

FORUM

AAF Newsletter
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Newsletter of the Association of Adventist Forums

December 1983

AAF Conference Features Sessions On Religious Experience, Worship

by Bonnie Dwyer

A special session on varieties of religious experience has been planned for the second National Conference of the Association of Adventist Forums. Steve Daily, chaplain on the La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University; Lorna Tobler, well-known Adventist laywoman; and Jonathan Butler, associate professor of history at Loma Linda University will discuss their own relationships to the Adventist church. A response will be given by social historian A. Gregory Schneider of the Pacific Union College faculty. He recently participated in a workshop at Yale University on the varieties of religious experience.

The second National Conference of the Association of Adventist Forums will be held in the Azure Hills Adventist Church, Grand Terrace, California, and the nearby University Church of Loma Linda March 15-18, 1984. A full program and registration materials are listed elsewhere in this issue of *Spectrum*.

"We planned this particular session on religious experience because we know that many people today are sorting through their personal religious experience, to bring it up-to-date with the way they live, work, and think," says conference coordinator Susan Jacobsen. "We wanted to provide a time when people could discuss this aspect of religious experience with others."

In a Friday session at the conference, the stages of development within a church organization will be discussed by Oxford Professor Bryan Wilson, one of the world's most notable sociologists of religion. Later that day, the AAF Task Force on Church Structure will report on the current work being done throughout North America on changing the structure of the church.

Sabbath morning Samuel L. Terrien, an associate editor of the *Interpreter's Bible and Dictionary of the Bible*, and one of this era's most distinguished contemporary theologians of the Old Testament, will talk on "The Day of the Lord and the Lord's Day." Charles Teel's "The Apocalypse as Liturgy," published in this issue of *Spectrum*, will be the heart of the Sabbath worship service at the conference. Later in the conference, Sergio Mendez Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca, who has the reputation of being one of Mexico's most progressive bishops, will describe the role of the Christian churches in social change in Central America. Walter Douglas, professor of church history and mission at the SDA Theological Seminary and member of a family involved in recent governments in Grenada, will respond to Bishop Arceo. John Kelley, an Adventist foreign service officer in the U.S. State Department, who manages the State Department's El Salvador Election Project, will explore whether and how the Adventist church might influence public policy in Central American nations.

In the final session of the conference, Charles J. Stokes, professor of economics at the University of Bridgeport, a former dean of Atlantic Union College and a three-time Fulbright professor of Economics, will give a presentation with the provocative title, "Mega-church, Mega-failure?" Groups will then focus on discussions of higher education, elementary and secondary education, health care, and publishing.

Bonnie Dwyer is a graduate student in journalism at California State University, Fullerton, CA.

89% of Readers Share Spectrum; 66% Refer to It Once a Week

by Dana Lauren West

The results from *Spectrum's* recent reader profile survey show that the respondents are satisfied with *Spectrum* as a whole. The rate of return was eight percent, slightly higher than the usual six percent response to a survey of this kind.

If the respondents are characteristic, *Spectrum's* typical reader is male (80%), between the ages of 34-41 (46%), has had graduate or post-graduate education, (35% and 45% respectively) is involved in medicine (24%), education (18%), or religion (14%), and earns over \$25,000 a year.

The results indicate an interest in attending AAF-sponsored conferences and workshops, but less interest in study tours. *Spectrum* readers also buy over 10 books and/or tapes and records each year.

The typical respondent is not active in his/her local AAF chapter (some do not have an organized chapter nearby), yet shares each issue of *Spectrum* with one to three people (89%), and reads or refers to each issue of *Spectrum* once a week (66%).

Although readers made suggestions for subjects they would like to see included in *Spectrum*, (some being religion and science, art and religion, literature, and the social sciences) the overwhelming number were pleased with the amount of space allotted to each section and with the selection of articles published. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the types of topics covered, but wished for more information regarding pertinent church issues and theological questions that are debated.

