

Adventist Raiders of the Lost Ark  
Disciplining the Davenport Offenders

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# SPECTRUM

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A Quarterly Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 13, Number 4

## PROPOSALS FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

What Must a True Adventist Believe?  
Income Sharing Within the Congregation  
Worship as the Church's Mission

# SPECTRUM

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## About This Issue

With one development after another shocking the denomination in North America, many members are increasingly relying on their local churches for spiritual nurture. Our special section considers several aspects of the local church. Among the authors is a conference president, Gary Patterson of Georgia-Cumberland, who says that in its function of worship the congregation fulfills its most basic mission. A companion article defends the use of liturgical forms of worship in Adventist congregations.

Two contributions were presented in different form at the national conference of the Association of Adventist Forums, September 1982. John Brunt explores the New Testament view of divorce, broaching

an ethical question of increasing relevance, unfortunately, in our churches. Joe Mesar, drawing on the vision of the prophets, proposes income sharing in the local church. Another essay suggests the baptismal vow as the doctrinal criterion for membership in the congregation. The section begins with the story of 24 pastors who met recently in Washington, D.C. to share with top administrators their feelings and ideas about ministry in the local church.

The Davenport drama continues. Also, art comes back to *Spectrum's* pages with a feature on paintings by Charles Zuill. We are pleased, too, that the new editor of *The Adventist Review*, William Johnsson, makes an appearance here in an interview. Finally, we wish to thank Julie Tilton-Ling for the many hours of invaluable editing she has contributed to producing the last three issues of *Spectrum*.—The Editors

# Pastors Call For Changes

by Julie Tilton-Ling

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Twenty-four pastors from across North America gathered at the General Conference offices in March of 1981 at the invitation of C.E. Bradford, vice president of the General Conference for North America. They proposed major changes in church structure and financial policy. Although specific recommendations were made at this unprecedented gathering, in the intervening two years little or nothing has been done to implement those suggestions. The meeting of pastors—carefully drawn in equal proportions from multi-church districts, large multi-staff churches and big city churches with one assistant—deserves greater notice than it has received.

According to a candid report in *Ministry* magazine,\* published by the General Conference ministerial department, the pastors proposed radical changes in church finances, administration, and perception of their roles.<sup>1</sup> Those pastors at the meeting focusing on finances recommended “that a percentage of the tithe be retained by each local congregation to enhance that church’s outreach efforts. Careful study should be given as to the exact percentages and procedures, but 10 percent should be a starting point

with a gradual increase as overhead structures are eliminated.” Congregations send all their tithe to their local conference. In North America, the local conference keeps 70 percent. The unions receive 10 percent, and the General Conference 20 percent. “We find it incredible,” said the pastors, “that the tithe dollar supports the entire church structure, including plant and equipment and secretary’s salary—conference, union, General Conference—but not (with the exception of the pastor’s salary) the local congregation that gives it. So the local church that is supposed to be the focal point of ministry is poorly funded and crippled while organizational overhead has grown and grown.”

The pastors also proposed that “a minimum of 10 percent of all trusts and annuities, upon maturity, automatically be returned to the local congregation of which the donor was a member at the time of contractual agreement.”

Reduction of tithe sent to higher levels of organization was related to proposed reductions in administrative staff, “especially at the union conference level.” All 24 pastors agreed that “at the present time in North America there is almost a one-to-one ratio of administrative workers to workers in the field.” The pastors said flatly that “this costly structure—departmental secretaries duplicated in conference, unions, and the General Conference—is not useful.” They

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recommended specifically that “instead of office-based departmental secretaries in each conference, pastors should be recognized as field-based specialists to whom others may come and learn from.”

Another area of concern at the meeting was the role of the pastor. The pastors set out in clear terms priorities for ministry that differ from what some might expect. Assuming fundamental commitment to the Lord and the body of Christ, they affirmed “a pastor’s concern to be first his family, then the local congregation and outreach to the world.” Pointing to the stress—on both themselves and their families—inherent in their role, the pastors requested that counseling outside the administrative ranks be made available.

The pastors were also concerned about their place in the work of the church. As Bradford explains, “in Adventism, it seems, there is a pecking order, and unless you are called to the conference office, you aren’t entirely fulfilled; you haven’t really ‘made it.’” And yet, theoretically, the pastor is praised by his superiors like Bradford, as the real key to the Adventist structure. The pastors concluded that since “the pastor’s role is considered by administration as most important, this concept should be reflected in the pastor’s wage scale in comparison to that of those in administration and departmental position.” In his *Ministry* editorial on the conference, Spangler reinforced the pastors’ point: “I have to agree that our present system of pay is more status oriented

than service oriented.” Further reflecting a desire to enhance their role were recommendations that pastors be provided with regular sabbaticals and other opportunities for professional growth through specialized continuing education.

The pastors made several recommendations for change in one central aspect of the local church’s life—the Sabbath school. They proposed that alternative formats for classes should be approved, for a more diverse Sabbath school could be used as a “golden opportunity for church outreach.”

Two pastors who attended the 1981 meeting, J. Redfield of Merrill, Wisconsin, and David Osborne of the Atlantic Union College Church in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, praise Bradford for organizing the meeting of pastors. However, both are concerned that if the changes suggested by the pastors are not quickly implemented by leadership, particularly in the area of finances, change may come forcibly in the midst of crisis. Both point to increasing awareness of the laity, particularly in the area of tithe distribution, as a force that must be reckoned with by church administrators. Redfield, Osborne, and other pastors attending the 1981 meetings look forward to more such discussions. But the lack of tangible change since the first gathering makes one of those who attended concerned that further discussions may be “an exercise in futility.”

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\*Quotations of the pastors’ comments are dependent on a *Ministry* article: by J.R. Spangler, “Concerns of 24 Pastors,” *Ministry* (August, 1981).

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# The Baptismal Vow As The Criterion of Adventist Faith

by Wayne Willey

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If someone were to ask you for a definitive written statement of what Seventh-day Adventists believe, what would you give them? There are at least three different formulations that might be considered “official” statements of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. Confused? So are many other people.

Before we can consider any doctrinal statement as representative of Seventh-day Adventists, we must demonstrate that it embodies the view of at least a majority of the total membership of the church. I think that the articulation of our faith that everyone assents to when they join the church—the baptismal vows—should be regarded as the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

What are the “official” statements of the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists? The *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* contains three different formulations of the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. First, there are “The Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists.” Second, there is a “Summary of Beliefs” which has been prepared for the

doctrinal instruction of those who wish to join the church. Third, there are the “Baptismal Vows,” and the slightly modified form of those vows used for people who join our churches by profession of faith.

In addition, there are the summaries “Seventh-day Adventists Believe,” which are printed on church bulletins, but as these statements of general belief have never been acted upon by any representative body of the church, they cannot legitimately be called an “official” statement of the “fundamental beliefs” of Seventh-day Adventists. Let us examine the statements that might be considered official to see which most accurately embodies the doctrinal views of the majority of Seventh-day Adventists.

The statement of beliefs which now appears in the church manual under the title “Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists” was adopted by the General Conference session in 1980. The 1,973 delegates representing all Seventh-day Adventists at that General Conference session were composed primarily of denominational employees and constituted approximately 1/20th of one percent of the total membership of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. It would be very difficult to present a convincing case for an assumption that any statement of beliefs adopted by less than one

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percent of Seventh-day Adventists must be considered representative of the beliefs of the remaining 99-plus percent of Seventh-day Adventists. That difficulty would be compounded by the fact that an overwhelming majority of the delegates to the General Conference session were on the denominational payroll. Less than seven percent of the delegates, including those presenting or explaining the material on behalf of the committee which formulated the document, spoke to the proposed restatement of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists" document.

The second statement of beliefs in the church manual, entitled "Summary of Beliefs" or "Doctrinal Instruction for Baptismal Candidates," was also approved only at the gathering of the General Conference in session. These statements would be representative of what the majority of the delegates present at the General Conference session believe should be taught to people who wish to join the Adventist denomination. Whether these beliefs are an accurate "summary of beliefs" of Seventh-day Adventists would depend to a large extent upon the perceptiveness of those who framed the document.

We need to address some very important questions before we can accept either the "Fundamental Beliefs" or the "Summary of Beliefs" as representative of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole. On what basis would the decision of a gathering of denominational employees who comprise 1/20th of one percent of the total membership of the church have sufficient authority to bind the whole church to a particular statement of beliefs? Why is a decision by this particular group superior to the decision of any other gathering of a similar number of Adventists? What is to protect the church from a takeover by a small group of people who might attempt to impose radical doctrinal changes on the

church? How does one harmonize this ability of the few to bind the church in doctrinal matters with the biblical doctrine of the priesthood of all believers which teaches that not only do all believers have equal access to God, but God has equal access to all believers?

Our dilemma is resolved when we discover that there is a statement of beliefs which accurately reflects the doctrinal views of the majority of Seventh-day Adventists. I refer to the baptismal vows and the nearly identical vows taken by those who join the church by profession of faith. I use the term "membership vows" for both. Every person who joins the Seventh-day Adventist Church makes a public commitment. The prospective member expresses agreement with the church and acceptance of the conditions of membership. This commitment or covenant is in effect a contract based upon specific terms publicly stated and mutually agreed upon. Any change of the terms of the covenant without the agreement of all parties concerned would void the "contract." The membership vows state "the fundamental beliefs" of more than 85 percent of Seventh-day Adventists today—the 3.1+ million people who have made a commitment to these "fundamental principles" since they were formulated and adopted in 1941. As a result, we can demonstrate that the "membership vows" meet the criteria of being representative of the beliefs of the majority of Seventh-day Adventists. These are the essential teachings or fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Adopting the less detailed wording of the membership vows as the definition of Adventist belief need not lead to laxity. As a pastor I recognize that I have a responsibility to require strict adherence to the terms of the membership covenant. I believe that any member who repudiates the membership covenant, either in word or in deed, has no legitimate right to call himself or herself a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the same time I recognize that

no one or no group within the church may require commitment to any doctrine or practice beyond the specific terms of the covenant. The terms of the covenant are the ties that bind us together as Adventists.

During the past several years I have attempted to lead my congregation into an annual renewal of their commitment to Christ and their covenant with one another at the beginning of each year. I have found that an annual renewal of one's covenant of membership has many benefits for the unity and spiritual growth of the local congregation. I have several times sent out a copy of the membership covenant with the mid-December issue of the church newsletter and encouraged church members to sign the covenant and return it to the pastor. Recently, however, my church used this document in a "Covenant Renewal" service during the worship hour on the first Sabbath of the new year. A copy of the membership covenant was distributed with the church bulletins (Because we have several people attending services who are not members of the Adventist community, we also provided a copy of the old Roman version of "The Apostles' Creed" from Bettenson's *Documents of the Christian Church* under the title of "My Christian Covenant" which would allow non-members to participate in our covenant renewal service.) After a sermon on "The Ties that Bind us Together," I invited those who wished to renew their covenant with Christ and the church to gather around the communion table and sign the appropriate "Covenant." An unanticipated benefit which resulted from the covenant-signing services was that several of our unbaptized young people came forward and signed the Christian covenant even though there was no specific call for them to do so. They considered themselves Christians and wished to renew their covenant with Christ. I am now preparing these young people for baptism and membership in the church. Another benefit of the

covenant signing is that failure to renew the covenant may provide an indication that a church member is experiencing a spiritual identity crisis and needs pastoral counseling.

Since Seventh-day Adventists do not have a "fixed" creed, there is always the possibility of revising the statement of fundamental beliefs contained in the membership vows. I believe that a return to the practice of early Adventism regarding church membership would be the most effective way to maintain unity during the continuing process of development in our statements of fundamental beliefs. There was a time when the quarterly communion service

was opened with a reading of the membership roll by the church clerk, each member giving testimony regarding his Christian experience as his name was called. Next the church record for the previous quarter was read and corrected . . . Absence from quarterly meetings without report for nine months was grounds for dismissal from the church."<sup>\*</sup>

Present practices regarding church membership show little recognition of the fact that church membership does not exist unless the individual is "in Christ." Some

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**“. . . the articulation of our faith that everyone assents to when they join the church—the baptismal vows—should be regarded as the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist Church.”**

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church members show little or no commitment to Christ or to the activities of the church, even worship and group study. Yet unless these "backslidden" members withdraw from the church, fail to communicate with the church for several years and thus become designated as "missing," or commit a public sin that causes them to be disfellowshipped, they may retain their church membership as long as they live.

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<sup>\*</sup>*SDA Encyclopedia* article "Lord's Supper," p. 813.



There are some very practical implications of the view that the membership vows are the only truly representative statement of the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. We are able to focus upon these statements as the "ties that bind" us together in the fellowship of the church. This develops a spirit of unity within the church as well as a tolerance for the viewpoints of one's brothers and sisters on those points which are not specifically stated in the membership vows. This spirit of tolerance for other views results in the granting of religious liberty within the church and maintains the unity of the church.

It is worth noting that the controversies which have resulted in division within the Adventist body throughout its history have arisen over issues which are not specifically

dealt with in the membership vows. I have asked many former Adventists if it was a repudiation of their membership covenant that resulted in their leaving Adventism. Most of these individuals have told me that they would still be in the church if some one or some group had not tried to impose additional tests of membership beyond the covenant vows they had made when they joined the Adventist Church. Practicing the principles of religious liberty within the church will also increase our credibility when we seek redress for violations of religious liberty in society.

Someone has rightly said "in essentials we must have unity, in non-essentials we must grant liberty, but in all things we must practice charity." When this motto becomes reality in Adventism, then there will be fewer alienated people leaving our churches and fewer schisms within the church.

## SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST BAPTISMAL VOWS

In the presence of the church or in the presence of a properly appointed body, the following questions should be posed and answered in the affirmative by candidates for baptism, and by those being received on profession of faith.

1. Do you believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit?
2. Do you accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, and believe that through faith in His shed blood men are saved from sin and its penalty?
3. Renouncing the world and its sinful ways, have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, and do you believe that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven your sins and given you a new heart?
4. Do you accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, recognizing Him as your Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and do you claim His promise to strengthen you by His indwelling Spirit, so that you may receive power to do His will?
5. Do you believe that the Bible is God's inspired word, and that it constitutes the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian?
6. Do you accept the Ten Commandments as still binding upon Christians; and is it your purpose, by the power of the indwelling Christ, to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord?
7. Is the soon coming of Jesus the blessed hope in your heart, and are you determined to be personally ready to meet the Lord, and to do all in your power to witness to His loving salvation, and by life and word to help others to be ready for His glorious appearing?

8. Do you accept the Biblical teaching of spiritual gifts, and do you believe that the gift of prophecy in the remnant church is one of the identifying marks of that church?

9. Do you believe in church organization, and is it your purpose to support the church by your tithes and offerings, your personal effort, and influence?

10. Do you believe that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that you are to honor God by caring for your body, avoiding the use of that which is harmful, abstaining from all unclean foods, from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages, the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption, and from the misuse of, or trafficking in, narcotics or other drugs?

11. Knowing and understanding the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is it your purpose, by the grace of God, to order your life in harmony with these principles?

12. Do you accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion, and do you desire to be so baptized as a public expression of your faith in Christ and in the forgiveness of your sins?

13. Do you believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy, and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire membership in this local congregation of the world church?

From the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, revised, 1981.

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# Worship as the Church's Mission

by Gary Patterson

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The primary purpose of the Bible was not to propound doctrine, but inspire worship. Actually, little apologetic or doctrinal material appears in Scripture. Much of the Bible is a celebration of what God has done for his children through grace, and an invitation to worship as a response, in fellowship, to that grace.

We should not abandon apologetics and doctrinal study, only see them in perspective and recognize celebration and fellowship as central to Adventism. A doctrinal fight, instead of being the front line of the church's attack on forces of evil, becomes instead the line of last resort where the fortifications are thickest, the trenches the deepest, and desperation the highest.<sup>1</sup>

Isn't it sad that in the worship of the Creator we often come with the least joyful and creative experience of the entire week? Often it appears as if we are afraid to enjoy worship. Instead of allowing us to delight in new disclosures of God, our worship services often burden us with language and ceremonies that too often are regarded as unchangeable. Actually, they are boring. It

is often necessary for members to learn the accepted, holy language to be part of the church. Once habituated to these forms we are loath to change them. We identify God so closely with certain patterns of liturgy that we think altering the patterns imperils worship.

The fact is that many of these forms now considered sacrosanct were originally secular. Ironically, these forms come to be regarded as sacred and untouchable. But unless there is an openness to find the sacred in the secular, the opportunity to meet God is often passed by or maybe even cut off. That which "was 'without form and void' becomes a world. What was 'uncomely and not to be desired' becomes the Messiah."<sup>2</sup>

Part of the problem is that we do not properly distinguish between the sacred and the secular. We tend to regard them as polar opposites. Sometimes we even identify the sacred with the good and the secular with evil. We should not. The sacred is simply that which is set apart—in a religious setting that which is special or holy—while the secular is that which is everyday.

These distinctions do not mean that there is something evil in the ordinary. It does not seem to occur to us that the sacred and the secular go hand-in-hand. The special can only be defined and comprehended on the basis that there is an ordinary. If all we ever had was what we call "special," then it

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would be the ordinary. If it were not for the ordinary or the secular, there would be no way to recognize the special and the sacred. On the other hand, the ordinary can only be recognized when interrupted by the special.

Forcing a sharp dichotomy between the sacred and secular may cause us to devalue the ordinary and prevent moments of sacredness for setting priorities in our ordinary lives. By creating rigid forms for sacred activity we may in effect be isolating the sacred from the secular.

Since its beginning the Seventh-day Adventist Church has perceived its role as proclaiming a message. It was in the Millerite movement that we really got started. The development of our preaching worship traditions rose from this setting. To the Millerites proclamation was central. If you have a message like theirs what else is there to do? They preached at revival meetings attended by thousands. One drew such large crowds the railroad had to erect a special station north of Boston. These revivalists were not able to apprehend in a single bound all that God would have them know. Their liturgy—if it can be called a liturgy—was basically derived from the enthusiast and evangelical churches from which they came.

Ellen White rebuked their early attempts at worship.

Men of but small experience who have but little influence, can get up commonplace sermons. . . .

There is nothing in the words, or arrangements of ideas, that melts and burns its way into the heart. . . . They make bad work.<sup>3</sup>

Church meetings were often somewhat of a disaster. Recalling these times J. N. Loughborough noted that:

In our assemblies in those early times when no restraint was upon anyone—when one had just as much right to occupy the time in our public meetings as another—we were greatly annoyed by turbulent spirited men.<sup>4</sup>

A young church with free-wheeling worship services was deeply suspicious of church order and structure.

But we have moved from the dread of organized structure to one of the most tightly administered religious communions in existence today. There is a real danger that as members of an institutionalized church we will become mere spectators. Often we decry the lack of interest on the part of the laity. But what else can we expect when our architecture, our order of service, and our model for the church—preaching—encourage members to passively let the clergy do everything?

We must remember that while proclamation is essential and necessary, our purpose as Adventists can only be accomplished if worship is central, and if it is celebration involving the entire congregation. Contrary to what some think, the purpose of the church is not to build a doctrinal fortress strong enough to shut out an evil world. The purpose of the church is to be a worshiping community in the midst of the world. The purpose of the church, as one of the great protestant reformers said, is “to praise God and enjoy Him forever.”

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#### NOTE AND REFERENCES

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1. See John Killinger, *Experimental Preaching*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1973), p. 24.
2. John Killinger, *Leave it to the Spirit*. (New York:

Harper and Row, 1971), p. 153.

3. *Review and Herald*, (Jan. 5, 1869), p. 10.

4. *Review and Herald*, (July 9, 1901), p. 2.

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# O Come Let Us Adore Him— But How?

by A. J. Woodfield

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The influence of the liturgical movement seems to be laying hold of even Seventh-day Adventists. We refer to ourselves as “the church,” call our meeting rooms “sanctuaries,” dress our choirs in “robes,” and install stained glass windows. Particularly in larger Adventist churches, a shift is taking place from the rude informality of the meeting house with its medley of “items” to dignified churchly services, complete with introits, anthems, intercessions, responses, and even chanted psalms. How should we respond to this trend? Is it a betrayal of our heritage? Must a truly committed Adventist insist on only gospel songs, mid-week prayer meetings, and testimony sessions?

I think not. A careful look at what the Scriptures say about worship suggests that we have much further to go in appreciating the dignity appropriate for worship of the Lord of Lords. The Bible suggests worship should be like an audience with a king.

There is no lack of definitions of the term “worship” in the Oxford Dictionary—but most can be eliminated as obsolete. First, let us agree that what we are considering is the

high festival on Sabbath when the church meets to join in an act of public adoration and to hear what God has to say to it. We are not referring to the many other opportunities Adventists find for gathering—parent-teacher meetings, youth meetings, prayer and business meetings, temperance and health meetings. Let us also agree that we are defining worship as “reverence or veneration paid to a being or power regarded as supernatural or divine; the action or practice of displaying this by appropriate acts, rites, or ceremonies.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, let the dictionary remind us that liturgy is “a form of public worship especially in the Christian church; a collection of formularies for the conduct of the Divine Service, also public worship conducted in accordance with a prescribed form.”<sup>2</sup>

Even the most anti-liturgical Adventist congregations display their veneration of God by carefully following prescribed forms of acts, rites and ceremonies, and even worship. In the past, all Adventist churches in Britain used an identical preprinted form with the “order of service” all laid out in precise sequence; all that was lacking were the names of celebrants. Adventists lay great stress on baptism by immersion because this is the mode prescribed in the New Testament; the Lord’s Supper has to be accompanied by footwashing because of

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Christ's command, and the communion with bread and wine is derived from the method revealed to Paul, handed on by him to the Corinthian Christians, and so to us.

The growing interest in a more elaborate, liturgical worship derives from a dissatisfaction with the pervasive lack of reverence in Adventist churches. More careful structuring of church services, the growing use of more traditional ecclesiastical terminology, and calls to worship and responses are attempts to produce a more religious atmosphere conducive to feelings of religious satisfaction. Many feel that we do not behave in church as if we were in the audience chamber of the king.

## Old Testament

What may we learn from Scripture about how to approach the divine being? What was it like in the beginning? How did God's kingdom of priests worship him? How differently did their spiritual successors behave in the early years of the new dispensation?

There is no direct description of how the first man and woman conducted themselves in the presence of their creator, but we may deduce that they approached him with feelings of awe. They knew that he had created them, and creation is still an awe-inspiring concept. They also remembered how he had blessed them.<sup>3</sup> Wherever we read of blessing, it was a rite of solemn joy, emphasizing the clear distinction between bestower and recipient: the bestowal of benefit from a superior to an inferior.<sup>4</sup> Blessing did and does inspire a feeling of worship in the receiver.

