

Spectrum

The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Voyages of Discovery

SAILING FROM BYZANTIUM
MISSIONARY FROM CATHAY:
DAVID LIN'S OWN STORY
CONVERT TO SCHOLAR:
AN ODYSSEY IN HUMILITY

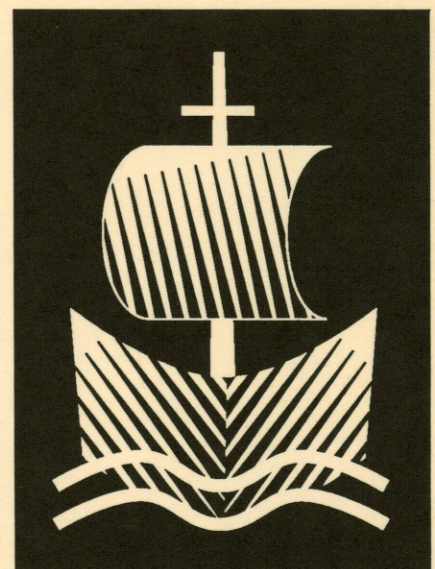
SEXUAL HARASSMENT
ON THE SDA CAMPUS

I'M SINGLE
AND IT'S SATURDAY NIGHT

A LAYPERSON
IN CHURCH WONDERLAND

RESPONSES
*The Presidents and
Anonymous Donors*

December 1991
Volume 21, Number 5



Spectrum

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Voyages of Discovery

“**I**N 1492 COLUMBUS SAILED THE OCEAN BLUE.” We all learned the jingle in the first grade. It will reverberate in our heads this quincentennial year as we listen to debates about Columbus the fearless admiral, Columbus the mercenary, Columbus the agent of historical progress, Columbus the tyrannical slave-owner. Whatever or whoever he was, Columbus and the other great explorers of the period were not so much leaders of change. They were more servants of a cultural consciousness that had already become global. Their boats were launched by a social imagination that had already conquered the world, impatient for soldiers and other mercenaries to fill in the details.

In our special section we feature Columbuses of the spirit, as daring in exploring their individual worlds as the great admiral his larger one. Several have traversed vast geographical distances, but much more arduous and dramatic are the shifts they have undertaken in their world views. Many recount journeys from rich and strong heritages—not only American Protestantism, but Greek Orthodoxy and Chinese Confucianism; not only southern revivalism, but Big Science.

Several of our explorers share their feelings in mid-passage. They are still discovering what kind of Adventists they really are. For example, several of the celebrities in Ronald Graybill’s initial essay are learning distinctive ways to understand and express their Adventism. Jerry Gladson is carefully, if not painfully, finding a new role for himself within both society and the church.

Some of the stories in our special section are about departures, including treks away from the Adventist community. But departures can themselves be a form of tribute—if the community is itself a band of adventurers, wanderers after the spirit, restless seekers of truth—pilgrims. Those who journey inward and those who journey outward have in common that they cannot abide boredom; they will search beyond all flat, unvarying horizons.

That the sails and masts of many expeditions in this issue rise against the horizon is cause for celebration. Approaching explorers are always welcomed by a community of voyagers perpetually eager to hear news of fresh discoveries.

Roy Branson



Sexual Harassment on the Adventist Campus

A year before the Clarence Thomas hearings, Andrews University learned about on-campus sexual harassment.

by Patricia Nash and David Lofthouse

Perhaps as many as 20 to 30 percent of women students are sexually harassed by faculty during their college years, say several surveys at universities across the United States. If these figures were translated into Adventist college populations in the U.S., from 1,942 to 2,913 female students would have been harassed on Adventist campuses in 1990. Statistics for the number of male students harassed are not as readily available.

The Andrews University administration has led the way in cooperating with its student newspaper, the Student Movement. Perhaps other Adventist colleges and academy administrations will follow Andrews' leadership and find ways to confront and prevent sexual harassment in their schools. The following article is reprinted with permission from the May 15, 1991, Student Movement.

— The Editors

When she wrote this article, Patricia Nash was a senior journalism major and editor of the Student Movement. David Lofthouse, who assisted in research for the essay, was a senior communication major. Nash and Lofthouse graduated from Andrews University in the spring of 1991.

"I went in one day to ask him something about an assignment," she says. "He closed the door and we talked about the project. Then just as I was standing up to leave, he kind of put his arms around me and kissed me on the lips."

She, in this case, was a student. He, a teacher. A married teacher. A married teacher at an Adventist university.