The present cluster format continues to be most popular, although some noted that on important subjects an entire issue devoted to one subject would be welcome. The content of *Spectrum* was considered to be readable and understandable (94%).

Many respondents took the opportunity to add written comments. A pastor of a 900-member church with 15 years in the ministry: "You people are doing a noble and necessary service to the church. You have avoided the pitfall of a sleazy journalism while giving pertinent information. Keep it up, be courageous, without your work the future would be bleak indeed. I have no doubt that your efforts have brought a deeper level of internal responsibility to church leadership. Fear is a powerful emotion. Perhaps courage can become a more frequent one! If not, this church is doomed!"

An older member: "*Spectrum* should never forget its root and its presuppositions. When W. A. Spicer and G. F. Wolfkill contributed to the re-

search group at PUC, they started with the understanding that the foundation doctrines were divinely inspired, but that further light on understanding these doctrines should be diligently researched. Positive research illuminates truth, but negative research presents pegs on which to hang one's doubts. But a multiplicity of doubts tends to undermine the whole structure of faith. One divinely revealed truth must prevail against a multiplicity of errors no matter how penetrating are the negative barbs. My perspective of *Spectrum's* place in Adventism is a clearing house for careful assessment of arguments and information that affect our understanding of the fundamental doctrines, and the church's application in its world mission."

An SDA volunteer teacher to Peking: "We leave shortly for Peking, where we will teach English for a year. If it is possible to put our subscription on hold until we ask for it to be continued, please do so. Thank you. We find *Spectrum* not only interesting but invaluable, and the layout is of a very good quality. We have one complaint, however: why is the layout aimed at the visually impaired? We can read it from six feet away without strain. Why not use a smaller type and squeeze in more articles?"

Another reader: "I feel that reading *Spectrum* is largely responsible for my still being an active SDA. It has been reassuring to realize that others—individuals that I respect—have similar questions and problems. It is helpful to understand their reactions and rationale for their beliefs. Keep up the good, informative, work and don't 'go soft.'"

A union conference president: "*Spectrum* is read from cover to cover. Great to have a magazine that digs in a bit. I am president of a union of the Seventh-day Adventist church."

Dana Lauren West is a graduate student at Maryland University, College Park, MD.

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Contact Raymond Damazo, 855 106th Ave., N.E., Bellevue, WA 98004. Office: (206) 454-2722; Home: (206) 455-4522.

Southern Region Hears Patterson, Wagner

by Grace Emori

Three chapters are active in the Southern region of the Association of Adventist Forums: Atlanta, Georgia, Orlando, Florida, and Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists in Tennessee. Two have recently held meetings. In Atlanta, on December 5, Gary Patterson, president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, gave a report and entertained questions on the Annual Council of 1983. He himself had participated in the discussion of the possibility of creating a more independent North American Division. Previously, on October 14, Roy Branson, editor of *Spectrum*, made a presentation on "Covenant, Holy War, and Glory: Paradigms of Adventist Identity."

The chapter at Southern College has already held several meetings this school year. John Wagner, the new president of the college, soon after classes began, discussed the issue of town and gown relationships at the first of what are called "Bag and Brain" luncheons. They are informal get-togethers of faculty and students. Roy Branson gave his lecture on Adventist identity Sabbath afternoon, October 15, to about 350 people. The next month, November 12, Daniel Augsburg, professor of historical theology at the SDA theological seminary, lectured on a topic that honored the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth: "What Happens to a Movement After the Death of its Founder?" The discussion touched on implications for the Seventh-day Adventist movement.

Grace Emori is the AAF regional representative for the Southern Region.

AAF Chapters Triple in North Pacific Region

by John Brunt

Over the past three years the number of local AAF chapters in the North Pacific Region has tripled increasing from three to nine. There are now two chapters in Western Canada, four in Washington, and one each in Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

One factor in this growth has been the consistent strength of the chapter at Walla Walla

College. Graduates have settled throughout the Pacific Northwest and have continued to feel the need for intellectual and inspirational stimulation and for the opportunity to discuss important religious issues. New forum chapters have met that need. Thus graduates have been involved in the formation of new chapters. Another factor is the positive attitude toward the church that has characterized chapters in the Northwest.

