has said that the 150 hours of interviews that he and Bradford conducted beginning in the second half of January affected his thinking. He told the audience at Andrews University that "I have never gone through quite an experience like this to see big men, tall men, strong men, break down and weep, sob, convulsively; that's not easy to take—pained over the fact that through their carelessness or dereliction

. . . they brought this kind of public reproach, public shame on the church." At the same time, mail began stacking up on the president's desk. He had its contents analyzed and learned that 80 percent of the mail was opposed to publication of names.

By the time the commission met on Sunday, February 20, in the dining room on the top floor of the General Conference's high rise building, Wilson, Bradford, and the General Conference Officers not on the commission asked the commission to reconsider its recommendation to publish the names of those needing to be disciplined. The officers, in an earlier straw poll, had voted 14 to nothing against publication, with one officer abstaining. After considerable discussion, the commission and the officers met separately to vote on the matter. The commission remained unanimously in favor of publication. The officers, including those on the commission, voted in a secret ballot 15 to 4 against publication. The officers then proceeded on that Sunday and Monday to discuss, in the presence of the commission, the names designated for the most severe discipline. With only officers voting, five of the names recommended for discipline were given a more serious punishment and 20 a less severe form of discipline than that recommended by the commission. One commission member said that in only one or two instances did he agree with the officers' decision in favor of leniency.

Chronology of the Case

These activities in early 1983 follow almost two years of twists and turns in the Davenport case. Every month seems to have brought another development in the story. Here is a chronology of those events.

JUNE 1981. With his financial empire collapsing, Donald Davenport considered the possibility of having the church loan him \$5 million to prevent his bankruptcy. According to Davenport's office records on

file in the bankruptcy court, he discussed such a loan with James Hopps, the attorney for the North Pacific Union, who was to arrange for the loan. But the North Pacific Union did not have \$5 million to give Davenport.

JULY 1981. On the 13th of the month, Davenport signed a bankruptcy petition. The same day the General Conference retained Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher, a Los Angeles-based law firm, to advise the General Conference in the case. But Davenport's counsel did not file the petition that day.

In the North American Division, the Davenport affair has turned into a complex organizational struggle.

On July 17, Davenport was still trying to arrange a loan from the church. Bankruptcy court papers show Davenport wrote three times that day to his friend and occasional business partner, Ellsworth Reile, president of the Mid-America Union Conference, about plans to have the church place an overseer in Davenport's office and giving instructions regarding the sale of three buildings.

"I am advising you by this letter that the General Conference may put a Demand in direct to the Escrow Company for all the cash proceeds from the sale of these buildings, thus assuring them that whatever cash comes in will be theirs," he said. In another of the letters he wrote, "My first concern is to stave off any Chapter proceedings so that I may continue to operate and pay everyone owed 100 cents on the dollar out of the new jobs coming up. This would totally stop what I think would be a tremendous run on the church as well as cutting off trust funds and, worst of all, even tithing, which none of us wants to see."

To another business associate, Des Cummings (former president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference), Davenport wrote

that week, "I am sure that you are well aware of the problems that I am having with everyone putting runs on me, but I am fighting it off as long as I can. If my final plan works, then everyone will come out 100 cents on the dollar. If it doesn't work, then it will just take a long time to get everybody paid up. I came into the world owing nobody and I intend to leave it that way!"

A special meeting of the presidents and treasurers of the North American Division unions, as well as those of certain local conferences, convened at the General Conference July 21, to review investments with Davenport, according to the *Adventist Review*.

Finally, on July 22, the bankruptcy petition was actually recorded in Los Angeles. Following its usual procedure, the court appointed a trustee to oversee the task of selling the doctor's assets and settling with his creditors. The law firm of Sulmeyer, Kupetz, Baumann and Rothman applied for and received the responsibility to act as attorney for the estate. All of the doctor's records and papers were taken to the law firm's Los Angeles office.

"Builder's Bankruptcy May Cost Adventist Millions," said the headline in the July 28 *Washington Post*. The *Walla Walla Union Bulletin* reported "Adventists Fear Loss of Millions."

AUGUST 1981. On August 9, the *Los Angeles Times* said that creditors were uncovering evidence showing that Davenport mortgaged properties beyond their worth and offered lenders trust deeds on properties he did not own.

General Conference spokesperson James Chase called such news reports premature in a report on the back page of the *Adventist Review*, August 20.

SEPTEMBER 1981. Based on information compiled as early as 1980 by the church's auditors, General Conference Treasurer L. L. Butler was able to inform members through the *Adventist Review* of specific dollar amounts for the Davenport loans. Seventeen organizations were listed.

Loans totaled \$17,873,424, and interest added another \$3,137,313 in outstanding funds. What the summary did not indicate was the amount of funds which were unsecured. As far back as January of 1980, the General Conference auditors had given Neal Wilson a report showing total church investments with Davenport amounting to approximately \$19 million with over \$12 million unsecured.

On September 3, Judge Barry Russell denied Davenport's request that his bankruptcy be converted from a chapter 11 filing to a chapter 7. (Creditors stand a better chance of collecting under chapter 11.)

Gertrude Daniels, an 85 year-old woman from Yamhill, Oregon, wrote to the North Pacific Union Conference on September 17 and requested her trust money which the North Pacific Union had invested with Davenport. Her request set off a chain reaction which ended with several other trustors joining Mrs. Daniels in an Oregon suit against the church for its handling of their trust funds.

OCTOBER 1981. Annual Council convened in Washington, D.C., and the Davenport case was on the minds of the church officers. An Audit Review Committee was set up to check union and conference financial statements. An Arbitration Steering Committee was established to prevent conflicts between various church entities over the settlement of the estate. To show members that the current officers wanted to prevent a repeat of the Davenport loans, conflict of interest guidelines were also tightened.

In the *Adventist Review*, editor Kenneth J. Wood explained why the magazine had not published more on the case: "First, we have insisted on sharing only truth, not rumor, and second, we have sought to avoid complicating the case for attorneys who are seeking redress for the church in the courts . . . We think that the individuals, boards, and committees that lent funds to Dr. Davenport should be called to account for their actions."

NOVEMBER 1981. North American Division President Charles E. Bradford informed the membership, through the *Adventist Review*, that "the steering committee will be composed of lay members and officials from the directly involved conferences, all nine unions of the church, and the General Conference.

"The steering committee is to provide orderly oversight over the settlement of claims and will have power to make final settlements. There will be an appeal process established."

DECEMBER 1981. Attorneys including Ernest Ching, representing Gertrude Daniels, Arthur Blumenshein, and Helen Black, sent the North Pacific Union and its local conferences, the General Conference, and several church officers notice of their intent to file a class action suit in Oregon against the church for its handling of trust funds. Since there were many other members who also stood the possibility of losing the money they had placed in trust with the church, the attorneys representing the plaintiffs felt a class action suit was appropriate.

JANUARY 1982. The new year opened in an acrimonious way. Charles O. Frederick, president of the General Conference Insurance Company (Gencom), wrote a highly charged letter to the presidents and treasurers of all conferences and institutions in the North American Division warning of disastrous litigation between conferences and officers and the church-owned insurance company. He made it clear that if any conferences or unions tried to sue Gencom to collect for their losses, the company would fight the claims.

Frederick's letter was particularly significant to the conference officers in the North Pacific Union and its subsidiaries because Ching proceeded with the lawsuit against them.

FEBRUARY 1982. The *Adventist Review* did not carry a report on the lawsuit. But in his column, GC President Wilson lamented, "Litigation almost always results in a

weakened relationship with our Lord and each other. Our determination to 'win' produces a spirit of anger, bitterness, resentment, retaliation, threats, and alienation. These reactions are not compatible with the grace of Christ. You can win a court case and lose your soul."

To Gertrude Daniels, Arthur Blumenshein, and Helen Black, who were involved in the Oregon lawsuit against the church, the words could well have seemed a dire warning.

As far back as January of 1980 the GC auditors had given Neal Wilson a report . . .

The certified public accountancy firm of Kenneth Leventhal completed its summary of Davenport's assets and liabilities for the trustee in the case. In an accompanying letter, the accountants noted, "The majority of notes payable of the Debtor are held by parties who may believe that such notes are secured by assets of the debtor. Due to the lack of proper recording of liens, questionable possession of the pledged asset, or other matters, the security positions claimed by various creditors have been disputed by the Trustee. . . . There is correspondence between the holders of various notes payable and the Debtor which discusses interest rates that vary from the terms of the notes. Further, *the rates of interest on a significant number of notes payable may be at rates which after review by counsel could be determined usurious*" (italics supplied).

According to the trustee, in the months which followed the bankruptcy, many of Davenport's properties were foreclosed. Davenport had borrowed more money against the properties than they were worth, rendering them useless to the trustee attempting to garner assets for the settlement of the estate. To clear up disputes over assets, the trustee filed over 100 adversary proceedings (suits within the bankruptcy system) in the case.

MARCH 1982. Attorneys for Daniels, Blumenshein and Black contacted the church's attorneys about the Oregon lawsuit. According to Don Kurtz, a partner in the Ching, Mackey and Kurtz firm which represented the three church members, the church's attorneys promised not to contact any other trustors and prejudice them before the first preliminary hearing scheduled for later in the month.

They kept their word, but on the day of the hearing, while the attorneys met, the conference secretaries mailed out a letter from Union President Richard Fearing and Trust Director C. G. O'Dell to members having trusts with the union. It outlined three alternatives for the trustors: (1) receiving a payment as a compromise for any claim against the union rising out of notes executed by Davenport; (2) making a contribution to the Union in the amount of

the notes executed by Davenport; or (3) joining a class action suit against the General Conference, the North Pacific Union, and the local conference.

APRIL 1982. The letters sent out by the union paid off. The elderly trustors of the North Pacific Union did not want to sue their church and the pastors they trusted. At a hearing in Portland, Judge Clifford B. Olsen denied the class action status requested by Ching, Mackey and Kurtz. However, the individual suits of Gertrude Daniels and the others proceeded.

MAY 1982. In San Bernardino, California, the *San Bernardino Sun* began a devastating four-part series on the Davenport case, for which it later received an award for investigative reporting from the Gannett chain of newspapers. In the first article, writers Art Wong and James Nickles outlined their findings:

The President's Review Commission

General Conference Officers

Lance L. Butler (Chairman)

Treasurer of the General Conference since 1980, and for the previous 12 years treasurer of the Australasian Division.

G. Ralph Thompson

Secretary of the General Conference since 1980. Prior to that he was a General Conference vice-president.

J. William Bothe

An associate secretary of the General Conference, assigned to the North American Division.

Other Denominational Employees

Robert H. Carter

President of the Lake Union Conference.

Kenneth H. Emmerson

A general field secretary of the General Conference and chairman and chief executive officer of Harris Pine Mills, for 12 years treasurer of the General Conference until 1980.

John R. Loor

President of the Northern New England Conference.

Jack W. Provonsha

Physician ethicist, and chairman of the Department of Christian Ethics of Loma Linda University.

Lay Persons

Edward D. Armbruster

A stockbroker with Kidder, Peabody & Company, Inc., in Kansas for the past 18 years.

Frank E. Ashby

Owner and operator of a business in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

Terrence M. Finney (Vice-chairman)

Judge of the Superior Court of California in and for Eldorado County for the past five years; previously a county district attorney.

Aubrey H. Liles

An accountant in Atlanta, Georgia, specializing in tax work.

Andrew A. McDonald

A Judge of the East Orange, New Jersey, Municipal Court since 1977.

Shirley T. Moore

A certified public accountant of Takoma Park, Maryland, specializing in tax work, trusts, and foundations.

Frank V. Potts

A Senior partner of his own law firm in Florence, Alabama; previously county prosecuting attorney and member of the Alabama governor's cabinet.

Allan Roth

Since 1970 senior vice-president of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association in Walla Walla, Washington.

“Adventist laymen and spiritual leaders for years invested millions with Davenport in the form of loans repaid at interest rates two to three times the prevailing rate.”

“Adventist organizations also loaned Davenport millions and for years were regularly repaid. But property records show Davenport seemed to repay loans with funds from other loans.”

“Many of Davenport’s transactions with Adventist entities and church officials seemed to violate the church’s own investment and conflict-of-interest guidelines.”

“Some Adventist investment officers made personal deals with Davenport at substantially higher interest rates—up to 80 percent—than their church entities received.”

“Some church loans to Davenport were unsecured and other loans were secured by third and fourth trust deeds and trust deeds for property valued at considerably less than the loan.”

Then, relying on the court-appointed trustee’s bankruptcy report, the reporters gave specific details on 13 church officers, noting their personal investments with Davenport and also the amount their employing church organization had with the doctor. The list began with former General Conference President Robert H. Pierson. While he was president, he had a personal loan with Davenport and chaired the board of the Christian Record Braille Foundation when it also loaned money to Davenport. The list continued with Desmond Cummings, president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference from 1966 to 1979; Ellsworth Reile, president of the Carolina Conference from 1969 to 1978 and now president of the Mid-America Union; Don Aalborg, secretary of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference; Jack L. Price, former Southern Union trust director; George Liscombe, South Dakota Conference secretary and former conference president; James K. Hopps, legal counsel for the North Pacific Union; Wayne Massengill, former

North Pacific Union Conference trust director; Harvey Sander, formerly trust director for the Upper Columbia Mission Society and presently Columbia Union trust director; Richard D. Fearing, formerly Upper Columbia Conference president and now North Pacific Union president; W. E. Jones, former secretary and trust director for the Western Washington Conference; Lloyd Diamond, secretary and trust director for the Western Oregon Conference; Elford Radke, Oregon Conference auditor; and H. J. Harris, North Pacific Union secretary and former president of the Oregon Conference.

JUNE 1982. Judge Olsen ordered the church to produce the documents requested by Ching, Mackey and Kurtz in the discovery process of the Oregon lawsuit.

In the Mid-America Union, when the General Conference auditors presented the union committee with their audit report, a footnote suggested that there might be a conflict of interest on the part of some union officers, because of personal business dealings with Davenport. The union committee formally disagreed with the implication of the footnote that any of Mid-America’s officers currently had a conflict of interest. The *SDA Press Release* called this a vote of confidence for Reile. It published copies of correspondence between Davenport and Reile under banner headlines calling for Reile’s resignation.

JULY 1982. Eight more people joined the Oregon lawsuit against the church, including some non-trustors. These church workers contended the conference officials had acted as agents for Davenport and used their position to influence people to place money with the doctor.

The *North Pacific Union Gleaner* attempted to clear the air surrounding the case by publishing a six-page article in which union officers discussed the union’s loans to Davenport. Specific figures were given and the question of security for the loans addressed. However, the one topic not covered was conflict of interest. Of the five union officials interviewed, three were

listed as Davenport's creditors in the bankruptcy papers. That was never mentioned.

In Loma Linda, the *San Bernardino Sun* articles had aroused the Loma Linda University Church congregation, because Davenport was one of its members. Pastor Louis Venden requested the board of elders to set up a committee to discuss the implications of the new information. Should the doctor's membership be revoked for wrong doing? The committee was to present suggestions to the church board.

Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher presented the General Conference with a 624-page report covering the involvement of the church entities with Davenport, the impropriety of actions by certain church officers, and suggestions for procedures to reduce the risk of recurrence of the problems encountered with Davenport.

A year had passed since the initial bankruptcy filing.

AUGUST 1982. In the first Davenport article to appear in the *Adventist Review* for several months, General Conference President Wilson described the Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher report, asked for the forgiveness of church members in the whole affair, answered some questions about the case, and, most significantly, named a 15-member President's Review Commission to study the lawyer's report and make recommendations to the General Conference officers.

SEPTEMBER 1982. Three months after the original article in the *San Bernardino Sun*, Robert H. Pierson wrote the paper to explain his investment with Dr. Davenport.

"My rate of interest was not higher than anyone else who invested in Dr. Davenport's 'Capital Loan Account,'" Pierson said.

"In making the loans I did to Dr. Davenport, I was not in any known conflict of interest. It is true that I was a board member of the Christian Record Braille Foundation at the time an official of the institution evidently made a loan to Dr.

Davenport. This loan was made without the authorization or the knowledge of the board.

"I learned of the transaction sometime after my retirement and after my loan had been repaid. Through the years I have adhered strictly to the 'conflict of interest' policy of my church. I have never accepted any favors from Dr. Davenport."

NOVEMBER 1982. Attorneys for both sides in the Oregon lawsuit met to discuss settling the case out of court. The Bullivant, Wright, Leedy, Johnson, Pendergrass and Hoffman firm of Portland represented the church entities named as defendants and all the various church officers, except for Wayne Massengill who had his own attorney, Frank Lagesen. Representing the General Conference in this case, as well as other matters related to Davenport, was the Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher firm of Los Angeles.

The church members were represented by Ching, Mackey and Kurtz of Santa Ana, California, and Stoll and Stoll of Portland. No agreement was reached.

DECEMBER 1982. The deposition process began in the Oregon lawsuit. North Pacific Union officers were questioned individually about their actions involving Davenport. Their responses would be used when the case went to trial. Questions about the church's conflict of interest policy, personal investments with Davenport, and specific letters written to Davenport about conference and personal loans were covered. While the process continued, the attorneys worked on the settlement process.

In Los Angeles, attorneys in the firm of Irving Sulmeyer, the Davenport estate trustee, subpoenaed members of the Davenport family in an effort to locate hidden assets such as antiques and cash, but would not comment on what they learned.

The chairman of the President's Review Commission gave Neal Wilson a preliminary verbal briefing on the commission's findings following its review of the

Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher report. Wilson learned that the commission had reviewed the actions of 163 church officers.

JANUARY 1983. The President's Review Commission presented their report to Wilson. Monday and Tuesday, January 3 and 4, the General Conference officers spent 11 hours discussing the report. Wilson said, "In principle they accepted the report of the President's Review Commission and tentatively concurred with the recommendations."

Rumors began to circulate about the sanctions which would be imposed. On January 19, the *San Bernardino Sun* was the first to report that 95 church officials faced potential disciplinary action.

January 22, Wilson held a question-and-answer session at the Loma Linda University Church. Much of what he said about the Davenport case later appeared in the January 27 *Adventist Review* article titled "Report of the President's Review Commission."

However, Wilson's agonies over the case came through more strongly in the public presentation as he described being visited by FBI agents about possible legal actions in the case. Wilson also indicated when he expected the General Conference would complete its deliberations on who should be disciplined. He said he had cleared his calendar for six weeks for interviewing officials the commission had recommended for discipline. He said he hoped that by April the church could put the matter to rest.

FEBRUARY 1983. Just before depositions of the General Conference officers were scheduled to begin, attorneys reached a settlement in the Oregon lawsuit. Although attorneys would not give the exact figure of the lump sum settlement, Don Kurtz said his firm's clients had received an amount comparable in value to

what they would have expected from a court verdict. Church attorneys were left with the task of deciding how to split the costs of the settlement which various sources place at almost \$600,000.

On February 20, the President's Review Commission did not agree to the General Conference Officers' proposal to withhold all names from publication. On February 24, the General Conference Committee voted to reveal names only to governing committees or boards. On February 26, two members of the commission publicly expressed their disagreement with the decision of the General Conference Committee to withhold names. General Conference and North American Division officers prepared to travel to union and local conference executive committees to recommend that they administer different forms of discipline to their own members. The commission is scheduled to meet again on May 26. The first item of business is to decide whether to continue or disband.

Nearly two years after Davenport declared bankruptcy, differences over how the church should deal with the case makes Davenport more than a story about lost dollars. In the North American Division it has turned into a complex organizational struggle. Not only do laity want to dilute the authority of the clergy, but different levels of church leadership are potentially in conflict with one another. If local or union conference officials were to refuse to resign, and succeeded in retaining the support of their executive committees, officers of the General Conference could find themselves publicly debating other administrators at special local or union conference constituency meetings.

Ford and Van Rooyen Lose Ordinations

by Adrian Zytoskee

REGRET TO ADVISE. DIVISION COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 1, 1983, VOTED TO ANNUL YOUR ORDINATION. WRITING [LATER].

With this terse telegram, the Australasian Division informed Desmond Ford that the process of separation between the church and Ford, which began at Glacier View, Colorado, in 1980, is nearly complete. So far, Ford retains his membership in the Pacific Union College Church in Angwin, California.

Two weeks later, on February 17, 1983, the General Conference Committee, with a few dissenting votes—citing the new church policy on discipline of ministers—declared that Smuts Van Rooyen's ordination was "void." Further, the committee requested that Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan, "review his membership for disciplinary action." This most recent General Conference Committee action charged Van Rooyen with

apostasy "because he has identified with and has given continuing support to activity subversive to the denomination and its fundamental beliefs and has persistently refused to recognize properly constituted church authority."

The actions, "annulling" Ford's ordination and voiding that of Van Rooyen, followed after Ford and his associates met in the El Rancho Motel near San Francisco International Airport on January 14-17, 1983, with representatives of the General Conference. It was to be only the first of a series of meetings devoted to theological dialogue, but it turned out to be the last. Eight days after the end of the session, on January 26, 1983, Neal Wilson, president of the General Conference, wrote to Ford that "our approaches and presuppositions in the understanding of prophecy are far apart," and that there would be "no constructive purpose served" by further meetings. Wilson also informed Ford that he was giving the Australasian Division clearance to do "what seems best to them" regarding ordination. Less than a week later, the Australasian Division took its action against Ford.