She was shocked and quickly mumbled something like "got to go now" and rushed out the door. "When I left his office I was shaking—I felt disgusted. . . . I felt like washing my lips," she says.

Another department, another married teacher, another student, but the same university. The story is slightly different. Here a student says her advisor would shut his door and offer hugs when he thought she looked discouraged. "I thought at first that maybe teachers are more responsive and caring here because it's a Christian environment."

She says it took her two quarters to realize there was a problem. "I felt like he was trying to be a dad, when in reality he was using his position to overcome people." She tells of

times when he would kiss her on the forehead and grab her hand to pray with her—always alone in a closed-door office or room.

And yet another story comes from a student who says she told her roommate for months that one of her teachers “was just too ‘touchy-feely.’” Then one day “he came up behind me and slid his hand down to feel my bottom.” She was so startled she didn’t say anything.

These stories have been compiled from Andrews University students and former students and are based on their narration of real experiences. And these incidents, like all sexual harassment cases, cause real feelings.

What It Is

Sexual harassment can be in the form of touches, jokes, pinups, as well as blatant propositions, according to Patricia Wells, district executive in the Michigan Department of Civil Rights branch in Benton Harbor.

In short, the legal definition, according to Michigan and federal law, includes unwelcome sexual advances and verbal or physical conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile environment for employment or education. “The key word is *unwelcome*,” Wells says.



What to Do

First, let the person know you don’t appreciate it, says Wells. Say something like, “I’m not comfortable” or “I don’t appreciate it when you touch me like that.”

“It doesn’t have to be confrontational,” says Meredith Jones, chair of the university’s Women’s Concerns Advisory. “But that’s where you have to start to stop the problem.”

Tell someone. “To this day, I don’t look at him,” says one student of the alleged harasser. Later another student suggested she go talk to the chair of the department. “I didn’t go because I was embarrassed,” she says.

Fear, embarrassment, and shame often do prevent victims from letting someone know about their experiences. “Tell somebody,” says Wells. “Don’t try to carry it alone. Eventually it will affect your studies or job productivity.”

Jones adds that “keeping it to yourself isn’t going to help anyone. Realize it’s not your fault and go to a person you feel comfortable telling.”

Like rape, sexual harassment is often underreported. “Women often deal with sexual harassment indirectly,” says Stella Greig, university ombudsperson. “For example, if it is coming from a teacher, they would drop the class rather than confront the teacher; if it is coming from a boss or male colleague, they would avoid being near the individual at work or perhaps even quit their job.”

Greig also says another possible reason for not reporting a problem is not knowing whom to go to.

If you feel you are being sexually harassed by a teacher, Andrews University policy in the student handbook says you should report the problem to the chair of the department in which the teacher is working. If the problem is with a work colleague, you should talk to the supervisor of the aggrieved party.

The policy also says that you should go to

the next higher authority, such as a dean, when the department chair or work supervisor is the person doing the harassing.

According to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, the university has a legal responsibility to act on the complaint immediately—"within 24 hours of when it was reported," Wells says. The employer is liable in sexual harassment cases, as are all parties to the harassment, according to the precedents set in court on sexual harassment cases, she says.

Other Places to Go for Help

Women who are sexually harassed often find it difficult to tell their experience to a man in an authority position, so they don't tell anyone at all.

"Female students aren't going to go to the male teachers," says one teacher, who for a time was the only woman in her department.

One female staff member says that "when I became head of the department I got a whole flood of incidents reported to me."

Now the university has a female ombudsperson. And though the ombudsperson is supposed to be a "last resort," Greig is willing to be consulted early on.

"I have found that even when speaking with another woman, women are reluctant to discuss and reveal the details of what has happened," she says. "But after they have done so, they get some feeling of relief."

Greig explains that she will help the student find the best way to deal with the situation. Sometimes she goes to talk to the department chair or work supervisor with the student, but it is always the student's decision.

For help outside the university or job setting, you may go to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, or the civil rights branch in any area.

In the Andrews area, if you dial 925-7044, a civil rights department field representative will immediately listen to your complaint, and then

help you decide what to do next, which may include filing a formal complaint.

The Andrews Problem

Greig says she has worked with three sexual harassment cases, though two occurred before she became ombudsperson two years ago. "I am happy to say that all three problems were resolved," she says.

Arthur Coetzee, vice president for academic administration, also says he has worked with two to three cases. All have been "satisfactorily dealt with in terms of what evidence we had and the response of the offender." The problems were discussed with the university president, he says.