After the Fall we turned to fear. The offending pair, suddenly conscious of their nakedness (and who of their descendants do not on the spiritual plane share their feelings?) "hid themselves in fear."<sup>5</sup> By the time of the patriarchs, the expression of this inherited fear had crystallized into bowing

down and prostrating oneself before the Lord. Moses hid his face at the burning bush, for he was afraid to look on God.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the temple liturgy exhorted worshipers: "Come let us throw ourselves at his feet in homage, let us kneel before the Lord who made us."<sup>7</sup> Allusions to this submissive approach, like that of a vassal paying allegiance to his lord, are so frequent that it is obvious that this was the expected bodily approach to God.

Closely related to submissive posture was the desire to mollify the deity by bringing gifts. This desire is patent in Noah's conduct when his watery ordeal ended. His first act on leaving the ark was to erect an altar on which he could present whole offerings. The Scriptural gloss remarks that "when he (God) smelt the *soothing* odour" he resolved never to repeat the judgment of water.<sup>8</sup>

However, the worshiper was not free to offer anything; the deity had distinct preferences. Cain was told, "If you do well, you are accepted; if not, sin is a demon crouching at the door."<sup>9</sup> While we do not know how

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**"So accustomed are we to the use of royal imagery that we have turned it into a dead metaphor, and until we give it life again we shall fail to behave as we should in the presence of the king of heaven."**

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Cain's approach was unsatisfactory, it is certain that his offering was liturgically defective. Worshipers were not to approach God in a manner of their own devising.

Further incidents and glosses seem to indicate that God also expected the use of a correct formula. There was a right name by which to address him. "At that time men began to invoke the Lord by name,"<sup>10</sup> and the comment infers that worship previously

had been inferior. The right name ensured a better understanding of the deity worshipped; it revealed his character.

When the descendants of Abraham began their history as a nation, these inchoate but essential elements in primitive worship took on the form of a divinely revealed liturgy for the use of a kingdom of priests who were to serve a celestial king.<sup>11</sup> God adopted Israel as his subjects, and their poetry abounds in references to him as king.<sup>12</sup> Even when they adopted a monarchical government, their visible king was the "Lord's anointed," his deputy, his son.<sup>13</sup> Joseph Angus writes:

the tabernacle (and afterwards the Temple) was considered as His palace; there He gave visible manifestations of His glory; there He revealed His will; there was offered 'the bread of the presence'; there He received His ministers, and performed His functions as Sovereign.<sup>14</sup>

So accustomed are we to the use of royal imagery that we have turned it into a dead metaphor, and until we give it life again we shall fail to behave as we should in the presence of the king of heaven.

Much of Exodus and Leviticus must be considered a sort of handbook of court etiquette, and court etiquette demands exact ceremonial performance. Petitioners to a king have to learn beforehand how to approach, how to speak, and how to retire. Royal ceremony was not designed as

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a tourist attraction. It is a symbol of the majesty of the kingdom, the dignity of its head, and is designed to inspire a proper relationship between monarch and subject. In the covenant made at Sinai, Exodus

establishes the constitution of the priestly kingdom and describes the palace to be erected as the king's audience chamber, specifies the robes to be worn by the priests and Levites, and outlines the exact duties these palace officials were to perform. Leviticus adds still further detail. These documents make it clear that the approach of priests and people to their Lord had to be careful and respectful, that the prescribed forms had to be observed most scrupulously.<sup>15</sup>

### New Testament

The Old Testament scriptures describe the public worship prevalent in the time of Jesus, and the first Christians continued to share in it. They did not consider themselves members of a different society; they described themselves as the true seed of Abraham.<sup>16</sup> They neither took nor were directed to take any steps to set up a new system of worship. "All that believed were together . . . continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home."<sup>17</sup> Paul always worshipped with fellow Israelites in their synagogues until they drove him out. The early Christians do not seem to have intended anything other than a modification of the existing system, a removal of outmoded symbolism and its replacement with something more appropriate. Animal sacrifice was to give way to the commemoration of the true sacrifice: for type had met antitype.<sup>18</sup> Any symbolism now was to be mainly commemorative rather than anticipatory. It was the animosity of the Jews that forced Christians into setting up their own churches. Not surprisingly, Christian churches closely resembled the synagogues, and Christian ceremonies reflected those in Judaism.

The commonest objection to liturgical worship is that it degenerates into empty formalities, and long before the coming of Jesus, spiritually-minded prophets had pro-

tested against this. Samuel told Saul that obedience was better than sacrifice; Isaiah described God's loathing of vain oblations, and Joel exhorted worshipers to rend their hearts and not their garment.<sup>20</sup> But none of them wanted to destroy the system; they attacked only its abuse. The rending of the temple veil did not proclaim the sweeping away of a reverent approach to God; it merely proclaimed that approach now was more direct.<sup>21</sup> Priesthood was not abolished: a better one had taken its place. God was still king, worshipers still his subjects. Jesus replaced a strictly topical centre of worship with a universal and more spiritual one. He magnified the old system and made it honorable for all men everywhere. Nowhere does the New Testament encourage worshipers to behave casually and informally in public devotions. The epistle to the Corinthians leaves us in no doubt on this point.

The new situation is made very clear in the letter to the Hebrews. The aim of the epistle is to show the Jew that Christianity is the consummation of Judaism. It provides a better priest, a better sacrifice, a better temple, and a better absolution from sin.<sup>22</sup> It draws a careful parallel between the old and the new, and the nature of a parallel is that both aspects of the parallel have something basic in common.<sup>23</sup> Type had blossomed into antitype. Ceremonial, reverent worship was to continue though sublimated to an approach that was "in spirit" and therefore valid—"in truth."

## *Apocalyptic*

The most significant witness of the New Testament is in the Apocalypse. Here in the vision of the worship of heaven we are given the description of the reality of which Israel's system was the copy.<sup>24</sup> Naturally, therefore, the celestial sanctuary exhibits a remarkable similarity to its temple copy. Its focal point, the throne of God and his glory,

is the original of the mercy seat and the shekinah. The 24 elders, who make obeisance before it, and join in the responsive anthems and offer incense, correspond to the 24 courses of priests, each course led by its elder.<sup>25</sup> The earthly priests were robed and wore mitres because their heavenly antitypes are robed and crowned.<sup>26</sup> The sacred furnishings correspond: seven lamps burning before the throne as seven lamps burned in the holy place,<sup>27</sup> an altar of incense for the prayers of the saints,<sup>28</sup> a sea of glass like the great brazen sea in the temple courtyard,<sup>29</sup> and four fabulous beasts, which were copies of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat, carved on the temple walls and embroidered on the great veil.<sup>30</sup> Proceedings were climactic, beasts and priests celebrating each stage in the worship with antiphonal hymns, building up with a majestic crescendo to the moment when the lamb, priest and victim both, declared the will of the divine king.<sup>31</sup> Here is revealed heaven's worship style—ceremonial, responsive (congregational participation is of its essence, for the priests are the whole church), profoundly reverent, awe-inspiring in setting, eloquent in symbolism and bodily posture. Above all, worship is organic. No trivial items here, no backroom informality. Extemporaneous chats with the heavenly father should be private, in our secret chamber with the door shut.

What a pity that irrational prejudice turns so many against the deeply moving blessing of a liturgical worship that originates in the audience chamber of the eternal king! There may be more truth in the observation of the poet Donne than we realize: "And for the debt of prayer, God will not be paid, with money of our own coining, (with sudden, extemporal, inconsiderate prayer) but with currant money, that beares the Kings Image, and inscription."<sup>32</sup>

Far from returning to the greater informality of our past, Adventists should move forward to forms of worship that prepare us for the eternal wonders of

Apocalyptic liturgy. Let us worship with the priestly and royal dignity to which we, as God's own people, lay claim; for whether we remember it or forget, we are in fact "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,

and to innumerable hosts of angels . . . Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God, with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire."<sup>33</sup>

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. XII, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 320 col. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, vol. VI p. 355 col. 2
3. Gen. 1. 28-30
4. Heb. 7. 7
5. Gen. 3. 8-10
6. Gen. 24.26, Exod. 3.6
7. Psa. 95.6
8. Gen. 8. 20-21
9. Gen. 4. 7-8
10. Gen. 4. 26
11. Exod. 19. 3-6, 1 Sam. 8.7
12. Psa. 5.2, 10.16, 24.8, 29.10 etc.
13. Psa. 2. 2,7
14. Joseph Angus, *The Bible Handbook*, (London, 1908), p. 422-23.
15. Exod. 19. 21-22, Lev. 1
16. Gal. 3. 29
17. Acts 2. 46
- 18 Paul evidently made little effort to wean Christian Jews from their traditional religious forms. He even placated them by having Timothy circumcised! What he opposed was the compelling of Gentile believers to adopt practices that were outmoded. His dispute with Judaizers was not to settle a controversy concerning liturgical worship. There is no mention of such a controversy in the New Testament. He himself worshipped in the Temple when he was in Jerusalem and in synagogues (until local Jews drove him out) when he was on tour.
19. Early Christian basilicas were approached through a courtyard (atrium) where a fountain stood for ceremonial ablutions before entering the church. One such atrium still survives in the church of San Ambrogio, Milan. Unbaptized persons could then proceed only as far as the narthex. The baptized (presumably considered spiritual priests) could pro-

- ceed into the nave to worship. The clergy (presbyters) occupied the apsidal presbytery. The hemispherical shape of the apse symbolized eternity, God's dwelling, the Christian equivalent to the holy of holies. The altar was placed symbolically between the nave and the apse at the focal point of the whole building to indicate that an entrance into eternal life was through the supreme sacrifice of Christ, "through the veil of His flesh." The altar was usually erected over the grave of a martyr (witness)—cf the souls of martyred Christians under the altar in Rev. 6.9—hence, because Christ is the true Witness and the martyr is also a witness, the whole was called the *confessio* and the sanctity of the altar derives from the Old Testament sanctuary.
20. 1 Sam. 15.22, Isa. 1.13, Joel 2.13
  - 21 Heb. 10.20
  22. Heb. 8.1-6
  23. Heb. 4. 2-11 makes the parallel nature of the epistle's argument very clear.
  24. Heb. 8. 4-5. The comparison is worked out fully in chapters 8-10.
  25. 1 Chron. 24.5, 5-18
  26. Exod. 39. 27-30
  27. Exod. 37. 17-24
  28. Exod. 37. 25-29, Rev. 5.8. Subsequent references fill in details of the heavenly sanctuary as described in the Apocalypse: the altar of incense in 8.3 and the altar of sacrifice in 6.9. It suggests that martyrs are an equivalent to the ancient sacrificial victims.
  29. 2 Chron, 4. 2-6, 10
  30. 1 Kings 6. 23-30, 2 Chron, 3, 7, Ezek. 1.6, 10, 18, 22, 26 and 10. 14, 20-22.
  31. Rev. 5. 7 and 6ff.
  32. H.W. Garrod (ed), John Donne, *Poetry and Prose*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 89.
  33. Heb. 12.22, 28-29



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# What Does the New Testament Say About Divorce?

by John C. Brunt

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Not long ago I attended a church board meeting that lasted for two and a half hours. Two hours were spent on two items: two cases of divorce. After these two hours of sometimes vigorous discussion, the board was unable to reach a conclusion and referred both cases to other committees (one of which it had to create) for further study. This situation is hardly atypical. Divorce and remarriage present the church with some of its most difficult dilemmas.

As local churches respond to the problem of divorce, they want to be consistent with what the New Testament counsels and requires. Consequently, it is relevant, indeed crucial, that the New Testament passages discussing divorce be examined. We will look briefly at the context and teaching of each passage before drawing several conclusions concerning their relevance for the church's understanding and treatment of divorce. The most important of these conclusions is that in the New Testament, the presumption against divorce, while very strong, is not absolute. We will study the

passages according to the generally accepted chronological order in which they were written.<sup>1</sup>

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## *1 Corinthians 7:10-16*

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As we will see, there are several difficulties in fully understanding these verses, but it is clear from the passage that Paul knew a saying of Jesus forbidding divorce. In spite of this, Paul also recognized that divorce might occur (although we do not know in what context) and admonished against remarriage (verse 11). In addition and more remarkably, Paul was willing to advise divorce in one situation—that of the unbelieving spouse who wished to separate.

Paul's advice concerning divorce appears within a longer discussion where Paul answers questions relating to sexuality and marriage. Apparently there were Christians in Corinth who went to opposite extremes. Some believed that in sexual matters all things were lawful (Paul refutes them in 1 Cor. 6:12-20), while others thought that even sexual relations in marriage were wrong (Paul refutes them in 7:1-7). The discussion on divorce follows Paul's refutation of the latter and may even be related

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to it; some may have felt that because sexual relations were wrong Christians should divorce.<sup>2</sup>

In 7:10–11 Paul argues that Christians should not divorce and bases his advice on a saying of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> According to Jesus a wife should not separate from her husband, and a husband should not divorce his wife. Paul adds a parenthesis between these two pieces of advice, however, which says that if the wife does separate from her husband, she should remain single.

In verse 12 Paul moves from divorce in general to a specific, difficult marital situation. What should a Christian do who is married to an unbeliever? Paul answers that such mixed marriages are legitimate and therefore the Christian should remain with the unbelieving spouse, unless the unbelieving spouse wishes to leave. In the latter case Paul makes an exception. (Notice that the exception is Paul's and is not a part of Jesus' saying.) God has called us to peace; therefore, the Christian should not force the reluctant, unbelieving spouse to continue the marriage.

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**“What is certain is that in these verses Paul makes an exception to the prohibition on divorce, and he does so on principle. God has called us to peace.”**

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Several problems emerge from the passage. First, why does Paul sometimes use the word “divorce” and sometimes use “separate”? Is he attempting to make a distinction? Probably not; the two terms appear to be synonymous and interchangeable.<sup>4</sup>

Second, what is the meaning of the “Pauline parenthesis” in verse 11? If the Lord said there should be no divorce, why does Paul seemingly allow for the possibility but then deny remarriage? A number of possibilities have been suggested:<sup>5</sup> Paul is simply recognizing the reality that divorces will occur; he is thinking of a specific case in

the church where separation may have already occurred; he wants to leave open the possibility of divorce for sexual ascetics who cannot conscientiously remain married (even though Paul opposes that position himself); or the parenthesis is a later interpolation. The first of two possibilities are best, but it is impossible to answer this question with certainty.

The third problem in understanding this passage involves the meaning of the two questions in verse 16. Is Paul speaking to the positive possibility of saving the unbelieving spouse, or is he arguing that one should not hold the reluctant spouse in the relationship by emphasizing that the Christian cannot be certain of winning him or her? In other words, is he saying, “Stay with the unbelieving spouse; you might convert him or her,” or is he saying, “Let the reluctant spouse go; how do you know you can convert him or her?” In a recent article Sakae Kubo has persuasively argued for the latter.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, does Paul allow remarriage for the Christian who has been divorced from an unbelieving spouse? Some point to verse 11 and believe that it is decisive for this situation as well. Thus no remarriage is permitted.<sup>7</sup> Others point to the words “is not bound” in verse 15 and argue that Paul allows for remarriage.<sup>8</sup> Paul is not explicit, and on this specific point no definite conclusion is possible.

What is certain is that in these verses Paul makes an exception to the prohibition on divorce, and he does so on the basis of principle. God has called us to peace. To compel an unbelieving spouse to continue in an undesired marriage violates this principle of peace.

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### *Mark 10:2–12*

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**W**e now move to the gospel material, which is, in many ways, more difficult because of the differences between parallel accounts in different gospels. Several things

are clear from the passage, however. Jesus upholds an ideal, based on creation, that there should be no divorce. In addition, as the passage stands in Mark, there is a definite advancement of the standing of women. A man who divorces his wife commits adultery *against her*. Finally, adultery is put at the point not of divorce but of remarriage.

Our analysis begins with Mark since it is generally assumed that it was written first. This passage provides the first explicit quotation of Jesus' teaching on divorce, although it follows Paul's reference to this teaching by more than a decade.

The Pharisees open the discussion with a question: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" Jesus responds by referring to Moses and pointing out that the certificate of divorce Moses allowed was given because of the hardness of their hearts; God's ideal is that there should be no divorce. At marriage two people are joined by God into a permanent unity. Jesus appeals to the creation as the foundation for this ideal.

Jesus then privately gives further advice to his disciples. A man who divorces a wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and a woman who divorces her husband and marries another commits adultery.

The chief interpretive difficulties here involve the comparison of this passage with the parallel account in Matthew. We shall reserve comment on most of these difficulties until we have surveyed the parallel.

There are several elements unique to Mark that have caused problems for some because they do not seem to reflect the milieu of Palestinian Judaism. The Pharisee's initial question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" seems somewhat strange since the debate among Pharisees was not over divorce as such, but over the grounds for divorce. The School of Shammai argued that divorce was only permissible in cases of adultery while the School of Hillel countered that a man could send his wife away for any reason, even if she burned his dinner.<sup>9</sup> As we shall see,

Matthew's account reflects this Pharisaical debate.

The words "against her"<sup>10</sup> are also not in keeping with usual Palestinian practice, where adultery was considered to be a sin against another man, whose property rights to his wife were violated by adultery.<sup>11</sup> Is Jesus redefining adultery or does the Markan passage reflect later influence?

A similar question emerges when Mark is the only gospel in which Jesus speaks of a woman divorcing her husband. This was common in the Gentile world but was forbidden in a Jewish context. Does this element go back to Jesus, or does it reflect Mark's Gentile milieu? Such questions are extremely difficult to answer with certainty. However, it is obvious that the passage hews closely to the prohibition against divorce, never acknowledging any exceptions. While the Pharisees speak of what is permitted and want to know about their rights, Jesus continually turns the discussion to God's will and his ideal for marriage.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, for Jesus marriage is so absolute that divorce does not necessarily end the marriage relationship. That relationship continues on so that remarriage is considered a violation of the marriage commitment.

### Matthew 19:3-9

This is clearly an account of the same incident recorded in the previous passage. Yet there are several striking differences. The most important of these are:

1. The initial question by the Pharisees has to do with the grounds for divorce rather than divorce itself. (The words "for any cause" are added.) This puts the discussion in the context of the Hillel-Shammai debate.
2. There is no mention of a woman divorcing her husband or of adultery being against the woman.
3. An exception, not present in Mark (or Paul), is found. A man who divorces his wife

except for infidelity and marries another commits adultery.

In each of these cases the Matthean version more closely reflects a Jewish milieu. Is this because he is closer to the original situation or because he is writing in a Jewish context and modifies his material to suit it? Debate on this topic is complex, technical, and vigorous.<sup>13</sup> At least for numbers one and two, it is probably impossible to say with certainty which is closer to the original.

In actual fact, if we believe that all the accounts are inspired presentations of God's will, determination of which is the closest to Jesus' actual words is unnecessary. But neither should we overlook the diversity among the accounts and engage in a simplistic harmonization. It appears that the gospel writers, under inspiration, have modified their material to communicate God's will to their particular audiences.

This seems to be the case where number three is concerned. There is good reason for believing that the so-called exception clause, "except for infidelity" is added by Matthew and does not reflect the original words of Jesus, since of the four writers who refer to Jesus' saying, only Matthew mentions this exception. Apparently Matthew, writing under inspiration, makes an exception to the general negation of divorce that is particularly appropriate to the more strongly Jewish context in which he writes;<sup>14</sup> just a quarter of a century earlier, Paul had made a different exception appropriate to a different social setting. In a sense, Matthew, with the words "except for infidelity," is adding a parenthesis within Jesus' remarks. He, of course, had no punctuation marks with which to make this clear to us.

But what is the exception Matthew makes? This question is complicated by the fact that although some of our English versions read, "except for adultery," Matthew does not use the regular Greek word for adultery. Instead he uses the word *porneia*, which is often translated "fornication" and is used with a variety of meanings. Usually it refers to any illicit sexual activity

in a very general sense. Unfortunately, Matthew uses the term elsewhere only in 15:19, where it is merely one of a list of vices, and there is no context to help us.

This use of *porneia* has led to a number of suggestions for the meaning of the exception clause. The most common view is that Matthew is referring to adultery.<sup>15</sup> But it is also seen as referring to premarital sexual relations,<sup>16</sup> or marriages that were not legal to begin with because kinship lines were too close and incest taboos had been violated.<sup>17</sup> Others, in one way or another, argue that Matthew is not really making an exception at all.<sup>18</sup> While adultery is the most probable interpretation, it must be admitted that the meaning of *porneia* in this context cannot be definitely determined.

What is clear from the Matthean passage is that Jesus is again seen as holding up the ideal, based on creation, that there should be no divorce. But Matthew, writing under inspiration, adds an exception that is probably his own.

### Matthew 5:31-32

Since this passage from the Sermon on the Mount is both brief and closely related to the one we have just studied, we will not need to devote much attention to it. Here Jesus says that a man who divorces his wife, except for *porneia*, makes her an adulteress and that a man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The chief difficulty is the phrase "makes her an adulteress." Some hold that this differs from the other gospel passages by putting adultery at the point of divorce rather than remarriage.<sup>19</sup> Others are probably correct in holding that Matthew is presuming that the divorced woman will either have to remarry or turn to prostitution, which in either case would be adultery.<sup>20</sup>

Here again the same exception appears with the same word, *porneia*. One new element is the teaching that a man who marries a divorced woman commits adul-

tery. As in other gospel passages, the marital union is seen as continuing beyond divorce.

### Luke 16:18

The final passage seems to be parallel to the previous one but with some variation.<sup>21</sup> It omits the reference to making the divorced wife an adulteress and states that a man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and that a man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. The former point has already been seen in Mark 10 and the latter in Matthew 5. Many view this as the most original form of Jesus' saying.

### Conclusions

Undoubtedly this brief survey of the New Testament material on divorce is complex and confusing. What does it all mean for our attitude toward divorce and our actions with regard to it? I tentatively set forth the following conclusions.

First, no "divorce policy" for the church can be attained from the New Testament material. Never does the New Testament explicitly connect divorce with church discipline. The New Testament writers did not intend to set down a church policy; rather they related Jesus' teachings to various situations that their communities faced. As a result there is some degree of diversity of detail among the New Testament writers, which makes harmonization into a single "biblical" policy impossible. In addition, the interpretive problems in these passages are too great to permit us to draw a detailed policy from them. There is simply too much that we don't know. For example, we cannot be absolutely certain whether Paul allows for remarriage after the divorce he permits, or precisely what *porneia* means in Matthew. If we were to have a precise biblical policy, we would certainly need to have definite answers to both of these

questions. This is not to say that the church should have no policy, nor is it to say that it cannot be informed by the New Testament. But when we formulate a policy we will have to accept responsibility for its content. We cannot simply call it *the* biblical policy.