The topic for the "first" meeting was "Methods and Principles of Biblical Interpretation" because the hermeneutic of Ford and his associates had been "divergent"

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from that of the church, particularly as applied to eschatology and interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy. The General Conference wanted to know whether the two groups had "common ground" or "little hope of coming closer together," says Duncan Eva, retired General Conference vice president and chairman of the ad hoc "Ford Committee."

Eva also states that the General Conference organized the meetings because "it was the proper and Christian thing for both groups to try and come closer together." It was, he said, "a sincere endeavor" on the part of the General Conference "to seek reconciliation for the people involved and for the church as a whole."

Other members of the committee selected by the General Conference were: Niels-Erik Andreasen, Old Testament scholar and associate chairman of the Division of Religion at Loma Linda University; Gerhard Hasel, Old Testament scholar and dean of the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University; William Johnsson, a former professor of New Testament at the SDA Seminary, now editor of the *Adventist Review*; Richard Leshner, a vice president of the General Conference and director of the Biblical Research Institute; Enoch Oliveira, a vice president of the General Conference; and J. R. Spangler, editor of *Ministry* magazine. Ford and Van Rooyen were accompanied by Calvin Edwards and Noel Mason, two other former Seventh-day Adventist ministers, now working full-time for the Good News Unlimited Foundation, an organization established by Ford in Auburn, California.

Participants in the meetings agree that they were conducted with a "good spirit all around." However, differences quickly emerged. Eva made it clear at the beginning of the two days of meetings that the participants selected by the General Conference were bound by the 27 statements of

fundamental beliefs adopted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the Dallas General Conference session. He also said that the committee was not interested in "rehashing" the issues discussed at Glacier View.

Some have argued that the real issue dividing Ford and the church is Ford's view of justification and salvation . . . Ford himself sees his position on the Second Coming to be integrally related to his position on salvation.

Ford, on the other hand, came to the meeting with 70 reasons why the doctrine of the investigative judgment was untenable. Other members of the Good News Unlimited team suggested that as many as three of the church's 27 beliefs needed substantial revision. Regarding interpretation of the books of Daniel and Revelation, Ford argued that the book of Revelation cannot be viewed as "a book of history." He said that Adventist interpretation of Revelation is a 19th-century endeavor that reads 18th and 19th-century events and dates into John's vision. As a result, said Ford, Adventist interpretation of the book has nothing to say to the 20th-century world.

Hasel, who spoke more than any other member of the General Conference group, argued that the historicist view of prophecy, including the traditional Adventist understandings, could be defended on exegetical grounds and had special relevance for today's world. He and others contended that Adventists should not reject the interpretation of their pioneers, but instead build upon it. Some individuals present argued that if Ford and his associates were given even tacit approval to teach and promote a new eschatology, it would become necessary for the church to extend its umbrella to include

so many disparate viewpoints that unity would be impossible.

Some have argued that the real issue dividing Ford and the church is Ford's view of justification and salvation—a view called by his critics the “new theology.” Ford himself sees his position on the Second Coming to be integrally related to his position on salvation. Some of the General Conference representatives in the recent meetings with Ford emphatically deny that understandings of salvation are at issue. They see Ford's views on salvation as being within the mainstream of Adventism and insist that there would be no real problem if Ford would refrain from publicly challenging the church's understanding of Daniel and Revelation.

Termination of the two men's ordinations was based on a new policy adopted in October of 1982 at the Annual Council of the General Conference held in Manila,

Philippines. According to that revision of the General Conference Working Policy, a minister who “openly expresses significant dissidence regarding the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church” may lose his credentials. The status of his ordination will be reviewed at an appropriate time. If he persists in dissidence, he may “make void” his ordination, moving him into the category of an apostate. It then becomes the “duty” of the local church where he is a member to administer discipline, possibly including disfellowshipping.

In spite of losing his ordination and coming under threat of losing his membership, Ford expresses sympathy and understanding for administrators. He also quotes Whittier: “Mine is a mighty ordination of the pierced hands,” and maintains that whatever happens, “I will always be a Seventh-day Adventist.”

Is a Dissident an Apostate? A Pastor Looks at Church Discipline

by James Londis

One of my responsibilities is to preside over the most painful of all meetings in the church—a business session to disfellowship a member. Since these business meetings are usually attended only by members of the church board, most church members escape the agony of expelling someone from the congregation. But for those who are there, it is a sad moment when the church—created by Christ to incorporate sinners into its saving fellowship—places someone outside of that fellowship. The sadness is never more pronounced than on those rare occasions when the member in question is—or has been—an ordained minister.

During the theological controversy of the last few years, the number of ministers surrendering or losing their credentials has increased. While some may have behaved irresponsibly, others have felt that their integrity would not allow them to continue preaching what they no longer believed. A small number of these former pastors have

asked that their memberships in the church be withdrawn, but many are still church members in good and regular standing. Whether or not they realized it, those ministers who were disciplined came under the section of the General Conference Working Policy that deals with the disciplining of ministers, a section not particularly well-known. However, the revision of the policy at the 1982 Annual Council has attracted the attention of both clergy and laity. Beginning with the issue of a minister's credentials and ending with the status of his church membership, the new policy, entitled "Safeguarding Credentials—The Integrity of the Ministry," delineates the reasons for discipline and the forms it should take.

The first application of the policy to a minister's credentials was made by the General Conference in February 1983. This does not mean that the policy is fixed, however. All policies are continually reviewed and revised to be more beneficial to the world church. For that reason I will analyze the way the new policy goes beyond the previous version, identify the theological reasons why the policy should be restudied, and make some suggestions that would ensure the fairness of the discipline procedures.

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1982 Policy Change

The 1978 working policy (see the non-italicized print in the accompanying text) begins with a statement about jurisdiction over ministers (L 60 05) and the importance of maintaining the integrity of ministerial credentials for the sake of the world-wide work of Seventh-day Adventists (L 60 10). It then specifies one major reason for voiding one's ordination to the sacred office of the ministry: the violation of the commandment on adultery (L 60 15). In a later section—almost as an afterthought—apostasy is also mentioned as a basis for discipline.

When either immorality or apostasy occurs, the form of discipline proposed is: withdrawing the minister's credentials, "annulling" his ordination—with concurrence of the next highest church jurisdiction—ending his denominational employment, and notifying the local church where the former minister has his membership that the committee has taken these actions. Upon notification, the policy states: "It shall be the duty of the church to administer discipline as provided for in the *Church Manual* in the case of moral delinquency on the part of church members."¹ Added to the local church's discipline (which would be censuring or disfellowshipping) is the proviso that the minister should plan to "devote his life to some other area than the gospel ministry, the teaching ministry, or positions of denominational leadership and prominence." Though implicit, this statement is nevertheless clear: once removed from the ministry and subsequently disciplined by the local church, a person may never serve in the ministry again.

In 1982, the Annual Council in Manila expanded the policy adopted four years before. To moral fall and apostasy as reasons to discipline ministers, the Annual Council added the category of dissidence. Also, the Annual Council made explicit the non-eligibility of a former minister/member for re-employment in the ministry.

Theological Considerations

Underlying all church policies are theological beliefs about God, the church, human beings, sin, and salvation. While policy statements cannot—and perhaps should not—include the theological rationale behind them, one way to make a policy more effective in the life of the church is to show its roots in the church's theology.

Let us look first at the theological significance of the language in the document. If they are going to be helpful, terms like "dissident," "subversive," and "apostate" need to be used with some precision. A dissident is someone who disagrees with the prevailing opinion or belief in the church, but—initially, at least—he disagrees at a level and in a way that poses no real threat to the community. He merely exercises his right to pursue truth, even when it carries him on a collision course with either the leadership or the majority of the members. He is not interested in undermining the church but in changing its theology or practice.

To be labeled a subversive, one would have to intend to overthrow established church authority. Unlike the dissident, who wants to strengthen the church, the activity of the subversive undermines it. One wants to change it while the other wants to control it. Only when the dissident feels he cannot change the church is he tempted to resort to subversion. Both the dissident and the subversive, in their own ways, "care" about the church.

By contrast, the apostate rejects the church *in toto*. He no longer believes in or cares about the church. He wants neither reform nor control; he wants divorce. He is in rebellion against God. While the dissident may be in error intellectually, the apostate commits a sin of the will. The dissident's disagreement and the apostate's rejection

are not at all the same, nor does dissidence necessarily lead to apostasy. Dissidence is a matter of opinion; apostasy is a question of relationship. An individual should not be called "apostate" for simply disagreeing with the church, nor is someone who will not change his mind at the urging of the church "unrepentant" in the sense of obstinacy against God. Even "continued and unrepentant dissidence" is not necessarily evidence of rebellion or loss of love for the church; it may indicate integrity of belief.

In this regard, the policy would gain balance and strength if this distinction between a dissenter and an apostate were made. The result would be to stress the importance of free expression and individual dissent. Without that emphasis, the impression is wrongly given that the church expects utter conformity. There may be times when dissident teachings do threaten the life of the church and the community must protect its life in Christ. But this dissent needs to be contrasted with the kind of dissent that invigorates the church. The contrast would sharpen our understanding of the Christian church as a community following the truth at all costs, even as Jesus did.

Consequently, it seems to me that a dual affirmation of the principles of freedom and responsibility needs to be made in the new policy. Without that dual affirmation, the nature of the church is open to serious misunderstandings. Whatever social entity one belongs to—whether a club or a family—the relationship between the issues of freedom and responsibility defines the ethos of that group. Tilted too far in the direction of freedom, the group may become amorphous and chaotic; tilted excessively towards responsibility, the group may become constricting and authoritarian. Furthermore, if the church is indeed perceived primarily as a club, one feels that institutional and organizational criteria dominate the church's self-understanding. It is less likely to point its members to the freedom available in a family. On the other hand, if the model of the family largely

defines the church's nature, it will convey a sense of both freedom and responsibility in love that the organizational emphasis inevitably lacks. It is clear that the church is not, strictly speaking, an organization; yet it is not without organization. Settling this ecclesiological issue about the nature of the church—as an organization, or a family, or a synthesis of both—is necessary if the policy for disciplining ministers is to engender enthusiastic support from the ministry itself.

Separating a disfellowshipped member completely from the congregation is such a deafening word of "law" that the sound of grace cannot be heard. For him the church as organization eclipses the church as fellowship.

Even the tone of the language in the policy seems devoid of fellowship. Here again is the tension between organization and fellowship, club and family. The model the church adopts shapes not only the nature of church discipline but even the language in which the policy is couched. When one violates the rules of membership in an organization, one might be readily expelled. But we do not easily disown even the most difficult members of the family. In a variety of ways, we may discipline and censure sisters and brothers, daughters and sons, even mothers and fathers, but we do not ordinarily "disfellowship" them. And for good reason. We sense that precisely at moments of censure they need "superfellowship": then they need us more than ever.

These are reasons why some pastors think that while the church may sometimes disfellowship, it may need more steps available to it before it imposes that ultimate sanction. They believe that the existing categories of "censure" and "disfellowship" are inadequate.

One sees the organization-family dichotomy even in the language the policy uses to address the local church. It recognizes local congregational authority in matters of church membership, but the policy does not convey the idea of the local church as a community/family strongly enough. If instead of "it shall be the duty of the local church to administer discipline," the policy read, "the local church shall be notified of the conference committee action," the members would more likely feel that the church is not only an organization but also a caring fellowship.

Another example of the lack of clarity about ecclesiology is the policy's discussion concerning the revocation of the ministerial credentials and ordination. Adventists have always believed that there is a dialectic of the divine and human in the calling of a minister. This means that when the church votes to call an individual to the ministry, it is tacitly affirming that person's conviction of being called by God to this work. However, while the church initially issues a ministerial license, it does not issue the credentials until the moment of ordination. In that act, the church declares that the licensed minister has demonstrated within the life of the church—not just in college or seminary—that he or she is called of God. Ordination is the community's symbolic way of giving special authority to some of its members in order to equip other members for their ministries in the church. Therefore, if one removes a minister's credentials, one removes that person's authority. Ordination cannot remain in force when the credentials are revoked any more than the spirit can live when the body has perished, or wedding bands can keep people married when they are legally divorced. If we do not insist on this unity between the credentials and the ordination, we will lapse into a mystical understanding of ordination that implies that the act of the laying on of hands

provides something more from the church than the credentials do. Such an understanding would give the church a power it does not possess. Someone might argue that ordination invokes the blessing of the Holy Spirit in a way that the credentials do not. If so, then there is greater reason for the policy to speak only to the issue of the ministerial credentials, for we should not presume to judge the Spirit's relationship to a formerly credentialed minister any more than we should make pronouncements about a disfellowshipped member's relationship to Jesus Christ as Lord.

An adequate understanding of the church would also recognize that sin can affect even the most prayerful decisions of conference committees and church business sessions. We ought to indicate an awareness of the church's fallibility and proneness to pride in its policies concerning discipline. Such an indication would do two things: first, it would allow the church to acknowledge

Policy on Discipline

■ Safeguarding Credentials—The Integrity of the Ministry—Policy Revision

VOTED, To revise GC L 60, Safeguarding Credentials—The Integrity of the Ministry, as follows:

L 60 05—No change.

L 60 10—No change.

L 60 15, *Reasons for Discipline of Ministers*—1. *Moral Fall/Apostasy—Discipline shall be administered to an ordained/licensed minister in the following circumstances:*

a. *In the case of a moral fall in violation of the seventh commandment, including those violations involving sexual perversions, he has, by that transgression, made void his calling and/or ordination to the sacred office of the ministry.*

b. *In the case of apostasy whereby he falls away to the world, or identifies himself with, or gives continuing support to, any activity subversive to the denomination, and/or persistently refuses to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church, he has, by such disloyalty, proved himself unworthy of a place or part in the gospel ministry of this church.*

2. *Dissidence. Discipline may also be administered in the case of a minister who openly expresses significant dissidence*

that subsequent events or later evidence might prove its judgment wrong; and second, it would help to minimize the abuses of power all of us are tempted to employ. Especially when we sit in judgment, we must be humble. No one must ever receive the impression that Seventh-day Adventists assume infallibility in matters of discipline.

I am fearful, however, that insisting that no minister who has ever lost his ministerial credentials or ordination can ever minister again conveys that very impression. The policy takes for granted that the reasons a minister would lose his credentials or license are adequate reasons to censure or disfellowship him, thereby making his readmittance to the ministry impossible. In this regard, the policy diverges from the *Church Manual* which assumes that there may be occasions when one's credentials might be lifted without affecting one's membership.² In my opinion, the *Church Manual* is right and the policy wrong.

Consider questions about disciplining a person who is guilty of a "moral fall." How often is it the case that there is only one "guilty" party in an adulterous situation? What about adultery that is known only to one's spouse and one's conference leader? If it is clear that this is a case of "entrapment" by the third party, that it is the pastor's first indiscretion of this kind and that he and his spouse have repaired their relationship, are we to assume that—as the policy indicates—the mere act of adultery "voids" one's call to the gospel ministry? What about an immoral act that happened many years ago and is only now coming to light? And even if the minister's credentials are lifted, would it be true in every case that he should be censured or disfellowshipped?

The distinction between removing the ministerial credentials and disciplining at the local church level should also be observed in cases of "dissidence." Let us suppose that a minister is disciplined over the

Adopted at 1982 Annual Council

regarding the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Continued and unrepentant dissidence may eventually be seen by the church to be apostasy and identified as such by the minister's administrative organization after counseling with the next higher organization.

L 60 20, *Steps in Discipline of Ministers*—When discipline must be administered in the case of a minister, four aspects of his relationship to the church may be affected: his credentials/license, his ordination, his church membership, and his denominational employment. The discipline and corresponding procedure for administering such discipline in relation to each of these aspects is as follows:

1. Credentials/license. The credentials/license of a minister who experiences a moral fall or apostatizes shall be withdrawn permanently by his employing committee, after consultation with the next higher organization. His credentials/license may also be withdrawn in the case of dissidence as defined in L 60 15-2 above, after consultation with the next higher organization, but such withdrawal shall be reviewed by the committee after a stipulated period/periods which shall be determined at the time of withdrawal.

2. Ordination. a. A minister who experiences a moral fall or apostatizes has made void his ordination. This changed relationship shall be recognized and recorded by his employing organization with the approval of the respective

union committee (General Conference or division committee in the case of a General Conference/division institution). He shall be ineligible for future employment as a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

b. A licensed minister who experiences a moral fall or apostatizes shall be ineligible for future ordination or employment as a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

3. Church Membership. The organization which has withdrawn a credentials/license permanently and, in the case of an ordained minister who has made void his ordination, has recognized and recorded his changed relationship, shall inform the local church of which the offending minister is a member. It shall be the duty of the church to administer discipline as provided for in the *Church Manual* in the section "Reasons for Which Members Shall Be Disciplined."

4. Denominational Employment. It is recognized that a minister who has experienced a moral fall or has apostatized has access to the mercy and pardoning grace of God and may desire to return to the church. Such an individual must be assured of the love and good will of his brethren. However, for the sake of the good name of the church and the maintaining of moral standards, he must plan to devote his life to employment other than that of the gospel ministry, the teaching ministry, or denominational leadership.

doctrine of revelation and inspiration because his views are out of harmony with the church. He accepts the authority of the Scriptures and Ellen White, but his understanding of the basis of that authority makes it difficult, if not impossible, for him to defend the current thinking of the Seventh-day Adventist church. If he loses his credentials as a teacher or preacher, does that mean his membership should always be in jeopardy? Let us further suppose that, on the particular point that he has differed with the church, the church later revises its position. Would the former minister not be eligible for re-instatement as a member and possible re-appointment as a minister? If we allowed each case to be evaluated separately and revised the policy so that it contained no references to the permanent non-employment of ministers, the church would powerfully affirm that it was a "forgiving community."

As a pastor I have learned that it is almost impossible to disfellowship a church member and at the same time convince him that the community still cares about him as a person. Separating him completely from the congregation is such a deafening word of "law" that the sound of grace cannot be heard. For him the church as organization eclipses the church as fellowship. How to properly combine these two characteristics is difficult. It is true that discipline is designed to both uphold the good name of the church and awaken the member to repentance. Still, I believe that unless the policy expresses more compassion, ministerial discipline will sound vindictive rather than regretful. The last word in the Bible is always the word of forgiveness. Should the last word of this policy be otherwise?

Procedural Recommendations

In no place is the compassion of a disciplinary policy more visible than in the procedures that accompany it. Fair treat-

ment for an accused minister requires the church to agree on just procedures. Who is to decide the truth of the allegations and how is it to be decided? The silence of the policy concerning due process—other than stating that the appropriate conference committee must make a decision at some point—permits each jurisdiction to create its own version of just procedures. Such a situation does not protect either the minister or the administration. There is little to protect the church leadership from criticism when procedures vary from conference to conference. A standardized procedure can deflect such criticism as well as ensure that the accused does not feel "lynched." If the process is fair, an accused minister may not agree with the decision that has been reached, but he will feel that he has been in the hands of Christians.

I have been working with a General Conference committee growing out of Theological Consultation II that has addressed these very procedural points. Drawing from the work of that committee, I believe that good procedures should include the following: (a) The first person to speak about discipline to a minister should be his immediate superior, who, in most cases, is the conference president; (b) If the accused denies the charges against him, the conference president should immediately inform the conference committee who should create a hearing committee. The composition of the hearing committee should include several conference committee members, representatives from peers of the accused, and representatives from the union conference, and, if theological issues are involved, members from the theology department of the college within the union. Instead of the conference president, someone such as the union ministerial secretary should chair this hearing committee; (c) The accused has a right to know his accusers; (d) When the hearing committee has concluded its work, it is to send a recommendation to the conference committee; (e) If the accused is dissatisfied with the committee process or decision, he has the right to an appeal to the

union committee. It then should establish its own hearing committee along the same guidelines established for hearings at the local level. As in the case of the local conference, the union hearing committee would make its recommendations to the full union committee. The appeal procedure would terminate at the union level. If church policy either included or made reference to such procedures, it would be immeasurably more helpful to the church and reassuring to its ministry.

When persons are disfellowshipped, they are missed, terribly missed. The names may be gone from the records, but the persons are still real in the life of the congregation.

Individuals who lose a limb feel that limb for many months after the amputation. They have used that arm or that foot for so many years that their brain—and in that sense their entire being—is etched with that limb. Its importance and meaning remain even after it is gone.

When a member—ordained or not—is removed from the church, the congregation continues to feel his or her presence. Such an excruciating experience deserves to be limited as much as possible by policies based on careful theological reflection, expressed in compassionate language, and specified in just procedures. We must never forget that the body that suffers is the body of Christ.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "Among the grievous sins for which members shall be subject to church discipline are the following:

1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the cardinal doctrines of the church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.

2. Open violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, adultery, fornication and various perversions, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbath-breaking, willful and habitual falsehood, and the remarriage of a divorced person, except of the innocent party in a divorce for adultery.

3. Fraud or willful misrepresentation in business.

4. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach

upon the cause.

5. Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization. (See p. 240, 'Self-appointed Organizations.')

6. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.

