

FORUM

Newsletter of the Association of Adventist Forums

November 1985

Adventist Forums Active At General Conference Session

by K. J. Clayton

The international character of the AAF membership was evidenced by the participants and the subjects under discussion at three luncheon meetings held July 2, 3 and 5 at the Chinese Imperial Garden Restaurant in the Hyatt-Regency complex adjacent to the Superdome, site of the 1985 General Conference session in New Orleans. Between 70 and 95 people attended each luncheon. Roy Branson, editor of *Spectrum*, and Lyndrey Niles, AAF president, presided.

China

Hsu Hua, the first Chinese president of the China Division, and his wife were honored guests at the Tuesday luncheon. In an interview with Roy Branson, Hsu shared insights into life in China today. He said that Christian groups are allowed to meet regularly and that Christianity is growing steadily—indeed, he conducted a baptism in Shanghai this year. Individual denominations are not recognized by the government, and foreign—especially Western—influence, assistance or intervention is detrimental to the Christian work in China. The aim of Adventist believers is long-term strength based on self-support, self-propagation and self-government.

Hsu, who was also president of the China Division when the People's Republic of China was established, spent 18 years in prison or under house arrest. When asked about David Lin, former secretary of the China Division who served a 15-year sentence at hard labor, Hsu reported that Lin is doing well, that he is continuing his work of translating technical material for a mining company and that authorities are said to be considering reopening Lin's case for review.

South Africa

On Wednesday, apartheid (Afrikaans for "apartness") was sensitively and candidly discussed by Alf Birch, past president of the South African Union and newly appointed director of church ministries for the Australasian Division; John Brunt, dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla College; and Russell Staples, chairman of the department of mission, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University.

Birch described South Africa's population as composed of approximately 800,000 Asians, four million whites and 18 million blacks. He emphasized the close working relationship between the two Seventh-day Adventist unions there—the Southern Union for blacks and the South Africa Union, which serves the remainder of the population. He characterized the philosophy of apartheid as unacceptable to Christians and said that Adventists in South Africa are attempting to set their own house in order before making any formal statements to the government about apartheid.

Brunt and Staples agreed to make presentations when Bekele Heye, president of the East Africa Division, who was scheduled to talk about Adventists and famine relief in his native country of Ethiopia, was reluctantly unable to meet his appointment. Brunt said his seven-week visit to Africa to conduct an extension class for the SDA Theological Seminary did not qualify him as an expert on African affairs, but the descriptions of his interactions with students in his class illustrated many facets of this complicated human issue.

Staples' many years on the African continent and his continuing work in missions provide him with unique insights, also. "If membership growth continues at its present pace, at least one-third of

the membership of the Adventist Church will be living on the African continent in the year 2000," he said. "What is our church doing to prepare for this?" (Staples addresses this issue in the book *Servants for Christ*, published by the Andrews University Press in 1980. Gottfried Oosterwal, director of the Institute of World Missions, in the same volume extrapolates current trends to show that 83.5 percent of the Seventh-day Adventist population is now in Africa, Asia and Latin America, compared to only 12 percent in North America, 3.5 percent in Europe and 1 percent or less in Australia.) Staples said "the sustained movement into Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa is unparalleled anywhere in the world today."

Romania

Petre Cimpieru was the first speaker at the Friday luncheon. He told of the growth of the Christian and Seventh-day Adventist communities in Romania, related the "struggles of Adventists to preserve their religious beliefs" and discussed some of the current human rights issues there.

From 1968 to 1973 Cimpieru was head librarian for all libraries for the Romanian Department of Defense. When military investigators found that his parents and his wife were Seventh-day Adventists and that he believed in God (although he was not baptized at that time), he was fired. Because of his master's degrees in history and the Romanian language, he was able to teach high school for six years; he then lost that job because of his Sabbath observance. After two difficult years, Amnesty International helped him make contact with the General Conference and emigrate to Austria and then to the United States. Currently he is a library assistant at Loma Linda University and is doing graduate work at the University of California at San Bernardino toward a master's degree in national security and defense. He is the editorial secretary of the Romanian *Signs of the Times*.