Second, although the material does not provide us with a policy, it is useful for us. It not only sets forth some things that are quite clear, in spite of interpretive difficulties, but also gives us examples of inspired, moral reasoning in relationship to the divorce issue. Close attention to the material is therefore helpful in allowing us as individuals and as a church to reflect on this issue. We need not despair simply because there are difficult elements in the text. We can concentrate on what is clear. The recognition that we cannot draw clear-cut policies from the material does not render it irrelevant.

Third, the New Testament presents a consistent and clear presumption<sup>22</sup> against divorce. All of the New Testament writers agree that Jesus opposed divorce and that God's ideal is that there should be no divorce. God intends that marriage should be permanent. He himself joins husbands and wives together, and humans are called upon to preserve his work and not undo it. This is the basic core of Jesus' teaching on divorce. Divorce thwarts God's will and misses his ideal.

This is by far the most important conclusion of the New Testament material on divorce, and it flies in the face of much of our contemporary culture. In an age when "till death do us part" all too often means "as long as everything goes well," the New Testament challenges us with God's will from creation for the permanence of marriage. Every attempt on our part to look for grounds that we might use to justify divorce misses the point. The goal is no divorce. When we truly listen to the New Testament, we are responsible to do everything we can to reach that goal.

Fourth, in the New Testament, particularly in Paul and Matthew, there is a realization that in a less than ideal world

humans will not always meet God's ideal. In fact, at times this ideal may conflict with other values and ideals, such as the ideal that God has called us to peace. The New Testament expresses a gracious realism that attempts to relate God's will to actual circumstances that are sometimes less than ideal. This is most apparent in Paul.

Paul's exception in the case of mixed marriages is based on a principle—God has called us to peace. This would seem to imply that Paul believes that other values, in addition to God's ideal for the permanence of marriage, are important and must, in at least some cases, be considered. As Furnish says of Paul:

He would appear to be unwilling to sanction the idea that marriage is an end in and of itself that must be maintained at any cost. Here Paul shows a sensitivity to the *quality* of a marriage relationship, for which he is seldom given credit.<sup>23</sup>

Thus Paul presents us with an inspired example of principled, moral reasoning in relationship to a specific marital situation. Rather than legalistically making Paul's (or Matthew's, for that matter) specific exception the only possible exception, it would seem more in keeping with the spirit of the New Testament material to engage in the same type of moral reasoning with regard to specific cases, asking, for example, what would be most in keeping with God's ideal for marriage and his call to peace, and recognizing that the strong presumption against divorce would make any exception bear a very strong burden of proof.

Fifth, although no policy can claim to be the biblical policy, certain requirements would seem necessary for any church to be able to claim that its decisions concerning divorce were consistent with the New Testament. What would such a policy need to do?

It would affirm and give witness to God's ideal that marriages are to be permanent. Anything less would dilute the clear and consistent teaching of the New Testament.

It would also attempt to mediate God's redemptive grace and healing in those situations where this ideal is not met. This would include the same gracious realism found in the New Testament.

It would be sufficiently flexible to allow for principled moral reasoning, such as we find in Paul, to be applied to specific cases. All too often, in an attempt to be consistent, the Matthean exception has been absolutized into a hard-and-fast law, with little if any reference to the Pauline approach. While this may satisfy our need to have cut-and-dried answers for every situation, it loses the richness of the New Testament's moral thinking.

These criteria do not establish a policy, but they do aid in evaluating any policy's consistency with the New Testament.

Finally, the affirmation of God's ideal for marriages must be seen not only in the church's divorce policy but in its total ministry. Even more important than how we treat cases of divorce and remarriage is what we do to promote good marriages and help troubled ones. More than once I have heard it said that it would be better if ministers did not know how to counsel, since they should spend their time in evangelism and not with people having marital difficulties. While we recognize the importance of evangelism, if Adventist churches are to affirm God's ideal for marriage, they must recognize that their evangelistic mission includes helping to establish and support good marriages. Only as we take this task more seriously will we reduce the tragic dilemmas that we so often face and move closer toward God's ideal.

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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. This paper can in no way be exhaustive or thorough. Entire books have been written on di-

vorice and the New Testament. These include Myrna and Robert Kysar, *The Asundered: Biblical Teachings on*

*Divorce and Remarriage* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978), and Donald W. Shaner, *A Christian View of Divorce According to the Teachings of the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1969).

2. Thus Victor Paul Furnish, *The Moral Teachings of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), p. 42, emphasizes that the subject of I Cor. 7 is not divorce but sex, and that Paul is not advising people whose marriages are in danger of falling apart, but those who wonder if marriage is a legitimate status for the Christian.

3. It is generally agreed that when Paul distinguishes between what he says and the command of the Lord, the latter refers to a specific saying of Jesus during his earthly ministry.

4. See Kysar, p. 67

5. For an elaboration of these possibilities see Furnish, pp. 41–46. Support for the view that Paul has a specific case in mind is given by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, O.P., "The Divorced Woman in 1 Cor, 7:10–11," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100(1981):601–606.

6. Sakae Kubo, "1 Cor. 7:16: Optimistic or Pessimistic?" *New Testament Studies* 24:539–544. Kubo bases his argument on context, showing that the structure of the passage is as follows: verses 12 and 13 give instruction to those who wish to break with their unbelieving spouses, while verse 14 shows why they should stay (such marriages are legitimate); verse 15ab gives instructions to those whose partners wish to leave, and verses 15c–16 give reasons why the Christian should let the unbelieving spouse go (God has called us to peace and one cannot be sure of converting the spouse).

7. See David Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 97–98. Kysar, pp. 74–79, holds that Paul did not allow remarriage, but probably would have had he realized that the parousia was not imminent.

8. See William Orr and James Arthur Walther, *I Corinthians*, "Anchor Bible" (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), p. 214, and Hans Conzelmann, *I Corinthians: A Commentary*, trans. James W. Leitch, ed. George W. MacRae, "Hermeneia" (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), p. 123.

9. *Mishnah*, "Gittin" 9:10. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, S.J., "The Matthean Divorce Texts and Some New Palestinian Evidence," in *To Advance the Gospel: New Testament Studies* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), pp. 79–111, argues that Qumran evidence shows that the Essenes prohibited all divorce and that this provides a believable Palestinian background for the originality of the Pharisees question as recorded in Mark.

10. Although there is minor manuscript support for omitting "against her," the words are certainly part of Mark's original text.

11. Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), p. 120, finds this so curious that he calls the saying a "parable" that is not talking about divorce at all, since it makes no sense at all as it is. He points out that already in Old Testament times adultery had been used as a metaphor for idolatry. But it also seems possible that Jesus is creating new definitions to communicate a new and radical message.

12. See Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, trans. Donald Madvig (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976), p. 203.

13. There are at least four positions: (1) Mark presents that more original account throughout, (2) Mark's account is primary, but Matthew preserves some elements that are more original, (3) Matthew's account is most original throughout and gives evidence for the chronological priority of the gospel of Matthew, and (4) Both accounts have been so heavily edited that it is impossible to tell what the original looked like. Most Commentators reflect either (1) or (2). For (3) see Dungan, pp. 102–113, and for (4) see Bruce Vawter, C.M., "Divorce and the New Testament," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 39(1977): 528–542, p. 532.

14. Although the traditional view that Matthew was written for Jewish Christians is now questioned by some, there can be no doubt that there is some kind of "Jewish connection" in this gospel that is closer than in the other synoptics. Jewish practice demanded divorce in cases of adultery and certain other sexual irregularities.

15. See, for example, Kysar, pp. 48–49, and W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew*, "Anchor Bible" (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), p. 65.

16. See M. Geldard, "Jesus' Teaching on Divorce: Thoughts on the Meaning of *Porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9," *Churchman* 92(1978): 134–143.

17. See Fitzmeyer, *passim*, especially pp. 94–97.

18. See Vawter, pp. 531, 535, and Dungan, p. 113f.

19. Kysar, p. 50.

20. Albright and Mann, p. 65.

21. Thus Luke 16:18 and Matthew 5:31–32 are quite possibly drawn from the hypothetical teachings source labeled Q. Here again opinion is divided as to which gospel preserves the Q saying most accurately.

22. I use the term "presumption" in the sense that it is set forth by James F. Childress, "Scripture and Christian Ethics: Some Reflections on the Role of Scripture in Moral Deliberation and Justification," *Interpretation* 34(1980):371–380.

23. Furnish, p. 45.

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# Income Sharing: A Plan for Economic Justice in the Local Church

by Joe Mesar

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**T**he Adventist Church is a very prosperous institution. We support schools and hospitals that boast the most modern facilities available. As of 1980, the church's assets came to \$4.4 billion. In 1981 total church income was over \$670 million. Yet, in the midst of this denominational affluence, more members than we realize live on the margin of survival, without money to heat their homes or feed their children. Although the church is not a poor institution, many of its members are.

The persistence of poverty in the church is a policy issue for the worldwide church. But a local congregation must daily face the intensity of the need first hand—in the eyes of its parishioners. At the local church level the paradox of poverty amid comfort becomes an acute pastoral concern. And because the local church is the place where theological principles intersect with prac-

tical realities, it has a unique opportunity to fashion a solution.

## *The Plan*

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**O**ne such response is for local congregations to adopt an income sharing plan. According to this proposal, each year the local church board would allocate an amount in its budget to an income sharing fund. That fund would be administered by a church committee, composed primarily of members in the lower income brackets. The committee's responsibilities would start with identification of potential recipients, and clarification of their financial needs and resources. After conversations with potential recipients, the committee would establish some general criteria to determine who qualified for assistance.

The committee would then authorize the church treasurer to pay a specified amount per month to those eligible for this subsidy. So long as its total budget was not exceeded, the committee could approve cash grants to members as needed. In some cases the committee might decide that instead of pro-

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viding a general income supplement, it would give members money for a specific purpose, such as school tuition or fuel assistance. Or, instead of money, a family's need might best be met by a particular service. For example, doctors and nurses in the congregation could provide free or low cost medical services.<sup>1</sup>

The centerpiece of the plan, however, consists of direct cash payments. This method is emphasized for three reasons. First, it is relatively easy to administer. Second, it allows the individual recipient the greatest freedom of decision and hence, encourages personal responsibility and dignity. It assumes that the person who receives the money knows what his or her needs are and is quite capable of satisfying them given adequate resources. Finally, regular cash payments are systematic, indicating that the church's concern for the poor is strong and continuing, not casual or sporadic.

Like every spending program, the income sharing plan is linked to a program of cash collection, or, in this case, a new call for faithful giving. In order to increase its revenues and to fairly apportion the responsibility for its budget, the church officers would recommend a system of progressive tithing. While everyone (including those receiving financial assistance) would be expected to return the basic 10 percent tithe of income to the church, giving for local church programs would be set according to the individual's ability to pay. Members would be asked to contribute offerings on the basis of a percentage of their income. The percentage requested would rise with the amount of the person's salary. People with little income—the families being assisted, for example—would not be asked for any money for the local church budget. Other individuals or families would, depending on their relative financial position, give two percent to five percent of their income for church expense. The wealthiest individuals in the church might be requested to donate a double or triple tithe.

## *Reasons for the Plan*

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This plan is based on a simple yet far-reaching premise—the church has a duty to care for the poor and dispossessed in its ranks. It is intended to achieve three goals: income maintenance, income redistribution, and the strengthening of community. Income maintenance means that the church would try to insure that members of the congregation would not fall below a minimum standard of living needed for a simple, safe, and healthy way of life. In the past, the church has tried to provide for the poor in its midst through the Dorcas Society, disaster relief programs, or emergency grants from a "Poor Fund." This plan is designed to reorganize and expand these efforts.

Yet it also implies a change in the way we look at poverty. The church has always been generous when its members (and others) have been faced with a crisis situation clearly beyond their control—a fire, or flood, or the death of the family breadwinner. The proposed plan would supplement individual incomes which are inadequate because of other, more subtle circumstances that are also not of the person's own making—long-term unemployment, race discrimination, language barriers, second-rate education, and so on. These institutional reasons for poverty cannot be pinpointed as precisely as a natural calamity. They are not as dramatic as a fire, but they are real and debilitating nonetheless. The fund would be used to help victims of poverty without regard to the source of their misery.

Not only the premise but the goals of income redistribution are important. First, our concern should be with justice, not simply charity. In our church, as in most denominations, wealth exists side by side with poverty. This unequal distribution of money and goods among church members is not based on scripture. It reflects the values of the world around us, the price that the marketplace puts on different abilities. If we

voluntarily share our resources, we affirm the biblical ideal of economic equality. We reject the practice of the world, where prosperity and material comfort are generally bought at the expense of another's pain.

Whether we recognize it or not, the church is an economic unit. It collects money and spends it on various services. By simply conducting its normal business, it redistributes income in a limited unself-conscious way. Traditionally, the Adventist Church has collected money and redistributed it to train and pay professionals: doctors, nurses, ministers, and teachers. Under the proposed plan of income sharing, the church would be a conduit for redistributing money from this group of business and professional people to poor members.

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**“To fairly apportion the responsibility for its budget, the church officers would recommend a system of progressive tithing . . . giving for local programs would be set according to the individual's ability to pay.”**

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Secondly, income redistribution is a necessary component of this plan, not simply because large disparities in wealth have a negative effect on the poor but because gross inequality of resources can have a negative impact on the well-to-do and the prosperous. Put bluntly, we simply do not need all of the goods that even a middle-class American family income can buy. When we acquire more things than we need, we place ourselves on dangerous spiritual ground. As one of the critics of income sharing has observed, there is no inherent virtue in poverty. On the other hand, there is biblical support for the view that unnecessary accumulation of wealth is a vice. The plan's element of income redistribution is an

attempt, however flawed, to address these issues in a serious way.

The third goal of this plan is to strengthen community and fellowship within the church. In our society individuals with even modest amounts of money tend to isolate themselves from the poor. We live in homogeneous neighborhoods, spend our leisure time with people of similar tastes and background, even worship in places that are removed from scenes of want and suffering. This insulation from the problems of poverty causes misunderstanding and suspicion. Even more disturbing, our isolation is a way of protecting our consciences from the claims of our brothers and sisters. It is a defense mechanism that hinders us from doing something about injustice and poverty simply because it is so far removed from our daily lives.

Anthony Campolo illustrates this point with a story. While visiting Haiti, he was dining out with friends at one of the more exclusive restaurants in Port-au-Prince. After being seated, he turned to the window and noticed a group of Haitian children standing outside. Their stomachs were bloated, their ribs exposed from hunger. This spectacle disturbed Campolo and his friends as they began to order from the rich and varied menu placed in front of them. Their waiter, noting their consternation, quickly lowered the Venetian blinds, obscuring the diners' view of the children outside in the street. Seeking to relieve their discomfort, the waiter said gently, “Don't pay attention to those children. Enjoy your dinner.”

**T**he splendid diversity of the Adventist Church gives us a rare opportunity to develop a loving community that both respects and transcends age, race, nationality, social background, and economics. We can prevent cultural and financial difference from becoming barriers if we demonstrate our concern for one another outside of our normal network of friends and associates.

The income-sharing plan obviously requires a vastly increased level of trust and sensitivity among church members. Both rich and poor would of necessity be disclosing detailed information about their finances and their personal lives. Through this process, understanding of the problems of others could grow, and close healthy relationships could flourish across class and cultural lines, thereby contributing to the church's unity and enhancing the power of its witness.

Moreover, if some members have their financial worries abated, they may be able to contribute more of their energy and skills to the church. Their influence in community decisions may increase as their self-confidence grows and as the majority of the congregation becomes attuned to their concerns. A program of income maintenance and redistribution is not simply an end in itself. Rather the plan is founded on the idea that a policy of fairness and justice in handling our finances is an essential element of a healthy spiritual community.

The goals of this plan for sharing income in the local church may seem to embody strange new ideas. As we look around us, the proposal does not resemble the way most congregations handle their money. At first glance, the plan reminds us of government welfare programs, not a new method for organizing the church budget. It deals with issues that are usually felt to be outside the church's concern and competence. But, despite its outward appearance, the authority for this proposal is religious, not secular. The primary motivation is moral, not political or economic. The income-sharing plan is an attempt, however clumsy and imperfect, to put into practice one of the central themes of the Bible—the ideal of justice within the community of faith.

The Bible, of course, is not an economics textbook. It does not dwell on the details of supply and demand or how to cure unemployment or inflation. The biblical writers, however, repeatedly emphasize that both our personal and corporate use of

money is a spiritual matter. They outline principles to guide our economic decision-making, making it clear that our attitudes toward wealth and poverty should be an integral element of our faith. The call to justice is not an incidental or peripheral concern of Scripture. Rather it permeates the text from start to finish, from the law of Moses to the prophets, the life and teachings of Jesus, and the practice of the early church.

### *The Sabbatical Sanction*

The most detailed instructions on how to treat the poor are found in the Mosaic law—particularly the provisions establishing the Sabbath Year and the Jubilee. The Sabbath Year had three major elements. First the land was to lie fallow during this year. After six years of planting and harvest, the soil was not ploughed in the seventh year; the crops that grew naturally without cultivation were to be made available for the poor of the community (Exodus 23:11). Although this practice also helped restore the fertility of the land, emphasis was placed on the rest provided for the farmer, as in the weekly Sabbath, and the benefits bestowed on the poor.

The second feature of the Sabbath Year was the cancellation of all debts (Deuteronomy 15:2). The law revealed concern that long-term debts would widen the gap between rich and poor and make these divisions permanent. "There will never by any poor among you if only you obey the Lord your God by carefully keeping these commandments which I lay upon you this day." (Deuteronomy 15:4, NEB). In addition, the text goes on to warn those who would try to find loopholes in the law. The lender was to be told that he would be guilty of sin if he refused requests for money simply because these debts would be canceled in a year or two, when the Sabbath Year arrived (Deuteronomy 15:9).

Thirdly, all Hebrew slaves were to be freed in the seventh year (Deuteronomy 15:12). Actually, the Israelites were prohibited from taking their countrymen as slaves (Leviticus 25:46). But this injunction was often ignored, so the Sabbath Year placed limits on the term of slavery.

Slavery in the Old Testament was often the result of economic exploitation. A debtor might be required to offer himself or his children as security for a loan. In the event the debtor defaulted on the loan, he or his children would become slaves to pay off the debt.<sup>2</sup> The debtor served his master until the loan agreement was fulfilled or until he was redeemed by a family member who paid the obligation. However, this could take a long time, particularly if the lender charged interest (typically one-third to one-half the principal).

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**“The splendid diversity of the Adventist Church gives us a rare opportunity to develop a loving community that both respects and transcends age, race, nationality, social background, and economics.”**

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The Year of Jubilee stated an even more radical idea. The provisions of the Year of Jubilee built on the structure of the Sabbath Year. It was in effect to be a Sabbath of Sabbaths. Every 50 years, land was to return to its original owners without compensation.

The Jubilee was announced by the blowing of the trumpet on the day of atonement (Leviticus 25:9). Thus, as the sins of the people were forgiven by God, they in turn were to commit themselves to his regime of justice on earth. Reconciliation with God was to lead to a transformation of human, social and economic relationships. Since land was the main source of income in the Hebrews' agricultural economy, the Jubilee

was intended to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor.

The religious principle behind the Jubilee was simple. God is the true owner of the land. He had divided it among his people, much as a feudal king might make grants of property to his subjects (Joshua 24:13). But the families and tribes of Israel were only his stewards. They could not sell land permanently against his will. “The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me” (Leviticus 25:23). Like the Sabbath Year, the Year of Jubilee repeated the proclamation of freedom to the slaves that issued in the seventh year. “And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Leviticus 25:10).

Many scholars do not believe that the Jubilee was ever practiced. There is little direct reference to it elsewhere in the Old Testament. However, it sets forth an ideal that Israel was to strive for—the goal of a rough economic equality among her citizens. This ideal of equality was embodied in Hebrew law and custom. Each individual had an emotional and cultural attachment to his ancestral property that is difficult for us to comprehend in the 20th century. However, hard times often forced a man to sell his property. Even in this case, his closest kinsman had the first right to buy the land in order to keep it in the clan. Unfortunately, kinsmen were not always willing or able to act as redeemers of the land, and large estates were created with the former owners often working as servants on their own family portion (Leviticus 25:39–42, Deuteronomy 24:14).

The Year of Jubilee refused to recognize these large estates as inevitable or permanent. A purchaser of land was to realize

that he was not obtaining the property in perpetuity but was actually buying the harvests between the time of sale and the Jubilee. His payment to the owner varied, depending on how many years remained before the reversion in the 50th year.

Under the Sabbath Year and the Jubilee the cancellation of debts and the redistribution of property were to occur regularly and automatically. They applied to the rich regardless of how their wealth was obtained or how beneficially it was being used. Likewise the poor had a right to have their debts erased and their land returned. They were not left dependent on the occasional good will or the wealthy for their basic needs. Rather, God provided a plan to ensure that equality was served.

### *The Prophetic Witness*

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The Israelites, being sinful human beings, departed from God's ideal. By the eighth century, just before the 10 tribes were taken into captivity, the houses of the rich were large and elegant, while the poor were huddled together in one quarter of the cities. The plight of the poor was steadily worsening, so God sent the prophets to denounce injustice in Israel.

The central message of Amos was that Israel had broken its covenant with the Lord. The people, on the other hand, felt they were being faithful to their agreement with God if they meticulously followed the ritual of the sanctuary service. Amos replied that ritual without an ethical life was empty. "I hate, I despise your feast days (saith the Lord), and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them . . . But let judgment run down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:21-24).

Eventually greed even overcame the concern for proper worship. Amos pictured the

merchants waiting impatiently for the end of the Sabbath in order to resume their exploitation of the poor, to "buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes?" (Amos 8:4-6).

In a particularly graphic passage, Isaiah pictures God's anger at the wealthy who live in abundance while the poor suffer. "The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of His people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor?" (Isaiah 3:14,15). This message is echoed in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Micah.

These Old Testament verses demonstrate that God is concerned with economic justice among his people. Of course, his principles were not always followed. But Israel's disobedience did not weaken God's demands. Nor does the Bible indicate that these principles were limited to a particular time and culture.