7. The use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages.

8. The use of tobacco.

9. The misuse of, or trafficking in, narcotics or other drugs." From the *Church Manual*, 1981, pp. 247-248.

2. "A minister may be relieved of his office as a minister by conference committee action, without his standing as a church member being affected." *Church Manual*, 1981, p. 189.

Special Section

The Oppressed Brother: The Challenge of the True and Free Adventists

by Charles Scriven

Previous issues of *SPECTRUM* have contained articles on the Seventh-day Adventists in the Soviet Union, many of whom suffer from oppression at the hands of a government antagonistic to their religious commitments.

In what follows, the president of Walla Walla College, Clifford Sorenson, and Roland Blaich, a professor of history at the same college, discuss the situation of the True and Free Seventh-day Adventists in the Soviet Union. These Adventists' convictions about the proper relationship of church and state and their sufferings at the hands of the Soviet government constitute a moral challenge to the Adventist community.

Scriven: Dr. Sorenson, how did you acquire a special interest in the situation of Adventists, and in particular True and Free Adventists, in the Soviet Union?

Sorenson: My interest was largely generated from the fact that my wife's family was on the scene in Russia when the Adventist Church experienced many of the

Sorenson, whose doctorate is from the University of Southern California, recently traveled to the Soviet Union and met with members of the True and Free Seventh-day Adventist Church. Blaich's doctoral dissertation at Washington State University dealt with the Christian churches under Hitler, and he continues to pursue his interest in the relation of religious groups to totalitarian governments.

The moderator of these conversations was Charles Scriven, a member of the theology faculty of Walla Walla College and the associate editor of *SPECTRUM*. They were recorded in two separate sessions and later edited for publication. Scriven recently traveled to the Soviet Union where he was able to meet with members of the (registered) Seventh-day Adventist Church in Moscow.

—The Editors

early events leading to today's circumstances. At least one of our relatives was a delegate to the 1924 Moscow Conference where key differences arose among those in attendance.

Scriven: Have you ever met with Adventists of the Soviet Union yourself?

Sorenson: I have never personally met with members of the registered church, but I have met my wife's cousins who work as pastors in the True and Free Adventist Church.

Charles Scriven is an associate professor of theology at Walla Walla College. He is the author of *The Demons Have Had It*.

Scriven: Dr. Blaich, your background includes doctoral studies on totalitarian governments, specifically Nazi Germany.

Blaich: Yes, my studies have centered on the Christian churches in a Nazi totalitarian setting. Naturally, I am very interested in the experience of the church under communism, specifically in East Germany, but also in the Soviet Union.

Scriven: Perhaps that's enough by way of background. The topic is the Adventist Church in the Soviet Union. I am particularly interested in the situation of the True and Free Adventists there, though I hope that this discussion will illuminate the general question of the church's existence in a totalitarian society. Now, to get started, would you say something, Dr. Blaich, about the nature of the totalitarian state. With what kind of government does the church deal in Russia?

Blaich: First, the totalitarian state, whether fascist or communist, is based on an ideology that defines truth and gives to the group in power a monopoly on truth. It demands perfect conformity in all spheres of life. Second, the totalitarian state characteristically seeks to mobilize the masses. This is where it differs from mere dictatorship. It seeks to involve the masses positively in the system. It does this, on the one hand, through indoctrination—this requires a monopoly on information—and on the other hand, through terror.

Scriven: Can you comment, in particular, on the special problems churches face under totalitarian governments?

Blaich: The ideological state is necessarily opposed to the church. The church is an alternate source of information or truth. It denies the ideology's absolute claim to truth. It rejects the totalitarian claim to dominate all spheres of life. And the Christian refuses to be mobilized into the system. The church is inevitably a rival that must be conquered or eliminated. There is no question about that. The only question is how.

Sorensen: But the Russian government

officially affirms its people's right to religious freedom and would cite the existence of Christian churches and of millions of Moslems within its borders as evidence of this.

Blaich: Yes, this is true, but it can be explained. The ideal—for any totalitarian state—is to break down traditional structures, including traditional religions, so that it can mold the masses into a new society. It is very difficult to do this when these structures have existed for a long time. The Soviets, as did the Nazis before them, have used a diversified approach. They have used atheistic indoctrination—through the media, schools, and youth movements. They have used intimidation and persecution. But at the same time, they have wanted to give the appearance of toleration—of benevolence, in some cases—toward churches and religious leaders. This is to give the impression, at home and abroad, that the persecution that is widely talked about is actually not happening, but that the country is a legal state and only deals harshly with those who are violating the law. Thus they can avoid the formation of a united, determined opposition.

Scriven: In light of this background on the relation of churches and totalitarian governments, let's turn now, in particular, to the situation of the Adventist Church in Russia. Articles in past issues of *SPECTRUM* (Vol. 11 No. 4) have acquainted our readers with the broad outline of what is now known: that in the middle 1920s a division among Soviet Adventists occurred over how the church should relate to the totalitarian Soviet government; that from then until now many Adventists have been willing to register their congregations with the government and to cooperate with the wishes of the government to a substantial degree; that others have in various degrees and ways resisted the efforts of the government to domesticate the church; that among these latter a quite radical group has existed under the name True and Free Seventh-day Adventists. Because of your

background, Dr. Sorensen, I am especially interested in what you have to say about the True and Free Adventists, who came into considerable prominence when their 87-year-old leader, Vladimir Shelkov, died in a labor camp in 1980.

Sorensen: Our limited communications with family members of the True and Free Church indicate that, in their view, the official Adventist church—the church registered with government agencies and recognized by our own central church administration—has abandoned to a large measure, or at least distorted, the Adventist “truth.” They think the official Adventist Church has, in a sense, become Babylon—has eroded certain basic tenets, by having surrendered its autonomy and become a

pawn of the state. They are not happy that the official church is willing to take the route of quiet diplomacy; they believe we must speak out, be heard, be confrontive, and challenge the authority of the government, with respect to its infringement of individual freedoms, especially as they pertain to the church.

Scriven: In what ways do the True and Free Adventists think Adventism should confront the state?

Sorensen: Embarrassment of the state is one tactic they have used. Through published statements and in other ways, they have tried to show the true character of the present regime both to the citizens of their nation and to those who reside outside the Soviet Union. They try to prove, for

Amnesty International Asks Adventists to Help

The following letters requesting assistance have been received during the last few months. Amnesty International, an organization which won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1977, has many times spoken out on behalf of Adventists imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Amnesty International has made one of its principal objectives the unconditional release of “prisoners of conscience,” persons who have not used or advocated violence and are detained for their beliefs, color, sex, ethnic origin, language, or religion.

One way Amnesty International’s 250,000 members in 134 countries work for their release is to form groups that adopt specific prisoners, whose cases the group documents and publicizes. Amnesty International currently has under adoption as prisoners of conscience, approximately 70 Seventh-day Adventists, most of whom Amnesty International says are imprisoned for producing, possessing, or distributing unofficial religious literature.

—The Editors

To the Editors: Since early this year, Amnesty International Group 250 in Chico, California, has been acting in defense of a young woman who has been unjustly imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Leta Nagreskaite, who belongs to the Church of True and Free Seventh-day Adventists, was arrested September 1981 in Leningrad while distributing illegal religious pamphlets. The two-and-one-half-year sentence she received is a clear violation of the basic right to religious expression guaranteed by international covenants, as well as by the U.S.S.R. Constitution.

Leta Nagreskaite was born January 9, 1953. She comes

from Kaunas, Lithuania. She was employed as a curator in the Republican Zoological Gardens. She has a mother and a sister, Eita, who is her identical twin. Leta and another woman came to Leningrad on September 21, 1981. They were seen placing printed leaflets in mail boxes and were reported to the police. Leta was arrested and had in her possession 13 copies of *Open Letter* Number 15 in a plastic bag. The *Open Letter* is a bulletin which reports on the violation of rights of religious believers. Issue Number 14, of which Amnesty International has a copy, reports on the suspicious death of Seymon Bakholdin, which occurred while he was serving a seven-year sentence for his religious activities.

A trial was held in Leningrad City Court from December 17 to December 21, 1981. The chairwoman of the court was V. I. Poludnyakova and the Procurator was Trubina. Leta Nagreskaite was charged under Article 190-1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code: “circulation of fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system.” The maximum sentence under this article is three years. Because she had a good character reference from her place of work and no previous convictions, the court said it would be lenient. She was sentenced to two-and-a-half-years’ imprisonment in a corrective labor colony. Amnesty International does not yet know her exact whereabouts.

Our group has become involved in this case out of a concern for protecting human rights for all people. We particularly welcome your participation in campaigns such as this to help the victims of religious persecution.

Henry P. Gordon
Amnesty International 250
5135 Royon Lane
Paradise, CA 95969

instance, that the authorities are not supporting, as they claim, true freedom of conscience and religion. This is the main thrust.

Scriven: Can you be more specific about the criticism the True and Free Adventists have of the officially recognized church?

Sorensen: The primary concerns are, first, the apparent willingness, as they perceive it, of the official church to cooperate with military service requirements of the government—to the point even of bearing arms; second, the willingness of the church to cooperate with the government regarding prior approval of sermons and government supervision of the transfer of ministers from one congregation to another; third, the apparent willingness of

the church members to send their children to school on the Sabbath and to cooperate in government-enforced programs in the autumn, when young people are required to harvest crops on the Sabbath. These are all ways in which they believe the church has surrendered itself to the government and hence become a modern-day Babylon.

Scriven: How did these differences develop, anyway?

Sorensen: It would seem that the roots of this issue stem from World War I and the military service issue which developed in Germany as a result. The Friedensau meeting held in July of 1920 is very important in this respect. The purpose of this gathering was to bring together the various elements within Germany and

To the Editors: The Hudson Valley Group of Amnesty International has been working to obtain the release of Rikhard Albertovitch Spalin from imprisonment in a Soviet labor camp. Mr. Spalin is a member of the Church of the True and Free Seventh-day Adventists and has been incarcerated for both his association with and evangelical work for his church.

Rikhard Spalin was born in 1937 and resided with his wife, Galina Ivanovna, and their four children in Georgievsk, which is between the Black and Caspian seas, in the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic of the U.S.S.R. Mr. Spalin was arrested with others in the Stavropol area on August 13, 1978, and on June 11, 1979, charged—under Articles 190-2, 162, and 92 of the RSFSR Criminal Code—with circulating anti-government slander, engaging in a prohibited trade and stealing state property. Mr. Spalin was found guilty and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in a labor camp in Velsk, near the White Sea. Reliable sources report that Mr. Spalin's arrest stemmed from his salvaging of a discarded printing press and its subsequent use to print *True Witness*, an underground religious publication.

Conditions in the Velsk camp are described as poor. In addition, Mr. Spalin is imprisoned 1,300 miles from his family, is allowed no visitors, and mail service is prohibited or delayed for months. He has reportedly developed a seizure disorder (very possibly caused by physical abuse), hypertension, and heart disease.

Amnesty International believes that Rikhard Spalin has been imprisoned for no other reason than the free exercise of religion and the expression of his beliefs. In theory, these rights are supposedly secured under the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 18 and 19), ratified by the USSR in 1973. In reality, these rights do not exist.

Our strategy is to mount a constant barrage of correspondence directed at Soviet officials who are responsible for Mr. Spalin's imprisonment and to pressure those officials into, at minimum, improving Mr. Spalin's living conditions, but, ultimately, into allowing his release. The success of this tactic relies on the generation of letters from a large number of people and organizations. To this end, we have approached the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to enlist their help in mobilizing the American Adventist community to remonstrate on the behalf of Mr. Spalin. Unfortunately, we were informed that the General Conference does not recognize the True and Free Church as legitimate, and therefore will do nothing on his behalf. Consequently, your help is vital to the success of our efforts. We need to inform the Adventist community of the desperate plight of Mr. Spalin and the entire True and Free Church.

We implore our readers to write to Soviet officials. Two officials who reside in the United States are:

Ambassador Oleg A. Troyanovsky
United Nations Mission of the USSR
136 East 67th Street
New York City, N.Y. 10021

Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin
Embassy of the USSR
1125 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

It is our hope that through the cooperation of Amnesty International, SPECTRUM, and the Adventist Community, Rikhard Spalin's freedom can be secured.

Leonard Lothstein, Ph.D.
1 David Lane
Yonkers, New York 10701
(914) 698-1100 X315

Europe which held opposing views on the issue of combatancy.

Scriven: Explain the connection between all of this and what is going on now in Russia.

[True and Free Seventh-day Adventists] think the official Adventist Church has, in a sense, become Babylon . . . by having surrendered its autonomy and become a pawn of the state.

Sorensen: Some leaders of our church in Germany in the early days of World War I had indicated that participation of our young men in the military, including the bearing of arms, was a church-approved position. A group later identified as the "opposition party" was highly displeased with this state of affairs and became openly opposed to the leadership and tried to rally the church members to their viewpoint. At the Friedensau meetings, the General Conference representatives met with the various church factions to discuss the problem and to bring about conciliation. A. G. Daniels was chairman of these meetings.

This all ties to the Russian problem because at the conclusion of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian government sought to establish a relationship with the Christian community as a whole and, subsequently, with the Adventist church in particular. The government had learned about the early German statement allowing the bearing of arms and took it to be a representative statement of the church's posture with respect to combatancy. In other words, government officials took this policy to justify their view that every young man in Russia who was an Adventist should bear

arms and participate fully in military service. What had happened in Germany, therefore, had a significant impact with Russian authorities and on the issues considered at the 1924 Moscow Conference.

At the Friedensau meetings, the General Conference leadership had hoped to bring about sufficient understanding so as to facilitate further dialogue and study. The transcript of these meetings, however, suggests that the opposition party members present at the meeting were not persuaded, and the effort to encourage further dialogue largely failed. We must bear in mind, of course, that the opposition party felt they had been deeply hurt, even betrayed, by the action of their leaders. They felt that the church in Germany should have supported noncombatancy and regarded this as the traditional position of the church. (It is not clear, however, that the general church had had any previous occasion to establish a clear position on the issue.) As a consequence of the collaboration of church leaders with government representatives, many German Adventists who were committed to a noncombatancy position as a matter of conscience were incarcerated or lost their lives. This resulted in major abrasions between the groups, between those who felt they should support leadership and those who felt they should support what they saw to be the traditional—and biblical—posture of the church.

Scriven: What was the 1924 Moscow Conference on which, as you say, all of this had an impact?

Sorensen: The Russian authorities requested the church in 1924 to send delegates to Moscow for a meeting on church-government relations. When the delegates arrived, the Russian government presented previously prepared documents specifying church latitudes and authority limits. These "agreements" specify most of the controls which prevail today. There were subsequent conferences in 1928 and in the early 1930s, each establishing more restrictive policies for the church. Delegates to the 1924

meeting were, in many cases, intimidated by government agents while traveling to Moscow on the trains. They were instructed in no uncertain terms as to the issues and how they would vote. At that convention one group signed the documents, thinking it would be best to concede and be cooperative; another group refused and subsequently became identified as the True and Free Adventists.

Scriven: We've talked a bit about the background and outlook of the True and Free Adventists. What do you understand about the relationships that now exist between True and Free Adventists and those Adventists who register and cooperate, as far as possible, with the government?

Sorensen: Through various communications, I judge that both groups are following rather independent courses with very minimal communication and, in many cases, with substantial levels of distrust of each other. We must keep in mind, however, that the True and Free Church has been identified as a subversive and unauthorized group by government agencies. For that reason its members are not willing to participate in any type of public forum. This makes it nearly impossible to bring the two groups together in order to resolve mutual problems and establish confidence and trust.

Scriven: This difficulty of communication between the True and Free Adventists and the rest of the Adventist community complicates the whole question of how the church should understand its relationship to these people. In view of the little that we do know, how, Dr. Sorensen, do you think the SDA Church should respond to their plight?

Sorensen: Unfortunately, the church has been quite reluctant to respond in any setting. Of course the matter is extremely delicate. In a public setting, certainly, the church has to tread very carefully. Certain public statements could damage existing lines of communication and even existing freedoms.

Scriven: You mean that speaking out on behalf of the True and Free Adventists

would have the effect of making things more miserable for the registered Adventists?

Sorensen: There can be little doubt on that point. On the other hand, silence about these matters, or even an effort to negotiate in quiet, careful ways, can also yield nothing; the process can go on without any evidence of results.

Blaich: Negotiation is meaningful and can be successful only where it is done from a position of strength. That rule from diplomacy must also be applied here. There will be little incentive for the Russian government to give at all on behalf of the True and Free Adventists, unless it becomes clear that there is something for them to gain in giving. And I think that is where the importance of speaking up comes in. The potential of our speaking out would mean, for them, losing something.

Scriven: How would it mean losing something?

Blaich: The Soviet Union is sensitive to world opinion. This is demonstrated in the release of dissidents. The Soviet Union would like to appear as a legal state that guarantees all reasonable constitutional rights.

Sorensen: If it would be a mistake for the church to single out the plight of the True and Free Adventists through official church organs, surely as a church we could at least speak out on behalf of all peoples in controlled or restricted societies. In my view, our church should develop a significant profile on the general issue of the freedom of conscience. This could be achieved in world leadership settings—such as the recent Madrid Conference, for example.

Scriven: This is one way in which the church as an official organization might help assuage the pain of oppressed peoples like the True and Free Adventists. But would an effective approach include a variety of ways of dealing with totalitarian governments? How, Dr. Blaich, did the churches in Nazi Germany which were openly critical of Hitler do what they did?

Blaich: There were different types of resistance to the Nazis: from that of organized groups to that of individuals, from outspoken statements of opposition to quiet, passive resistance.

Scriven: And it did have the effect of helping, in its way, to undermine the Nazi leadership?

Blaich: Yes. Christians who resisted at all—and simply living the life of a Christian is an act of resistance to evil—presented an automatic limit to the development of totalitarianism. Some church leaders in Germany were quite outspoken especially on issues such as the atheistic indoctrination of youth, infringement on parental rights, euthanasia, and the violation of basic human rights of some minorities such as the Jews.

As a church, we have, to a degree, been trained to be passive, apolitical, and uninvolved.

Some even suggested openly that the Nazi state violated God's law and natural law and therefore was not a legitimate state. The effect was the suspension of some Nazi programs such as euthanasia, or at least the modification of Nazi tactics. This is a fact which can be clearly demonstrated. Certainly on a broad basis, the progress of the Nazi *Gleichschaltung*—the conformity of society with Nazi ideology—was greatly slowed down.

I should say, too, by the way, that there is another dimension of resistance to Nazism that we haven't mentioned yet. Christians in Germany were aided by Christian spokesmen in other places—England, America, and the Scandinavian countries, for example—spokesmen who wielded power through public opinion.

Scriven: But what about Christians who did not resist Nazism?

Blaich: Well, here we touch on a sore spot. The Christian church has been

subjected to much criticism for this. It is true that in a country where more than 90 percent of the population were members of a church, Nazi crimes would not have taken place except for the silence, toleration, and even cooperation of Christians.

It is sad to have to admit that members of the Adventist Church cooperated. To protect the institution and organizational structure of the denomination, the leaders of the Adventist Church accommodated to the Nazi state and its ideological stance. For example, the German *Morning Watch* for April 20, 1940, praised Adolf Hitler for his humility, self sacrifice, and "warm heart."^{*} Adventists even disfellowshipped members of Jewish origin.

In all fairness I should add that there *were* a few persons in our church who were subversive and risked their lives in the process of protecting the persecuted. As always, the men and women of conviction and courage were few and far between.

Scriven: All of this suggests that there is a useful distinction to be made between the witness of the church as an official organization and the witness of the individual member. Ought we as individuals to be more outspoken in voicing our support of people such as members of the True and Free Adventist Church?

Sorensen: There were individuals in Nazi Germany and other conquered and occupied countries who had a profound influence for good, beyond all proportions of their number. Standing unflinchingly on a principle, even to the point, often, of sacrificing themselves, they forced government officials either to do something drastic or to back away. As a church, we have, to a degree, been trained to be passive, apolitical, and uninvolved. There are many settings where we could, by vigilance on behalf of human rights, make a difference in the world.

^{*}See Erwin Sicher, "Seventh-day Adventist Publications and the Nazi Temptation," *SPECTRUM*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 11-24.

I Was in Prison

by Tom Dybdahl

When I was 12 years old, I read a book titled "By God's Grace, Sam." It described how a convicted murderer, Sam W. Tannyhill, became a Seventh-day Adventist through the "Faith for Today" television program. In November 1956, about a year after his conversion, Sam was executed at the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus.

I have never forgotten that little book. When I finished it, I wondered why anybody would want to kill someone who was a devout Adventist. And I wondered about all the other men and women on Death Row who might be killed before they had a chance to convert. I am still wondering about them. And that is part of the reason I dragged my family off to New Orleans for two years so I could work as a volunteer with the Louisiana Coalition on Jails and Prisons.

My job at the coalition is to work with prisoners in the state system. The organization does not provide legal aid but works to protect prisoners' civil and constitutional rights. Basically, I receive letters from prisoners describing their troubles, investigate the situation (or find someone else to), and try to resolve any problems. In addition,

the coalition actively opposes capital punishment and tries to provide special support to those people who are condemned to die.

It is hard to remember, now, just what I expected of criminal justice in Louisiana. I knew the South was not noted for genteel treatment of criminals, that our justice system had serious flaws. But knowing is one thing, and seeing is another.