Sometimes part of the problem is a lack of official complaints and notes to support a termination of employment, says Don Smith,* chair of a department at Andrews. "When I became chair, I began creating a paper trail. Though a lot of people thought it was the first complaint, really it was only one of several that had never been documented."

Smith reported the problem to the dean and then to the vice president. "The administration took it very seriously," he says. "They didn't brush it off at all."

According to Smith, a warning was issued to the teacher and he was told that "if there was another complaint, his job was on the line."

In the two or three years following the warning, Smith says he has not heard of any more problems.

However, some feel that sexual harassment problems cannot be corrected until the problem-causers are gone. "It's common knowledge and it's gotten to the point where everyone makes jokes about how weird he is," says student Lisa Wilson,* who made a sexual harassment complaint to her department chair about a teacher three years ago.

"There's been so many complaints, yet it seems to the students that nothing has happened," she says.

But according to one chair in a department where several complaints were received, measures have been taken to curb a sexual harassment problem.

Though he declined to be specific, Chair Joe Michaels* says, "We've made some moves in the department, and since then we haven't had the problems that we had before." The teacher was informed that if the problems appear again it will be "serious grounds for dismissal," Michaels says.

Since this situation was dealt with, no problems have been brought to his attention in the last year.

Firing a person for sexual harassment is a very serious matter, Michaels explains, and the institution should be able to back up its decision in case it is faced with a lawsuit.

"The problem may not be totally eradicated and could surface again," he says. But without enough evidence, the school just has to wait. "The advice from 'above' was to make these moves and see what happens," Michaels says.

In one case several years ago a teacher did lose his job over a sexual harassment complaint from a student, says Jan Richards,* an Andrews teacher. The student told her parents, who called the university. "The parents gave an ultimatum: 'you get him out or we will sue,'" Richards says. The student reported that her teacher had called her into his office and hugged and kissed her.

"The only reason that it got reported when it did was because he did it to the wrong person," Richards says. "I don't think there are very many who have the courage. If you feel guilty, if you feel you did something to cause it, then you won't report it."

In this situation as in others, it was common knowledge in the department among the students. "I found out afterward that they would try to avoid him," Richards says.

Unfortunately, this situation might have been avoided: the teacher had previously taught at another Adventist school and had been fired because of a sexual harassment problem.

Most sexual harassment problems occur with a male harasser and a female victim; however, the reverse does happen occasion-

ally. And the harassment is not always from teacher to student. "There have been times when I've felt sort of harassed by students," says Doug Jones, assistant professor of English. He explains that to him harassment means "anytime a person's physical or verbal presence makes a

person feel uncomfortable."

In particular, Jones recalls a former student who was very aggressive and open to inappropriate behavior. "I just pulled back and turned on a whole lot of negative signs," he says.

Only a Misunderstanding?

In some cases the "victim" is not the only one who feels victimized. In one such situation, an Andrews teacher was accused by a student of making a suggestive comment. "The comment was actually made to protect the student from what could turn into a serious problem," says the teacher, but it was interpreted by the student to be a sexual advance.

The situation was further complicated by the teacher's reputation for being a touching,

Personal empathy is sometimes used as justification for physical contact. However, there's a difference between the momentary touch of empathy and the sustained amorous touch.

back-patting, and hugging kind of person. "I come from a loving family where touching is part of showing that you care," the accused teacher says. "Unfortunately, in today's society, school is not the place for that kind of expression, and I learned that lesson the hard way."

According to this instructor, no real changes were made in the department after the allegations, but the administration warned the teacher to be particularly careful for the next two years. "I am sure that if the administration had any doubt as to my trustworthiness, I would be canned. . . . The administration doesn't put up with nonsense."

Now the teacher says, "What concerns me the most is that now I am afraid to touch students and express my care and concern for them like I used to."

"Good!" says one colleague, who says that at least five people in the department told her they felt uncomfortable with the teacher's actions. "Personal empathy is sometimes used as justification for physical contact," she says. "However, there's a difference between the momentary touch of empathy and the sustained amorous touch. Even though the person giving it doesn't sense it, the person receiving it has the right to feel uncomfortable and try to stop it."

Not all students who feel sexually harassed actually hold it against the person. Sally Campbell,* an Andrews graduate, says she finally told her boss that she felt uncomfortable with his touching. But the incident did not bring any hard feelings in her mind.

"I talked to him myself, but I never went any further because of my respect for him," she says. "I know he has a genuine heart and that he doesn't know how to make a distinction between affection with his wife and relationships with students."