The Walla Walla Forum Chapter continues to be active. Mrs. Mary Dassenko, a social worker in Walla Walla, serves as the new president. Speakers have included Gordon Bietz, pastor of the Southern College Church, and Tom and Judy Dybdahl. The Walla Walla Chapter also sponsors a scholarship for needy students at Walla Walla College.

Another chapter that has already made plans for the new school year is the Portland Chapter. Its new president is Dr. William Taylor. He and his associates have planned a series of presentations affirming reasons for faith and continued commitments to the church. Topics include, "Why I am a Christian," "Why I am a Seventh-day Adventist," and "Festival of the Sabbath."

On October 23, the British Columbia chapter, with Michael Haluschak as president, heard presentations by Rabbi Solomon of Beth Israel Temple of Vancouver, and Marty Haapalo, chapter secretary, on "The Celebration of the Sabbath."

John Brunt is the dean of the school of theology at Walla Walla College and regional representative for the North Pacific Region.

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Atlantic Region

The **New York Chapter** has started its season of programs. On October 29, Dr. Gerald Sheppard, professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary, spoke on "Daniel and Revelation: The Future of the World—Current Biblical Interpretation." Rabbi Jonathan Wolf, organizer of the Religious Jewish Committee for Progressive Political Action, spoke on November 12, and the founder of the New York Chapter, Dr. John Kelley, now with the State Department, spoke on November 26.

Columbia Region

The **Philadelphia Chapter** welcomed Judge Andrew A. McDonald on October 1. McDonald is a member of the President's Review Commission on Davenport.

The **Washington, D.C. Chapter** heard a panel discussion on "Review of the Autumn Council." Participants included Jan Daffern, associate pastor of Sligo Church, discussing women's issues; James Coffin, assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*,

giving his views on the overall significance of the 1983 Annual Council; Leslie H. Pitton, General Conference Director of North American Youth Ministries, exploring the prospect of a North American Division; and Warren Zork, associate pastor of Sligo Church and formerly a union official in East Africa, discussing the merger of two African divisions.

Southern Pacific Region

The **Los Angeles Chapter** hosted a presentation on the biblical principles of intimate love with Dave Larson of Loma Linda University's Department of Ethics.

Nuclear holocaust and Christian hope was discussed by Rob Lloyd and Ed Shakespeare, both pastors at Fullerton SDA Church at an **Orange County Chapter** meeting on October 22.

George Colvin addressed the issue of Adventism and re-organization for the **San Diego Chapter** on October 18, and Paul Landa of Loma Linda University discussed Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation on November 12.

For Your Information: Adventist Forum Regional Representatives

Atlantic Region

John Hamer Jr.
c/o Digital Equipment Corp.
75 Reed Road
Hudson MA 01749
Tel. (617) 568-5244 (o)

Columbia Region

Theodore Agard
Radiology Department
Kettering Medical Center
3737 Southern Boulevard
Kettering OH 45429
Tel. (513) 434-0045 (h)
(513) 298-4331 (o)

Southern Region

Grace Emori
2502 Asbury Court
Decatur GA 30033
Tel. (404) 325-0360 (h)
(404) 329-3518 (o)

Central Region

Darrel Huenergardt
O'Brien, Huenregardt & Cook
Attorneys at Law
109 South Walnut
Box 490
Kimball NE 69145
Tel. (308) 235-4217 (h)
(308) 235-3617 (o)

Northern Pacific Region

John Brunt
Walla Walla College
College Place WA 99324
Tel. (509) 529-8114 (h)
(509) 527-2194 (o)

Southern Pacific Region

Mike Scofield
720 S. Webster, #112
Anaheim CA 92804
Tel. (714) 828-1348
(714) 680-2212