Dave Bascom* called collect one day from the St. Tammany Parish Jail. He had been arrested some months earlier, accused of aggravated rape and aggravated crime against nature. He talked so much that I took an immediate dislike to him.

He had no money and no family, so he was assigned a public defender. He entered a plea of not guilty. He met with the lawyer once before the trial and gave him the name of a witness whom Dave believed would exonerate him. When the trial day came, Dave walked into court and discovered that his witness had never been contacted. His lawyer had been too busy. He asked for a postponement, but the judge denied the motion.

The lawyer then advised Dave to plead guilty and said he'd get him off with five

Tom Dybdahl, who received an M.Div. from the SDA Theological Seminary and an M.A. from the Columbia School of Journalism, works with the Louisiana Coalition on Jails and Prisons.

*Names with an asterisk have been changed to conceal the guilty.

years: with a jury trial, he could have received 100 years for those charges. In the absence of his witness, and any other advice, Dave pled guilty. The judge proceeded to sentence him to 40 years, with no reduction for good behavior. Dave didn't realize that lawyers are not authorized to offer their clients any specific deals.

By the time Dave called us, there really wasn't much we could do. An investigator found his witness with only a few phone calls, but it was a bit late, and he had no money to pay someone to take a sworn statement from the man. When I visited Dave recently, he talked about his appeal, but he didn't sound hopeful. All the judges have asked him the same question: "Why did you plead guilty if you're innocent?"

Russell Tate's* case went to trial, but his public defender didn't seem to pay much attention to the proceedings. Russell knew he was in real trouble when, on the day of final arguments, his lawyer marched into court and immediately pulled up both trouser legs. "Look at these socks," he ordered. "Notice anything different?"

"Yeah," Russell said. "You've got one of them on wrong-side-out."

"You bet," the lawyer said. "My father told me it brings good luck. You've got nothing to worry about." Russell received a life sentence without the possibility of probation or parole. Last time I saw him, he showed me the scars on his wrist from a recent suicide attempt.

A few weeks ago, a man at the state penitentiary asked for help in obtaining a pardon. He sent along a letter from the state-appointed doctor that had examined him, stating that he might well be innocent and urging that the Board of Pardons grant him clemency.

During the earlier trial, the doctor had testified about the prisoner's mental competence and had left with the sense that his court-appointed lawyer was not exceptionally adept. Among other things, this attorney periodically referred to his client by the wrong name, using instead the

surname of a crooked politician with whom the accused had the misfortune to share an unusual first name.

I'm not saying here that bad lawyers are the problem, or that these men are blameless. Prisoners, like all of us, often alter the truth in their favor, so it is risky to guess at guilt or innocence without all the facts. What I am saying is that if you're poor, the system just doesn't work very well for you. You're more likely to get a poor defense—and to end up doing time.

Inside the jails and prisons, things don't work out quite the way they are supposed to either. One day I received a call from a lawyer asking me to visit one of her clients. He seemed to be spending a lot of time in the isolation unit, and she was worried about him. But she didn't want to confront the warden.

Joseph Wells* was a big, red-headed kid, just 21. If you liked him you'd call him high-spirited. A deputy cursed him, and he cursed the deputy back. So they put a chain around his neck, arms, and legs, and beat him. Then they twisted a chain around his neck, and when he was gasping for air, they told him to apologize: "Say you're sorry."

"I'm sorry," he whispered.

"Say it louder."

He did, and they unchained him. It took about two weeks for the cuts and bruises to heal. When I visited him again, he was back in isolation for masturbating in view of a guard.

There were 13 cells in the isolation unit, but only four of them had lights. His didn't. It was too dark to read, but it didn't matter much because they wouldn't let him have anything to read. The roaches were what really bothered him.

"I went to see the doctor yesterday," he told me, "'cause I thought I had a rash. But he told me it was no rash, it was roach bites. I wish I could do something about those roaches." He's doing time for shoplifting while on probation.

Nolan Washington's* mother called several weeks ago about her son's arm. He had been scheduled for surgery when he was arrested. Now he was awaiting trial, and his arm—untreated—was virtually immobile and very painful. "I was just sitting on my bed, reading the story of the Good Samaritan," she told me. "And I thought, they're doing my son just like that. Goin' right by." I called the prison, but I wasn't hopeful that it would help.

I didn't hear from her for a month or so, and then she called again. They hadn't done anything about his arm; it still hung from his shoulder, useless. But now he had ankle problems as well. He had broken it years earlier, and he had a steel pin in the joint. He had fallen recently, and it was painful and swollen.

"He asked for some treatment," she told me, "but they just looked at it and told him to come back in two days. There wasn't no place to soak his foot but in the commode. So that's what he's been doin'. Soaking his foot in the commode."

These stories are not the only ones, or even the worst ones. They are simply the ones on my mind now. Tomorrow I could write about others. There are far too many to call them exceptions—indeed, more and more it seems that the exception is when prisoners are given decent, fair, humane treatment. I think society has agreed, in some sense, that people who commit crimes should be punished and that one acceptable form of punishment is loss of freedom. But have we agreed that the men and women who are locked up should be systematically abused, degraded, denied the status of persons? Yet this goes on, daily, in most of our jails and prisons. It happens behind walls, and razor wire, and steel doors, so we do not see it. But most of us do not even want to know about it because then we would share some of the responsibility.

Just today I visited a man awaiting trial in one of the parish jails. One Sunday morning last summer, as Mike* was sleeping in his bed, he heard one of his cellmates scream.

He jumped up, and got a face-full of liquid toilet cleaner that was intended for somebody else. By the time he was taken to the hospital, one eye was almost totally destroyed and the other slightly damaged.

Last month, some prisoners at this jail sawed through the bars, and Mike was one of 12 who escaped. The law caught him the next day. While he was being taken back to the jail, some guards beat him up, trying to get information about the escape. He was handcuffed, with arms behind his back, and at one point he stumbled against one of the deputies. "Trying to steal my pistol, eh?" said the guard. "Which is your good eye?"

"My left one," Mike said.

Then the guard hit him in his left eye with the pistol butt.

Early on the morning of Tuesday, December 7, 1982, the sovereign state of Texas killed Charlie Brooks, Jr., with a lethal injection. According to the other men on Death Row, he was friendly and well-liked, and a lousy volleyball player. In December 1976, he and his childhood buddy Woody Loudres kidnapped a Ft. Worth mechanic named David Gregory and shot him to death. The judicial system toyed with Charlie Brooks for six years and then repaid him in kind.

When there was no word of a stay of execution by Friday, December 3, the coalition—all eight of us—sprang into action. Four people went off to Texas to mobilize opposition to the execution, while the rest of us did the same in New Orleans. I organized a press conference, trying to make the point that—even for those who supported capital punishment—Charlie Brooks was not a good candidate for death.

There were two reasons. It was the first time—to anyone's knowledge—that a stay had not been granted when the merits of the case were still being considered by the federal courts. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court

of Appeals, here in New Orleans, did not directly block Brooks' right to appeal through the federal court system. But by refusing to stop his execution, it made any appeal beside the point. Even a successful appeal can't help a dead man.

Second, there was a basic question of fairness. Charlie Brooks' co-defendant, Woody Loudres, had originally been sentenced to death as well. But his conviction was overturned by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals because of some fundamental errors in jury selection. Instead of prosecuting Loudres again, the District Attorney offered him a 40-year sentence in exchange for a guilty plea, and he accepted.

In the crime at issue, only one shot was fired. Since neither man testified against the other, the state of Texas did not know who had actually fired the fatal shot. So in the eyes of the law, they were equally guilty. But one was sentenced to 40 years; the other, to death.

As a result, Jack V. Strickland, the former assistant district attorney who had been the lead prosecutor in both cases, filed an affidavit in support of a stay of execution for Charlie Brooks. It read, in part: "The evidence against Brooks and the evidence against Loudres was substantially identical . . . It's my professional belief that Brooks' challenge to the disproportionality of his sentence raises a substantial question of law which deserves careful judicial review."

But as the hours passed on Monday, December 6, it became evident that no careful review was forthcoming. At about 10:30 a.m., the clerk at the 5th Circuit Court announced the decision: no stay. Papers were immediately filed in the U.S. Supreme Court. By midafternoon, the Texas Board of Pardons revealed its recommendation: a 2-to-1 vote against clemency. Shortly afterwards, lame-duck Governor William P. Clements commented that he saw no reason to intervene. At 7:30 p.m., the Supreme Court announced its 6-to-3 vote in favor of death. Charlie Brooks' last legal hope was gone.

During the noon hour, we had gone downtown and passed out leaflets with information on the Brooks case, and our reasons for opposing his execution. Some people cursed us, a few thanked us, and most glanced at our flyers politely and went on their way. One or two stopped to discuss the issue of capital punishment.

I think that opponents of the death penalty (and I am certainly one) have most of the logical arguments on their side. There is no evidence that capital punishment deters anyone else from killing; it is reserved almost exclusively for poor people; it even costs more than life in prison. But few people decide this issue logically. It is a highly emotional subject, and most people opt for revenge, though they use more polite words. If someone murders, society has a right to murder back. It's the old eye-for-eye.

I told these passers-by that I believed the death penalty is wrong, in every case and circumstance. And that I did not get to that position because of good arguments, but because I believe in mercy. If God could forgive killers, could I withhold forgiveness? Doesn't the cross proclaim that no one is beyond hope, that Jesus accepted execution to save us all from that fate? On that sunny afternoon, no one disputed my pleas; they simply saw things another way.

Our efforts did attract some media attention, however. In the previous few days, there had been almost no interest in the case. But as Monday slipped away, along with Charlie Brooks' chances, he quickly became big news. By noon, the radio was giving details of his last meal order—steak, fries, and peach cobbler. By 6 p.m., even the CBS Evening News took notice. But the big story of the day was Barney Clark's artificial heart. While doctors in Salt Lake City stretched their skills trying to save Dr. Clark's life, a doctor from the Texas Department of Corrections was examining Charlie Brooks' veins to see if they were adequate to receive a lethal injection.

At 11 p.m., 20 of us in New Orleans

gathered for a vigil. We stood in a circle, in the cold darkness of Jackson Square, in front of any empty church. Four hundred miles to the west, in the Ellis Unit of the Huntsville Prison, they were strapping Charlie Brooks to a hospital bed and preparing him for death. We talked, and sang, and prayed.

None of us in that silent square had ever seen Charlie Brooks, or known him, or spoken with him. He had no idea that we stood together because of him. But there was a bond there, simply because we had tried to help him. We had tried to say, as clearly as we could, that we did not want him to die. We did not want this man murdered in our names.

**. . . society has agreed . . .
that people who commit crimes
should be punished . . . But
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and women who are locked
up should be systematically
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status of persons?**

As the hour of his death came, we finished our prayers and joined hands, hoping for a miracle. But the only miracle was the potency of modern drugs. Afraid that there might be a hitch, prison officials had inserted the intravenous catheter well before midnight. For about half an hour, only a sterile, salt-water solution flowed into Charlie Brooks' veins. At 12:09 a.m., an unknown executioner injected a syringe of sodium thiopental into the intravenous tube. Injections of pavulon and potassium chloride followed, as a guarantee of death. At 12:16 a.m., Brooks was pronounced dead. Witnesses disagreed about whether he felt any pain.

In the days following the execution, there was a substantial clamor of protest from legal experts. Many lawyers—whatever

their views on capital punishment—were deeply disturbed by the refusal of the 5th Circuit Court to give Brooks a full hearing and by the Supreme Court's sanction of this short-cut procedure.

Meanwhile, Texas was setting up another execution. The same pattern seemed to be falling into place for Thomas Barefoot, who had been convicted in 1978 of killing a policeman. As his day of death approached, the 5th Circuit Court refused his request for a stay, and Barefoot's lawyers expected the Supreme Court to follow suit. The arguments in his case were not considered as strong as those in Brooks'.

But 11 hours before his execution, the Supreme Court surprised everyone and granted a stay. The high court also agreed to provide a full review of the procedure used by federal courts to review death penalty appeals.

No official explanation was given for this U-turn. But it was impossible not to see the decision as a tacit admission that the ruling in Charlie Brooks' case had been a mistake. And it seemed more than coincidence that Brooks was black and Barefoot was white.

A few days after Christmas, our office received a card that had been wrongly addressed and had meandered around the South for a couple weeks. It was from a former resident of Texas' Death Row, who is now serving a lengthy sentence for murder. After wishing us happy holidays, he wrote a short note.

"I was the next door neighbor to Woody Loudres (next cell) for about two years. Woody Loudres told me or admitted to me that he was the one who pulled the trigger and killed Mr. Gregory. Sincerely and Respectfully, Fred Saunders.*"

Two days after Charlie Brooks' execution, I visited Death Row at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. The penitentiary is actually an 18,000-acre farm, nestled in a sweeping curve of the

Mississippi River about an hour's drive north of Baton Rouge. The river surrounds it on three sides, and there is a high fence on the other. Inmates are housed in a number of camps spread out over the prison grounds.

Louisiana Route 66 ends at the prison. Just inside the main gate, there is a two-story cement block building shaped like a Y. Two wings are cell blocks for prisoners deemed disciplinary problems, and the other houses the men who are sentenced to die.

Visitors pass through an electrified gate in the fence under the watchful eye of a guard. There is a small sign reminding you to shut the gate again. Inside the building entrance there is a small office and some vending machines with candy and drinks. That's as far as you can go without a key.

To reach the visitor's room, you go through three sets of steel-bar doors. The guard bangs the key and yells "clear the hall," eliminating the possibility of any inadvertent human contact. The doors are opened, then closed behind you one by one, and finally you are locked into the place.

The room is painted institutional green, and despite being spotless, manages to look shabby.

The visiting area has six booths for prisoners. There are no contact visits here, and a heavy-mesh wire separates the free people from those who are bound. In a short time the wire pattern begins to drift, and the first prisoner warns me that I will soon have a headache. Family members are allowed two visits each month. Prisoners can make a monthly phone call, limited to 10 minutes.

I have visited more than half of the men on Death Row here, and the most unusual thing about them is how ordinary they seem. They look just like people I have known in other places and other times. (Except, that is, for their bad complexions and bad teeth. They don't get outside much, and dental care in most prisons is atrocious.) They talk like ordinary people, too.

I know, from reading their trial transcripts and news clippings, that some of them have done terrible things. But as I begin to associate a face, and a person, with

Information About United States Prisons

Data

Prison Population

*We now imprison people at a higher per capita rate than every industrial country except South Africa and the Soviet Union: 154 people in federal and state prisons per 100,000 citizens.

*In the decade from 1971 to 1982 the number of people in federal and state prisons increased 56 percent—from 198,061 to 353,000.

*In the decade from 1971 to 1981 the *annual* rate of increase in prison population jumped from 6 percent per year to 12 percent. The steep rise began in 1974 (7%); then in 1975 (8%); 1976 (9%); 1977-1979 (10%); 1980 (11%); and 1981 (12%).

*From 1974 to 1981 the number of prisoners in federal and local prisons increased 35 percent.

*Including federal, state and local jail inmates, the prison population in 1981 was 571,000, up from 497,000 in 1980.

Death Row

*Whites on death row: 583 (51%)

Blacks on death row: 487 (43%)

Total death row population 1137 (as of December 20, 1982)

*Thirty-eight states now have the death penalty.

*More than half of those on death row (578) are in four states: California, Florida, Georgia, and Texas.

*455 men have been executed for rape since 1930.

*90 percent of the men executed for rape (405) were black. No white has ever been executed for the rape of a black in the United States.

Resources for Study and Action

Fellowship of Reconciliation

Box 271

Nyack, NY 10960

Provides support to prisoners and their families, and works against the death penalty.

the name on the paper, it becomes impossible to think of them only as criminals. When we talk about sports, about politics, about God, a human being takes shape.

When I describe my work with prisoners, people commonly ask: "What about the victims? What are you doing for them?" We are, in fact, working to start a ministry to victims of crime. It is an angry question, one that usually means "Why do you help killers and rapists instead of helping innocent victims?"

Victims of crime often need help, and they certainly "deserve" it. But what about Jerry Jackson*? In all the time he had been on Death Row, I was his first visitor. "I think I have a sister in Houston," he said, "but I ain't sure." He doesn't make his monthly phone call because there's nobody to call.

Or what about Arthur Hays*? He had only one request: "Could you help me find my Mamma? She has a nervous condition, and she's not very well. Just when they

moved me up here, she moved, and we lost contact. I'd like to see her one more time, so I could explain what happened."

And what about all the others? I see their faces, patterned by the heavy wire that divides us. Some of these men are open, and warm; some frighten me. Some of them are deeply sorry for their deeds; some show no remorse. Do they "deserve" help? I cannot answer, except to ask: Do I "deserve" grace?

In the short time I have been here, I have not become an expert on prisons. I do not have a plan for the perfect justice system. I am not sure what we should do with the men on Death Row, except that we should first spare their lives. And I do know that what goes on in our jails and prisons is shameful and that there are numerous options, if we were but interested.

Perhaps that is the crux of the problem. When people are convicted and locked away, we lose interest. The world labels them criminal, sub-human. So it is of small

Citizens Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration

P.O. Box 8911
Durham, NC 27707

Jesus Behind Bars

Box 7949
Orlando, Florida 32854
Seventh-day Adventist lay organization employing 17 full-time workers active in personal ministry in such prisons as the Cleveland House of Correction, San Quentin, Soledad, the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, and five prisons in Florida. Rather than prison reform, the group trains Adventist volunteers who join professionals in conducting worship services and visiting individual prisoners.

National Council on Crime and Delinquency

Continental Plaza
411 Hackensack Avenue
Hackensack, NJ 07601
Publishes a quarterly magazine, *Crime and Delinquency*, and is an excellent source of statistics and information on crime and corrections.

National Moratorium on Prison Construction

324 C St., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
Publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Jericho*, does research on the problems and costs of prisons, and works against new prison construction.

PREAP

3049 E. Genesee St.
Syracuse, NY 13224
They have produced an informative book—*Instead of Prisons: A Handbook for Abolitionists*.

Prison Fellowship

Charles Colson, Executive Director
P.O. Box 40562
Washington, D.C. 20016
Ministers to the spiritual needs of prisoners and promotes alternatives to prison. They publish a helpful volume: *Is There a Better Way? A Perspective on American Prisons*.

Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons

P.O. Box 120044
Nashville, TN 37212
Sponsors organizations throughout the South that work to protect prisoners' civil and constitutional rights, and work against the death penalty.

concern if they are mistreated, or even killed. It serves them right.

Sadly, most Christians accept this worldly view without question. Instead of being shaped by Christ, they are shaped by the harsh counsel of those who do not know him. Instead of seeing Jesus in the least of these, they see brutes.

Here on Death Row, the line that the world draws is most clearly evident. I am free to go whenever I wish, assuming I can get the attention of a guard. After I knock on the door, they will let me out, back through the bars and gates, back to my car, back to wherever I wish to go. The men on the other side sit in gray sweatshirts, shackled hands and feet. There is only one place they may go: back to their cells, back to wait for death. The good and the bad; us and them.

Doesn't the cross proclaim that no one is beyond hope, that Jesus accepted execution to save us all from that fate?

But the gospel makes me uncomfortable with such distinctions. We are not all criminals, but we are all sinners, and St. Paul reminds us that the wages of sin is death. In God's eyes we are all on Death Row.

The good news, of course, is that God loved us anyway. He never asked whether we deserved help. Jesus poured out his life for the world, even though none of us was worthy. How can we, who live only by God's grace, presume to pass judgment on the ultimate worth of another person?

The more I see of human misery, the harder it is to take sides. There is plenty of pain to go around. Why is it so difficult—even for Christians—to see that prisoners are still human, still precious to God?

During my visits to Death Row, I am continually amazed by the strength of the men there. I think especially of Jack*, who is

probably innocent. Twice he has come near death. When his wife was dying of cancer, prison officials refused to let him visit her, and then rejected his request to attend her funeral. But he is not bitter, or angry. "If I could get a fair hearing on the new evidence, I think I could beat this thing," he says. "I'll keep trying. They can't do any more to me than what they've already done."

Daily life for those on Death Row is spartan and terribly constricted. But the physical circumstances are overshadowed by their continual proximity to death. It invades every waking moment and troubles all their dreams. Their home is named for death. Several of them have come within hours of execution, some more than once. They know that it is likely that at least one of their number will not survive this year. The pressure, even viewed by an outsider, is enormous.

Yet most of them manage to survive as human beings, often with wit, and grace, and hope. When I come away from my visits, despite the terrible grimness of things, part of me is buoyed up. It is they who give me courage.

One of the men on Death Row is a Seventh-day Adventist, or about as much of one as it is possible to be in such a place. It seems strange to sit in this stark visiting room and talk through the wire about mutual acquaintances, or theological controversies, or the nearness of Christ's return.

We have never discussed the specifics of his case, but I know them well. In a time of intense stress, he committed murder. I do not think that the circumstances leading up to his crime would recur in a million years. But his appeals are running out, and I am afraid for him.

Last time I saw him, though, he seemed in good spirits. The minutes passed quickly, and I had to leave. As the guard led him away, I called out: "Need a ride back to New Orleans?"