### *Jesus and the Practice of the Early Church*

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In fact, Jesus specifically endorsed the practice of the Jubilee. At Nazareth, Jesus echoed the words of Isaiah in announcing the platform of his coming kingdom. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18,19). Through the years Christians have spiritualized this text, claiming that freeing the captives refers to captives of sin. While this may be a legitimate gloss to add to the verse, it is most probable that Jesus intended his sermon to be taken liter-

ally. After all, Isaiah's message, with which the Jews were quite familiar, concerned real poor people. A number of scholars feel that the phrase "the year of the Lord" is a direct allusion to the Jubilee.<sup>3</sup> Certainly the idea of delivering slaves from bondage states one of the elements of the 50th year celebration. Thus, at the outset of his public ministry, Jesus based his claim of messiahship on his fulfillment of the Old Testament vision of social justice.

Jesus strengthened the force of the requirements of the Sabbath and Jubilee. His ethic was to do the maximum, not the minimum, required by the law, even the law of Jubilee. He instructed creditors to lend their money, even though they had little hope of repayment. Likewise he told debtors to pay their obligations before they were due in order to avoid controversy with their brethren (Matthew 5:25,26). Do the right thing, he advised, even if it brings no advantage to you.

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**“Jesus described conversion as a commitment to join an ethical community. That, at least, means a changed attitude toward wealth.”**

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Jesus taught that excessive wealth was dangerous to the believer. Riches were an impediment to spiritual devotion. Selfish acquisition of goods also conflicted with genuine service to the poor and the outcast. “Ye can not serve both God and mammon,” Jesus remarked (Matthew 6:24). Mammon does not mean the devil. Rather it is an Aramaic word for wealth and property. The chief enemy to true discipleship is the love of wealth. We must choose between Christ's kingdom and the values of this world.

Jesus described conversion as a commitment to join an ethical community. That, at

least, means a changed attitude toward wealth. John the Baptist accurately pre-figured Christ's position on this subject. As he baptized, the people asked him what they should do as part of their new life. John answered, “he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise” (Luke 3:11). What, then, should we do with our resources if we would be Jesus' disciples? We must follow the instructions he gave to the rich young ruler. “Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me” (Luke 18:22).

Christ and his disciples practiced economic sharing out of a common fund (John 13:29). So it was only natural for the early church to adopt this pattern as well. They sold land, homes, and other possessions to care for the poor in their fellowship (Acts 4:32,34,35). The early Christians made these sacrifices naturally and joyfully. Their generosity of giving was combined with a sensitivity toward the recipients of the common funds. In Acts 6, the Greek widows in Jerusalem felt they were not being treated fairly in the distribution overseen by the Jewish Christians. They complained to the apostles. It was agreed that deacons would be appointed to care for their problems. But the interesting thing is that all these men were Greek! In short, the church turned over its common purse to members of the group who were being unjustly treated.

Paul expanded this concept of sharing within one congregation to include sharing among churches. The church at Antioch sent relief to Jerusalem according to their ability (Acts 11:29). During his missionary journeys, the poor were continually on his mind (Galatians 2:9,10). He often volunteered to personally accompany the collection even in the face of great personal danger (1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Financial contributions were

just part of a wider fellowship among the churches, tying Jew and Gentile together in mutual dependency (Romans 15:26).

Paul envisioned a simple principle of distribution-equality. "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened. But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality" (II Corinthians 8:13,14).

We can briefly summarize the principles of the Bible on the issue of economic justice. First, we are not to defraud or exploit the poor in our business dealings. Second, there is a positive duty to assist the poor particularly those within the church. The needy have a right to such assistance. They should not be left to depend on the random generosity of their fellow believers. The Bible also urges the wealthy to limit their private consumption. Scripture warns that the possession of a lot of money or property can lead to self-sufficiency and pride and ulti-

mately to the erosion of one's spiritual experience. Excessive wealth also denies the poor the basic resources to which they are entitled. It subverts the ideal of justice and the biblical preference for equality.

The Bible is clear that the inequality of wealth is a spiritual matter. Christians can not be silent on this question. Our lives—and our common life together—must point one way or another. The Bible offers guidelines and directions—the Year of Jubilee and the communal sharing of the early church. We need not apply these solutions legalistically. But we do need to use biblical principles to devise our own solution.

If the Adventist Church became a strong and just and compassionate community, the power of our witness to the world could be dramatically increased. But even if no one notices, we cannot avoid responsibility. The goal is faithfulness, not effectiveness; obedience, not popularity.

It is time for us to join Jesus and the prophets.

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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. This plan for sharing income among church members was presented some years ago to the Boston SDA Temple congregation. A number of the plan's features were adopted by the church and put into practice.

2. Second Kings 4:1-7 tells the story of a widow whose children were to be taken as bondsmen because she could not pay her creditors. They were spared only because the prophet Elisha worked a miracle on her behalf. Nehemiah paints a similar picture during the period after the exile (Nehemiah 5:1-5).

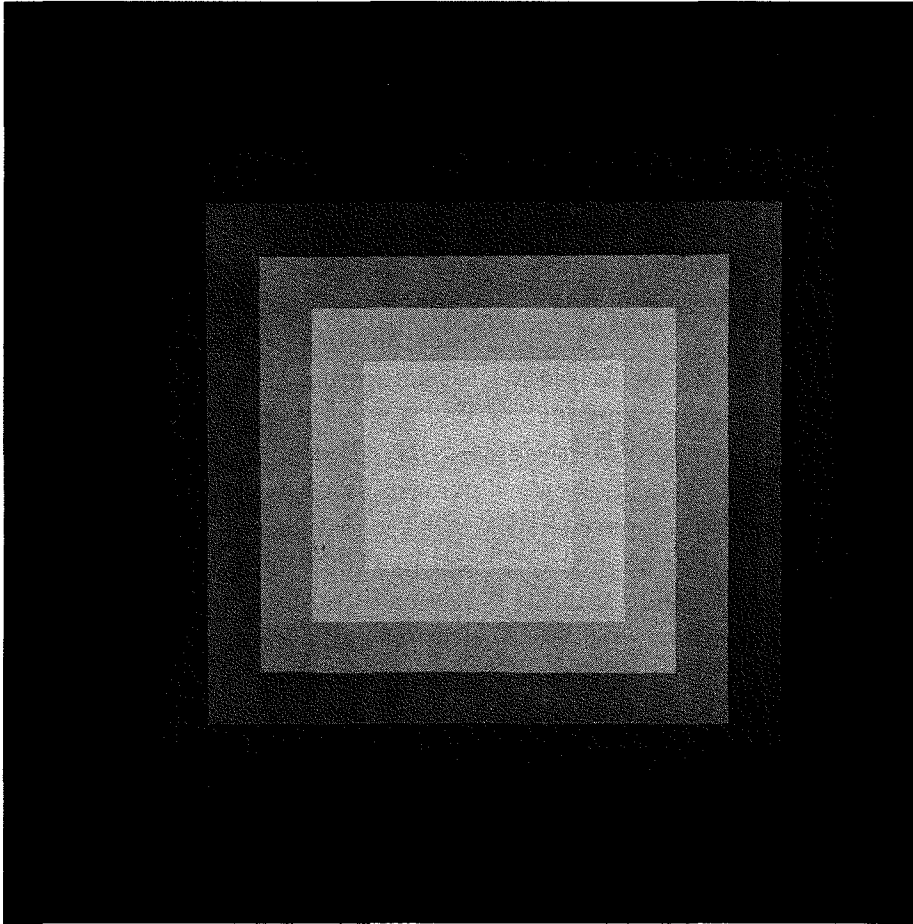
3. This view is most effectively advocated by:

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## Subtlety in Space

The Art of Charles Zuill

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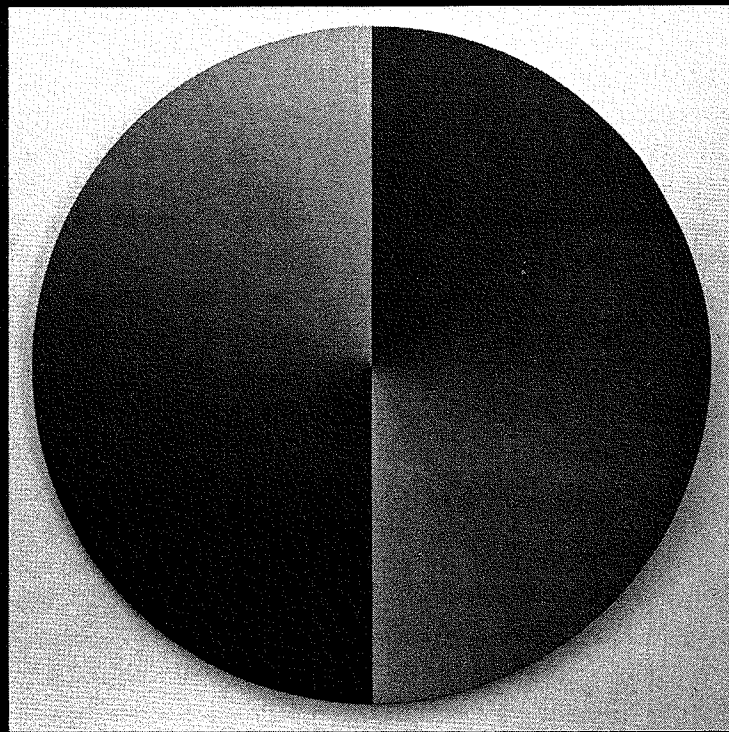
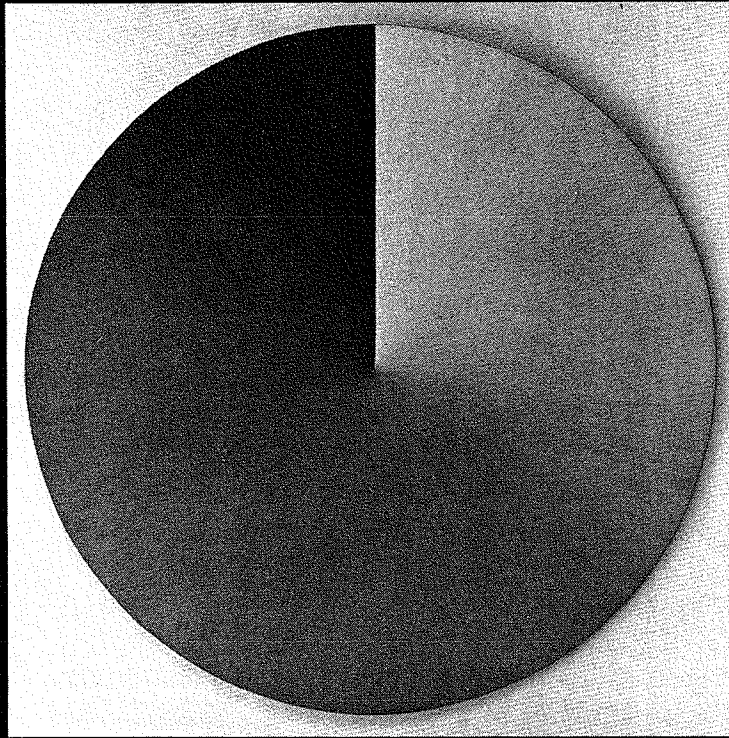
Charles Zuill's art falls within a contemporary movement that has often been called minimalism. Like other artists with this style, Zuill aims for clarity and lucidity. He does not provide the spectator with symbols, but form itself. He uses simple geometric shapes and subtle gradations of black and white. By emptying space, Zuill encourages the spectator to lose himself in the contemplation of simplicity. He invites us all to explore the space beyond the obvious.

Zuill, chairman of the art department at Southern College, received a bachelors degree from Atlantic Union College and master of fine arts from the Rochester Institute of Technology. He has exhibited his works in various galleries and museums.

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Commentary by Jorgen Henriksen, a painter, and faculty member at the Massachusetts College of Art.





# Disciplining the Davenport Offenders

by Bonnie Dwyer

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Of the 80 denominational officers slated for discipline in the aftermath of Donald J. Davenport's 1981 bankruptcy, most had been disciplined by May 1983. But only 17 of the officials had been disciplined publicly. Three former church officials were told that they could never again hold denominational jobs; three current church officers were informed they could not stay in their posts and must be reassigned. Eleven other denominational leaders were publicly reprimanded: a General Conference trust officer, three union conference presidents, three union trust officers, a union treasurer and secretary, and four local conference officers. Ten people were shielded from reprimands in public meeting because they had retired. Forty-six of the 80 officials disciplined received only private letters of administrative disapproval and disappointment, the mildest level of reprimand (level 1, see box on p. 34).

Actually, the disciplinary process may affect church organization as much as it did the individuals being disciplined. At most conference and union committee sessions called to administer discipline, members expressed willingness to forgive the officers

involved. But during the spring of 1983, individuals, committees, and constituencies have been recommending changes in the structure of the denomination in North America. Perhaps the fact that three of the eight current union conference presidents were disciplined (as well as other union officers) drew particular attention to the role of the union conferences.

On March 30, nine of the 15 members of the President's Review Commission met with Neal Wilson, president of the General Conference, Charles Bradford, vice president of the General Conference for North America, and other General Conference officials. Members of the commission seriously considered resigning after the General Conference refused its recommendation to reveal the names of the most serious Davenport offenders. But in the end the commissioners agreed to complete their work if certain conditions were met. First, the scope of their investigation should be expanded to include the structure of the church and its means of communication. Second, the duration of the commission's life must be extended. Third, the commission should be able to consult lay experts in the areas they would be studying. Fourth, the report produced by the commission would be made available to the church members.

In April, the Michigan, Southeastern California and Upper Columbia conferences discussed the possibility of eliminating the union conferences. On May 5, the North Pacific Union Executive Committee met with several lay invitees and created a Governance and Management Study Commission to examine not only the North Pacific Union constitution, but the question of whether unions are needed at all.

Some of the impetus for studying structural changes in the church in North America has grown out of frustration with the inadequacy of the process for disciplining officials involved with Davenport. What follows is a report of public disciplinary proceedings that took place through May 1983. The accounting begins with the actions of the highest level of church structure, the General Conference, continues through three union conference committee meetings, then recounts the actions of two local conferences.

### *General Conference*

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To prevent anyone from suggesting that the General Conference did not practice what it preached to unions and conference, the General Conference Committee was the first entity to discipline an officer. February 24, the General Conference Committee discussed the actions of General Conference director of trust services, Alva Appel, who while trust director in the Columbia Union had helped arrange 27 transactions with Davenport from 1967 until 1974. During that time only one title search had been conducted on Davenport property. Appel had not personally loaned money to Davenport, so was not charged with conflict of interest, but he was reprimanded for lack of fiduciary responsibility (level II). After presentation of the factual material, the General Conference Committee approved the recommended discipline and an account

of the action duly recorded in the official minutes of the day.

### *Columbia Union*

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The first union executive committee to meet for a disciplinary session was that of the Columbia Union on March 13. General Conference representatives recommended that President W. O. Coe and Trust Director Harvey Sauder be reprimanded. The charges against Coe were for dereliction of fiduciary responsibility during the time he served as president of the Florida Conference (1965–73), the Northern Union (1973–75), and the Central Union (1975–78). Coe had also invested \$10,000 of his personal funds with Davenport, but only for a few months.

While Coe was president of the Florida Conference five loans were made to Davenport, which were “out of policy,” because no title searches were made on properties securing the loans. In the Northern Union, loans started prior to Coe’s arrival. The treasurer made arrangements orally with Davenport. There was no record of committee approval authorizing the loans. When Coe moved to the Central Union as president, he was reported to have told the conference association officers that he supported the Davenport loan program because of its good track record in Florida. The Central Union then invested \$190,000 with Davenport.

Sauder invested personally with Davenport for many years—even while he was in the mission field—but said that he had not invested any association or conference money. However, he had written a letter to Davenport suggesting that he wanted to involve the Columbia Union in the Davenport program when he assumed his responsibilities there. But no new loans were made after Sauder’s arrival.

Columbia Union Treasurer Donald J. Russell said the union executive committee

really did not want to take any action at all. "We felt that the worst Elder Coe was guilty of was relying on subordinates. It was easy to understand why it had happened. He had not received any kickbacks or special treatment."

Neal Wilson reported to the union committee that in personal interviews Coe had indicated he only wanted a place in God's work. "My belief is that Coe's statement was the mark of a big man." General Conference officers reported the level of discipline first recommended for Coe by the President's Review Commission—a transfer of job responsibilities (level III)—was too harsh. Therefore, the General Conference had lowered Coe's discipline to level II, a public reprimand. Finally, Charles Bradford told the committee that the church disciplines were to be corrective, not punitive. While not wishing the disciplinary process to appear vindictive, Bradford emphasized that, "The community must say how it feels."

In response, the union committee noted that to the extent that Coe and Sauder had violated policies governing trust investments, they must accept the admonishment voted for them by the General Conference. But the union committee also adopted actions chastising the General Conference, and in effect, giving Coe and Sauder a vote of confidence for their performance in the Columbia Union:

VOTED that the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee acknowledges receipt of the recommendation by the President's Review Commission, relating to the imposition of sanctions on employees of this union for actions that occurred

during prior periods of employment with other denominational organizations.

THAT this committee is aware of the concern of the members of our church with respect to this issue and of the need to restore credibility in our leaders, as it relates to the Davenport matter. We are also aware of the importance of prudent and responsible financial leadership, and believe all management actions in this regard must be in harmony with properly established fiscal policies of the responsible supervisory entities of the church, including the local conferences, unions, divisions, and general conference. It is essential in this regard, however, that higher authorities who question, or do not approve of, actions by organizational entities under this jurisdiction give prompt notice of such disapproval in order that appropriate remedial action be taken. . . .

THAT finally, this committee wishes to convey to W. O. Coe and to all of the SDA church members in the Columbia Union, its belief that the actions of our president, while in his current position, have been consistent with the trust and high responsibility that were conveyed upon him when he was elected to such office. We also wish to assure him of our full support as we proceed to carry out the mission that has been assigned to us by our maker.

### Mid-America Union

One day after the Columbia Union Executive Committee acted, Neal Wilson and Charles Bradford led a General Conference delegation that met March 14 with the Mid-America Union Executive Committee. The committee had been expanded to include an additional 11 lay people and three denominational workers. In an extensive statement, Neal Wilson explained why the General Conference Committee, concurring with the President's Review Commission, was recommending that Ellsworth Reile, the president of the

### *Levels of Discipline*

**Level I.** A private letter of administrative disapproval, caution, and disappointment.

**Level II.** A private letter recommending administrative reprimand for dereliction of fiduciary responsibility. The employing organizations will be requested to review the performance of the administrator at a regularly called meeting of the administrator's controlling committee or board and to administer official discipline.

**Level III.** A private letter recommending administrative reprimand for dereliction of fiduciary responsibility and a transfer of

reassignment to some other type of work. The employing organization will be requested to review the performance of the administrator openly at a duly called meeting of the administrator's controlling committee or board to administer discipline and to take the necessary official actions.

**Level IV.** Permanent termination from denominational employment and withdrawal by the controllings committees of ministerial credentials.

—adapted from the *Adventist Review*, March 24, 1983, page 8.

union, be removed from his post and transferred to another denominational position (level III).

According to a letter from Wilson to Reile, the problem was Reile's actions while president of the Carolina and Kentucky conferences from 1969-78. Reile and his local conference committee failed to safeguard denominational assets, repeatedly violating the investment policy of the North American Division. Reile's case was complicated by his conflict of interest as a result of his personal involvement with Davenport through loans, partnerships, and letters of patronage, all of which proved to be an embarrassment to the church. Reile had written letters on behalf of Davenport that had proven to be a hazard to the church defending itself against certain charges. Further, Wilson said without elaborating, one of Reile's letters misrepresented the precise facts.

More than six hours of discussion followed. Supporters of Reile discussed distinctions between actual and potential conflict of interest. They stressed that none of the conferences in the Mid-America Union had suffered losses because of Reile's personal investments with Davenport. Darrell Huenergardt, the legal counsel for the union and a member of the executive committee, described the proceedings as being very open. Others present at the meeting concurred that committee members had consistently conducted themselves with Christian consideration.

Reile thoroughly reviewed his personal loans with the doctor. In 1980, after seven years of investing with Davenport, Reile rolled all his funds (\$119,000) into a limited partnership involving one building. "The fact is that he sold a building, and I never got any money," Reile said. "However, taking the total average of all my investments, if I had gotten money, it would have averaged 13 percent for the entire time."

Reile said that prior to October 1980, when he established the partnership with Davenport, he talked with Elder Wilson

about Davenport investments and was counseled to hold tight and not do anything. "This proved to be the wrong thing to do," he said.

Reile maintained that he got no favors, finder's fees, or interest rates on the unsecured notes that anyone else investing on the same basis at the same time could not have gotten. His response was similar to one he had made to the same committee a year before. The Mid-America Union Executive Committee had at that time expressed their confidence in Reile.

There is no evidence that Elder Reile hedged his personal funds with denomination monies,

There is no evidence that he exchanged denominational funds for personal funds,

There is no evidence that he accepted personal favors or benefits in exchange for investing denominational funds with Dr. Davenport, and

WHEREAS, there is no discoverable evidence of intentional or conscious abandonment of fiduciary responsibilities

THEREFORE, be it further resolved that we request the General Conference to place Elder E. S. Reile's name in Category Two.

Subsequently, the General Conference Committee did not agree with the Mid-America committee that the discipline should be lowered to a reprimand and voted to leave the discipline at level III, requiring removal of Reile from his present office. As of May 1 the situation was unresolved, with Reile retaining his presidency.

### *North Pacific Union*

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When the North Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee met on March 29, it had been expanded to include an additional 27 people—the majority lay people. Those who came to the meeting already knew that the North Pacific Union Conference had lost the largest amount of money of any church entity in the Davenport bankruptcy: \$6,403,823 plus more than \$1 million in interest. Three of its local conferences had also lost money. Several church members had filed lawsuits against the union for its handling of money

with Davenport. All but one of those suits were settled out of court in March 1983. Now the expanded union conference committee was to decide disciplinary action concerning the union president, secretary, treasurer, retired trust officer, two present trust officers, and legal counsel.

The first two hours of the meeting were spent debating procedures. Richard Fearing, the union president and one of those whose names was to be discussed, opened the meeting as chairman. He expected to continue chairing the meeting. Some pointed discussion, including remarks by the president of the General Conference, preceded a shift of the chairmanship to Richard Hammill, a member of the Union conference committee and a retired vice president of the General Conference. The invitees to the union conference committee were also officially extended the right to vote on actions. Throughout the discussion and final votes on their cases, the union officers being considered for discipline remained in the room as members of the union conference committee.