Australia

The final speaker was Phil Ward, editor of *Adventist News*, published fortnightly in Australia. He gave a brief overview of the Michael and Lindy Chamberlain case which has troubled Australia and the Adventist Church for five years. Lindy has served three years of her sentence of life imprisonment at hard labor after being convicted of murdering her nine-week-old daughter, Azaria, in August 1980. Michael was charged as an accessory to the murder and was released on a \$500 three-year bond after he was sentenced to 18 months at hard labor. Ward's 1984 book, *Azaria!*, outlines the case and the results of his extensive and continuous investigation. Indeed, the latest

major development is that six individuals named by Ward in his book have brought a libel suit against him. He is delighted, because his lawyers will be able to examine them under oath about the case. In effect, he has instigated another trial discussing new evidence. Ward emphasizes that there was no body and that Lindy had no motive and no opportunity for the murder. The libel suit against Ward ensures that the "trial by media" continues, although to date Lindy Chamberlain and her attorney have refused Ward's assistance.

K. J. Clayton is a graduate student in the department of sociology at the University of Texas, Arlington.

San Joaquin Valley Chapter Offers Scholarships

by Grant Mitchell

The San Joaquin Valley chapter awarded a \$100 scholarship and a one-year *Spectrum* subscription to one graduating senior from each of the four Seventh-day Adventist day academies in the San Joaquin Valley. Recipients were: Mitchell Fornerook, Armona Union Academy; Andres Paeng, Bakersfield Adventist Academy; and Tonya Kromann, Modesto Adventist Academy.

Students were chosen on the basis of the following criteria: (1) an attitude of honest inquiry as illustrated by the young Jesus who sat "in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking questions" (Luke 2:46); (2) an active involvement in seeking knowledge, demonstrated through the independent use of facilities and resources; and (3) a record of high scholastic achievement.

Officers of the San Joaquin Valley chapter developed the scholarship program to counter two problems: (1) the view of many church members that the AAF is consistently negative; and (2) young people's lack of interest in the AAF.

Community reaction has been very positive. The awards were the subject of an article in the Pacific Union *Recorder*, which quoted chapter president Joe Battenburg as noting Adventism's "tremendous tradition of courageously searching for truth" and hoping that the scholarship program would encourage students to continue that tradition.

Grant Mitchell is vice president of the San Joaquin Valley Association of Adventist Forums.

Accolades to Achievement: New and Departing Editors

by Roy Branson

S*pectrum* bids both farewell and welcome to some of the ablest editors in the Adventist community. Those consulting editors or editorial board members who are now alumni remain some of *Spectrum's* finest potential authors. Simultaneously, some of our best writers have accepted editorial responsibilities.

Ottillie Stafford's name has appeared as a member of the editorial board since the first issue of *Spectrum* in 1969. As head of the English department at Atlantic Union College she taught many of the contributors to the journal, including its editor. She wrote some of the journal's most memorable articles on the Sabbath and the literary qualities of the Bible. She delayed her departure from the editorial board until she had helped produce the recent cluster on women in the church. But now, after 16 years, increased administrative duties, including directing a very active adult degree program, dictate a reduction in her obligations.

Richard Emmerson, also a professor of English, has served as executive editor or as a member of

the editorial board since 1978. His involvement in the dissemination of information and ideas to church members through *Spectrum* coincided with one of the most turbulent and critical periods in the church's history. Now, Walla Walla College has offered him expanded research and writing opportunities which will absorb all of his time beyond teaching.

Eric Anderson, professor of history at Pacific Union College, is leaving after serving as a consulting editor for eight years. Even before that, as editor of an earlier incarnation of *Forum*, he printed the first reports on the Merikay Silver sex discrimination cases. His writing in *Spectrum* included revealing interviews and the provocative essay, "The Bishops and Peace, Or Is it Necessarily a Sin To Build Nuclear Weapons?" (Vol. 14, No. 2).

Joining the board of editors is Roy Benton, chairman of the departments of computer and mathematical sciences at Columbia Union College. Benton, as an Andrews University undergraduate, succeeded Anderson as editor of the campus newspaper, the *Student Movement*. For several years he has been an active consulting editor, most recently contributing the interview of Ed Hare, titled "Odyssey of an Adventist Creationist" (Vol. 15, No. 2).