He laughed for just a second. "Wait till I get my things," he said, and then the door banged shut.

It is no irony that today is December 21, the winter solstice. In many ways, the last few weeks for me have been a time of darkness, of dying. Immersed in the reality of Louisiana prisons, I have wrestled often with doubt.

For the darkness is not only out there, in the jails and prisons and wardens and prisoners, but also in me. I struggle with my own will to power, to dominance, to violence. I want to take judgment into my own hands, rather than waiting on God.

And the questions do not go away. What did Jesus mean when he proclaimed the opening of the prison to them that are bound? Should a Christian think twice about dropping a wrongdoer into the abyss of our criminal justice system? Why do most churches—including my own—pay so little

attention to men and women in prison? Didn't Jesus say that a key difference between the sheep and goats was that one of them visited prisoners?

Even when people ask how they can help, I'm not sure what to say. The system is so strong, so entrenched. I tell them to go inside the bars and learn what goes on, to pray, to speak out against brutality, against death. Yet these efforts seem so small. I wonder if the months ahead will offer better answers.

But in this season of fading light, there is a star that does not flicker. It flames over the stinking barn where God became man. He, too, knew hatred, and injustice, and beatings, and finally execution. But he rose again, smashing the stone over every grave.

Because of that God, it is possible to hope. But it is not easy.

FORUM

AAF Newsletter
Remove if you wish

Newsletter of the Association of Adventist Forums

June 1983

Tensions Reported Between Australian church and AAF

by Dana Lauren West

The Australian Association of Adventist Forums is at a crossroads, in the opinion of Lawrence Geraty, professor of Old Testament and archeology at the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He recently met informally with local AAF chapters in Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney.

Geraty feels that unless the AAF in the United States takes a more active interest in sharing its experience as a catalyst for dialogue with denominational leadership, (AAF as a place for an exchanging of a diversity of views between leaders and members in the United States), the Australian AAF may die.

From December 26, 1982, to February 8, 1983, Geraty, at the invitation of the Australasian Division, taught two graduate courses for ministers at Avondale College and met other camp-meeting and conference appointments.

Because of the severe polarization in certain segments of the Australasian church, in part due to local Forum sponsorship of visits to Australia such as those of Desmond Ford and Walter Rea, the division has taken an official stand, published in the division *Australasian Record*, disassociating itself from AAF. In spite of this action, Geraty found the local church leadership he spoke to understanding and reasonable. They seemed supportive of any efforts on his part that could be seen as constructive and bridge-building.

On January 22, Geraty met with the Melbourne AAF Chapter, now under the leadership of Don Powell who is making a conscious effort to re-establish cordial relationships with the local conference. Geraty saw the group as a cross-section of talented, educated and thoughtful Adventists in the area. Although all had been

highly committed to the church at one time, many had grown cynical and even bitter due to the theological and political controversies of the last three years.

Geraty spent an evening with the Adelaide Chapter on January 29, continuing under the leadership of Peter Drewer, whose church membership, along with a significant number of those present, is now with a local gospel fellowship. The break with the local conference came after Drewer wrote Neal Wilson a letter that was answered by Arthur Delafield in which Ellen White's writings were claimed to be "canonical." Drewer presumed this to be the new teaching of the church and felt the church was moving away
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Niles visits with West Indies Region

AAF President Lyndrey Niles spent time in the West Indies during March and April. On March 26, Niles made general remarks in Barbados to a Forum meeting regarding AAF activities.

Over the weekend of April 14 he was guest lecturer for the H.M. Johnston Lecture Series dealing with communications at West Indies College in Mandeville, Jamaica. H.M. Johnston was chief medical officer in Jamaica and was credited with eradicating malaria there, as well as being an excellent lecturer.

Niles also delivered the 11 a.m. service on Saturday. He spoke on the life of John the Apostle, and the power of transformation.

from its historic commitment of the Bible as its authority.

While other facts were obviously involved, Geraty feels it is this type of near-isolation from mainstream Adventists that has discouraged many loyal and committed members. They have seen the only church they know move to the right in almost cultic fashion to preserve its identity during a very difficult period. The Adelaide Chapter also includes former missionaries, denominational teachers and ministers, and even former conference executive committee members—all of whom seem bewildered at the course their church has apparently chosen.

The Sydney AAF Chapter invited Geraty to meet with them on February 7. Their leader, John Pye, is a former leader of the long-standing organization of SDA university students in Australia. While this group seemed to Geraty to be more closely tied into the denomination in terms of its members lives—people who really saw little justification for AAF unless it was related to the denomination in some way—many of them were experiencing “burn-out” in relationship to both the church and AAF.

In all three groups Geraty shared what he called “a dream for the SDA Church;” how, in 10 years, he would like to see a church characterized by not only doctrinal soundness, and fiscal and administrative responsibility, but openness and adaptability to new ideas and policies. He specifically emphasized his hopes for a church that stressed fairness in dealing with people, including equal opportunity for employment and ordination.

Geraty found administrators in Australia to be in an unenviable position. They are perceived by most Forum members to be out of touch and authoritarian when it comes to doctrine and policy. On the other hand, administrators are also criticized by fundamentalist right-wingers in Australia who perceive them as compromising and soft on non-traditionalists. Administrators seems to be able to tolerate the latter group easier than the former.

Geraty denied he could be an expert on the Australian scene after only two months exposure. The issues are complex, and it would be too easy to misrepresent all sides involved. He does feel the denomination should make greater efforts to understand the AAF in Australia. It represents a resource in the church which can be marginalized and neglected only at great risk to the success of the church's mission. On the other hand, Geraty feels Forum chapters in Australia have made their mistakes, should acknowledge them, and seek to better understand the difficulties faced by administration during this trying time.

West Coast AAF holds sessions with President, Editor

by Ray Damazo

Southern California members of the Association of Adventist Forums have gotten their first glimpse of Lyndrey Niles, the new president of the association. Gatherings March 18–20 in the Los Angeles and Loma Linda areas welcomed Niles, Roy Branson, editor of *Spectrum*, and Ray Damazo, chairman of the *Spectrum* Advisory Council. The following Saturday, March 26, a metropolitan-wide meeting in Seattle, Washington, heard Branson speak on “Paradigms of Adventist Identity.” Members of the council in the Seattle area gathered that evening for a report from the editor.

The most memorable meeting in Southern California was the over one and a half hours that Terrence Finney, a superior court judge in California, and vice chairman of the President's Review Commission on the Davenport case, spent Saturday night, March 19, with the *Spectrum* Advisory Council in the Redlands home of Wilmer and Janine Engevik. Finney revealed no names of individuals. He did describe in some detail the procedures the commission followed in conducting its work, and candidly expressed his disappointment that the denominational leadership had changed its mind about implementing some of the commission's most important recommendations. Also giving reports were Niles and Branson.

The previous Friday night in the Glendale City Church Niles and Branson had spoken at a meeting of the Los Angeles Chapter. There, Niles stressed that AAF sometimes fills an often overlooked pastoral function. He recounted an incident following the national AAF conference in Washington, D.C., in September, 1982. A stranger came to Niles after the conference and said that he had not been attending church, but after the weekend he was going to return to his city and once again participate in his local congregation.

Saturday afternoon the committee making initial plans for the second AAF national conference next March 15–18, 1984, gathered in Redlands for a potluck meal at the home of Susan Jacobsen, the chairperson of the committee. Later in the day, active and former officers of

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chapters in Southern California traveled to Loma Linda for a meeting chaired by Mike Scofield, the representative on the AAF Board from the Southern Pacific Region. Niles outlined plans to establish task forces on Adventist education and other areas, and Branson described future issues of the AAF newsletter, as well as *Spectrum*. But most of the time was devoted to questions and discussion. Several chapter officers expressed the desire for local chapters to be more integrally related to the national organization. Others hoped that *Spectrum* would not curry favor with the leadership of the church.

Sunday morning, Niles and Branson met with the AAF Task Force on Lay Participation. The task force is working on a model constitution for local conferences and proposals for structural change in North America. Plans were laid for distribution of their work.

The next weekend, Saturday, March 26, over 200 people crowded into the youth chapel of the Green Lake Church, including eight pastors in the area, to hear Branson describe Adventist theology and self-understanding within three paradigms: covenant, holy war, and glory. That night, at the

home of Robert and Sally Hasselbrack, council members from Seattle and western Washington state not only heard a report from Branson, but a presentation by Gerald Winslow, professor of theology at Walla Walla College, based on his recently published and favorably reviewed book, *Triage and Justice*. Many who spoke during the discussion period wanted *Spectrum* to report fully on the Davenport case, but—perhaps more than in Southern California—advisory council members also wanted *Spectrum* to avoid a partisan stand in its reporting on the subject.

Other gatherings of the council are planned for other parts of the United States. Invitations have already been extended from AAF members in Washington, D.C., and Tennessee to hold advisory council meetings in their areas. However, it is not necessary to wait for a meeting for individuals to join. One can become part of the *Spectrum* Advisory Council by pledging a minimum of \$1,500, which can be donated over more than a single year. Those interested in joining can write: Raymond S. Damazo, 855 106th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

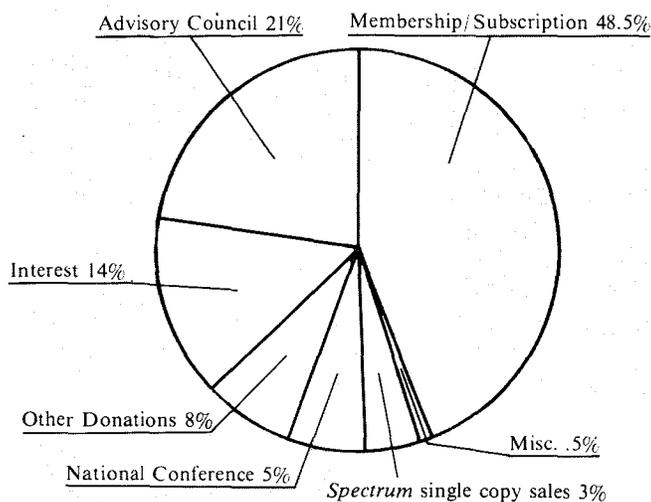
Ray Damazo is a dentist in Seattle, WA, and chairperson of the Spectrum Advisory Council.

1982 AAF Income and Expenses

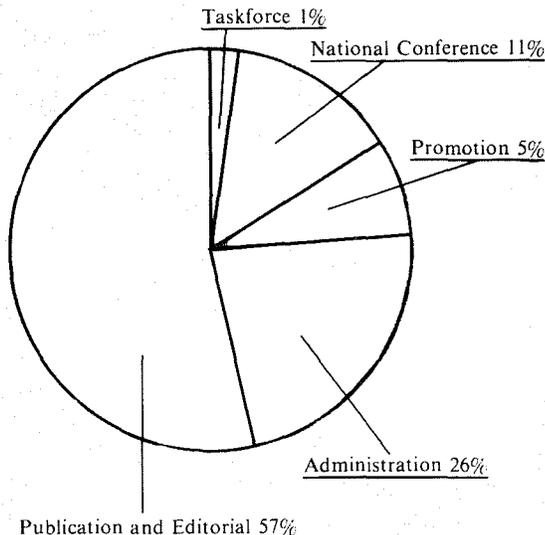
The two pie charts shown give an indication of sources of income and categories of expenses for AAF during 1982. An unusually high amount of interest was earned on membership/subscriptions and other donations.

In 1983, not holding a national conference will, of course, reduce expenses in that category. It is expected that promotion will constitute a higher percentage of 1983 expenses.

AAF 1982 Income



AAF 1982 Expenses



Atlantic Region

The **New York Chapter** has recently had a number of excellent programs and recitals. Some examples: a worship recital dealing with worship dances of Japan and Korea featuring Tani and friends on April 30. Also scheduled is "The Pope and Politics in Central America," a lecture presented by John Kelley of the U.S. Department of State.

Columbia Region

The **Dayton Chapter** has been challenging its members' minds with penetrating dialogues. In March, Dr. William Loveless, president of Columbia Union College, addressed the issue of the church's mission to populated urban centers and what it would take to change Adventist migration from the city to the country.

The 1983 calendar includes a weekend of lectures on the Christian and human sexuality conducted by Dr. Alberta Mazat, professor of marriage and family therapy at Loma Linda University.

Northern Pacific Region

Canada's **Central Alberta Chapter** has voted in their new 1983 officers: Gosnell York, president; Keith Clouten, vice president; Beverly Tetz, secretary-treasurer; Louise Rea, publicity secretary; and Reuben Buhler, community liason. Their plans for programs include an SDA neurosurgeon speaking on ethics and medicine, and lectures on challenges Christian young people face and Christian marriage.

The **British Columbia Chapter** was organized as of February 12, 1983. The guest speaker at the founding meeting was Alvin Kwiram. If anyone in the Pacific Northwest US, or Southern BC wishes to join the chapter, contact Glen Rick or Marj Haluschak, Box 526, Aldergrove, BC VOX 1A0.

Correction

The author's identification for the "SDA artists" and "Reports on church organization" articles in the autumn 1982 newsletter was incorrect. Patti Hansen Thompkins is a free-lance writer and editor living in Orlando, FL, and Rhona Hodgens is an instructor in the music department of Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA.

The **Walla Walla Chapter** is led this year by Dan Lamberton of Walla Walla College's English department. Speakers for this chapter have included Kenneth Emmerson, former General Conference treasurer and member of the President's Review Commission, discussing the Davenport affair; William Johnsson, editor of the *Adventist Review*; and Fritz Guy from the theological seminary at Andrews University.

Southern Pacific Region

The **San Joaquin Valley Chapter** invited Jonathan Butler to speak on "Ellen White, the Founding Mother" on May 7. Smuts van Rooyen and Desmond Ford from Good News Unlimited, William Shea from the seminary, as well as Alex Ortega, a local pastor in Central California, spoke on investigative judgement. The three main questions that were addressed included: 1) What is the investigative judgement? 2) What is the biblical basis for it? 3) How does it affect the doctrine of salvation?

The **San Diego Chapter** welcomed Don Hamer, assistant professor in the department of theology at Loma Linda University, on April 9. Hamer spoke on religion and the arts and what the two have to do with one another.

The **Pheonix Chapter** invited Dr. Jack Provonsha from the department of ethics, Loma Linda University, to speak on April 23.

West Indies

The president of the **Barbados Chapter** is Winston Mayer. The vice president is Harold Wharton.

Many provocative and diverse programs are taking place in each chapter in order to let others know the work that your chapter is doing please send any information to: *Forum* c/o Editorial Assistant, 7710 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912

SDA Hymnal Needs Poems

The committee planning a new hymn book for the church is interested in well-written hymn-words, modern in language, rich in imagery, and following the regularity of hymn meters. They are particularly desirous of finding well-written words for hymns on Adventist subjects: the Sabbath, the Second Coming, etc. If you have any such poems to submit, send them to *Spectrum-Hymn Poems*, Box 5330, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

Let the Wilderness be Glad! The Apocalypse and the Environment

by Barry Casey

The best thing about the *Junior Guide* when I was a junior was the illustrated weekly story about the adventures of some wild animal. Harry Baerg's lithe pen-and-ink drawings opened a door of mystery into another world in which animals moved purposefully, quietly, and modestly. It intrigued me that they could communicate with each other; I always assumed that if we could translate wolf-talk, it would come out sounding a bit like the dialect of English which my German neighbor spoke.

The most enchanting idea, however, was that this world existed silently and hidden alongside my own. While I went to school, played baseball, and did my chores, the "other world" was charged with abundant energy. One could feel its electricity in the forest; the trees fairly quivered with it. I longed to be accepted and to speak its language, to know its secrets and then to simply merge into it like a river vanishing underground. I longed to really "be with" nature even though I felt somehow that one could not remain long in that other world without bruising it.

We are both attracted and repelled by nature: it lures us and terrifies us. I lived one year in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, within sight of Black Mountain. Every night before going to bed, I would peer out at its bulk against the stars, imagine myself alone on its shoulders, and shiver excitedly—despite the warmth of my own kitchen. It was beautiful, but it could also kill. The starkness and power which drew the eye in admiration were also the elements of a brute indifference to the frailty of human travelers. That I could quite possibly die in the midst of such raw beauty was a paradox worth contemplating.

In years to come I discovered another paradox—one which I have not ceased to be troubled by. In my biology and geology classes at Pacific Union College, I studied under professors whose understanding and respect for the earth was deep and invigorating. On Sabbaths I learned that we would soon be leaving this old earth, that what really mattered in life was getting out of this world and into the next.

Could it be, I wondered, that Adventist belief in the imminence of the Second Coming of Christ precluded concern for the rights of the planet? But where was the justice in using and disposing of nature and

Barry Casey is an assistant professor of theology at Columbia Union College.

its resources without a thought to our responsibilities toward it? Because we were promised an earth made new, did we have the right to hasten the death of the old one? In the years since college my questions have become more acute as I have learned about specific threats to the environment.

According to the Office of Endangered Species in the federal government, over 200 plants and animals in the United States alone are in danger of becoming extinct.¹ Paul Opler, a biologist working at the Division of Biological Sciences, a research institute in Washington, D.C., estimates that, around the world, one species now becomes extinct every day. By the end of the century, one species may be eliminated every minute.

More ominous is the endangering of American lives by the more than 100 million pounds of toxic chemicals dumped into the nation's waterways each year. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the government agency responsible for regulating and monitoring the quality of the nation's environment, admits that it does not have accurate data about what percentage of those wastes are radioactive. (The EPA is dependent for its information on voluntary reports from major industrial dischargers.) Independent organizations point to specific cases to support their assertion that the problem of radioactive wastes ("rad-wastes") is critical.

Between 1974 and 1977, for example, measurements off the New Jersey coast revealed levels of radiation 260,000 times above the "normal" level. Radioactive isotopes—Plutonium 239 and 240—were found in edible fish at levels 5,000 times higher than normal.² In 1980, under pressure from the California State Health Agency, the EPA released a study it had made six years before which revealed that 18 miles from San Francisco, near the Farallon Islands, radioactive levels in ocean bottom sediments were 2,000 times higher than normal "background" radiation levels. This was the direct result of dumping by the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory of be-

tween 26,000 to 36,000 drums (each drum holding 55 gallons) of high-level radwaste in one decade alone (1946–1956). Between 1946 and 1970, six other corporations and laboratories had licenses to dump their radwastes in the same area, all of them as loosely regulated by federal agencies as was the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.

America is not the only country engaged in dumping radioactive waste into the seas. Western Europe countries alone, by most recent account, currently lead the pack, annually dumping more than 5,000 tons into the Irish Sea. According to its plans in 1982, Japan may have begun dumping as much as 100,000 tons of radioactive garbage into the Pacific annually.³

. . . around the world, one species now becomes extinct every day. By the end of the century, one species may be eliminated every minute.

These radioactive wastes endanger humans by polluting a sea food chain. The radioactive material escapes from leaky drums, is taken up by plankton, which are eaten by fish, which, in turn, are consumed by humans. Damaged drums rot completely in 20 years and even undamaged barrels rot in 40 years. In the late 1980s and the 1990s radioactive waste will increasingly be escaping from these decomposing containers.

Much of the current struggle in the United States over environmental pollution concerns the EPA's administration of its "Superfund," a \$1.6 billion grant intended to help clean up the nation's most hazardous toxic-waste dumping sites. Some have charged that the EPA has allowed major corporations—some cited for violations of procedures for storing toxic wastes—overly-extended periods of cleanup time.

The Reagan administration has proposed extending corporation cleanup deadlines for four to six years. It has also drafted legislation allowing industrial manufacturers of toxic chemicals to escape uniform, national standards for pretreatment of discharges into publically-owned treatment plants. Further, the administration has proposed an EPA budget that would reduce funds for pollution research and control by 45 percent. The National Wildlife Federation and National Clean Air Coalition objects to other proposed cuts in the EPA's budget—money to reduce sulfur dioxide emission (the major contributor to acid rain), although the EPA itself estimates "the cost of *not* controlling acid rain is \$5 billion a year in damage to aquatic systems, forests, crops and other resources."⁴

This year will be crucial to the future of the United States' environment. In 1983 the U.S. Congress must decide whether to reauthorize seven of its key environmental laws: the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Resource Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Toxic Substance Control Act.

With such environmental issues confronting us, how are we to think about nature—that aspect of reality which Adventists are fond of calling "God's Second Book"? Do we—responsible Adventists and citizens—think of ourselves as part of nature or separate from it—or perhaps even opposed to nature?

Adventists have long sought a holistic view of life in which the physical, mental, spiritual, and social elements work together in harmony. Because we believe in God the Creator, we believe we are to love the earth and care for it. But we also know we are to expect and long for the end of the world and the creation of a new earth. How are we to bring these two imperatives together?

One possible solution lies in a way of thinking about nature which regards

humans as coexistential with, rather than separate and over against, nature. Further, this viewpoint suggests that through the creative use of imagery and symbols, Adventists may cultivate a 'contemplative realism' toward the natural world which can make a positive statement about moral responsibility. As people who deeply believe in the sovereignty of the Creator God, we cannot help but feel a sense of outrage at the despoiling of what God has made. We share in that process of despoiling, and thus we share in the responsibility of all people to treat the natural world with respect and care.