During the General Conference report on the six current officers to be disciplined, Charles Bradford said the General Conference Committee had lowered the discipline recommended by the President's Review Commission for Treasurer Duane Huey and Trust Director C. F. O'Dell from a job transfer (level III) to a public reprimand (level II). The discipline for attorney James Hopps had been lowered from permanent barring from denominational employment (level IV) to job transfer (level III). Bradford said all of these top leaders of the North Pacific Union, except O'Dell, were in violation of the church's conflict-of-interest policy because they had made personal loans to Davenport at the same time the entities they led also loaned money to the doctor. Also, allegations of dereliction of fiduciary responsibility were made since regular escrow procedures were not followed.

The committee heard from officials of the

North Pacific Union. Richard Fearing, the president, said he plans to return the interest he earned above that made by the church: "I'm sorry and that's it." He had invested \$12,000 of his own money with Davenport.

Duane Huey, the treasurer, said, "I have betrayed the trust of the people of this union. I have begged forgiveness of the Lord. I think we have been mistaken by not going to our people earlier. I am sorry for my faulty perceptions . . . and for the loss of credibility. We must change our organizational structure with regard to the trust system." At one point Huey had approximately \$3,000 of his personal funds with Davenport.

The way James Hopps, counsel for the union, told his story, Davenport never offered him 80-percent interest for a loan. What Davenport suggested to the young attorney, Hopps told the union committee, was an 80 percent appreciation of his money. In December 1980, the doctor wanted to buy some property which he estimated could yield \$400,000 to \$500,000 in a year or two. The banks were not making real estate loans then, so Davenport sought funds from individuals. Davenport told Hopps he planned to use all his profits from the property he would be able to acquire to reduce his indebtedness to the North Pacific Union, Hopps' major client. If Hopps loaned Davenport money, he could help his employer recoup its funds.

At first, Hopps refused. But as he thought about it over the next few days, he reasoned that if he wanted to do good, he would have to make the sacrifice and invest his money. After praying about it, he finally decided to go ahead and loan Davenport \$82,000. Hopps considered it one of the most charitable acts of his life.

"There must have been errors made by me," attorney Hopps said. "There are seven volumes of material. My deepest apology for all errors, both of omission and commission. I'm sorry that I was deceived. I was too trusting. I'm also sorry for personal responsibility for personal loans."

John Stewart, another attorney for the union, said officers had not apologized to the church members sooner because of his advice. He had told them not to say anything in a public forum that might be misunderstood, since the North Pacific Union was being sued by several church members for its handling of funds with Davenport.

Later in the afternoon, Huey, the treasurer, was asked whether tithe funds were involved. After an extended pause he answered, "Yes." Huey also had to answer for the \$300,000 the union had loaned to Davenport just four months before his bankruptcy. "We had reservations about it," he said. "The idea came from Davenport via Hopps. It was a desperation attempt to prop up Davenport in hope of getting some cash flow going. It was a 'compensating balance' arrangement, not uncommon among bankers as a method to increase loans." He admitted it was "a really big mistake" and hinted that there was fraudulent activity on the part of some people, but he did not elaborate, and the subject was dropped.

In the end, Hopps was the only person whom the committee voted must leave his job and be transferred (level III). The other incumbent officers received official reprimands (level II): union President Richard Fearing, Treasurer Duane Huey, Secretary H. J. Harris (who had put \$5,000 of his personal money into Davenport enterprises), current Trust Services Director C.F. O'Dell (who had not placed his Trust Director Robert Burns (who had personally invested \$15,000.

Wayne Massengill, trust director for the North Pacific Union Conference in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when large amounts of trust funds were being funneled to Davenport, also appeared at the meeting. Neal Wilson told the union committee that Massengill had received \$200 a month from Davenport for managing a special account

which paid individual investors 16-percent interest, so he was seen by many as an agent of Davenport. That perception was enhanced by the fact that Massengill wrote to at least one other union about the conglomerate pool fund established in the North Pacific Union with Davenport. The conglomerate pool combined the funds of several entities within the union to yield a better return on the money when it was loaned. The arrangement did not conform to General Conference policy, and Massengill's letter could be read as a suggestion that other conferences follow in the lead of the North Pacific Union in defying the General Conference.

There was considerable discussion concerning Massengill's discipline, and whether he should be required to repay the church for the management fees he had received. Defending his actions, Massengill did admit some wrongdoing, but said he thought of his Davenport activities as an acceptable sideline business. He also talked about the hardship placed on him by lawsuits filed against the church in Oregon. Unlike all other church officers, the denomination's insurance did not pay for his attorney's fees. Legal assistance had already cost Massengill about \$6,000.

In response, the North Pacific Union Conference Committee's final action on Massengill omitted reference to returning the management fee and only asked him to refrain from trust advisement. The committee did not vote on the level IV discipline recommended for Massengill because he is a retiree, and the General Conference president is supposed to deal with retirees personally.

It was close to midnight when the committee adjourned. Their final motion was to call for a reconvening of the committee in May, with invitees to discuss a healing process for the North Pacific Union. The *North Pacific Union Gleaner* carried a report on the disciplinary actions, but stated only the positions of officers disciplined, not their names.

## Montana Conference

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Not only union conference officials, but local conference officers have been disciplined. The Montana Conference took two meetings—the last on April 25—to achieve its disciplinary action. The complexity of the process reflects the fact that the conference constituency felt that they were at odds with both their union and the General Conference.

As one of the conferences in the North Pacific Union, Montana loaned approximately \$600,000 in direct investments through the union's collateral pool funds, plus \$200,000 in direct investments through the union. Montana paid out \$182,000 for the La Sierra Post Office alone, which Davenport also sold to a few other church entities. Actually, he only held a lease on the building, which was owned by Loma Linda University.

In addition to voting in favor of some of these loans as a member of the conference executive committee, conference Treasurer Burt Pooley also invested personally with Davenport. As a result, the President's Review Commission and the General Conference Committee both recommended that he lose his job and be transferred (level III). When the Montana constituency met on March 6, 1983, the General Conference had just completed voting its disciplinary recommendations. G. Ralph Thompson was the featured speaker for the worship sessions on Friday and Sabbath. As the secretary of the General Conference and a member of the President's Review Commission, he could have presented the General Conference's findings on Pooley's case to the Sunday business session. But Thompson left Sunday morning. Richard Fearing, president of the union and chairman of the conference nominating committee, had a copy of the General Conference's recommendation for disciplining Pooley. However, Fearing did not reveal the recommendation of the General Conference Committee to the

nominating committee of the Montana constituency. Instead, Fearing recommended that the nominating committee not submit a name for treasurer to the constituency meeting, and that the newly-elected conference executive committee act on Pooley's name. However, while the nominating committee was meeting, Treasurer Pooley presented his annual report to the on-going constituency session. It included a lengthy account of his actions concerning Davenport loans. When the constituency voted on the officer list, it decided to override the nominating committee and vote on Pooley's name anyway. He was re-elected.

When the General Conference learned that its recommendation had not even been presented to the Montana constituency, it requested a meeting with the new conference executive committee. To prepare the members of the committee, the local conference sent out in advance materials from the President's Review Commission, a report from the conference's own study commission, and Pooley's own 38-page defense.

Pooley also sent a request to the General Conference to re-evaluate his disciplinary action. The General Conference agreed to lessen the severity of its recommended discipline. When the Montana Conference Executive Committee met on April 25 the General Conference recommendation had been decreased from a job transfer (level III) to a reprimand (level II).

According to Morris Brusett, a lay member of the Montana Conference Committee, Pooley was humble and apologetic at the conference committee meeting. Representatives from the individual churches did not have many questions for Pooley and said they were ready to forgive and forget. Committee members did ask why the General Conference had come back to Montana after the constituency had re-elected Pooley. One of the lay members, a certified public accountant, especially invited to attend the committee meeting,



was very critical of the General Conference auditors for not being more vocal in their criticisms. He sparked a debate over the auditor's role in the conference loans. (At the March constituency meeting Montana's constitution was changed to allow the conference executive committee to choose who would audit the conference books.) Others said they thought the North Pacific Union should accept major responsibility for the Davenport losses suffered by Montana.

At the end of the discussion, a request for a vote on whether to change the recommended level of discipline for Pooley was rejected. The committee was left with voting simply yes or no on whether to reprimand Pooley (level II) in accordance with the recommendation of the General Conference. The conference committee voted to accept the General Conference's amended discipline of censure (level II).

Before the meeting ended, Pooley announced that he had already received and accepted a call to be an assistant treasurer in the Ohio Conference.

### *Georgia-Cumberland Conference*

Another local conference meted out the most severe discipline in North America to denominational officials involved in the Davenport affair. On April 5, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference's Executive Committee released a special report to its members that provided details concerning involvement of both current and past conference officers with Davenport. The conference had begun investing with Davenport almost 20 years ago. One officer credited Davenport with turning the conference books from red ink to black. The conference's net liquid assets went from a negative balance of \$514,354 in 1964 to a positive balance of \$32,918 in 1971.

"Based on the revised operating capital formula used for fund accounting, our operating capital, December 31, 1971, was \$108,297.55 or \$97,881.55 above the General Conference recommendations," the conference Secretary-Treasurer Fred Minner told the General Conference Treasury Department in 1972. "This has become possible, primarily because of our investments with Dr. Davenport. So you can readily see why we have great concern for the continuance of this program.

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### **Bradford said all of these [six] leaders of the North Pacific Union, except O'Dell, were in violation of the church's conflict-of-interest policy**

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"I think I should add that during the seven years since we first invested in post offices, our interest alone has exceeded one half million dollars. Davenport has been most cooperative in every way, and we receive the interest regularly each month. His performance and track record has far exceeded what was promised, as well as our expectations."

By the time of Davenport's bankruptcy in 1981, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference had \$3,129,999 outstanding in loans, plus \$609,658 in interest. Over the years these loans caused controversy, and one member had filed a lawsuit during the 1970s in an effort to produce information.

After Davenport's bankruptcy, late in 1981, Georgia-Cumberland established a Davenport Study Commission. Five laymen and two pastors thoroughly analyzed conference records. Three commission members traveled to California to examine the Davenport estate files. By the end of 1982, a final report was compiled, but it was held until the General Conference completed its study. Then in March 1983, the local conference committee heard both its

own report and that of the General Conference. Both recommended the most severe discipline for former President Des Cummings, Sr. (1964–80) and former Sabbath School and Stewardship Director Jack L. Price (1966–81), although both had already left church employment.

In its special report to the Georgia-Cumberland members, the conference executive committee and association board reported what the conference commission had discovered:

It was found that Cummings received finder's fees on monies loaned to Davenport by various entities, one such entity being the Florida Conference Association. The Study Commission found checks from Davenport payable to Cummings for finder's fees for the years of 1976 and 1977 in the amount of \$103,809.32. In addition, there is documentation from Davenport's files which shows additional finder's fees for 1978, 1979, and 1980 of \$149,273.88, which was credited toward the purchase of a piece of property by Cummings.

Further, the Georgia Conference Association advanced \$600,000 for the construction of a Southwestern Bell Telephone Company building in Temple, Texas, for which the Deed of Trust was never received. After construction was completed Cummings purchased the building from Davenport and received a clear title for the property.

In response, the conference committee voted that Cummings "should not be eligible for employment by any unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; that he should not function as a Seventh-day Adventist minister; that he should possibly receive additional church discipline; that the association pursue any and all sources of remedy available and do whatever is necessary to recover the losses sustained as a result of the Davenport Bankruptcy." This was the most severe discipline voted for any current or former denominational official.

Although the General Conference had recommended that Jack Price receive the same discipline as Cummings, the local conference, while agreeing that he should never again work for the church (level IV), did not demand that additional church discipline be taken. According to the report to the Georgia members:

Jack Price apparently received finder's fees from Davenport in 1977 of \$10,968.22. There is also correspondence from Price to Davenport which

indicates that Price received a 50 percent rate of interest on an investment of \$25,000.

As a result of this and other evidence the Study Commission found that Jack Price may have had a conflict of interest as defined by the General Conference working policy in that he apparently sought to secure financial opportunities for himself. The commission found that, although he was not nearly so involved as some, his actions could have been construed at times as not being in the best interest of the association. The committee accepted the commission's statement regarding Jack Price and voted that he not be eligible for employment by any unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Fred Minner, the assistant secretary of the conference who wrote the General Conference about the success of the Davenport investments during the 1960s, had had no personal loans with Davenport. Still, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Committee voted that he be transferred from his job (level III), the only current employee of the conference to be so disciplined.

The commission found that the work of Fred Minner has to do particularly with the monies and documents of the Conference Association. The commission did not find any implication of personal financial involvement with Davenport. His integrity is not questioned. It was, however, found that the work of seeing that the documents and monies were in proper order was particularly his responsibility. Because he did not fully execute his fiduciary responsibility, it is requested that the conference administration arrange for a change in his service to the church and bring in a new association treasurer. The Georgia-Cumberland Conference Executive Committee voted to accept the recommendation of the Davenport Study Commission.

This special report went through five other names, describing their positions and the actions taken by the conference committee. Information on E. E. Cumbo conference secretary from 1969–78, and currently president of the Illinois Conference, was passed on, without conference action, to the General Conference Study Committee.

The conference committee voted not to discipline several current officers. Richard Center, current treasurer, did not have any personal financial involvement with Davenport, so the conference committee did not recommend disciplinary action for him. At the time Center became an association officer, the pattern for Davenport investment procedure was well established. Hoy

Hendershot, conference field representative, was cleared of any misdealing. Aalborg, secretary of the conference, did violate church policy by placing personal loans with Davenport at the same time the conference committee on which he served also placed loans with Davenport. But, according to the commission, he did not receive any preferential treatment and he also filed with the conference a statement setting forth his financial dealings with Davenport. The conference committee took no disciplinary action in his case. Auditor Jerry Wiggle was said to be negligent in his 1978 audit, and the conference committee recommended that the General Conference auditing department investigate his work for possible disciplinary action.

The Georgia-Cumberland Commission also found members of its executive committee and association board partly responsible for the Davenport losses. It said that members of these boards "had a duty as fiduciaries for the constituency to be seekers of the facts in order to insist that proper business procedures to be fulfilled in the financial affairs of the church." The most comprehensive report published by any union or conference in North America concluded by saying:

Surely everyone will recognize and agree that the Davenport situation has been a sad and tragic situation for all involved. The time has come to put it all behind us. All the wishing in the world cannot change one part of the past. So let us learn our lessons and love one another with a spirit of forgiveness. . . . Finally, let us be about the work that we as disciples of Christ are called to do, that of giving the good news of the kingdom of God. It is time for a fresh start. By God's grace let it begin in each of us individually and all of us together.

### *Local and Union Conferences Take Action on Structure*

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The process of disciplining denominational officials involved with Davenport has not only focused the attention of the President's Review Commission on the need

to study the structure of the church in North America. Members in the Michigan Conference and the North Pacific and Pacific Unions have taken concrete steps this spring to examine the power and autonomy of particularly the union conferences.

The Michigan Conference is the largest in the Lake Union. On April 24, by a vote of 259 to 70, the conference constituency, in its triennial meeting, adopted a dramatic resolution. Among other things, the constituency's action requires that the Michigan Conference president recommend to the 1983 Annual Council that local conferences reduce by 50 percent their financial support to the union conferences. Also, the constituency's resolution suggests that before October 1, 1983 the executive committees of each conference in the Lake Union, (enlarged until each committee contains 50 percent lay persons), discuss a plan for merging the Lake Union with another union conference.

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### **That local conferences reduce by 50% their financial support to the unions.**

#### **—Recommendation of Michigan Conference Constituency**

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In the North Pacific Union, lay members were added to the union executive committee in March to vote on discipline of their union officers. They discovered that the North Pacific Union had amended its constitution in January 1981, just six months before Davenport filed bankruptcy. The amended constitution strongly protected the officers who subsequently came under fire. New wording in the constitution made it impossible for members of the constituency to call for a special constituency meeting; only the union executive committee could do so. Additional new wording prevented the election of new officers at any special meetings of the North Pacific Union

constituency called by the executive committee. In other words, if they wished, officers, once they were elected, could remain in office until the next constituency meeting, held every five years.

In March, the expanded union committee on discipline, insisted that the group gather again to discuss the issue of structure. On May 5, the expanded North Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee created a Governance and Management Study Commission. It has been charged with examining not only the North Pacific Union constitution but the basic question of the usefulness of the union structure at all. The 15-member group will be composed of two people from each conference within the union (at least one from each conference must be a lay person), and one person each from Walla Walla College, the Adventist Health Systems-West, and the union officers. The chairman of the commission must be a lay person who will be selected at the first meeting. The commission will report at a special constituency meeting to be held in September 1984.

The Pacific Union is the largest in North America. It contains the largest local conference in North America, the Southeastern California Conference. When the constituency of that conference met on April 24, the church members spoke their minds. They refused to allow the union president to chair their nominating committee because of rumors that he had been involved with Davenport. The constituency also adopted a resolution expressing:

. . . deep concern with the handling of the Davenport financial affair by the General Conference, and that in order to reestablish confidence in administration and the credibility of those involved, the President's Commission on Davenport be reconvened for the purpose of completing a full investigation of this matter, and that they be given all of the information available to the General Conference Officers, and that they be allowed to conduct personal interviews of any

individuals necessary to prepare a complete report and make final recommendations, and that their final report be made available to the appropriate administrative units and others who may desire it. In addition, this should be sent by Southeastern California Conference to the executive officers of each conference of the North American Division and the General Conference.

The constituency went further. In another resolution delegates revealed deep suspicion of the union conferences in North America:

Be it resolved for study.

- a. That the union structure in the North American Division as a regional administrative device, shall have outlived its usefulness for the relatively homogenous North American Division.
- b. That the union structure in the North American Division should be removed, the local conferences reorganized, and their functions redefined.

In June, the Pacific Union Executive Committee received a report from its own church structure committee, chaired by David Bieber, the former president of Loma Linda University. One thrust of the committee's recommendations is to create a genuine North American Division with regional offices rather than the present union structure.

It would be hard to ignore the work of such a commission, not only because it has been appointed by the largest union in North America, but because it consulted extensively with organizational experts both inside and outside the denomination. It also conducted a survey of some 2,500 members, local church officers, pastors, and union and conference officials.

If, by any chance, the President's Review Commission, the commissions established by the Pacific and North Pacific Unions, and other study groups were to make coinciding recommendations, the response to the Davenport scandal might help create a consensus among church members that will bring significant change in the structure of Adventism in North America.

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# FORUM

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Newsletter of the Association of Adventist Forums

Spring 1983

## New president sets goals for future of Adventist Forums

by Lyndrey Niles

The Association of Adventist Forums has recently celebrated its 15th anniversary, the last seven years of which have seen significant growth under the outstanding leadership of attorney Glenn Coe. Membership subscriptions have reached the 7,000 mark; forty chapters are active throughout the United States, Canada, and several other nations. The first national conference has been judged a success, while *SPECTRUM* and the newsletter are set for five combined issues in 1983.

The above is a good report, but it does not tell the whole story of the Association of Adventist Forums.

It does not include the formal letters of appreciative readers thanking the authors and editors for articles which have brought insight and a special blessing to them. The report excludes the testimonies of those who have grasped a clearer understanding of a difficult biblical concept discussed at a chapter meeting. The report does not cover the commitment of former Adventists to return to their churches as a result of attending the national conference in Washington.

Nor does it include the hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists who find spiritual maturity by participating in the discussions of contemporary issues from a Christian viewpoint and by looking objectively at different points of view in order to foster Christian intellectual and cultural growth . . . as is possible with Forum membership.

For the next two years, your AAF officers hope to provide further opportunities for what Coe recently called "the excitement of personal discovery." Already, a second national conference

has been approved to be held on the West Coast and is in the planning stages. Additional conferences in other parts of the country will be encouraged.

A goal of 10,000 members has been set, and a broader spectrum of articles will continue to appear in our journal. In addition, new proposed projects are currently being explored by the AAF Board. For example, task forces similar to the task force on lay participation will be established to explore problem areas and make recommendations to the association and the church.

We invite you to join in the excitement of the Forum experience and let us work together to discover the spiritual truths and challenging experiences to be found in genuine Adventism.

*Lyndrey Niles is a professor of communications at Howard University and president of the AAF.*

*The Association of Adventist Forums  
announces its*

**Second National Forum Conference**

*to be held*

**March 15-18, 1984**

*in*

*Loma Linda, California*

# Committee to plan future conferences

by Dana Lauren West

**F**ormer Association of Adventist Forums' President Glenn Coe has been appointed director of special projects by the AAF Board.

The directorship was established after the national conference, held in Washington, D.C., in September. The enthusiasm generated by that conference led the board to take steps to encourage other conferences and seminars. Coe's primary responsibility is to foster and schedule conferences.

The Executive Committee, at Coe's request, has set up a standing committee to work with him.

## Spectrum, *FORUM* mailed together

by Dana Lauren West

**A**t the Association of Adventist Forums' annual board meeting in September of 1982, several decisions were made concerning the newsletter *FORUM* and *Spectrum*.

The board approved a plan to expand the publication of *Spectrum* from four issues to five within a single calendar year. The "Update" section—printing news of the denomination in short essay form—will also be enlarged to at least five pages.

Lastly, the *FORUM* newsletter will now be included in each *Spectrum*, easily detachable so as not to spoil the journal's appearance.

The format of *FORUM* will remain the same—short news pieces dealing with the AAF, the chapters, and meetings reported in news style. The newsletter will appear five times (instead of four times a calendar year) and be stapled inside *Spectrum*, not mailed separately.

Whereas AAF news will be slightly less in total inches, the newsletter will appear more frequently than before.

The cost involved in printing five inserts of four pages each will be less than the cost of printing four 12-page newsletters. The mailing cost is also decreased because of this action. Overseas subscribers will now receive all the AAF news for no extra cost.

This Committee on Conferences, with Coe as chairman, will have the responsibilities of recommending to the Executive Committee the time, place, and content of national conferences. There will be additional input from local ad hoc committees established to help with details of national conferences slated for their area.