"Under no condition do I ever want to see any harm done to him because of his lack of being able to make a distinction," Campbell says.

Later, the chair of the department called to ask about the situation after several other complaints had been made, she explains. However, Campbell didn't tell the chair much because "of my personal loyalty and feelings" toward her former teacher.

Campbell places part of the blame upon herself. "I allowed myself to be in those situations," she explains.

Now that her teacher has been confronted with the situation, "chances are he's at least a little more sensitive or selective in his relationships with students," Campbell says.

However, whether a sexual harassment case is a misunderstanding or not, Vice President Coetzee says he must proceed with the assumption that the person is making a valid complaint and investigate the situation.

Faculty may use the faculty grievance policy if they feel they are unjustly disciplined.

How to Prevent It

Teachers and students alike must realize that work relations and personal relations are different, Wells says. "Men were accustomed to doing things they didn't realize were illegal."

Her advice is: If you're not sure, don't do it. Stifle a joke. Refrain from the touch on the shoulder.

Coetzee gave a "word of caution to those who are friendly and outgoing": Express your feelings with reserve where no possible misunderstanding can result.

"I think teachers—male teachers in particular—need to be very aware of the possibility of being misunderstood," says Doug Jones. He explains that he rarely closes his office door, even if a student suggests it.

Cultural differences also need to be taken into account, especially at a place like Andrews. "We have a multicultural student body and faculty, and we have varying expectations and norms regarding appropriate behavior of

men towards women and vice versa,” Ombudsperson Greig explains.

“One culture’s way of showing friendliness may be another’s way of signalling a move towards intimacy. Whether the offender meant to offend or not, the offense is very real to the woman.”

Coetzee agrees. “It is something we ought to be doubly careful with in a multicultural setting,” he says. “The same action could be quite acceptable under one culture and offensive in a different culture.”

Of course cultural differences shouldn’t stop you from saying, “In my culture that’s not acceptable.”

Help Stop It

Sexual harassment at Andrews is probably not a rampant problem, but it does occur. And one situation is one too many. Share this information with others. Encourage people to be courageous enough to solve the problem.

The Department of Civil Rights brochure on sexual harassment offers an additional advice: “Above all, don’t be forced into ‘going along with the crowd’ and accepting sexual harassment as ‘the way things are’ or as a joking matter.”

*A pseudonym.



From Edward Hopper, *Hotel Room*

I'm Single and It's Saturday Night

Singles wake up alone, go to church alone, listen to “how to be a good parent/spouse” sermons, and wonder what they are going to do that night.

by Kathleen Taylor

“D O UNTO OTHERS . . .” THE PHRASE KEPT running through my mind as I sat on the edge of my bed. Boyfriend Number 4 of my rather uneventful life had just handed me the famous death sentence: “You know, you’re a wonderful girl and you’re going to make someone a wonderful wife, but we’d be better off as friends.” I was thinking about what the next step ought to be. “Move away, or at least broaden your circle of friends,” was my father’s sage advice. Terrific. How was I supposed to broaden my circle of friends?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a family-oriented church. I was not aware of this when I was younger, but as I graduated from a public university and entered my professional life, I realized that if I wanted to marry an Adventist, I might have blown my only chance. I was supposed to meet a nice young man in an Adventist college and marry him. Since my major wasn’t offered by Adventist colleges, I’d

unknowingly made a huge, life-altering choice. I hadn’t met anyone during my first year at an Adventist college, and I couldn’t afford to return. Now that I was a graduate occupied with my profession, how was I to go about meeting the Adventist men who hadn’t married their college sweethearts?

First, I went to local Adventist churches. There were half a dozen in the area with congregations in excess of 350 members. In the church in which I had been raised, I was one of only three single people under 30 years of age; unfortunately, all three were female. At the large churches there were, not surprisingly, very few members my age. The youth Sabbath school classes were comprised of “early college,” or “Hey, I’m 45 but feel 25.” There was nothing wrong with these classes and I made friends with both groups: in fact, some of my best friends fit in the “45 but feel 25” category. The smaller churches had few young adults and 80 percent of them were married.

After a couple of years, I came to the conclusion that males my age didn’t exist in the

Kathleen Taylor is the pseudonym of an Adventist who is active in her local church.

Adventist Church. I began to realize a hidden “price” of public education, and decided that compromise might be the next best solution. I resolved to meet “Christian” men. It wouldn’t matter if they weren’t Adventist, so long as they believed in God. I reasoned that, as long as they respected my religion, it would be OK to go out with them. Getting into a more serious relationship wouldn’t be so bad. To protect myself from getting too involved, I got a part-time job at a local Adventist hospital and started working on weekends. That was a way to get through the weekend and feel as though I was doing some good, without being too lonely.