Creation, Dominance, and Separation

Judaism introduced into the ancient Near Eastern world a new concept of time which also had implications for the way in which nature was perceived. In the Canaanite nature religions, time was cyclical and seasonal; one's existence was linked with the natural cycles of the sun and moon, the seed-time and the harvest. The mountains and rivers teemed with life, both natural and supernatural, and the *cosmos* (or world) was a circle which enclosed both gods and humans. Since time was cyclical and thus repetitive, the future was experienced as the present replayed. In the eternal present, humans and animals existed on a continuum, rather than in a hierarchy of value. Further, there was little or no distinction between sacred and profane, since nature included all living things in a sacral relationship under the gods.

The Hebrew view of the Creation is a radical departure from this closed system. It distinguishes nature from God and humans from nature. It opens up the closed circle of time and turns it into an arrow shooting toward the end of history. Instead of all natural things being part of the divine reality, the Hebrews divest nature of all divinity. Only God is worthy to be worshipped as Creator and Sustainer of life.

Instead of a cosmological/spatial view of reality, the Hebrews arrive at a historical/temporal view.

This is the beginning of what German sociologist Max Weber called the *disenchantment* of nature, meaning not disillusionment but a straightforward, matter-of-fact approach to nature. The first account of Creation in Genesis both establishes the principle of human dominance over nature and gives supreme value to human life. To be created in the image of God means to have dominion over the earth, to be God's viceroy in subduing nature, and to be separate and above the rest of the created world.

As a people who deeply believe in the sovereignty of the Creator God, we cannot help but feel a sense of outrage at the despoiling of what God has made.

Commentators on Genesis have noted that the concepts of humans' divine likeness and their dominance over the natural world are held very closely together in the creation story of Genesis. As God's power extends over every sphere, so human power extends over the limited sphere of the natural world. Thus, although human power and dominance are necessarily finite in comparison to God's power, they are absolute with regard to the natural world.

The Hebrew verb for "have dominion" (*radah*) expresses a kind of vehemence, notes Bruce Vawter in his commentary on Genesis. "It does not imply some kind of benign presidency over a docile and pacific nature. It occurs in sufficient rarity in the Hebrew Bible that its frequent usages in connection with kingship (I Kings 5:4; Psalms 72:8, 110:2; Isaiah 14:6; Ezek. 34:4, for example) convince us that it was part of

the technical language of royal rule—and royal rule, it hardly need be pointed out, was an absolute in the world of Genesis."

But what kind of "dominion" or "dominance" was called for? The ancient Near Eastern kings had about them something of the divine; there was an aura which bleeds through even in the stiff poses of figures on clay tablets. Their power was assured over all that they possessed. Yet the Priestly Writer's perspective on human domination is modeled on God's domination. The kingly rule and power are ideally to be established and carried out along the following lines:

Not by appearance shall he judge,
nor by hearsay shall he decide,
But he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide aright for the land's afflicted.
He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of
his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay
the wicked.

Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.

(Isaiah 11:3-5)

Here the concepts of justice and responsibility not only become consequences of true kingly rule, but they also appear as confirmation of kingly authority. The true principle of human dominance is based on justice, not rapacity, and the far-sighted exercise of responsibility with regard to the natural world is an indication of true humanity. Here is where the biblical creation story strikes a note different from that of Near Eastern creation myths, in that its view of human power is based on justice and even-handedness rather than on a magical or military metaphor of power. Although it is not explicitly stated, the biblical creation story encourages a view of the natural world which takes into account not merely nature as a means but also an end in itself. In other words, the original biblical creation story sees nature as having worth, both in itself and for humans—an idea that will be examined later. Just how far

Western attitudes toward nature have distorted this position will become apparent also.

The biblical view of Creation frees both humans and God from being defined solely by their relation to nature. It also makes nature wholly available for human use and takes away the fear of reprisals by the gods of mountain and valley. Nature is desacralized, exorcised of divinity and demon, freed from all magical power, and, above all, objectified.

This objectification helped to provide the basis on which modern scientific and ethical theory concerning nature arose. "The idea that man stands apart from nature and rightfully exercises a kind of authority over the natural world was thus a prominent feature of the doctrine that has dominated the ethical consciousness of Western civilization. There is no more important source for the idea of mastery over nature."⁷

Western Science and Secularism

Western Christendom, unfortunately, early interpreted the high value placed on humans by God as a consequent *devaluing* of nature. Nature was valuable only because of its value for achieving human ends, not because of any intrinsic worth.

The fourth-century Christian polemicist Lactantius firmly draws the line between humans and nature, and establishes the relative value of each, when he compares the world to a house which "made for the purpose of being inhabited, has no sensibility by itself and is subject to the master who built or inhabits it." He then concludes that man is not a part of the world "in the same manner in which a limb is a part of the body; for it is possible for the world to be without man, as it is for a city or a house."⁸ In his zeal to preserve Christianity from the idolatries of pantheism and animism, Lactantius cuts off any possibility of humans' taking nature on its own terms or exercising more

responsibility toward it. It is simply there to be used, a dead thing yielding nothing more than its mere components. Further, by placing humans existentially outside the world, he confines human experience to the realm of the mind and ignores sensory experience.

Thus, the Christian tradition, which was also the background of scientific thought until the end of the nineteenth century, provided an image, drawn from the biblical creation story, of man as the lord of the earth. William Leiss points out that the significance of this imagery is the political setting given to the Genesis account.⁹ God, the Lord and Ruler over all, gives subordinate authority to humans to manage the affairs of the earth. The difference between power exercised with responsibility to achieve justice and power that merely subjugates is subtle. It is not surprising, then, that the Western scientific tradition largely comes to think of nature in terms of subjugation, mastery, and dominance.

The 17th-century philosopher-scientist Francis Bacon saw his work as a scientist and a Christian to be instrumental in repairing the damage done in the world by the Fall. While he intended his research and methodologies to glorify God through science, many of the metaphors which pervade Bacon's treatises have an aggressive, even hostile, overtone to them. Outlining his method of experimentation, he summarizes: "For you have but to follow and as it were hound nature in her wanderings, and you will be able, when you like, to lead and drive her afterwards to the same place again."¹⁰ For experiments to be successful, says Bacon, it is necessary to lay traps for nature in order to discover her secrets. Once the secrets have been disclosed, a scientific method can be developed which will allow for repeated experiments. Nature is here personified as a woman who can be intimidated and coerced into divulging her most precious secrets—secrets which are then exposed to public examination and discussion.

The presuppositions of another 17th-century scientist, René Descartes, also reveal a firm grounding in the Christian tradition and the principle of human dominance. To Descartes, the natural world reflected a rational order because it had been brought into being by God. "Furthermore, the discovery of *that* order was of supreme value since it led to knowledge of God himself."¹¹ Descartes' famous dualism between spirit and matter, however, "allowed scientists to treat matter as dead and completely separate from themselves, and to see the material world as a multitude of different objects assembled into a huge machine."¹² This mechanistic and reductionistic image of nature found its ultimate

expression in Newtonian physics, which dominated science from the latter part of the 17th to the end of the 19th century.

This *disenchantment* of nature, although the absolute precondition for the development of natural science, drove a wedge between humans and nature. The fact that it was based on the biblical account of Creation only strengthened the attitude of human dominance over nature. Even when biblical authority was being vehemently questioned in the 19th century, the presupposition of human dominance was never in doubt.¹³

Fortunately, the concept of man as the lord of the earth has been balanced, at least in theory, by the Christian doctrine that

Resources for Study and Action

The most valuable resource for those concerned with the environment is the National Wildlife Federation's annual *Conservation Directory*, which lists all federal, state, and interstate commissions and agencies dealing with environmental issues, as well as congressional committees overseeing environmental legislation. It even includes international organizations and listings of persons in charge of environmental concerns in almost every country in the world. (\$9.00, plus \$1.55 shipping charge. Send to **National Wildlife Federation**, 1412 16th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036). Citizen groups especially recommended include the following, listed alphabetically.

Center for Environmental Education, Inc.

625 9th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

The Center encourages citizen involvement in the improvement of environmental quality and publishes on a quarterly basis *The Whale Report* and *The Seal Report*.

Defenders of Wildlife

1244 19th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Defenders is dedicated to preserving wildlife and protecting natural habitats from encroachment and exploitation. It publishes *Defenders*, a high-quality bimonthly journal.

Environmental Action Foundation, Inc.

724 DuPont Circle Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Founded in 1970, EAR researches and develops educational programs on issues such as solid waste management, toxic waste, solar energy, and nuclear power. Publications include *Power Line* and *Exposure*.

Environmental Policy Center

317 Pennsylvania Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

This association concentrates on educating legislators on Capitol Hill concerning the issues of energy and water conservation, nuclear power and weapons, water and farmland protection.

Friends of the Earth

1045 Sansome St.
San Francisco, CA 94111

Friends is a world-wide organization committed to the preservation, restoration and rational use of the earth. It frequently publishes exquisitely produced books on wilderness areas.

Sierra Club

530 Bush St.
San Francisco, CA 94108

Perhaps the most widely known of environmental actions groups, this organization not only seeks to influence legislators and educate the public, but sponsors camps, wilderness outings, films, exhibits, and conferences in order to teach people to love and care for the earth. Among its publications are the *Sierra Club Bulletin* and *Wildlife Involvement News*.

humans are accountable to divine authority for their actions. As long as Christianity was part of the larger fabric of society, these two emphases could exist in a healthy tension. But when religion's influence began to decline with the increasing secularization of society, all that remained was the secular use of the principle of human dominance.

Alternative Views

Granted, then, that Western society's use of the biblical view of relations between humans and nature has been skewed with increasingly ominous results, where are we to turn? Some would suggest, with Theodore Roszak, the way of the Native American, whose relations with nature are an extension of his own being. The spirits of the meadows and animals fill his life with meaning; all his movements in nature are made with the consciousness that his world is animated by divinity. But the idyllic nature of this position is marred by the fact that the animistic world is also one of dread and superstition. Further, the Native American may have had reverence for nature, but he often held human life to be very cheap. Also, primitive animism is not something secular urban dwellers can easily assimilate.

Another alternative is the Eastern Taoist position of benign noninterference in nature. Here, one does not directly confront nature or try to master it, but rather learns to work within it. If Westerners would say they had "conquered" Mt. Everest, the Taoist would say he had "befriended" the mountain. The *Tao*, or *Way*, is to seek harmony between all things through a kind of active passivity. Abandoning all desires leads to the cultivation of gentleness, humility, and grace. One does not "attain" or "achieve", but rather "becomes" and "follows."

As appealing as Taoism may be, the fact is that we would have no science or technology under such a philosophy. Furthermore, it is not likely that Taoism

could offer any resistance to the rapaciousness of post-industrial exploitation of the environment.¹⁴

The common weakness of all three positions—Western Secularism, Native American Animism and Eastern Taoism—lies in their understanding of how humans are to relate to nature. The *Western* tradition separates humans from nature in order to objectify nature for instrumental purposes. The result is that nature is exploited and devalued. The *Native American* position regards humans and nature within the same sacral sphere but with the result that humans are devalued. The *Taoist* view regards humans and nature as parts of an ultimate cosmic harmony, with the result that immediate environmental concerns are seen against the backdrop of aeons and thus lose their urgency.

It is clear that a position needs to be developed which would allow the objectivity necessary for individual human consciousness distinct from nature, but which would also encourage a genuine participation in nature in a kind of spiritual empathy. This cannot be the sort of sentimentality which thinks of animals as humans in disguise. There needs to be a certain tough-mindedness to this vision which regards animals just as they are—sentient beings with varying degrees of intelligence,

Contemplative realism attempts to avoid the view that all science is evil.

instinct, and purpose. It should also be a position which would combine the spiritual with the empirical, and religion and art with science and technology. What we need is an approach based on adequate scientific information, technological skill, and the vision to encourage long-range planning and rigorous efforts.¹⁵ Such a position might be termed the attitude of "contemplative realism," when seen from an Adventist Christian perspective.

Contemplative Realism

Contemplative realism is, first, contemplative because it seeks to approach the world from a meditative, open, and searching stance rather than a mechanistic, closed, and dominating one. It is contemplative because it draws on Western Christians' disciplines of prayer and meditation and, to a lesser extent, disciplines of the East, such as yoga and Zen meditation. It tries to find a fruitful tension between science, religion, and art instead of considering them disparate elements of human knowledge.

Contemplative realism acknowledges the conflicts and contradictions inherent in a technological society's approach to nature. Thus, a contemplative "realist" understands that a new consciousness regarding the relation of a consumer society and nature takes time and patience to develop, but he is optimistic of change. The realism sanctions the most beneficial scientific methods to safeguard nature. Contemplative realism attempts to avoid the romanticized view that all science and technology is evil, while still remaining watchful of the attitude of some scientific technocrats who believe that "if it can be done, it ought to be done."

Briefly put, contemplative realism would regard the human/nature relation as follows:

a) Humans are not separate from nature or above it, but coexistential with it, while still maintaining a distinct personal consciousness. Personal consciousness, from a Christian perspective, is necessary for the concept of being made in the image of God. Yet, the very fact of personal consciousness means that humans can *choose* to regard themselves as co-existent with nature. That they have the ability to choose is testament to their "Godwardness"; that this coexistential position is what they choose is testament to their struggle to become fully human.

b) Nature and its creatures are regarded on their own terms as a "given" in the world. Nature is neither "better" nor "inferior" to humans, but simply different.

c) Coexistence presupposes the intrinsic value of both humans and nature in relationship. In addition, the Christian believes created things have value because God created them, and consequently God's creatures have certain basic rights.

Western Christendom, unfortunately, early interpreted the high value placed on humans by God as a consequent devaluing of nature.

d) Coexistence also presupposes the instrumental value of nature and the responsible stewardship of the earth by humans. The contemplative realist would not regard the resources of nature as inexhaustible riches but rather as something to be drawn on sparingly, used carefully, and disposed of cautiously.

One of the impulses behind contemplative realism is the longing to really "be with" nature, to feel the vitality of its life and the pain of its death. We are far removed from that sort of empathy, bound up as most of us are inside walls, cars, and ourselves. And yet we can learn to see and feel, if we are willing to undergo the discipline.

Annie Dillard, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, advises that:

All that I can do is try to gag the commentator, to hush the noise of useless interior babble that keeps me from seeing . . . The effort is really a discipline requiring a lifetime of dedicated struggle; it marks the literature of saints and monks of every order East and West . . .¹⁶

Acknowledging that the mind is often like a muddy river filled with slow-moving trash, she encourages us to let the river flow and to raise our sights:

You look along it, mildly, acknowledging its presence without interest and gazing beyond it into the realms of the real where subjects and objects act and rest purely, without utterance. 'Launch into the deep,' says Jacques Ellul, 'and you shall see.'¹⁷

Relating how she avoids detection while stalking shy muskrat, she says she does not freeze to one spot:

Instead of going rigid, I go calm. I center down wherever I am; I find a balance and repose. I retreat—not inside myself, but outside myself, so that I am a tissue of senses. Whatever I see is plenty, abundance. I am the skin of water the wind plays over; I am petal, feather, stone.¹⁸

This centering, calming repose lies at the heart of all spiritual meditation, and it seems to be the way into the depths of nature.

In our reflection on contemplative realism to this point, there has been little that could be called overtly Christian. Rather, the basis of what we have discussed could be seen as a kind of spiritually enlightened humanism. This is not wrong, of course, but for the Adventist Christian who lives within a larger reality, it is not adequate for his or her worldview.

Adventist Christians are in a unique position to comprehend the inclusiveness of the relation between humans and nature because their creational and apocalyptic consciousness regards the cosmos, from beginning to end, as an organic reality in which every part relates to the others in a significant way. Just as God brought the world into being, so God will consummate all things in righteousness. What began in freshness and grandeur, then withered and died, will be brought to new life and glory. Those whose lives have been blasted by

despair will be given hope. The world will be made new.

The Bible communicates these powerful concepts not through abstractions but through vivid symbols and myths. I am convinced that Adventism's message of Sabbath and eschaton may be communicated powerfully and creatively when it opens itself up to the power of symbols and myths.

Adventist Christians are in a unique position to comprehend the inclusiveness of the relation between humans and nature because [of] their creational and apocalyptic consciousness . . .

Symbols, said Paul Tillich, point to a deeper reality. Not only that, but they also participate in the reality to which they point. For example, when a citizen sees his country's flag while abroad, he is moved with thoughts of home, familiar customs, and perhaps even concepts of freedom and well-being. The flag not only points to the reality of his country, but it also stands in place of that country while the citizen is in a foreign realm. Should anything happen to disgrace the flag, the citizen would feel the country and its freedoms had been disgraced also.

Further, symbols open up levels of reality to us which we would otherwise never become aware of, and they find corresponding elements in our souls which leap to life when touched by the sacred. True, Protestantism's (and Adventism's) wariness of the richness of symbols stems from a realistic assessment of the tendency of humans to turn symbols into false gods. But in so doing, it closes off one of the most powerful avenues through which God may communicate with us.

Myths, including those of the Bible, may be thought of as illuminating and perennial insights into reality. They are the age-old

stories out of which we form our own stories for our time and place. They are *not*, it should be made clear, falsehoods, fairy tales, untrue stories, or deliberate attempts to deviate from the truth. Myths are not merely arid constructs created by those whom Jerry Falwell calls "secular humanists": merely fragments of traditional Christian belief wrung dry of any supernaturalism. On the contrary, myths, as defined above, restore to the human experience the open-ended qualities of wonder, awe, and a sense of the presence of the holy.

Of course, myths may be used in the worship of false gods. The venerable myth that human effort brings results and rewards is often subverted into the crassness of materialism and the callousness of supply-side economics. Even more pointedly, the myth of humans created in the image of God has been perverted, as we have seen, into a legitimation for wholesale destruction of the natural world. The ultimate expression of this (and here we have a myth that is decidedly false!) is that we can both win and survive a nuclear war. Humans create their own god and call it Man, and Man attempts to become Creator and Destroyer without the authority to be either one.

However, the power of myths is that they can be experienced endlessly because their meanings are not exhausted in one application, but can be found in a thousand forms and a thousand situations. In the specific sense in which we are using it, the story of the Incarnation survives the ages because the story of God becoming human strikes a chord deep within the human psyche.

The contemplative realist grasps the fact that the redemptive power of myths and symbols is drawn from their ultimate mystery. We can never say, for instance, that we have "solved" the mystery of the Incarnation or that we understand completely the symbolism in the Lord's Supper. The most we can do is to humbly deny that we have the last word and gratefully remain open to further experience. We must resist

the well-intentioned Protestant tendency to explain everything on the basis of how it is used. We must not be so rationalistic as to prevent the great biblical myths and symbols from grasping our entire beings, for we only learn through participation. "A true symbol must be *lived into*," says Theodore Roszak. "That is how its meaning is found."¹⁹

Three of the most powerful symbols of the Bible, symbols which are true, in the deepest sense of the word, as descriptions of reality, shape our response to the world. The power of the creation story lies in its evocation of awe at the loving purposes of the Creator God; the power of the Incarnation story is found in the Creator God slipping quietly into the created world; the power of the story of the Second Coming is the Creator God setting things right in the created world by destroying that which corrupted and despoiled its beauty and grace.

The Adventist who is guided by contemplative realism sees that this world—however shabby its glory has become—is very precious to God. He or she sees also that, through a long process, humans have become separated from nature, deaf to its voice, and numb to its rhythms, and that this separation is manifested in violence toward nature. Furthermore, inasmuch as the biblical creation story portrays humans in the image of God, with a concomitant responsibility toward nature, such separation from nature means a fracturing within ourselves. We have been freed from the terrors of nature-worship only to find ourselves in a bleak and inexplicable world in which our technology rebounds on us with a vengeance. We are fast approaching a state in which our technical capabilities will outrun our ethics. If we really believe that "this is my Father's world," like the hymn says, we will realize that we will never be whole unless we love the natural world and care for it.

The Adventist contemplative realist is also acutely aware of the contradiction to this vision posed by the presence of evil. We are afraid of the natural world, and with good reason, because, unlike the almost infinite variability of human responses to a given situation, nature has a kind of blunt and brutal predictability. While humans condition, dodge, reinterpret, and flout laws, the natural world simply reacts. It can be debated whether hurricanes, tidal waves, or floods are evil, but the fact remains that we often interpret them as such. But if we can come to regard ourselves as coexistent with nature, we will learn to live with the ambiguity of a world existing in the thick of a Great Controversy. That is not to say we are resigned to evil in any form; on the contrary, we must resist evil with all our strength. But if we take Paul seriously, we will realize that we are inextricably tied up with this world, and it with us.

We are called to follow the way of justice and righteousness not only in the sphere of human relationships but also in the natural world.

It is not simply one's personal salvation "in the body" that lies up ahead, but the *entire* created order that is to be made new. Paul speaks of the created universe eagerly waiting for the eschaton when "the universe itself is to be freed from the shackles of mortality and enter upon the liberty and splendour of the children of God. Up to the present, we know, the whole created universe groans in all its parts as if in the pangs of childbirth" (Rom. 8:21-22, NEB). It is this universe which Christ created and holds together, which he has also reconciled and will, at the consummation of history, offer up to God (Col. 1:16ff.).