The Committee on Conferences will also coordinate the schedules of smaller regional conferences. Small national conferences on specific topics may also be planned. The members of the committee are: Glenn Coe, former AAF president and chief state's attorney in Hartford, Connecticut; Lyndrey Niles, present AAF president and professor of communications at Howard University in Washington, D.C.; Roy Branson, editor of *SPECTRUM* and senior fellow at Kennedy Institute of Ethics in Washington, D.C.; Lawrence Geraty, former AAF president and professor of Old Testament Studies at the SDA Theological Seminary; Susan Jacobsen, homemaker in Redlands, Calif.; William King, member of *SPECTRUM* Advisory Council and president of William King, Inc., a construction company in Flagstaff, Ariz.; and Verla Kwiram, member of *SPECTRUM* Advisory Council and businesswoman in Seattle, Washington.

Dana Lauren West is the editorial assistant for *FORUM* and *Spectrum*.

## AAF chapters active in Europe,

by Molleurus Couperus

**M**olleurus Couperus, director of International Affairs for the Association of Adventist Forums, accompanied by his wife Dos, long active in the AAF, travelled through Austria, Holland, and Germany during October and November of 1982 visiting and leading discussions with AAF chapters.

The first of the Adventist Forum meetings they attended took place in Vienna, Austria, on October 7 at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Gerhard Svrcek-Seiler. In Collonges, France, Dr. Couperus spoke at the morning devotional to students and faculty on the providential and often miraculous leadings of God in the lives of his children.

*continued on page 3.*

*continued from page 2.*

On October 22-24 the Couperuses joined the meetings of the German Adventist Forum group, the AWA (Adventistischer Wissenschaftlicher Arbeitskreis), and the Adventist Scholars Fellowship, at Freudenstadt in the Black Forest. The main subject was "The Biblical Understanding of the Law."

The German forum group (AWA) has for many years published two periodicals. The *AGA* (Adventist Beliefs, Past and Present) appears twice a year and publishes the papers which are presented at their two weekend conferences held each year. Dr. L. E. Trader, of the Marienhoehe Seminary, is the editor. The other periodical, *Stufen* (Steps), appears every four months and contains articles that are submitted by mem-

bers of the AWA as well as by persons who have been specifically invited to submit an article. It is edited by Kurt Bangert. Requests for subscriptions to either of these periodicals should be directed to: AWA, Im Kirchwald 3A, 6104 Seeheim 3, West Germany.

The last Forum meeting the Couperuses attended was at the Seminary Zandbergen in Holland. The morning presentation was by a member of the seminary faculty, who discussed the papers given at a ministerial conference in Germany during the summer. In the afternoon meeting Dr. Couperus spoke on "Whither Adventism?" including ways the church might handle current problems and challenges.

*Molleurus Couperus is director of international affairs for the AAF.*

## Flood, age of world discussed at Monterey meeting

*by Bonnie Wilson*

**T**he Monterey Bay Area Chapter presented "Lecture and Discussion on Creation" on January 22. The chapter heard three scientists in different fields address the issue of the age of the earth.

The topic that elicited the most discussion was the idea of the flood having taken place in a local geographic area. Lonnie Wilson, Ph.D., who moderated the question-and-answer periods, also introduced the speakers: Molleurus Couperus, formerly chairman of the department of dermatology at Loma Linda University, now doing research on creation and evolution; Jerry Snow, who works as the water quality specialist for Monterey County; and Robert Brown, a senior research scientist from the Geoscience Research Institute.

Couperus compared the SDA philosophy of the age of the earth with other Christians' ideas about this topic. Since 1905 the church has taken its present position that the earth is about 6,000 years old. Couperus felt the flood was the most crucial point in the 6,000-year concept. He presented the idea that the flood was confined to a geographic locality. This position, he said, is supported by several points: (1) The ark did not move from its own geographic locality but settled in almost the same place that it was built. (2) Food was available for the vegetarian animals that were in the ark immediately after they had disembarked. (3) Noah planted a vineyard, and

soil was needed for this. (4) There is no evidence of a universal layer of silt layed down about 4,000 years ago.

Snow spoke about the understanding of the culture of the time at the writing of Genesis. "Earth" to the men of Moses' time did not mean the "earth" as we know it but rather the portion of land that they knew and occupied only. Snow also indicated that there is no botanical evidence of a universal flood. Scientists should be finding flora from the indigenous areas of South America and in other parts of the world, and these examples of a universal flood are lacking.

There is a strategy of arriving at the truth, Brown felt, and that is by eyewitness testimony that is reliable, turning to the Bible and present day scientific research to fill in the gaps that are missing in the eyewitness testimony. There are several biblical translations that give us different chronologies of the Old Testament, and, depending upon the translation used, we can come to the age of mankind as being about  $6740 \pm 8,000$  years.

E. G. White tells us that "the earth is more than 6000" years old. There is also the question as to how much was created "In the beginning . . ."

Tapes are available for this session at \$9.00/set by writing to B. Wilson, 22560 Murietta Road, Salinas, CA 93908

*Bonnie Wilson is president of an engineering firm in the Monterey Bay area.*

## Atlantic Region

The *New York Chapter* welcomed Dr. Bill Webber, president of the New York Theological Society, on February 19. Webber spoke on "Exiles and Pilgrims," which dealt with the social and political relevance of the Christian gospel.

How the gospels were compiled and transmitted was discussed on March 12 by Byron Schaeffer, professor of biblical studies at Fordham University in New York City.

The Josephine Morris Chorale gave a recital on March 26. The members of the Chorale recently returned from a tour in Europe.

## Columbia Region

*Philadelphia Chapter's* President Jacqueline Winston reports Colin Cook's presentation on "The Gospel and the Homosexual in the SDA Church" was well received as evidenced by the approximately 200 attendants.

Cook is founder of Quest, a program that offers counselling and spiritual guidance to SDA homosexuals who wish a change in lifestyle.

## North Pacific Region

The *Flagstaff Chapter* has elected new officers for 1983-84. Don Mansfield is president; Bill King, vice president; and Dollie Teske, secretary/treasurer.

New chapters include: *Pullman, Washington-Moscow, Idaho* which has been organized. The president is Byron Blomquist. *Treasure Valley* in Boise with its president James Balkins was also organized.

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## South Pacific Region

The *Claremont Chapter* invited Dr. James A. Sanders, Old Testament scholar and theologian, to discuss ancient biblical manuscripts with an emphasis on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dr. Sanders serves as president of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center for Preservation and Research.

The *San Diego Chapter* has elected new officers. Les Palinka was voted president; Don Bauers, vice president; and Adda Sheldon, secretary/treasurer. The members-at-large are Clela Waddel, Bruce Sanderson, Jan Kaatz, and Walt Fahlsing.

Because this region has so many chapters with activities scheduled, members are advised to consult their regional newsletter for additional information. The newsletter is prepared by Mike Scofield, the regional director of the Southern Pacific Region.

## West Indies

A new *Barbados Chapter* in the West Indies with approximately 40 members has recently been accepted into the Forum chapters family. Officers include for president, Harold Wharton; secretary, Maccaulay Hood; assistant secretary, Dr. Norma Niles; treasurer, Cecil Cummins, and as publicity secretary, Dr. Bradley Niles.

Please send chapter information to FORUM, c/o Editorial Assistant, 7710 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

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# Johnsson on the Future of the *Adventist Review*

by Eric Anderson

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As William Johnsson was assuming the editorship of the *Adventist Review* in late 1982, Eric Anderson, professor of history at Pacific Union College, interviewed him in his office at the *Review* and Herald Publishing Association in Washington, D.C. Anderson edited the tape of their conversation.

Born in Australia, Johnsson's first college degree was in chemistry from Adelaide University. He then earned a B.A. in theology from Avondale College. After accepting a teaching post at Spicer College in India, where he eventually became dean of the school of theology, Johnsson earned an M.A. from Andrews University, a B.D. from London University, and in 1973 a Ph.D. in New Testament from Vanderbilt University. In 1975 he left Spicer College to join the New Testament department at the SDA Theological Seminary where he remained for five years, the last two as associate dean.

In 1980 he accepted the post of associate editor of the *Adventist Review*, and in December 1982, he became the editor.—*The Editors*.

**Anderson:** Elder Johnsson, you recently wrote an article in the Andrews University Student Movement with a very startling

headline. It was "The *Review*: An Adventist *Pravda*?" What did you mean by that title?

**Johnsson:** You notice, Eric, that the title did have a question mark. I was trying to meet head-on the criticism that the *Adventist Review* is essentially a mouthpiece for the General Conference; that it simply echoes the party-line.

**Anderson:** It is correct to say that the *Adventist Review* is the official paper of the

**Johnsson:** No, that is not correct. For a period the *Review* was classified as the official church paper. But since 1979 it has simply been listed as the general organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And the distinction is important. We would like to be thought of as being close to the General Conference in our philosophy, but also at least half a step away from the General Conference so we can retain a significant measure of journalistic independence.

**Anderson:** Are there natural limits to how open the *Review* can be in dealing with sensitive issues?

**Johnsson:** Yes. First of all, we are part of the church, and I see our work here at the *Adventist Review* as clearly a ministry. We are concerned with giving the news, but we also have a pastoral concern, trying to build up people's faith. Also, at times the church may be involved in matters where there is pending litigation. For instance, in the Davenport matter, our attorneys advised us

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Eric Anderson is professor of history at Pacific Union College. His doctoral dissertation, written at the University of Chicago, has recently been published: *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second*.

that we simply were unable to print all that we have known. There are exceptional cases where news stories come from overseas and I can think of one right now that involve stories of hardship and even persecution of our people, that we may choose not to run if we or our leaders feel that there is a likelihood that people abroad will suffer. I would underline that these are clearly unusual cases.

**Anderson:** As an example of what you are talking about, I read in the secular press that the revolutionary government in Nicaragua has been threatening Adventists, accusing them of various improbable acts of sabotage.

**Johnsson:** That is the sort of example I would have in mind.

**Anderson:** Let's think a little bit about the profile of your readers: How many people read the *Review*?

**Johnsson:** The circulation has gone up and down. Forty years ago we had a circulation of something like 37,000. Twenty years ago, in 1962, we hit 94,000, which was a sudden jump. It gradually tapered off; then in the 1970s, it sharply rose again as the Columbia Union and then the Southwestern Union introduced free copies of the paper to all its members. About eighteen months ago we hit 110,000. As of last August, the Columbia Union pulled out of the scheme so we are at 75,000 right now, 10–15,000 of whom are still paid for by the Southwestern Union for circulation to its members.

**Anderson:** Would it be fair to say, then, that the *Review's* circulation is, in rough terms, about what it was 25 years ago?

**Johnsson:** Yes, you could say that. And frankly, I am not pleased with a circulation of 60–65,000 individual paid subscriptions in the United States. I think it should be much higher.

**Anderson:** Can we speculate about the influence of the *Review*? If the circulation is holding steady in a growing church, isn't it less influential than it was?

**Johnsson:** For many, the *Review* is very

influential—as much as ever. But perhaps it is less influential among certain groups than it was 25 years ago.

**Anderson:** With whom does the *Review* have less influence?

**Johnsson:** I am thinking of academic groups, professional groups. I am not saying that the academics and professionals don't read the *Review*. Many do and are strong supporters of the paper. But I am also concerned that some sort of put the *Review* aside. We are not talking about a very large number in the church, but in my judgment a very important group. My own background is academics, and I feel very badly when academics dismiss the *Review*.

**Anderson:** Can you tell us a little bit about what we might do to attract that group back?

**Johnsson:** One thing we must certainly do is cover the news of the church more fully, accurately, fairly, and quickly than we have in the past. The *Review* does not have a large staff. We have basically six people in an editorial capacity and three secretaries, and we print 52 times a year, plus a monthly edition. We do all our own layout and pasteups. So we don't really have too many people to send out on news stories. But we definitely intend to do far more than in the past in the way of news features. We hear church members asking questions, and we would like to direct those questions to people in the church who have been elected to positions and should be able to give us the answers.

**Anderson:** You are the tenth editor of the *Review*. As far as I can tell, you are the first with advanced training in theology. What's the practical significance of that theological education for your editorship?

**Johnsson:** Because the paper has traditionally been so tied in with the life of the church, theological concerns have been important to it and will remain important. Although I will not be able to bring advanced academic concerns directly to bear on my editing, I would hope that my background would give me a certain

breadth of judgement in soliciting and evaluating articles. Indeed, I would hope that the *Review* will be known for its theological integrity.

**Anderson:** You have come to the editorship of the *Review* as a very prolific writer, I believe you have written six books.

**Johnsson:** Five, with the sixth one just coming off the press.

**Anderson:** If a *Review* reader wanted to understand the new editor, which of those books would you particularly recommend?

**Johnsson:** It depends on the reader. The one that I like the best is my work on the book of Hebrews. Hebrews is my favorite biblical book, and I wrote *In Absolute Confidence* to unlock my understanding of Hebrews. I think it succeeds fairly well. I am happy with the book. That would be more for the biblically inclined reader. I am very happy with the new book called *Why Doesn't Anyone Care?* I was asked to write a book Adventists might give to their neighbors, and so it is not scholarly, but I hope its background is good scholarship. It is a series of 10 "why" questions; for example, why good people suffer.

**Anderson:** Your dissertation for the Ph.D. in New Testament at Vanderbilt University does have a certain topical relevance.

**Johnsson:** Yes, its title is "Defilement and Purgation in the Book of Hebrews". It was done under Professor Leander Keck, who was chairman of the Department of New Testament at Vanderbilt and is now Dean at Yale University. He is, I think, the outstanding New Testament scholar in the country. The work that I did there involved an exegesis of Hebrews 9 and 10 which, of course, has become critical in Adventist discussions over the past two years.

**Anderson:** My impression is that your dissertation was very cautious and very constructive, but slightly revisionist. Is that correct?

**Johnsson:** Some could interpret it that way. But I would just look upon it as a conservative stance.

**Anderson:** Would you feel comfortable if that little tag I applied to your dissertation were used to describe your editorship—"cautious, constructive, and slightly revisionist"?

**Johnsson:** While I hope my editorship is responsible, I would not want it to be "cautious." I hope certainly that it would be "constructive." As for "revisionist," I would prefer the word "progressive," building on the Adventist tradition which I think is something not to be ashamed of, but looking toward the future. I would hope as an editor I would even have a certain boldness, as I think that the people who occupied the chair before me have had.

**Anderson:** You have been an associate editor for just over two years. In that time what were the high points? What were the best articles and the sort of material you would want to imitate and continue?

**Johnsson:** There are several articles that leap to mind. One is Elder Wilson's report to the church on the Davenport matter. I would hope that we could have more reports to the church from the General Conference and other responsible people. Another example would be the Ramik interview concerning Ellen White. That was significant, I think at a rather critical point in the history of the church and its understanding of Ellen White. In terms of serious theological writing the most important thing we have run were the articles by Alden Thompson on Ellen White.

**Anderson:** I think, that Elder Wood handled that very well, in that the diversity of responses was very well presented.

**Johnsson:** In many respects, I would see that series and the way the reactions were handled as a model.

**Anderson:** Do you plan, then, to leave some things in the *Review* just the same?

**Johnsson:** Certainly the format of the paper will remain the same. Thanks to Harry Knox, it has a neat, clean design. As for content, the paper will continue to provide articles in the area of doctrine,

# Selections from the pen of Editor William Johnson

compiled by Dan Fahrbach

## *Ellen White Revelations*

"We do not concede the point that Ellen White's prophetic role has been disproved. The studies by various researchers during the past few years indeed have brought much new data to light. They have shown that the scope and extent of Ellen White's uses of sources is greater than most Adventists had realized.

"But that is a far cry from falsifying her prophetic gift. What has been shown to be in error, in fact, is the concept of inspiration held by many Adventists. In light of the facts, a verbal (dictation) theory of inspiration for Ellen White cannot be sustained. Nor will it hold up for the Scriptures. While historically the Adventist Church has refused to endorse verbalism, in practice many members have inclined toward it.

"We suspect that many of those who have recently turned away from Ellen White's writings followed the verbal theory of inspiration. They should have abandoned their theory, we suggest, not Ellen White."

—Editorial, January 27

## *Church Structure*

"The time has come in Adventist history when more study must be made of the nature of the church. Ecclesiology—the general doctrine of the church—has not been an area of deep study heretofore. . . ."

" . . . It is important that the practical questions—questions of structure and organization—not be decided on a merely pragmatic basis. A theology of the church should inform discussions and decisions about the working of the church."

—"Editor's Viewpoint", February 10

## *Neal Wilson's style of leadership*

"Neal Wilson has the ability to keep the respect of those who disagree with him. He is able to tell another he's wrong in a manner that does not drive a wedge between them. He hears people out, even if eventually he has to oppose their ideas.

"The Wilson philosophy of leadership defies complete analysis. An elusive, personal quality goes be-

yond influences from father or up-bringing. He consciously follows no particular school of leadership.

"Part of that quality is the sharpness of a probing, informed mind. Elder Wilson to an unusual degree, has the ability to absorb detail into a comprehensive picture."

—"Perspective", February 24

## *Davenport Disclosure and Discipline*

"While the *Review* stands for a disclosure, our position demands that the disclosure reflect sensitivity and a truly Christian spirit. The *Review* is more than a newspaper. While we seek to keep our readers informed, we also wish to be redemptive. We seek to build up both individuals and the church at large.

"We do not think that the printing of names in the *Review* should become a means of church discipline.

" . . . While we hold that disclosure through the printing of names in the *Review* is not a desirable means of church discipline, we maintain that credibility and confidence can be built only on a basis of release of information through appropriate means. It is imperative that avenues of disclosures be established for those church members who individually desire more information.

" . . . The Davenport affair will go away eventually, if boards and committees follow through on the recommendations of the officers, and if the church at large perceives that they have done so, we may be able to put it behind us with reasonable speed. Without such actions and perception, however, the church may suffer under the Davenport burden for many years.

"Another factor to hasten its demise might be the readiness of leaders directly involved in the discipline to acknowledge their mistakes.

"We can understand, for instance, the feelings of those church members who are threatening to withhold tithe, but we cannot endorse such action. The church and its mission are far greater than the Davenport affair."

—Editorial, March 24

Dan Fahrbach, a graduate of Andrews University, has been editor of *Insight* since 1981.

articles that inspire, and articles that deal with the Adventist tradition.

**Anderson:** In the last few months, the *Adventist Review* and *Ministry* have included articles that attempt to re-educate the Adventist public on the role of Ellen White. In response to challenges they have attempted to spell out a new position. What role do you see for the *Review* in this new understanding of Ellen White's mission?

**Johnsson:** Some people might challenge whether, in fact, it is a new understanding of Ellen White. For some people, certainly, it may be a new understanding and I would hope that we can continue that process by a steady series of articles and reports.

**Anderson:** I am not sure I agree. Wouldn't you say that these understandings of Ellen White are new for everybody? Certainly no one in the church realized the full extent of Ellen White borrowings.

**Johnsson:** In terms of data, yes, but not in terms of interpretation of the data. I have to say that the impact of the borrowing of Ellen White has perhaps not been so severe on me as on some others. Years ago, when I took my doctoral studies I went through the process of trying to accommodate the fact of inspired writers' borrowing.

**Anderson:** Do you think that the worst of theological controversy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is over?

**Johnsson:** I would hope so. I see some signs that we are moving into a period of greater tranquility.

**Anderson:** What are the positive signs that you see?

**Johnsson:** I think scholars in the church feel a little bit more settled than they did a year or two ago; Consultation II would be a positive mark here. Also I sense among pastors and lay people alike almost a weariness with theological argument—not a weariness that says, "Let's forget all about it," but a weariness that says, "Let us go on to something else. Let's continue to work on these theological matters, but let us not be absolutely preoccupied with them." There is a sense that we simply cannot live on

debate forever. We have to go on. I sense a third thing—a feeling that the church is valuable, that there are limits to dissent and questioning. I don't want to be misunderstood here, but I sense more and more people, including intellectuals, saying, "Hey, we cannot simply open up the church in such a way that discussion might lead to utter dissolution of the church; there have to be limits."

**Anderson:** At the same time, people in the church who have been extremely suspicious of scholars and engaged in wholesale attacks on them have somewhat subsided, haven't they?

**Johnsson:** It seems so to me. I believe Consultation II has broken down a good deal of suspicion.

**Anderson:** Are there any innovations, besides more news, which you are planning as the new editor?

**Johnsson:** Well, about the news, we intend to speed up certain phases of production of the paper so that we can get news of the church out much faster, so that the *Review* is not simply recording news that people have already heard. Also, we will certainly have more of human interest in the paper. More of the content of the paper will be staff written. Anyone who joins the staff from here on must already be a proven writer, a good writer—be able to write quickly, to report a story. That will be an absolute requirement.

**Anderson:** There's an Adventist truism that "if we had studied the Bible the way we should have, we wouldn't need the spirit of prophecy." Let me try this one out on you. "If the *Review* did its job properly we would not need *Spectrum*." How do you react to that?

**Johnsson:** Well, I don't know. I don't feel that my role here at the *Review* is to try to put anyone out of business, *Spectrum* or anyone else. *Spectrum* obviously can do things we cannot do. *Spectrum* is not plugged into the official church as we are. I would hope that some of the people reading *Spectrum* and not reading the *Review*

would start reading the *Review* as well. I am not here to put *Spectrum* out of business. *Spectrum* will offer a variety of opinions. In many areas, it would be difficult for the *Review* to do so.

**Anderson:** I suppose an example of that would be *Spectrum's* coverage of the very complex situation in the Soviet Union which really couldn't appear in an official publication.

**Johnsson:** That is right, yes. We have clear evidence that the *Review* does end up in offices of ministers of state in countries all around the world. So this makes us cautious in certain areas.

**Anderson:** Sometimes when you give an interview you probably are frustrated that the interviewer didn't ask the right questions. Is there any question that you would ask yourself if you were conducting this interview, something we left out?

**Johnsson:** I think I would want to know about the changing relationship of the *Review* with the Review and Herald Publishing Association. This is an area that has not been very widely publicized so far. Starting January 1, the magazine is no longer a part of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Because the publishing house is moving out of Washington, the decision had to be made: "Will the *Adventist Review* tilt toward the publishing house or will it remain in Washington?" But this also raises some questions. Since we'll now be attached to the General Conference, the area of journalistic integrity becomes even more acute.

**Anderson:** It would seem that whether or not you like it, more than ever you will be thought of as the official publication of the General Conference.

**Johnsson:** Well, we have to keep educating the people that that is not true. You see, it's rather a fine line that we have to walk here. On the one hand, the very

strength of the paper, in large measure, arises from the close relationship of the *Review* with the General Conference. The editors supported staying in Washington so that we could remain close to the heartbeat of the church.

At the same time the *Review* editors and the General Conference officers don't want every word we print treated as if it had received the seal of the General Conference brethren. We don't want to have any censorship committee, as it were, looking over our shoulder. By the way, I want to lay to rest the idea that everything we publish is censored by some anonymous group. This has not happened. What may happen is that once in a few months, we refer an article to some of our consulting editors for counsel.