Karen Bottomley, who is living in Calgary, Canada, while working on a doctorate from the University of Toronto in European history, joins *Spectrum* as a consulting editor. Her multifaceted interests and skills as a writer can be seen in her report in this issue on the 1985 AAF geology tour.

Donald R. McAdams, president of the Texas Independent College Fund and the immediate past president of Southwestern Adventist College, is now a consulting editor for *Spectrum*. One of the early members of the AAF board, McAdams has written several major essays on Ellen White for *Spectrum*. Seven years ago McAdams wrote an in-depth analysis of an Annual Council, the first since the early days of the *Adventist Review*. Since then, such reviews have become a regular feature in *Spectrum* and just recently returned to the pages of the *Review*.

Roy Branson is the editor of *Spectrum*.

Adventist Forum Regional Representatives

Atlantic Region

Lourdes Morales-Gudmundsson
3270 Old Town Road
Bridgeport, CT 06606
Tel. (203) 372-5283

Central Region

Darrell Huenergardt
109 South Walnut
Kimball, NE
Tel: (308) 235-3617 (o)
(308) 235-4217 (h)

Central Pacific Region

Norman D. Sossong
1670 Sylvaner Avenue
St. Helena, CA 94574
Tel: (707) 963-2764 (o)
(707) 963-3611 (h)

Columbia Region

Theodore Agard
8600 Hideaway Lane
Centreville, OH 45459
Tel. (513) 296-7246 (h)

Lake Region

Donald Gillespie
Route 1, Box 330A
Berrien Springs, MI 49103
Tel: (616) 429-3343 (o)
(616) 473-5723 (h)

Northern Pacific Region

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

Southern Region

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

Southern Pacific Region

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

Chapter News

by Kathleen Srour

New York

Bob Bouchard, chapter president, reports that the chapter has begun its 17th year, meeting regularly at Columbia University on the first three Sabbaths of each month, September to June. The group has elected to begin a year-long study of the book of Ecclesiastes. On at least two occasions, the New York Circus, an ecumenical outreach group in the city, has met with the chapter to discuss a specific scriptural topic.

Music continues to be an important part of the worship program, with organ recitals and period music from the Renaissance and Baroque eras. For those visiting New York City, the exact address is: St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University campus, 116th and Broadway. The services begins at 11:15 a.m.

San Diego

On September 14, Tony Brandon, Ph.D., department of social relations, Loma Linda University, spoke to members of the San Diego chapter on "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage." Noting the backdrop of confusion in the Adventist Church where standards are set but not always enforced, Brandon noted guidelines for marriage set down in both the Old and New Testaments and questioned whether the church has a sound, Bible-based perspective of the principles of marriage and divorce. He also pointed out the need to address such questions as: "What is the church's concept of perpetual sin and remarriage?" "Is there a Christian way to divorce?" and "How can we as individuals and as a denomination bring help and healing to hurting people, without condoning wrongful conduct?"

by Diana Bauer

Denver

More than 65 attendees at the Denver area chapter's September 6 meeting heard a panel of geologists discuss Earth history. Topics ranged from the geologic column and plate tectonics to methods of radiometric dating and scientific evidence for such catastrophes as the Flood.

The panel members' consensus was that the Earth looks very old, according to scientific evidence. Current geological theory estimates the Earth's age in millions and billions of years. Recognizing that geology is a dynamic field with changing theories, the panel did not claim to have answers to the major questions raised by the study of the Earth. They appealed for more open discussion between theologians and geologists and called for theologians to consider alternative interpretations for biblical accounts of Earth's history.

Panel members included Gary Nowlan, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey; Bob Kinder, a physicist working in aerospace engineering; Bob Cushman, who is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in geology; and Ben Klausen, a geologist working on an advanced degree in nuclear physics. All four panel members belong to the Boulder, Colorado, Seventh-day Adventist Church. Joe Bozovich, a Denver Adventist with interests in geology and archaeology, moderated the discussion.

Kathleen Srour, formerly a member of the Columbia Union College faculty, is a businesswoman in Potomac, Maryland.

Diane Bauer is publicity secretary for the Denver Area chapter.

In the Next Issue

- A report on actions taken at the recent AAF executive committee.
- A graph showing how AAF income is distributed.
- A profile of new regional representatives.
- More chapter news. (This is your opportunity to contribute to *Forum*. Please send news from your chapter.)