It is this world and this created order which has suffered much at the hands of sinners. Jeremiah thunders to the people of

Israel that "your wrongdoing has upset nature's order, and your sins have kept from you her kindly gifts" (Jer. 5:25, NEB). Linking the despoiling of nature directly with political corruption and economic oppression, Jeremiah's message reminds us that we live within a complex organic reality rather than a mechanistic one. We cannot simply cordon off our political and economic actions from our environmental concerns. We are called to follow the way of justice and righteousness not only in the sphere of social relationships but also in the natural world. Really, we must see that we do not have the "world of nature" and the "world of humanity," but *one* world in which everything has consequences for preservation or destruction.

Drawing from the rich heritage of creational, eschatological, and apocalyptic symbols and myths in the Bible, Adventist Christians who are contemplative realists can bring a perspective on the interrelatedness of all created things to the foreground of the discussion of environmental issues. As Adventist Christians we look for the day when the "heavens will roll up like a scroll" and "the earth will be made new." We believe that God's purposes for this world are inclusive of all reality, that they are not isolated for the "remnant" who are saved but include the earth itself and ultimately the universe. If this is our vision of the future, we cannot short-change the present by ignoring the destruction of the earth through a misguided apocalyptic other-worldliness.

Paul Ricoeur, a contemporary philosopher, has said that symbols invite thought. Symbols also lead to action. If we can grasp the richness of the creation event of God, the poignancy of the incarnation, and the power of the eschaton—if we recognize that these stories reveal the meaning of our existence—we can embody that meaning in our lives. Those old stories surely call us to be personally responsible for our actions toward nature. They call us to raise a prophetic voice in our time against

government agencies whose primary concern is corporate profits rather than corporate responsibility. They call us to love the earth and its creatures, to join with groups which seek to protect the rights of animals and the environment. They call us to feel deeply the pain of the created world and to speak for that which has no voice. They call us to plunge ourselves into life and history, to seek to love the world as fervently and persistently as did Jesus, and finally, to realize that we are his creatures, too, and thus to long for the time when all creation will be reconciled in God.

Because we live in the hope of a time when God "will be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28) and the universe shall be a temple of praise to God and "the home of justice" (2 Peter 3:13), we are outraged that our rivers are poisoned with mercury and our air with pollutants. We are as agonized over humanity tearing apart a wilderness for a few thousand barrels of oil as we are when we sin against God by murdering or betraying one another. Our agonies are refracted into a million tiny movements; the universe writhes in pain, waiting to be released.

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10. *The Advancement of Learning: Works, IV*, 296 quoted in Leiss, p. 59.
11. John B. Cobb, Jr., *Is It Too Late? A Theology of Ecology* (Beverly Hills, CA., 1972), p. 34.
12. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), p. 8.
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14. Let us summarize the three positions we have outlined:
 1. The Secular Principle of Human Dominance (Western tradition)
 - a) By divine decree and technological expertise, humans are to rule and subjugate nature.
 - b) Nature has only instrumental, not intrinsic, worth.
 - c) Humans are separate from, and above, nature.
 2. Animistic/Pantheistic (Native American tradition)
 - a) Humans coexist with nature and its creatures out of fear of and reverence for the gods of heaven and earth.
 - b) Nature is experienced as having both intrinsic and instrumental value.
 - c) Humans are not separate and above nature, but coexist within the same sacral unity.
 3. Active Nonaction (Taoist)
 - a) The recovery of the primordial harmony between heaven and earth is sought through active nonaction and noninterference.
 - b) Nature is valued both instrumentally and intrinsically.
 - c) Humans are not separate from nature nor above it but are simply one part among many.
15. Cobb, p. 46.
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Reviews

Situation Ethics Today: Three Adventist Views

Kainer, Gordon, *Faith, Hope and Clarity: A Look at Situation Ethics and Biblical Ethics*. 144 pp. Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1977. \$4.95 (paper).

Johnsen, Carsten. *God, the Situation Ethicist*. 191 pp. P.O. Box 1474, Loma Linda, CA.: Center of Christian Realism, 1981. \$9.00

by David R. Larson

In an influential article first published in 1965, a Congregationalist theologian named James Gustafson described the controversy regarding situation ethics as a "misplaced debate." Misplaced or not, the dispute continues, as revealed both by Gustafson's later writings and by the contributions of Gordon Kainer, a theologian and administrator at Rio Lindo Adventist Academy in Northern California, and Carsten Johnsen, a linguist and philosopher who has taught at Andrews University and a number of other American and European schools. This is fortunate because the issues evoked by the orientation Joseph Fletcher and others call the "new morality" are as interesting and important today as ever.

Kainer basically contends that Joseph Fletcher's brand of situation ethics overreacts to the pettiness of much piety. Fletcher rightly criticizes Christianity for frequently spawning interpretations of the righteous life that are legalistic, simplistic, and loveless, Kainer declares. But this provides no reason to doubt, he contends, that the ideal solution in every circumstance is to obey God's will. Kainer emphasizes that God has revealed this will in Scripture, particularly in the Ten Commandments.

The spirit of God's love permeates the letter of God's law so thoroughly that it is never legitimate, in Kainer's view, to appeal to the former against the latter. Despite their specialness for the ancient people of Israel, he insists, the mandates of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 apply universally without addition, subtraction, or modification. All ethical dilemmas experienced by those who honor these requirements are more apparent than real: Kainer believes there is no situation in which one is actually compelled by unfortunate circumstances to choose a lesser evil. Therefore, the primary ethical struggle is not the effort to reduce one's moral perplexity; it is the battle against one's reluctance to submit to God's sovereign authority. This war, Kainer writes, can be won only in the strength of divine mercy and power.

Johnsen's primary point is that only God can function as a situation ethicist because only God knows enough about any set of circumstances to do so wisely. He develops this line of reasoning in direct conversation with those who believe that Fletcher's form of the "new morality" enjoys scriptural support. The Bible sometimes portrays its heroes and heroines acting in ways which are ethically questionable, Johnsen concedes. But frequently, he responds, the Old and New Testaments record these deeds without approving them. At other times, he continues, Scripture reveals that God commanded ethically exceptional action for reasons best known to God. Given the vast differences in ability and integrity between sinless divinity and sinful humanity, it is arrogant and rebellious, Johnsen believes, to use events in which God commanded morally unusual conduct as precedents and justifications for human compromises with evil. Johnsen insists it can never be right for humans to do evil, as defined by Scripture's

commandments, under the guise of choosing a lesser evil. In his view, the willingness to make such decisions is evidence of idolatrous self-sufficiency, the opposite of the humility and submissiveness to God's authority that mark the true Christian.

Kainer and Johnsen both express an ethical approach that places primary emphasis upon compliance with absolutely binding imperatives established by a supreme moral commander who, in their case, is God. Like Immanuel Kant, Kainer and Johnsen hold that some imperatives are never to be compromised, but unlike Kant, who believed commands are discerned by human reason, they believe commands are delivered by divine revelation. From Kant's perspective, Kainer and Johnsen ground morality on the uncertainties of religious belief; from the point of view of Kainer and Johnsen, Kant deified human rationality. Kainer and Johnsen stress the moral necessity of obeying God's directives.

My present orientation differs from that of Kainer and Johnsen on the one hand, and from that of Joseph Fletcher on the other hand, in two primary respects. In the first place, I prefer the "way of responsibility" to both the authoritarian emphases of Kainer and Johnsen and the teleological approach of Fletcher. The "way of responsibility" accepts the benefits and burdens of making ethical decisions without shifting this challenge to some commander who issues directives or to some computer that forecasts consequences. In either of these cases, some factor other than the decision-maker is ultimately accountable for what is decided: a state of affairs that may wrongly dodge moral liability. In addition, the "way of responsibility" is frankly pluralistic in its claim that there is no single consideration that is always overriding other than the ultimate commandment to love God with the whole of one's being and one's neighbor as one's self (Matt. 22:37-39). Both the

emphasis upon beneficial consequences ("You will know them by their fruits." Mat. 7:20) and the emphasis upon respecting personhood ("Whatever you wish that men do to you, do so to them." Matt. 7:12) must always be considered, but exactly which of these two valid emphases applies is deliberately left unspecified. This qualifies both Fletcher's contention that the rightness or wrongness of a course of action is determined exclusively by the goodness or badness of its consequences for the whole of society and the view of Kainer and Johnsen that divine authority is the sole ethical standard.

The difficulty with making God's sheer authority the ethical standard is not that this criterion is divine, but that it is authoritarian and therefore at least incipiently arbitrary. The "way of responsibility" does not deny the importance of obedience, but it places obedience in the context of responsive love. In one of his most effective chapters, Kainer utilizes a helpful diagram to illustrate that true obedience is always a loving response to God's graciousness; however, the primary emphasis of the rest of his book is upon God's authority. Fletcher also devotes a few pages to the theme of responsiveness in *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966); however, the primary focus of his various publications is upon consequences. Johnsen's book, which compares the relationships between God and humanity to those between employers and employees, pays even less notice to the responsive character of biblical ethics.

Because God's steadfast love gives monotheistic ethics its distinctive dynamic and motivation, it deserves primary attention. When this is done, the parables of Isaiah 5 and Luke 15 become every bit as helpful in making ethical decisions as the directives of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. And when this is done, it becomes apparent that even the Ten Commandments, as revealed by the verses that introduce them, are indicators of appropriate ways in which to respond to God's prior goodness.

The second primary way in which my present orientation differs from that of Kainer and Johnsen, on the one hand, and Fletcher, on the other hand, is that ethical guidelines are less important to me than they are to Kainer and Johnsen but they seem more significant to me than they do to Fletcher. From their opposing points of view, Fletcher as well as Kainer and Johnsen deny that it makes sense from a moral point of view to say "necessary but lesser evil." For Fletcher, if an alternative is morally necessary, it is not evil. For Kainer and Johnsen, if an option is evil, it is not morally necessary.

Both positions miss the realities of life as currently experienced and as exposed in Scripture. Ethical guidelines are very important because, among other things, they indicate normal ethical expectations. To use a concept J. Philip Wogaman develops in *A Christian Method of Moral Judgment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), ethical guidelines can function as moral presumptions that place the burden of proof upon those who would violate them. In some circumstances these guidelines conflict with each other, and the more particular and numerous they are, the more likely it is that such tension will occur. In such circumstances, I believe, one should choose the lesser of evils, all things considered, without refusing to be held accountable for one's choice and without denying the moral ambiguity of the alternative one chooses. Either to refuse to be answerable or to pretend that the course of action one prefers is wholly without moral blemish is, in my view, less than responsible.

Two illustrations may be helpful. First, Kainer's book regrets that 80 percent of the students surveyed in a Seventh-day Adventist academy approved of a woman calling to her absent husband in an attempt to deceive and frighten away an intruder. I agree with Kainer that there is a very strong Christian

presumption in favor of speaking truthfully; however, on this issue, all things considered, my vote is with the academy students. It is evil to deceive; but it is more evil, I fear, to refuse to protect the members of one's home from a truly illegal alien.

Second, Johnsen's book subjects the guidelines on abortion provided for denominational hospitals by a committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to severe criticism because he believes its approval of abortion in cases of felonious intercourse, maternal jeopardy, or severe fetal defectiveness violates the sixth commandment. I agree with Johnsen that there is a very strong Christian presumption in favor of protecting all forms of life, and an even stronger presumption in favor of protecting human life at every stage of existence; however, in the end my vote is with the General Conference guidelines, even though they are not perfect. Abortion is never without moral ambiguity; there are sound ethical as well as medical reasons why it should not be utilized in a routine or frivolous manner. But I believe the committee that formulated these guidelines rightly saw that in some circumstances it would be less evil to perform an abortion than to refuse to do so on the grounds, suggested by Johnsen, that one should let God intervene if God chooses to do so.

Such decisions are difficult even when they are made carefully and prayerfully, and they should ever remain so. It is not always easy to accept the freedom and responsibility God has given us. But we can find comfort and joy in God's unrelieved goodness. God's unending benevolence can widen our imaginations as we consider our options, strengthen our resolve as we fulfill our callings, and soothe our inner turbulence as we discover our inadequacies. No one is more worthy of our trust.

David Larson is associate professor of Christian ethics at Loma Linda University.

Provonsha on Death as a Barrier to Pride

Jack W. Provonsha. *Is Death for Real?* 79 pp. Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1981. \$3.95 (paper).

by Albert P. Thompson

Popular fascination with death and near-death experiences long have challenged both Christians and skeptical scientists. In the introductory pages of *Is Death for Real?*, Jack W. Provonsha, chairman of the department of ethics at Loma Linda University, illustrates the impressive other-worldly implications of near-death experiences with several anecdotes from the recent works of Raymond Moody, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, and others.

Leaning on his wide exposure to psychedelic literature during graduate studies and his medical background as a practicing physician, Provonsha suggests that such other-worldly encounters are not unique to near-death experiences. The characteristics of the dissociative states produced by hallucinogenic drugs, certain conventional medications, and various disease states are virtually in every respect identical to the accounts of near-death experiences. Moreover, the private nature of these experiences makes the higher reality suggested by them inaccessible to scientific testing, requiring alternative methods of evaluation. For Provonsha, this means testing the experience by comparison with previously established truths, especially those in the Scriptures.

In a brief historical review of the subject, Provonsha discusses the Neo-Platonizing of Christianity and points out that recent developments in biblical scholarship substantiate a holistic concept of man. This concept of man as a "multi-dimensional

unity" and its current, wholesome impact on sociology and medicine contrasts sharply with the influence of dualism in earlier centuries.

In his last two chapters, Provonsha compares death denial to that most fundamental sin, self-sufficiency. As a hedge against this error, the first death is God's reminder of our "creatureliness" and the final blow to "hubris—arrogant human pride." "Death is the one basic fact of human existence over which man has no control." Provonsha briefly discusses the nature of sin, arguing that death denial becomes another fig leaf by which humans attempt to deal with their "existential nakedness." Death anxiety has a counterpart in guilt anxiety, which Provonsha describes, in words familiar to readers of his previous publications, as "self disesteem, anxiety, aloneness, and meaninglessness."

The solution to the morass in which humans find themselves is to "look at it squarely and put it in the hands of God." This death to self is followed by a resurrection to a new life of "buoyant, responsible, released living"—a creative life of celebration that offers a foretaste of the future bodily resurrection. We shall live again "because He lives and because He graciously remembers" us.

As a Redwood Paperback, the book is not written in technical language and is directed to the general, Christian reader. However, the style is probably above the heads of the usual "literature-evangelized audience." For the thoughtful Adventist and the well-read Christian, the book offers a refreshingly sensible and consistent approach to death, and for those with a particular interest in near-death experiences, the bibliographies of the first four chapters alone make the book immensely valuable.

Albert P. Thompson, a graduate of Walla Walla College and the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University, is a physician in Lincoln City, Oregon.

Liabilities of \$7 Million Force Pacific Press to Sell Its Plant

by George Colvin

In an attempt to prevent the possible bankruptcy of Pacific Press Publishing Association, its board recently approved a plan to move the press to a new location. A new site has not been selected yet. Sale of the present 20-acre Mountain View site, independently valued at \$7 million, will help the press as it struggles to pay off its multi-million dollar debt.

The decision to move the 108-year-old institution came January 20, 1983, after the board heard the somber report prepared by a special committee appointed by the General Conference: Martin Kemmerer, former undertreasurer of the General Conference; Tom Miller, chief West Coast auditor for the General Conference; and Otho Eusey, an Adventist layman and owner of Eusey Press in Leominster, Massachusetts—a printing firm similar in size to Pacific Press.

This committee of three told the board, "Pacific Press has reached a point in its history where its indebtedness has become a crushing burden. As of November 20, 1982, the long-term liabilities plus the current portion of notes payable amounted to more than \$7.6 million, with the prospect of an increased indebtedness of \$1 million by June 30, 1983 . . . the press, which in the past only rarely made commercially viable operating gains, has since 1977 entered a period of marginal profitability and in some years actually made a net loss."

A staggering list of expenses and problems support this somber message:

- Approximately \$2 million is outstanding in accounts receivable from the Inter-American Division, which is responsible for about 35 percent of the press' revenue in recent years. However, the Inter-American Division has been badly affected in the recent decline in value of the Mexican peso. Other related financial problems for the press in its international publications include the start-up costs for the Spanish edition of the *SDA Bible Commentary*. The first two volumes alone cost Pacific Press about \$300,000 above the contributions to the project made by the South American Division, the Inter-American Division, the North American Division, and the General Conference. The press also recently spent over \$1 million to establish a branch printing facility in Montemorelos, Mexico. The future of this new press remains uncertain.

- Over \$1 million has accrued in costs for the settlement and attorneys' fees in the 10 years of litigation between the press and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission over what is commonly called the Tobler-Silver cases. The General Conference has decided to stop the costly appeals process and pay the litigants, thus ending the expensive 20-percent rate which was accumulating on the amount that the court originally awarded to the plaintiffs in 1979.

- Chapel Records, now the church's only record-producer, incurred operating losses of \$300,000 in 1981-1982.

Heavy losses were sustained by some periodicals, especially limited-circulation foreign language periodicals and the health-oriented journal *Listen* (which alone lost \$673,455 between 1977 and 1982).

- Poor use of plant facilities and uneconomically high inventory have also con-

tributed to the press' current economic status. The press usually runs its two large web presses only one shift per day, four days a week. The standard printing practice is to operate web presses three shifts a day, seven days a week. Total press inventories rose from \$7 million in 1977 to \$12 million in 1982, including a stock of paper four to eight times as large as that of standard industry practice.

Genesis of Crisis

L. L. Bock, chairman of the Pacific Press board and a General Conference vice-president, says the crisis at Pacific Press resulted from the lack of a business attitude that developed in the early 1970s when the press was financially secure. The strict business practices required in the highly competitive publishing industry were not carefully followed. For example, there was no tight budget, and realistic estimates for most jobs were missing. Books were producing losses which some former editors suggest were brought on by management's uncritical approach to the books' potential saleability. Pacific Press also lost some of its business, especially the Adventist academic books market, to the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

By late 1982, these events and practices had brought Pacific Press to the point of borrowing on a short-term basis to meet operating expenses, including payroll. The staff had been reduced by about one-fourth from 1980 to 1982, but the total debt still amounted to almost half of the gross annual income. Restricted cash flow soon made the press dependent on the General Conference for survival. In response the General Conference appointed an ad hoc committee to deal with the crises.

In January 1983, the committee set as objectives: (1) the paying off of the \$8 million capital and operating debt in five to seven years; and (2) the rebuilding of operating funds.

The committee presented five options to the board, ranging from continuation of the status quo (summarily rejected as financially

impossible) to complete liquidation and merger with the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Merger was considered perhaps the best solution from a purely financial viewpoint, but was rejected due to fears about overcentralization of North American Adventist publishing into one publishing house.

In the end, the board voted that Pacific Press would continue without a merger, but at another location less costly to maintain. This choice delighted the press' employees: it preserved the largest number of jobs and avoided merger with the Review and Herald plant with which Pacific Press employees felt a keen sense of competition. Guidelines for the move will be drawn from the church's recent experience with the Review and Herald Publishing Association's move to Hagerstown, Maryland. In preparation for the move, Pacific Press will hire a new financial officer.

Other changes at the press will include shifts toward a more business-like approach to publishing. The organization will be much less likely in the future to accept uneconomical assignments. Instead, bids will be secured from commercial printing firms on selected projects. If these bids are competitive, the work will be done "outside" on a contract basis. Use of contract printers represents a departure from the tradition of printing most Adventist literature on Adventist presses out of fear of using "secular presses."

The board's size will be greatly reduced, probably shrinking from 40 members to 13. New members will include a higher proportion of lay Adventists with business and printing expertise. The board will be charged with primary concern for the press' viability rather than for its customers' pocketbooks.

Foreign-language publications will be closely examined for efficiency, size and cost-effectiveness; unproductive operations will be eliminated. Most likely, the only exception will be the Spanish *SDA* and *Commentary* and *Listen*, though the press will not be expected to bear the losses on these operations.

One loss to the Pacific Press in the reorganization will be its publishing work for the Inter-American and South American divisions, which have been officially severed from Pacific Press' territory by an action of the General Conference executive committee. The \$2 million of debts owed to Pacific Press by various church organizations in the Inter-American Division will be covered partly by a payment of about \$850,000 from the General Conference and partly by direct collections for Pacific Press by the Inter-American Division. The General Conference payment will be charged as a loan to Inter-American Division. The Inter-American Division will become fully responsible for all church debts in the region owed to Pacific Press. The publishing association's operations at Montemorelos, Mexico, will either be transferred to the Inter-American Division or sold. Though Pacific Press will continue some printing work and most editorial duties for the two divisions, the loss of these customers may produce still further reductions in Pacific Press' workforce.

George Colvin is a doctoral candidate at the Claremont Graduate School.

Indian Laypersons Run Independent Schools

by Helen Whitehead

In seven areas of Central India, away from large cities, Seventh-day Adventist laymen have been providing government-recognized education since 1970. More than 1,500 students attend these schools, known as the Good Shepherd Educational and Welfare Program, in grades from nursery school to high school.