**Anderson:** To end, let me ask you a question about your predecessors. When President Reagan came into office he had the chance to hang a portrait of one of his predecessors in the Cabinet Room. He chose President Calvin Coolidge because he was particularly impressed with Coolidge's tax policy. If you had the choice to choose one portrait of a *Review* editor, is there one you would particularly want to model yourself on?

**Johnsson:** Three editors stand out. The first, although he served for only a couple of years, is J. N. Andrews. Since he was the outstanding scholar of the early Adventist church, I am naturally attracted to him. For totally different reasons, I am drawn to W. A. Spicer. He had a great warmth, deep human concern and a love for the people of God. He liked to say repeatedly, "The Adventist Church is a great family to belong to," a concern that I share. The third editor is F. D. Nichol. I am especially attracted to him because of the clarity of his thought and the sharpness of his expression. If you really forced me to choose among the three, I think I would hang Spicer's portrait.

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# Adventist Raiders of the Lost Ark

by Patti Hansen Tompkins

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The script for the expedition could have been drafted by Steven Spielberg, whose “Raiders of the Lost Ark” the Adventist explorers were in a sense emulating.

Arriving near a Franciscan monastery on a hillside, they deftly left their driver on one side of the hill. Then while several members of the party distracted an armed Bedouin guard, the others scoured the hillside until they found a concealed opening near an outer fence, approximately 300 feet from the monastery.

Two days later, they returned and again diverted the guard so they could explore the opening. Ron Spear and Alan Newhart were lowered through the opening into a chamber approximately 12 feet square. Inside the chamber, and down a passage way, Newhart took photographs of what appeared to be the place where a tunnel should have been. However, to the excited raiders, the wall of the passageway appeared to have been cleverly plastered to conceal the entrance to the tunnel, and they

were unable to proceed with their investigation.

Members of this expedition are convinced that the Ark of the Covenant is in that cave under Mt. Nebo. They acknowledge that they took a “terrible risk” in entering the chamber without permission from Jordanian officials. The risks are heightened by the strategic location of Mt. Nebo on the Jordanian-Israeli border. A few days before the arrival of the Adventist searchers for the ark, Israel had invaded its northern neighbor, Lebanon, and Jordan had militarized its territory adjoining Mt. Nebo. Jordanian officials were concerned that if something reputed to be the Ark of the Covenant were found in the area, Israel might be tempted to invade Jordanian territory, also, to retrieve it.

It is not surprising that teams of amateur archaeologists acting on the basis of their interpretations of prophecy are causing problems for recognized archaeologists. Andrews University’s Madaba Plains Project, near Mt. Nebo, has been affected by the surreptitious work of religious groups in Jordan. In 1983, for the second year in a row, the Andrews project has been canceled,

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despite the fact that Andrews' archaeological expeditions are highly praised. In his book *American Archaeology in the Mideast*, Philip J. King says, "The archaeology of Jordan owes an extraordinary debt of gratitude to the Hesban expedition (led by Andrews' scholars), especially for its pioneering efforts in many areas of archaeological research."

The Adventist group that visited Jordan in 1982 has not been alone. Over the past four years, there have been an undetermined number of expeditions to the Holy Land by groups with strictly religious reasons for wanting to find the ark. Of these expeditions, four are worth noting here, three because of Adventist involvement and the fourth because of the international attention it attracted.

The first of the four was undertaken by an Adventist group led by Lawrence W. Blaser of Denver. Siegfried Horn, respected Adventist archaeological authority, was invited to accompany the group but declined. The group then obtained the services of an archaeologist from Florida, went to the area of the Dead Sea for a brief stay and returned without evidence of finding the ark.<sup>1</sup>

The second Adventist lay expedition took place in September 1979, as the result of a chain of events begun one year previously. In September 1978, Jack Darnall of North Fork, California, received a strong impression that God wanted him to build a temple for Him. Darnall describes his experience in a 32-page report entitled "Sanctuary Research," published in the summer of 1982, stating that a "respected leader in the General Conference of the church . . . suggested that it would be highly appropriate for a group of ministers who love God's law and his Sabbath to bring forth his sacred ark as a testimony to the world." Apparently on his own, Darnall flew to the Middle East to search, and claims to have been given directions by an angel to a

certain cave near Bethlehem. Here he found bits of pottery dating between 700 and 586 B.C., thus convincing him that he had indeed found the cave where the ark was hidden.

Darnall returned home, telling his story in hopes of raising money to build a temple to contain the ark in California. According to his report in "Sanctuary Research," at least \$15,200 was raised, and a structure was built. Much of the report is an explanation of problems that later developed, resulting in the loss of the temple structure and property to a group unsympathetic to Darnall's cause. But he has not lost heart. In his report he states:

If God led me to the right cave, among the thousands of caves in Israel, and we do find the ark in it, then it follows that the same God gave us the right plan and the right place to house the ark. Furthermore, when the ark is brought forth by our group, it will show you that God first gave us the commission to build His Covenant Tabernacle, then to bring forth His Ark of the Covenant and to proclaim the beauty of His eternal covenant to all mankind. That is the purpose of the program. His covenant is for you.<sup>2</sup>

The third, and most attention-getting of the expeditions, was undertaken in November 1981 by a non-Adventist group based in Winfield, Kansas, under the organizational name of the Institute for Restoring Ancient History International. The leader of the group, Tom Crotser, claims to have found the ark inside a sealed passageway in a cave in Mt. Nebo. Eyewitness accounts and photographs were offered as evidence of the authenticity of the find. Crotser made public his plan to enlist the aid of international banker David Rothschild to recover the ark. Newspaper accounts of the "find" make clear Crotser's motivation: "The ark would help restore the Temple of Jerusalem so that all may be in order for the Second Coming of Christ, which he predicts will occur in September or October of 1988."<sup>3</sup>

The Crotser "discovery" understandably attracted attention, not all of it favorable. It



created no small stir in Jordan itself. David W. McCreery, director of the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, responded that "news of this amazing discovery . . . came as a total surprise" to himself and the director-general of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. "Since Dr. Hadidi signs the permits which all archaeological excavation and survey teams in Jordan are required by law to obtain, and I keep track of all American projects working in the country, it was quite a shock to hear of an alleged discovery made by people neither one of us had ever heard of."

McCreery acknowledged that this was not the first group of ark-hunters to come to his attention. "In fact," he said, "they arrive and depart on a fairly regular basis. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that a group has worked surreptitiously, without the knowledge or permission of the Department of Antiquities. It is also the first time that God has been mentioned as an active staff member, directing the expedition to the site and telling the team where to dig. One would have thought that if the Almighty directed these folks to the Ark of the Covenant that he would have also informed them that it was illegal to excavate without a permit."<sup>4</sup>

Because of the notoriety surrounding the Crotser claims, the curiosity of several Adventist laymen was aroused. They, in turn, proceeded to investigate whether or not the "discovery" of the ark could be substantiated.

Vance Ferrell, of Harrisburg, Illinois, who already believed the ark would be found, conducted several lengthy telephone interviews with a member of the Kansas group. In 1981 he concluded that:

It does not appear this is a hoax. The individuals who claim to have found the ark were guided to it by prayer. They are Christians who felt that the time had come for it to be found . . . Perhaps our Father recognized that if Seventh-day Adventists could have received the credit for this find, it would only add additional self-satisfaction to a people who need less, not more.<sup>5</sup>

Several prominent Adventists were also interested enough in the Crotser findings to invest personal funds in an attempt to verify the claims. Ron Spear and Lewis Walton asked Siegfried Horn to travel to Kansas to examine the evidence. Horn, who accepted their invitation largely because of a desire to satisfy his own professional archaeological curiosity, spent one and a half hours with Tom Crotser on April 11, 1982. His conclusion was that what the Kansas group had found was *not* an ancient artifact and therefore could not be the Ark of the Covenant. This conclusion was reported to those who had requested his services and paid for his trip. Horn says he has had no further contact with these men since he reported his findings to them, and was not aware of any plans they may have had to further pursue the matter.

**A**s already mentioned, the most recent search for the ark by Adventists took place in June 1982. Members of the expedition were Ron Spear, Charles Wheeling, and Ray Vice, self-supporting evangelists from Birmingham, Alabama; Albert Newhart, director of American Cassette Ministries in Pennsylvania; Newhart's son, Alan, a college senior theology major; Harold Conner, a dentist from Silver Spring, Maryland; Ernest Booth, biologist and operator of an educational filmstrip company in Anacortus, Washington; and David Jefferson, a Southern Baptist cinematographer.

At the same time that the Andrews University group had learned that their June 1982 expedition had been canceled, Spear's group traveled to Jordan specifically to investigate firsthand the claims of the Crotser group from Kansas. While waiting at the Amman airport for one of his own expedition members, Lawrence Geraty, professor of archaeology and history of antiquity at Andrews Theological Seminary, was recognized by one of Spear's group. When Geraty discovered the reason for their trip, he urged them to return to the

United States immediately. Geraty was extremely concerned about the possible repercussions of yet another search for the ark. He had learned that Jordanian authorities had canceled the Andrews project partly to protect it and the country from complications arising from unauthorized activities in the vicinity of Mt. Nebo. Geraty explained the gravity of the situation. However, the group felt strongly that they should stay. As Wheeling put it, "We had prayed earnestly that if God did not want us there, everything would close down for us before we left the country (United States). For some reason God opened the way, and we went."

Geraty then advised the group not to advertise that they were Adventists, not to mention the ark or Andrews University, and not to go anywhere near Mt. Nebo, as in doing so they might jeopardize the relationship of both the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Andrews University with the government of Jordan. The group agreed, saying they would remain in the country as media experts who wanted to see the country. Geraty then absolved himself of any further responsibility for the expedition members or their actions.

The following day, the group visited the Ministry of Tourism where they learned that Mt. Nebo was not off-limits to tourists. Ignoring Geraty's advice, they supplied themselves with a landrover, a driver, and fuel, and set off for Mt. Nebo.

The members of this expedition give five reasons for their conviction that the Ark of the Covenant is under Mt. Nebo.

1. The reference to the ark in II Maccabees is inscribed on a brass plaque inside the Franciscan monastery.

2. Franciscan monks are believed to be able to keep secrets for hundreds of years.

3. Mt. Nebo is in close physical proximity to Jerusalem, implying that the priests who removed the ark from Jerusalem would have had an easy time moving it to Mt. Nebo.

4. The Jordanian government canceled

all archaeological digs within a 20-mile radius of Mt. Nebo, thus "proving" that they are protecting something.

5. Someone took great pains to seal the entrance to the tunnel, again "proving" that something of value is hidden there.

While such teams of amateur archaeologists are attempting to fulfill what they perceive to be a last-days prophecy, they are at the same time causing problems for established archaeologists.

According to Michael Blaine, associate pastor of the Glendale, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church, and administrative director of the ill-fated 1982 Andrews University archaeological research team, "One must appreciate the difference between legitimate and non-legitimate work in archaeology, particularly during the present period of 'arkomania.'" Blaine defines "non-legitimate" work as that which has as its sole objective the recovery of a single artifact in order to authenticate something, rather than trying to understand the artifact's overall place in history.

In contrast, the Andrews University team work is legitimate, with the goal of "recovery of information concerning the history of the Transjordan, which has important implications not only for biblical history, but for knowledge of the Iron and Bronze Ages," which may be useful for modern regional planning in Jordan.

Blaine and others connected with the Andrews University project in Jordan believe "it is precisely the goals of the 'ark-seekers,' and the way in which those goals have been presented to King Hussein of Jordan," that are at least partially responsible for the cancellation of last summer's scheduled field work, and now this summer's as well.

Several ark-seekers have written letters to King Hussein, requesting permission to bring forth the ark in "accordance with the law of Moses," while pointing out to the king that Moses' law is "the same as" the

law of Allah. Such letters trouble recognized archaeologists. As Blaine states, "This type of request reveals either an ignorance of or a lack of regard for one of the fundamental 'laws' of archaeology . . . an artifact belongs to the country in which it is found." These letters also tend to be politically insensitive.

News media, tipped off to alleged discoveries of the Ark of the Covenant, has persistently demanded details of the find from the Jordanian government. Although the Andrews University archaeological team has enjoyed a cordial relationship with the Jordanian government and the Department of Antiquities, such harassment has understandably resulted in an attitude of hesitancy regarding any and all archaeological projects in the district around Mt. Nebo.

Blaine learned of the summer 1982 cancellation only after arriving in Jordan to begin work at Tell Jalul in June. The cancellation, says Blaine, "placed great financial stress on both the Andrews University group and some of the people who were to help at the dig, including students, teachers, housewives, and ministers, a few of whom were already en route to Amman before they could be notified."

Such turns of events have resulted in additional financial problems for the Andrews University project itself. Although its research was at one time partially funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, current cutbacks have caused it to rely more heavily on corporate and individual grants. Donations from these private sources may decline, at least in part due to the confusion regarding legitimate and non-legitimate work in Jordan.

**I**n light of these problems, Blaine and other serious archaeologists are particularly troubled by the fact that ark enthusiasts tend to describe their work in terms of "hastening the Lord's return." These Adventists bring to the search for the ark

uniquely Adventist concerns. While some Protestant fundamentalists see recovering the ark as a refutation of science and higher criticism, some Adventist searchers hold fulfillment of prophecy as the ultimate result of recovering the ark. As the years pass, a certain impatience grows in some minds regarding the importance of locating the ark. This impatience seems to be increasing for those who are counting down toward the last days of this earth's existence. Individuals as well as groups have taken upon themselves the responsibility for locating and recovering the Ark of the Covenant, believing that once it is revealed, the law of God, the investigative judgment, and the seventh-day Sabbath will be vindicated.

Neither the Old nor New Testaments gives any clear indication of where the ark is or of its future revelation. Ark-seekers pin their hopes on several other "proofs" that the ark will be discovered. Some claim to have been visited by a heavenly messenger who gave them personal responsibility for recovering the ark. Even certain Seventh-day Adventists have become involved in searches largely because of what they feel is evidence from the writings of Ellen G. White. She made two clear assertions about the history of the ark: 1) she claimed it was hidden in a cave, and 2) she asserted it has never been disturbed since it was hidden.

These righteous men, just before the destruction of the temple, removed the sacred ark containing the tables of stone, and with mourning and sadness, secreted it in a cave where it was to be hid from the people of Israel, because of their sins, and was to be no more restored to them. That sacred ark is yet hid. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted.<sup>6</sup>

Ellen White's writings also contain a passage that is widely interpreted by some Adventists as a divinely inspired prediction that the ark will indeed be found:

These tables of stone will be brought forth from their hiding place, and on them will be seen the Ten Commandments engraved by the finger of God. These tables of stone now lying in the ark of the testament will be a convincing testimony to the truth and binding claims of God's law.<sup>7</sup>

Although the statement refers only to the

display of the tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments, the conclusion is drawn that if the tables of stone are to be displayed to the world (in order to give emphasis to the seventh-day Sabbath), the Ark of the Covenant will have to be found first. Its discovery would therefore seem to be assured.

Most Seventh-day Adventists believe that the ark will not be revealed until God himself discloses it, perhaps symbolically, just before the Second Coming of Christ. The view of recent Adventist searchers for the ark is that it will be discovered in the last days just as the governments of the world are about to establish a counterfeit Sabbath. The discovery will then signal the beginning of the judgment of the living. This view is typified by the statement of Vance Ferrel that "Ellen White specifically predicted that this ark would be found and that its discovery would warn the world of the judgment and the importance of keeping the Ten Commandments."<sup>8</sup>

This anticipation of the literal recovery of the ark led to some confusion among Adventists following Crotser's widely publicized "discovery" of the ark in 1982. *Adventist Review* editor Kenneth Wood attempted to dispel that perplexity in his May 27 editorial. There, Wood briefly described the claims made by Crotser's group and concluded that "To know whether God will

bring forth the literal tables of stone hidden in the ark is not essential for us. To know Jesus is." Nevertheless, his discussions of interpretations of Ellen White's statements may have in fact fanned the flames of sensationalism:

"Throughout the decades some SDA's have held that Ellen White's statements indicate that the ark, containing the ten commandment law eventually will be found. Others have held that the statements are not coercive, that they may be interpreted in several ways, even in a symbolic sense. At one time we identified strongly with the latter group."

However, Wood continues that "more recently we have seen new force in a number of Ellen White statements made in 1901, 1908, and 1909," some of which Wood feels have "more than symbolic significance."

The concept that Ellen White's statements should be taken symbolically appears to be supported, in part, by a statement prepared by the Ellen G. White Estate in March 1962, clarifying the church's position on the ark:

... Nowhere is it said that the tables of the law will be brought forth by men as a result of finding them hidden in the cave . . . It is made clear that God, and not man, is the one who will bring the tables to view. This will be done *after* probation has closed for all men. The tables of the law will be exhibited then 'as the role of judgment.' However, we are not told in those statements which of the two sets of tables of the law will be the one exhibited in the heavens at this time.<sup>9</sup>

Yet belief in literal recovery—by man—of the ark persists, and with it, the possibility of continuing setbacks for established archaeological projects such as that of Andrews University.

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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. *Adventist Review* of August 23 and November 15, 1979.
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3. *The Jerusalem Post*, November 22, 1981.
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7. *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 972; see also *EW*, p. 255.
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9. "The Hidden Tables of Law," pp. 5, 6.

# Adolescent Literature: What Are Your Kids Reading?

by Sylvia J. Davis

It is . . . the literature we read for amusement or purely for pleasure that may have the greatest . . . least suspected . . . earliest and most insidious influences upon us.  
—T.S. Eliot

In 1980 as part of my thesis for the master of arts degree, I prepared and administrated a survey to determine the reading habits of approximately 500 eleventh and twelfth graders in five Seventh-day Adventist schools. The questionnaire, which asked the students to list favorite books, included questions that probed how they chose them and sought their general attitudes about literature. It was given in a variety of classroom settings with no prior announcement. No signature was required. Students were given the freedom to list preferences not recommended by their teachers or unavailable in their school library. I undertook the study with the hope that the knowledge gained would help teachers on both the secondary and college levels to select and recommend literature that would enhance the cognitive and emotive growth of their students. Limitations of space permit only a listing of the top 25 books selected by the students and a brief analysis. (Books are listed in order of popularity, most to least.)

Though writing specifically aimed at adolescents is a fairly new field, this list indicates that date of publication holds no absolute sway over reader appeal. Whereas six of the choices held positions on the best-seller list the year of the survey, *Huckleberry*

## SDA Academy Favorites

J.R.R. Tolkien	<i>The Hobbit</i>
Peter Benchley	<i>Jaws</i>
J.R.R. Tolkein	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (Entire trilogy)
George Lucas	<i>Star Wars</i>
C.S. Lewis	<i>The Chronicles of Narnia</i> (Entire series)
James Herriot	<i>All Creatures Great and Small</i>
George Orwell	<i>Animal Farm</i>
Hank Searls	<i>Jaws 2</i>
Mark Twain	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
E.G. Valens	<i>The Other Side of the Mountain</i>
James Herriot	<i>All Things Bright and Beautiful</i>
Flora Rheta Schreiber	<i>Sybil</i>
Judy Blume	<i>Forever</i>
Joni Eareckson	<i>Joni</i>
Coleen McCullough	<i>The Thorn Birds</i>
Gale Sayers	<i>I Am Third</i>
Alex Haley	<i>Roots</i>
Jack London	<i>The Call of the Wild</i>
Alan Paton	<i>Cry, the Beloved Country</i>
Vincent Bugliosi	<i>Helter Skelter</i>
Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey	<i>Grease</i>
Frank B. Gilbreth	<i>Cheaper by the Dozen</i>
Ernest Hemingway	<i>The Old Man and the Sea</i>
Chaim Potok	<i>The Promise</i>
John Powell	<i>Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?</i>

*Finn* first appeared in 1884 and the Lewis series has survived 30 years of young readers. Granted, six of the books chosen have been made into films, indicating the influence that this medium has on the adolescent, but few books of laughter or light comedy were chosen. Students take life seriously, and they chose material that explored wide experiences, often filled with violence and tragedy.

Only nine of the books on the list are "true" stories, though a closer look at many of the books shows an undercurrent of high moral and religious value in theme and plot. Adventure is still a perennial literary focal point in a reader's search for interest. Six of the 10 most-chosen books are tales of ad-

venture. While *Jaws* is a fictional story focusing on the man-vs-animal theme, James Herriott's books chronicle the British country atmosphere and a simple way of life with animals, where the need for care surrounds everyone. Mark Twain also wrote with an adventuresome spirit, following the rich history of early America. Written in a colloquial dialect, *Huckleberry Finn* survives and was a favorite of these high school students.

The appeal of stories that allow the reader to "live through the lives of others" is undoubtedly what put Valens' *The Other Side of the Mountain* among the favorites. A dream of every adolescent is to become the "best." Young Jill Kinmont was striving to be an Olympic champion when she met life head-on in a skiing accident. The honesty of this story reaches a climax when Jill, though paralyzed, informs a prospective employer, "You have no idea of what I am capable!" Every growing adolescent speaks these lines to parents, teachers, and friends, and that same appeal of identifying outside one's self may account for the choice of Tolkien's and Lewis' fantasy classics. Both fantasies follow a search for the black and white of good and evil and utilize elements of escapism. Bilbo, the Hobbit, begins an adventure that becomes a heroic quest defining good and evil.

Judy Blume is the only author on the list who writes specifically for the adolescent. She has written over 11 books, all in the first person, portraying significant moments of a young person's life. Her book *Forever*, 13th on the list, tells of the first experience of love. Without making a traditional moral statement, it raises the question of the appropriate expectations involved in intimacy. Its poignant message is that life is seldom filled with experiences that are "forever." In noting the lack of books listed from authors who write specifically for the adolescent, one may conclude that possibly

these students just have not been introduced to this literature. However, a wealth of literature is produced for this group by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but for some reason these books have not reached their intended audience or have failed to impress their adolescent readers.

If students are introduced to the authors who write about the experiences of youth, and teachers make time for discussion of the material, the knowledge of how others have struggled and coped with adolescent problems can be a resource for a positive growing process. One advertisement for adolescent literature reads in bold type: "To get them reading, to keep them reading." Maturity begins for many students when they learn to question pat answers and experience the richness offered by differences of opinion. Seventh-day Adventist educators must use books to help young people become more sensitive to the specialness of each human being.

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## The Great Controversy As the Key to Ellen White

Joseph Battistone. *The Great Controversy Theme in E.G. White Writings*. xiii + 134 pp., bibl. Berrien Springs, MI.: Andrews University Press, 1978. \$8.95 (paper)

by Rolf J. Poehler

Although he now is a pastor, this paperback grew out of a series of lectures Battistone presented while serving as an associate professor of religion at Andrews University. Battistone contends that Ellen White's writings can only be correctly understood and interpreted if the battle between good and evil is properly recognized as the central motif of, not only the "Conflict of the

Ages" series but her entire literary production.

As Battistone moves from Ellen White's treatment of Satan's rebellion in heaven all the way to her description of the final deliverance of God's people at the second advent, his analysis, at times, makes for tedious reading, at least for the reader interested in less studious material. But as a reference tool this book will undoubtedly be an asset to every serious student of Ellen White. To yield its fullest value the book must be studied in connection with those volumes of Ellen White Battistone attempts to elucidate.

Although his analysis is limited to her historical works, Battistone makes a valuable contribution to the long-overdue hermeneutic of Ellen White's writings. According to Battistone, Ellen White's writings are not inerrant source books providing objective historical and exegetical information. Rather, Ellen White intends to evoke through her commentary a religious response to Scripture and history. Ellen White, Battistone says, sees past events and personages as paradigms of the imminent final scenes of the great controversy.

One wishes that the author had devoted more space to these and other implications of his study. Future research, which would go beyond the expressed purpose of this book, will have to develop further the relationship of the great controversy motif to the problem of theodicy (stressed by Battistone), to the non-historical writings of White (neglected in the book), and to apocalyptic imagery and thought (ignored by the author). It will also be important to investigate the possibility of different conceptions of the great controversy motif. Since the theme of a battle between good and evil was neither new nor uncommon in White's time, the true uniqueness and originality of her approach deserve further study. In other words, the book serves only as a valuable starting point for the necessary hermeneutical reflection on the writings of Seventh-day Adventism's most influential writer.

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# Publishing Yes; Printing No—The Future of Pacific Press?

by George Colvin

A revolutionary action differentiating between publishing and printing was passed April 7 by the General Conference Committee following Spring Council. The General Conference decision was the denomination's first attempt to combine the editorial pluralism desired by Ellen and James White when they established the Pacific Press and the efficiencies in production made possible and necessary by modern printing technology. If the General Conference action is implemented, Pacific Press Publishing Association will become strictly a publisher: a group of editors and promoters without its own press. The General Conference Committee voted to recommend that the Pacific Press *not* buy new property right away, that the Pacific Press be maintained as a publishing but not a printing entity, and that the General Conference establish a task force empowered to undertake a major study of the entire structure of denominational printing and distribution in North America, and to make recommendations for changes.

Before the General Conference Committee voted, President Neal C. Wilson said that the two major web presses at the Review and Herald Publishing Association could handle several times the present volume of total church printing in North

America. Since the Pacific Press also has two web presses, none of the denomination's powerful presses are being operated cost-effectively. The Pacific Press has a debt of some \$8 million and an unsold inventory of \$12 million. The Review and Herald Publishing Association has a debt of \$12-\$18 million. Wilson said that not only printing but patterns of distribution must be examined. During 1982 in North America only 161 literature evangelists earned more than \$10,000 (assuming they received 30 percent sales commission and 10 percent living subsidies). Only eight literature evangelists earned \$20,000 or more in 1982—only 1.3 percent of the 1,412 full and part-time literature evangelists active during 1982 in North America. The vote of the committee was part of a motion approving the sale of the Pacific Press Publishing Association property in Mountain View, California.

In addition to launching a major study of publishing in North America, the General Conference action meant the Pacific Press would maintain editorial offices only to process manuscripts. Its costly web presses would be sold. Manuscripts edited and promoted by Pacific Press would be printed on the presses of the Review and Herald Publishing Association or at non-denominationally owned printing establishments near the editorial offices of Pacific Press.

Meanwhile, employees of Pacific Press met (with management approval), to discuss the General Conference plan to divorce publishing from printing functions. Employees feared the complete liquidation of the press after such an action: "Balancing the problems of the North American Division publishing on the back of Pacific Press," one employee said.



Some employees were upset at what they considered to be preferential treatment by the General Conference of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. They felt that officers appeared to be more concerned with the debt load of Pacific Press than with the larger debt at the Review and Herald. Also, the General Conference recently bypassed the Pacific Press, which has published all school texts printed by the denomination, and awarded the Review and Herald a contract to print a series of readers for the Adventist school system in North America.

The Pacific Press employees were not the only ones acting. On April 4 the *Pacific Union Recorder* reported in an extensive front-page article: "The Pacific Union executive committee and the Central California Conference constituency have voted unanimously to recommend to the General Conference that the relocation of the Pacific Press be at a site in Pacific Union territory."

When the Pacific Press constituency met April 10, employee interest was obviously high. A proposal to enlarge the constituency by 50 members, by giving votes to recent (five years) and retired employees was passed by a fairly wide majority. Not surprisingly, present and past employees constituted the majority of the constituency.

Lowell Bock, a General Conference vice president and chairman of the board of Pacific Press, presented to the constituency the decision made by the General Conference to reorganize the press as a publishing association, without a production capacity. He explained the refusal of the General Conference to authorize the press to do commercial work. Because the General Conference in late 1982 advanced about \$850,000 to the Bank of America to prevent foreclosure, Pacific Press was technically in receivership to the General Conference. It would be impossible for the General Con-

ference to absorb indefinitely the continuing losses of the Pacific Press.

The constituency, dominated by employees, responded by moving that the present buildings and property in Mountain View owned by the Pacific Press not be sold until a new site is selected at which to relocate Pacific Press as both a publisher and press. Debate on this rejection of the General Conference proposal continued all day. Ellen White's desire to maintain more than one editorial voice in the denomination was raised. The General Conference officers thought that their proposal would conform to her laudable goal of maintaining checks and balances among editorial influences in the church. Lawrence Maxwell, editor of *Signs of the Times*, pointed out that the General Conference was essentially asking many press employees to vote themselves out of a job. Paraphrasing a famous quotation, he raised the specter of recent denominational history: "Pacific Press has nothing to fear for the future except as it shall forget the way that Neal Wilson has led the affairs of Southern Publishing Association in the past."

Interestingly the press employees, intent on maintaining the organization in its present form, did not explicitly dwell on the prospect of 100 of the 260 employees at the Pacific Press losing their jobs. Neither did the General Conference representatives introduce the subject, perhaps because it had not been discussed at their Spring Council meeting.

In the end, the General Conference would not alter its stand against the Pacific Press becoming a printer of commercial work, and the employee-dominated constituency would not agree to Pacific Press becoming a publisher instead of a printer. The only vote passed by the constituency was to defer a final decision until another constituency meeting on June 12.

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

## College Newspapers Shift from Denominational Controversy to Campus Issues

by Mary Pat Koos

Adventist college students are tired of the controversies in the denomination and on their campuses, according to some editors of current college papers. Consequently, the amount of attention given controversial issues during the 1981-82 academic year has decreased in this year's papers. "Students have become apathetic to church issues and to all the infighting," says Ken Rozell, editor of the *Southern Accent* at Southern College. Rozell suggests another reason editors in the 1982-83 school year are more reluctant than before to focus on denominational controversies. "When students hear about all the politics and possible corruption in the church, they feel helpless and question their membership in the SDA church."

At the La Sierra Campus of Loma Linda University, the so-called "preoccupation" with controversy of the 1981-82 *Criterion*, which included lengthy features and strongly-worded editorials, has led the 1982-83 *Criterion* to swing away from what some considered to be excessive coverage of denominational issues. In his first editorial of the new year Glenn Jeffrey cited the *Criterion's* "first and foremost" priority as being "fun and popular." Later, associate editor Brent Bradley affirmed the paper's policy to include potentially controversial material in an informative manner. Asked whether the amount or type of church issues had changed over the past two years, Rhonda Robinson, editor of the *Columbia Journal* at Columbia Union College, answered, "Yes. A few years ago, an editor printed very negative opinions and news

about the various issues in the Adventist Church. We are now striving to move to a more balanced approach." As a result, she said, "We have not gotten much into church news and/or controversial issues."

However, one editor—Kris Coffin in charge of the *Campus Chronicle* at Pacific Union College—thinks that Adventist college students have maintained the interest in denominational issues their papers reflected in 1981-82. "Students are more critical of the organization and the ways it's run. They don't accept things just because the 'church' says so. They want to study and decide for themselves, to analyze and re-evaluate what has been taught them without question for many years."

During the 1981-82 school year, collegiate journalists explained how the forces of opinion within the church affect not only their own colleges but Adventist higher education as a whole. An index of items concerned with churchwide news and issues in nine papers surveyed includes dozens of articles under some 25 headings.

General Conference President Neal C. Wilson, in an interview in the *Campus Chronicle's* special issue, "The State of the Church" (May 27, 1982), granted a measure of latitude to Adventist college newspapers with the following comment:

I don't feel that it is improper at all for a student paper to explore and investigate these various viewpoints or ideologies, even some controversies, that exist in the church. I think that is something that a college paper can do which an official journal of the church cannot.

Wilson's statement came during a school year when several college newspapers were under fire from some students, faculty, administration, and constituency for news, feature, and editorial content.

On two campuses—Southern College and Pacific Union College—the papers themselves and the treatment of issues therein played a major part in campus and denominational controversy. Landmark editions of *Southern Accent* and *Campus Chronicle* exploring the state of the church, denominational controversy, and the problems of

their own religion faculties were published in the spring of 1982. Heated and highly varied reaction from constituents, faculty members, and students came as a result of the *Campus Chronicle's* publication of side-by-side pro and con reviews of Lewis Walton's book *Omega*.

Andrews' *Student Movement* received criticism for its sale of a half-page ad for local meetings featuring former seminary professor Smuts Van Rooyen and Desmond Ford (as did the *Campus Chronicle* for a similar ad for Van Rooyen meetings.) (This school year the *Student Movement* reported an administrative ban on advertising for the Ford-Van Rooyen meetings, but that did not stop the paper's coverage of the meetings in a feature, "Ford and Van Rooyen return to Andrews," by Keith Lockhart.)

Freedom of the press and a denominationally controversial issue also came head-to-head with Southern College *Southern Accent's* sale of a full-page army recruitment ad which led to a series of letters to the editor regarding the propriety of the ad and the issue of bearing arms. A subsequent editorial titled "Studying War Some More" advocated either complete conscientious objection or the bearing of arms.

Reporting of controversial issues and the resulting counter-opinion and objection from readers has led to an examination of the proper role of the Adventist student newspaper. Some reference to this issue has surfaced in nearly all the papers.

A letter from Andrews' *Student Movement* printing manager David Burgess (May 6, 1982) described the situation there:

I have watched with alarm as the *SM* staff has received pressure from the AU administration over the content of the paper. Apparently, administrators feel that the *SM* gives a view of Andrews which is damaging to its image. The paper is now to blame for a prospective decline in enrollment.

As a result of pressure from key officials, the editors—in all their wisdom—produced two remarkably bland and boring issues of the *SM*. . . . What I fail to see is how an article contributing facts and thoughts on particular subjects can damage the image of a university. After all, isn't a university the place where facts are discussed in the hope of coming to the correct conclusion?

Andrews' *Student Movement* has been thorough in its news coverage of denomination-wide events; this paper was unique in its "outside" news reporting and analysis of the problems at Pacific Union College and Southern College.

Mention of church-wide news and controversial issues though not totally absent has come with markedly less frequency in Union College's *Clocktower*, Walla College's *Collegian*, Columbia Union College's *Columbia Journal*, Canadian Union College's *Aurora*, and Southwestern Adventist College's *Southwesterner*. Today's collegiate editors are aware of the vital position Adventist colleges hold for the future of the denomination. Their varying editorial decisions reflect a struggle to act responsibly during a turbulent period in the church's history.

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Mary Pat Koos is a freelance writer in Grand Terrace, California.

## How Two College Presidents Were Chosen

by Kent Daniels Seltman

John Wagner and Malcolm Maxwell are the new presidents of Southern College and Pacific Union College, respectively. Both campuses were besieged by conservative attacks for many months prior to the September 1982 announcements by their presidents, Frank Knittle and John Cassell, that they would leave office June 30, 1983.\*

The two college boards, in selecting the new presidents, followed the recommendations of board-appointed presidential search committees. The new appointments appear to have strong support from the faculties and constituencies of the institutions.

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\*"Adventist Colleges Under Siege," *Spectrum*, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 4.

Knittle's resignation in September led to the creation of a 16-member Presidential Search Committee by the Southern College Board of Trustees. Membership included seven members of the board (the four Union Conference officers and three members-at-large), three faculty members selected by the faculty, three representatives from non-faculty college employees (one each from administration, student services, and college industries), the Student Association president, the Alumni Association president, and a member of the Committee of 100.

After two meetings, this committee presented three names to the December meeting of the full college board. Norman Woods, vice president for Academic Affairs at Loma Linda University, was first invited. Woods declined the invitation after a few days of consideration. This set the full selection process at work again with another meeting of the search committee and another meeting of the full college board in January.

John Wagner, vice president for Academic Affairs at Union College, was invited at this meeting. After some hesitation, Wagner accepted the presidency which he will assume July 1.

The situation at Pacific Union College was similar. The Presidential Search Committee at Pacific Union College was much smaller. Its nine members included the chairman and vice chairman of the board, three board members-at-large, two faculty members selected by the faculty, one student selected by the student association senate, and the president of the Alumni Association.

In an attempt to solicit as much input as possible, Walter Blehm, president of the Pacific Union and chairman of the college board, scheduled two public meetings of the search committee, one on the Pacific Union College campus and one at the San Jose offices of the Central California Conference. Furthermore, all pastors in the union were also invited by mail to suggest possible candidates, and they were encouraged to have their members do the same.

Out of the approximately 60 names gathered in this process, the search committee identified several leading candidates, most of whom were interviewed by Blehm in early February. In February the search committee submitted five names to the board.

Clifford Sorenson, president of Walla Walla College, was invited to be president of Pacific Union College. After about a week's consideration, Sorenson declined the invitation. Blehm then polled board members by mail to seek final approval to invite their clear second choice in earlier deliberations. As a result, Malcolm Maxwell, vice president for academic affairs at Walla Walla College, was formally invited to be president.

Maxwell accepted the presidency after a special meeting of the full college board (which only eight of the 30 members attended) in March. At that meeting, the board responded favorably to 10 areas of concern that Maxwell raised.

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Kent Daniels Seltman is the chairperson of the English department at Pacific Union College.

### The PUC Crisis

To the Editors: President Cassell of Pacific Union College wonders how it is possible for Christians to “participate in a campaign of personal and professional vilification.” I ask, what else can we expect given the promotion and sales by the SDA Church of 70,000 copies of a book with the mind-set of *Omega*? This book stirs us to righteous anger against “heresy” (to Mr. Walton’s way of thinking heresy is seen as grace and justification) and urges us to stamp it out. Should it surprise us that this is what these small, critical groups are trying to do? The church has promoted the very attitude (through *Omega*) that now threatens its own institutions.

Mr. Seltman speaks of “vicious rumor” doing inestimable damage to SDA higher education. Has anyone given thought to the extremely vicious rumors circulating through our churches re: those preachers of righteousness by faith who have been dismissed or have resigned (voluntarily or under pressure) in the past two years?

Charyl Williams

### A Time for Healing?

To the Editors: Two days ago I received the latest *Spectrum* (Vol. 13, No. 2), with the impassioned editorial. The nature of your comments is such that I believe a reply is warranted.

I wish you could understand the way those remarks sound to many observers. While you try to suggest rapprochement between the two persuasions in Adventism, no questions were answered. Many conservative church members will conclude that you are simply not talking their language.

I will be as brief as possible, since the matters to which I refer are simple.

You plead with the church to recognize the place of new light and progressive understanding. You say this in the context of a debate in which views are being proposed which both sides agree contradict the church’s historic positions. You speak and behave as though new light may indeed deny previous misunderstandings, even on major points of faith. Church members and administrators know how Ellen White reacted to the Ballenger sanctuary thesis, views identical with what we hear today, and recall her statement, “God never contradicts Himself” (1SM 162). They thus recognize the impropriety of accepting, in the name of “progressive truth,” new teachings which plainly deny past divine pronouncements. Mrs. White plainly declared that persons holding such aberrant views should not be employed as workers (see *Omega*, p. 76). On these simple, precise grounds, your

pleas for toleration will be rejected until you provide some systematic resolution to the obvious gap between your proposals and the counsels of inspiration.

You cannot point to previous changes regarding Armageddon or the king of the north to legitimize changes on the vital questions under discussion today. The aforementioned disputes concerned individual points of view, not official stances of the General Conference or precise statements of Mrs. White. Even the Arian views held for so long by many Adventists were never ratified as official doctrines or supported by Mrs. White. These points are thus in a completely different category than the tenets now under scrutiny. The latter are sustained both by official and inspired pronouncements.

Critics of historic Adventism have yet to present convincing evidence for the changes they feel should occur. Attacks on the sanctuary have received cogent response in the BRI papers found in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, published by Review and Herald. One is forced to reject the Adventist position only if he accepts liberal presuppositions on the nature of prophecy (denying the Bible to be its own interpreter), or if one accepts the new theology gospel thesis, whose finished atonement precludes the 1844 theology. Desmond Ford’s *Palmdale Documents* (p. 4) and Brinsmeade’s Sabbatarian thesis (*Verdict*, June 1981, p. 6) amply demonstrate this. Historic Adventism is rooted in the consensus of Scripture; thus these theories are judged and found wanting. The critics have standards which the mainstream of Adventism considers un-biblical.

The so-called “plagiarism charge” is even more hollow. Scholars have plainly demonstrated how Bible writers borrowed from sources in much the same manner as Mrs. White. The only thing the critic ends up saying is that the apologist is “damning the Bible in order to vindicate Ellen White” (Brinsmead, *Judged by the Gospel*, p. 128). You and I both know such retorts are not scholarship, but a childish escape from reality.

My point in all this is that apologists for the church have a case which they believe is sound, to which critics of our doctrines have yet to reply in substance. Yet you speak as though change is imperative, as if the church must alter its perspective to avoid embarrassment. No one has offered compelling reasons in this regard.

Your concept of freedom and toleration leaves many questions unanswered. You and your associates are quick to offer criticism if the church attempts to draw a line in theological matters. You cry “academic freedom” whenever discipline occurs. Where, my friend, do you draw the line between acceptability and impropriety? When anyone tries to draw a line you cry “intolerance.” You claim that fatigue rather than doctrinal error is the greatest danger for North American Adventism. One wonders what you consider error to be.

Kevin D. Paulson

To the Editors: I appreciated the editorial entitled "A Time for Healing." I agree wholeheartedly with the sentiments expressed. I wish, in fact, that the editor would have broadened the arena and entitled the article "A Time to Regain our Vision."

It is a fact of history that the most effective way to destroy any organization is to work against it from within. Because of that fact, it amazed me how successfully our attention has been divided over the recent months.

As you alluded to in the editorial, the real tragedy is that it is impacting the most creative minds of our church. It is time to regain our obvious mission.

Jere D. Patzer  
Upper Columbia Conference  
Spokane, Washington

To the Editors: After reading your editorial in the last *Spectrum* (Vol. 13, No. 2) I want to tell you how grateful I am that those words are in print! I'm also grateful that a few of you who saw the destructive actions of very polarized sides back in the 60s and 70s had the energy to insist that the dialogue continue.

I want you to know that I hear your voice and *Spectrum's* as peacemakers and I hope your numbers will increase rapidly! You are a courageous group, and I hope not an endangered species.

Wanda Boineau  
Augusta, Georgia

## Lay Responsibility

To the Editors: It was thrilling to read in the Vol. 13, No. 2, issue of *Spectrum* the article by Glenn Coe "The Future of Adventism: A Lawyer's Perspective." It so clearly sets out the steps necessary for "leading" which involves not merely the upper echelon of Adventism but also the laymen.

Ever since Glacier View, I have had the feeling of being considered "on the fringe." Prior to Glacier View I am sorry to say that I tended to accept hierarchical edicts—"I'm not to reason why." Then suddenly came the realization (Post-Glacier View) that now each individual church member must prepare to declare what his inner convictions are. It is time we dusted off our Bibles and set aside time (of which there is still a little left) for serious study. It was a revelation to me that Bible study can be so absorbing, permeating the whole being. Let the Bible speak. We don't need human interpreters; the Spirit is far more effective. God does not favor anyone. One must have the urge to do this, and the results are a foretaste of heaven. Believe me.

Dorothy Bathgate  
Warburton, Victoria  
Australia

## Women in Ministry

To the Editors: As I began reading the article, "How Long Must Women Wait? Prospects for Adventist Church Leadership," by Janice Eiseman Daffern, in *Spectrum*, Vol. 12, No. 4, I was initially tempted to dismiss what the author was saying as the blurtings of another pushy "libber", much like some others I had known and disliked. But as I read on some observations came to my mind which might prove thought provoking to other potential chauvinists like myself.

I will be the first to admit that I am quite uncomfortable with the idea of female pastors. The whole idea just doesn't strike me right. But I also must admit that I've never had a woman as my pastor which leaves me devoid of any objectivity on the subject. Furthermore, since when has the way something strikes me become a valid way of discerning God's will in the matter?

Yet, in spite of my innate bias against female pastors, the idea put forth by the church creating a "special" channel by which to bring women into the ministry, namely the "associate in pastoral care" program, seems to be entirely inappropriate. Either the church should fully open the door for women to enter the pastoral ranks through the same channels as men, or shut the door entirely and attempt to defend their action. After all, if the current machinery for "confirming the call" of men is inadequate for women, then who is to say the process is even reliable for evaluating the men? Our system for determining the fitness and commitment of a person to hold the office of the minister should be flexible and comprehensive enough to be used in evaluating any "brand" of human being.

As for my internal bias, well . . . it is neither sacred nor scientific, and though change often hurts, it is seldom fatal. I would vote in favor of opening to women the regular channels leading to the full prospects of the ordained ministry in the Adventist Church and let them fight it out with the rest of us. If I am afraid of losing my position to a woman, then I ought to sit down and re-examine my own "calling" and job performance in an attempt to discover the basis of my insecurity. If God really "called" me to minister, then he wouldn't let me be knocked out of my calling. But if a woman claims to be "called" of God, and yet we (the men) deny her the opportunity to demonstrate that calling, is it not possible that we might actually find ourselves to be opposing God?

Gary Venden  
Evangelist  
Carolina Conference

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