The schools have a total of 63 employees, whose salaries come from enrollment fees,

church members and charity donations. The salaries are, however, about 20 percent less than those paid to national workers in official denominational schools in India. "Our employees are mostly SDAs," says J.C. David, Jr., director of the Good Shepherd Educational and Welfare Program (Ed-Wel), "but we've baptized several Hindu staff members. Our schools, our teachings, and the miracles surrounding our existence are a real testimony for God."

His project, founded in 1967 by his family and three retired SDA ministers, received governmental accreditation in 1970 and is governed by a 13-member, self-perpetuating board. Besides Director David and two of his brothers, the board consists of Adventist laymen, and the lay activities director and the ministerial activities director of the North Andhra section of the Central India Union.

Since the schools are designed to reach as many young people as possible, the tuition fees are low. Even so, poor students must receive scholarships.

In addition to the seven existing Ed-Wel schools, David plans to establish more schools and welfare centers. Those interested in the Ed-Wel program may write to the Good Shepherd Ed-Wel Program, P.O. Box 70, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-500 004, AP, India.

Helen Whitehead is assistant director of admissions and college relations at Columbia Union College.

John's Apocalypse Becomes Worship Service

by Bonnie Dwyer

"The Apocalypse of John is now," began the *San Bernadino Sun's* story about a January worship service at the La Sierra Collegiate Church. Based on the book of Revelation, it was entitled "The Apocalypse as Liturgy."

"By treating the sweeping passage of the Apocalypse as a psalm of praise, our intent was to demonstrate that the apocalypse is for every age and speaks to each generation anew," said Charles Teel, Jr., associate professor of Christian ethics at Loma Linda University and writer. "It is an affirmation that the persecuting beast and dragon will be conquered by faithful remnants."

The sanctuary of the church was dominated by seven golden candlesticks sculpted by Alan Collins, associate professor of art, and his students. The candlesticks, standing five to seven feet in height, were carved in different shapes to reflect the characteristics each of the seven churches of Asia Minor mentioned in the book of Revelation.

As readers and congregation read responsively from the text of the Apocalypse, slides were projected on the walls of the church which depicted contemporary manifestation of the cosmic struggle between Babylonian evil and remnant good.

Evil was depicted through slides of such recent horrors as the Holocaust, Hiroshima, Vietnam, and victims of modern weaponry.

Goodness was also presented. A series of children's drawings was projected which revealed innocence and hope for a world in crisis.

The Sabbath School period preceding the worship service featured stories of contemporary individuals and communities who have had to face corrupt and persecuting beasts. Jonathan Butler, associate professor of church history, told the story of Vladimir Shelkov, the former leader of the True and Free Adventists in the U.S.S.R., who was imprisoned 26 years for his uncompromising stand. Alesky Kvchor-ski, a survivor of Auschwitz now living in California, provided an eyewitness account of how Alexander Kolbe, a Catholic priest who was recently canonized as a saint, stepped forward to offer his life in exchange for that of a fellow prisoner. Nancy Bailey, a representative of Amnesty International,

described the work of that organization on behalf of prisoners of conscience, including Vladimir Shelkov. One concrete result of the worship service was the gathering one week later of approximately 30 students, faculty, and community persons to lay the groundwork for forming a chapter of Amnesty International on the La Sierra Campus. Students from Argentina, Ghana, and Uganda expressed a desire to improve conditions for prisoners of conscience in their countries.

The combination of worship and action reflects the outlook of Charles Teel, associate professor of Christian social ethics at Loma Linda University, who wrote and planned the liturgy based on Revelation. "The Apocalypse is for every age. It is not just a message to the past or to the future somewhere. In the face of false Babylonian powers (by whatever name they appear today) which coerce, manipulate, and persecute, the slain Lamb calls believers to form remnant communities which heal, nurture, and build."

Church Sex Discrimination Cases Enter Second Decade

by George Colvin

After more than ten years of litigation, Pacific Press Publishing Association decided the early part of this year not to appeal the Lorna Tobler case to the United States Supreme Court. Consistent with that decision, the press in February 1983 paid Lorna Tobler \$77,000, finally concluding the case. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filed against the press on her behalf in 1972. This development still leaves unresolved the class action suit brought by EEOC against Pacific Press for

alleged sex discrimination against some 140 women employees in the payment of wages and benefits during the period 1970-1973.

The agreed-upon sum for Tobler represents the additional money that she would have received if the press had not discriminated illegally against women, compensation for money she would have earned had she not been illegally fired, and interest on both amounts.

Merikay Silver and Lorna Tobler were fired by the press in 1975, at the request of the General Conference Committee, for invoking legal processes against the church, including the filing of complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Silver's part of this litigation was settled several years ago (reported in SPECTRUM Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 5).

In the Tobler case, the Pacific Press based its position primarily—both in the U.S. District Court and on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit—on the argument that the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution exempts the church from the necessity to obey the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Pacific Press lost in both courts and will not attempt to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The resolution of the remaining EEOC class action case against Pacific Press is much less certain. This case, now at the District Court level, involves about \$700,000 in back pay and interest due the 140 other women at the press affected by the

discrimination in pay. (Had the press simply paid the class-action claim in 1973, the cost would have been approximately \$140,000.)

In February 1983, the EEOC received an offer from the Pacific Press' attorney. According to the offer, the Pacific Press would give the District Court magistrate the amount the EEOC says is due the 140 women who were employed at the Pacific Press. Although the press could continue to dispute the EEOC in court, the amount the press might have to pay if it appealed and lost the case would be given immediately to the magistrate. In return, no further interest would be charged to the press on this money. Since interest is now accumulating at considerably higher rates—16 percent compounded annually—the press would obviously not benefit from interest presently accumulating.

The press' offer would give it the opportunity of being able to appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit—even to the U.S. Supreme Court—*without* continuing to pay a high interest rate on the amount the lower courts have already said it must pay. Therefore, the EEOC is unlikely to accept the offer. If it does not, the Pacific Press would then have two choices. The press could appeal in spite of previously losing the Tobler case, with essentially the same facts. Or, the Pacific Press could conclude the litigation by paying the money that the courts have determined it owes the women.

More on *The White Lie* and Its Reviewers

To the Editors: Disconcerting trends in Ellen White apologetics were evidenced in the two reviews of Walter Rea's *White Lie*, published in the June, 1982 SPECTRUM.

Both Jonathan Butler and Alden Thompson cast the obligatory aspersions on Rea's prose while noting its considerable success in educating Adventist readers. Then each proceeds to construct Maginot-like defenses for Ellen White.

Butler's following remarks require a little dissection. Prophets can be expected to reach for literary assistance . . . out of the highest of spiritual motives and the securest sense of their own spiritual calling . . . For her to concede to critics that her human "sources" were anything less than links to the divine Source itself would have been to deny something so fundamental to her self-understanding as to make her indeed a liar. (p. 47)

If Ellen White had been secure in her "own spiritual calling," she need not have been defensive whenever it was suggested that there might have been a human element to otherwise divinely inspired testimonies:

O what a fixing up is this! What foolish positions Satan will lead some to take in their blindness . . . God gives the message and then takes especial care that it is not corrupted . . . The visions are either of God or the Devil.¹

Ellen White only once, under pressure, "conceded" a sparing use of human "sources," and then only regarding one book, *Great Controversy*. And she never suggested that those "sources" were "links to the divine Source itself." To acknowledge that her undivulged sources were anything less, Butler avows, would "make her indeed a liar." Yet Mrs. White angrily condemned an assistant who in 1897 tried to reveal the human methods used by the prophet. "I will cut off the influence of your tongue in every way that I can."²

Your words regarding me and my writings are false . . . Those unacquainted with you take your words as being the words of one who knows . . . McCullagh stated in a large congregation that it was reported by one who knew that I picked up things written in books, and sent them out as something the Lord had shown me . . . Many in Melbourne have been repeating the same things, things which you have told them, and which they thought must be true.³

In 1902 she elaborated a verbal inspiration view regarding her own writing:

While I am writing out important matter, He is beside me, and when I am puzzled for a fit word with which to express my thought, He brings it clearly and distinctly to my mind.⁴

Not only does Walla Walla's Professor Thompson not comment on Ellen White's denial of source utilization, he argues for "a necessary and well-intentioned 'cover-up.'" As the biblical precedent for a cover-up, he cites Christ's words, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." But when Thompson's attempt to defend a cover-up is scrutinized it falters badly.

A) As the God-man, Christ stands in a different relationship to us than we do to each other. B) He is also the ultimate Author of all revelation. C) Because of (A) and (B), it is not presumptuous of Christ—as it would be of us—to decide, at His own good pleasure, what is best for His creatures to know. And, finally, (D) it was the future, not old information known only to the scribes and pharisees, that Jesus withheld from His friends.

Ethical considerations aside, cover-ups rarely stay in place, and soon we have to face both the diminution of dear image and loss of trust in the conspirators, however benevolent their intentions may be. Pandering to human desire for certainty is not the answer; nor is suspension of our ordinary ethical conventions.

While the integrity of Professors Butler and Thompson is not in doubt, and they undoubtedly mean well, their individual attempts to legitimize subtlety are questionable. As Ellen White's most notable defender, F. D. Nichol, once put it: "A vividly held premise can blind the eye and invalidate the reasoning even of the most conscientious."⁵ At the very least, Butler's and Thompson's provocative reasoning will stir considerable discussion.

There are those of us who need to pray for the ability to forgive Walter Rea his way of making us know about Ellen White. Others of us must pray for the grace to forgive our failing leaders. In that sense, Ellen White and her writings have finally become, for Seventh-day Adventists, a testing truth.

1. Ellen White, "To Brother J.N. Andrews and Sister H. N. Smith." pp. 23, 22, 1860 W58, Advent Source Collection, No. 924, 40 pages.
2. Ellen White to Fannie Bolton, April 11, 1897.
3. Ellen White to Fannie Bolton, June 25, 1897.
4. Ellen White to Brother and Sister Irwin, July 18, 1902.
5. F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, p. 193, Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1951.

Doug Hackleman
Loma Linda, California

To the Editors: Is Ellen White's copying inconsistent with her claim to be inspired? What the title and the comments do not indicate is that there is any discussion of the basic issue. The same issue is present in any consideration of the Bible. Anyone who thinks that the men who wrote the Bible did not quote from earlier writers is certainly naive. It is very repetitious. Some of the repetitions to be found in the Bible are obvious copies; others are rough paraphrases. Nor is this all. Bible writers also quoted from non-scriptural writers. Should this fact shake confidence in the Bible?

It should shake my confidence *only* if I assume God will speak only once on a subject and then only through a recognized prophet. Teachers can repeat what they say so as to get their point across to those who missed it the first time, and so can preachers and parents and politicians, why not God? That would be absurd. God is free to reveal his will to us in whatever way he sees fit, and if we do not understand why and how he works in any given case, what is so surprising about that?

Kenneth Harvey Hopp
Redlands, California

To the Editor: Initiated by the Glacier View Rites of Passage, Adventist scholars have come of age in the realization that the church will remain the patron of the scholars only as long as the scholars patronize the church.

Thus, Adventist scholars have come to embrace the seven axioms of scholastic immunity:

- Choose Erasmus as your role model rather than Luther.
- Be Socratic without being insubordinate.
- Be an overt apologist for the church without becoming involved, committed or identified with any specific position, posture, or persons.
- Abandon candid exegesis for an intricate Aristotelian Thomistic system of metaphysical logic.
- Fashion mysticism and dogma into respectable learned propositions which no one can parse, let alone understand.
- Assure the corporate leadership that your scholarship has brought you out the same place you went in.
- Insist that the critics of the church be less sanguine and more sanctified than its prophets.

Scholars Butler and Thompson make a particular point that Rea fails the benchmark of axiom seven.

The White Lie is the natural product of an intelligent man with concern, passion, and impatience for the truth and fair play, who recently learned that there are at least five rather than only three most unbelievable statements:

- Your check is in the mail.
- I'm from the government, I am here to help you.
- Of course, I will respect you in the morning.
- I am from the Ellen G. White Estate, I have come to tell you the truth.

- Church trust funds are secure and being used to spread the Gospel.

The White Lie: scholarship it may not be. Timely, significant, and tragic it is.

Sincerely,
Thomas J. Zwemer

To the Editors: I'm one "institutional worker" who's not unwilling to humor Walter Rea by saying something "concerning the tie-in between the church's administrators and the Davenport, Ford, Rea connection." But in spite of what Rea's quaint phrase (SPECTRUM, December 1982) seems to confess, I totally disbelieve that there has ever been any "Davenport, Ford, Rea connection" for anybody to "tie-in" with! It overtaxes the imagination to picture those three robust individualists even momentarily harnessing themselves together, much less pulling in tandem with a bunch of bland administrators.

I won't ape Rea by accusing him of a white lie, but my light-meter still detects a lot of murky rays in his prose. With all his developed talents he'll know instinctively that I've stolen "The style is the man himself" (George de Buffon) and "The medium is the message" (Marshall McLuhan). But isn't he trying to have a thing both ways when first he gratuitously fills his book with irresponsible rhetoric—thereby automatically sabotaging the impact of his own serious research upon many whose credence he presumably desired—and now turns around and growls that everybody bleeds on the rug about his style rather than listening to his message?

The medium really *is* the message. The two, inherently, are inextricable. A writer can make or break his book by the tone of voice he chooses. That's a fact of literary life. Where truth is the question, a wildly swinging, sarcastic style may appeal to some readers, but it will probably turn away a dozen for every one it attracts.

Personally, I still respected Rea up to but not a minute beyond the hour when he offended common decency with that despicable title, *The White Lie*—a puerile pun that wiggles like a garter snake, and either does or does not call Ellen G. White a liar. That shabby, overpriced pun! Stuck with it now Rea apparently feels compelled to lob it at the pates of any or all whose interpretation of events or texts fails to coincide with his.

Thus he charges that Harold Calkins told "an out-and-out lie" in the *Pacific Union Recorder* by writing that "the [Glendale] committee did not discover dependence on other authors in the Spirit of Prophecy writings." Rea calls that "the opposite of what the committee had found and voted."

Here is the basic paragraph from the committee's official report: "That we recognize that Ellen White, in her writing, used various sources more extensively than we had previously believed. In a number of her books, the similarity between Ellen White and other authors is great enough to require the serious attention of our church leaders in order to determine the degree and significance of her dependence on other writers."

And here is Calkins' full statement, from which Rea extracted a single sentence: "Members of the committee recognized that Ellen White read widely in devotional and historical sources and drew information from a number of authors. Words phrases and thoughts from other dependable authors are apparent. They are in harmony with the great themes about which she was inspired. The committee did not discover dependence upon other authors in the Spirit of Prophecy writings. A further report of the meeting will be given at a later time. The committee is suggesting to the General Conference President's Executive Committee that further study be given to the use of sources in preparation of the Spirit of Prophecy."

Does the disparity between the resolution and Calkins' paraphrase seem sufficiently enormous to warrant denunciation as "an out-and-out lie"? Or is there an identity problem between Rea himself and the style he chooses to employ?

Since there are almost countless different ways to compose any factual or persuasive message, a writer is initially free to make countless rhetorical decisions. But then, since he was the one who voluntarily did the choosing, he ought to have the integrity to abide stoically ever after with the psychological consequences. It's not just Rea's "institutional" reviewers who are bleeding. His book itself is bleeding and has been doing so since before its ink was dry. And its author has only himself to blame.

John O. Waller
Professor of English
Andrews University

To the Editors: Thompson and Butler (Vol. 12, No. 4) both appear quite certain that Rea's book, *The White Lie*, falls short of any sound standard of literature or scholarship and with this judgment few would quarrel. Yet neither appears willing to subject Ellen White herself to any sort of objective criteria—as has been done to Rea, and as Rea has done to Ellen White.

Thompson labors to point out that Ellen White's reliance on human sources does not preclude inspiration, and he even attempts to justify her "cover-up." But should we not set some kind of limits to prophetic license? Just under what conditions could a writer's claim to inspiration be proven false?

Butler is right to criticize Rea for a lack of historical perspective, but not for trying to answer the moral question he himself has evaded: was Ellen White's claim to speak for God valid or not? Instead, he plays the academic game by directing our attention toward the "phenomenon" of her acceptance as a prophetess in the Adventist community. His purely subjective criterion for a prophet—a prophet is one whose followers believe him/her to be a prophet—will be of no help to those who must judge the credibility of visionaries claiming to represent God, both in Mrs. White's day and in our own.

There is now a crisis over Ellen White's authority precisely because critics, such as Walter Rea, have brought forth evidence that leads us to question whether

she actually did measure up to the *objective* standards that Adventists have traditionally demanded of prophets: agreement with Scripture, originality, honesty, and personal integrity. If Thompson and Butler wish to fault Rea for retaining these standards, they owe it to the rest of us to replace them with a better set of *objective* criteria by which we may try the claims, not only of Mrs. White, but also any others who would be prophets.

Jeffrey Smith
Graduate Student
University of California, Berkeley

On Abortion

To the Editors: It was with mixed emotions that I read through Gerald Winslow's article on abortion. I don't think we should spend so much time worrying about the unborn's "right to life." God has already provided for that. In Matthew 10:28 he said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell." What I think we should worry about is the quality of existence that would be available to a baby upon birth. That's what Christ would worry about.

Clearly there have been people who, due to the quality of life principle, would have been better off to have never been born: Both in man's sight (Job 3:3-26, Jer. 20:14, 15, 18) and in God's sight (Matt. 26:24, Mark 14:21, Luke 23:28, 29, Eccles. 4:3). Indeed, parents who forgo abortions may be held even more accountable in the judgment, if they bring children into the world with nothing to offer them but degradation. If the fetus's quality of life would lack dignity, I think it is clear that God would rather see it aborted.

Denver Lodge
Bozeman, Montana

More Information on Adventist Media Center

To the Editors: I am writing in response to Bonnie Dwyer's article entitled "Soul-Searching at the Adventist Media Center: A Multimillion Dollar Debate" which appeared in the September issue, Vol. 12, No. 1.

I feel the article was quite well done and did depict largely the situation that exists here, but certain facts were inaccurate and other insinuations could lead to a lack of complete and full understanding. With that in mind, I would like to call your attention to a few corrections that should be noted.

On page 27 reference is made to the appropriations received from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists by the Media Center in the amount of \$2.5 million in 1981, a 35-percent increase over 1980. A correction in this fact should read: ". . . 6.9 percent increase over 1980."

In the same paragraph, it is stated that the appropriations are 13 percent of the Media Center's total income. A more accurate statement would be that the appropriations are 10.9 percent of the Media Center's total income.

It should be pointed out that of the \$2.5 million appropriations received by the Adventist Media Center, \$500,000 is for capital debt liquidations and had nothing to do with operations of the Media Center and/or its components. The General Conference provided, through a loan from the General Conference Association the funds, for the construction of the facilities here in Thousand Oaks and have agreed through annual appropriations to underwrite the majority of that capital indebtedness. The total payments on an annual basis to the General Conference, including principal and interest, are \$600,000. Five hundred thousand dollars of that is included in the General Conference appropriations with the additional \$100,000 coming from funded building depreciation on an annual basis.

On page 34 it was stated that the Adventist Media Center makes special appeals to the General Conference for huge sums of money to retain solvency. This, in fact, is not the case. The Adventist Media Center is voted an annual appropriation by the General Conference at Annual Council in October of each year and it is our responsibility to operate and live within the scheduled and voted appropriation income. We have not nor do we anticipate making special appeals to the General Conference for additional funding beyond that voted in the annual budget.

I want to clarify these few points in an effort to give a more accurate picture of our financial involvement with the General Conference. It is true, there have been significant reductions in staff over the past several months but this is not equated in a comparable reduction of services and performances capabilities. We have found it necessary because of the economic climate of the times in which we live to come to grips with areas of inefficiencies and cutting in those areas which have not proven productive and compatible to the mission of the church in these days.

Robert L. Rawson
Vice-President for Finance
Adventist Media Center
Thousand Oaks, California

Bonnie Dwyer Responds

To the Editors: I appreciated Mr. Rawson's kind words about my article as a whole and his clarification of figures concerning the General Conference's appropriations to the Adventist Media Center. The major and helpful correction was the percentage increase in the General Conference's appropriation from 1980-1981. He does not challenge the total \$2.5 million amount of the denomination's appropriation in a single year, a sizable sum that he agrees is growing from year to year.

Bonnie Dwyer
Loma Linda, California

Relocating the General Conference Headquarters

To the Editors: I wrote to express deep appreciation for the total contents of the September 1982 issue (Vol. 13, No. 1). Special thanks for Ray Cottrell's able analysis of the "Case for an Independent North American Division." I hope that it is not already too late for serious consideration to be given to the relocating of the General Conference headquarters outside of North America.

Europe has been suggested as a possible site for world headquarters, and the idea has much to commend it. Europe, in global terms, is more central than North America. It already houses several well-known world bodies such as The World Health Organization and the World Council of Churches. Since Europe is not one political entity, an international church with headquarters might not arouse the fears and prejudices that presently arise. Switzerland is the country which any organization might choose as the site for a world headquarters.

But recent experience in the Afro-Mideast Division, and some current doubts concerning the Africa-Indian Ocean Division should serve as warning lights. The church should look carefully and far ahead before making easy decisions that will fix the shape of things to come for longer than we wish to contemplate.

Bernard Seton
Retired General Conference Associate Secretary
Etowah, North Carolina

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