The people in the church I visited were usually kind and said “Hello.” To be part of a church family you have to be involved, so I got involved. I did the lesson study for primary and later for kindergarten. I became a deaconess, sang in the church choir, and involved myself in Pathfinders. All the older parishioners loved me and assured me that I’d “find the right young man.” As I matured, I accepted the fact that there were advantages to being single. I was happy. I did have a lot more time and less responsibility than my peers with families, but I also made myself busy to keep from being lonely.

I, along with other single girlfriends, perused the writings of Paul and worked on developing my character. We worked through childhood traumas that we would probably have forgotten about, we bonded with one another, and we feverishly tried to believe that we would be able to accomplish more in the world as singles, and that we weren’t “bad” people because of it.

Then the relatives woke up and realized how old I was. “You need to get out more.”

“You’re too picky.” “You’d better find someone because you don’t want to be alone when you’re older.” These quotes became very familiar. And oh, how wonderful to have the writings of Paul at hand to volley back during stressful inquisitions.

Of course, there were a few single men out there whom I wasn’t related to, or that my best friend hadn’t already dated, but they were *very* few. As their relationships evolved and they became available, we would go out. Unfortunately, the special something needed for a life

partner wasn’t there. I made some close friends whom I wouldn’t give up for anything. The single guys tell me how hard it is to find single women that they would want to date, but they agree that it isn’t nearly as hard for them. So we all tend to group to-

gether a lot. That has been healthy for some, but for others it has only dramatized the acute loneliness that they feel.

Many single young Adventists have good health, lots of energy, few responsibilities, money, success, and time to enjoy it. But on Friday night and Sabbath, *families* do things together. Church social events center around family. Activities center around family and children. Families are friendly, but they are also busy. Flashing a smile and chatting at a potluck is about all the time for singles that they have. Singles wake up alone, go to church alone, listen to “how to be a good parent/spouse” sermons alone (wondering what they are going to do that afternoon), and realize that they don’t fit in. The unsolicited “kind” remarks of a church member—“I’m sure you’ll meet someone soon”; or “How come a pretty girl like you is here alone?” or “I don’t understand these young men”—are just further reminders

No one wants to be different. Is it any wonder that more and more singles just drift off somewhere where they aren’t constantly reminded of how different they are?

that you're different. Everyone seems to assume that you're looking for someone and that you can't possibly be content alone. They make you feel out of place and act surprised when you don't leap at the opportunity to meet their nephews. We're not different; we're unmarried.

No one wants to be different. Is it any wonder that more and more singles just drift off somewhere where they aren't constantly reminded of how different they are? Can you remember the last time you had to ask a man to sit with you in church because people might think you prefer an "alternative lifestyle" since you always sit with your girlfriends? How much more your reputation means when you're single. You have to make sure that appearances are balanced. You don't want to be seen as fickle or too friendly by sitting with too many different guys, but you can't always be seen with the same girls either. It gets to be complicated.

Many singles feel that our church doesn't focus as much on the essential message of Christ's soon return, but rather on family issues. We get excited when God's Word and gospel are preached in a manner that focuses on the individual. Those of us that have remained in the church are proud to be Chris-

tians and are eager to share God's message. Some of us want to do nothing else; some of us want companions. We're not different, however, just "family units of one" with many of the same cares and concerns as other Christians.

Many women who don't marry after high school or college continue their education. Rumor has it that you might meet someone in school, so you keep going. Soon you have a Ph.D., but you're still alone. Now many of the people you meet are intimidated, or if you're a professional and work in a large firm, your language and communication skills are different.

Often the educational backgrounds of two people create barriers that are almost impossible to break down. I know; I've tried. Using large words or catch phrases frustrates those not used to them. And don't ever use them when having an intense discussion or else you'll get a response like this: "I didn't go to college; I don't know what those big words mean. Can't you speak like the rest of us?" Mentioning that a certain response had been "negated" didn't seem like using too big of a word to me . . .

What can we all do about this? Well, next Sabbath I'm having some "family units of two" over for lunch, and I'll ask how their week went. Don't think I'll ask about their love life, though . . . They'll probably ask about mine!



Ellen White In A New Key

James Walters offers a new model for understanding the role and authority of Ellen White for the contemporary church.

by James W. Walters

TWO WIDELY DISTRIBUTED PAINTINGS OF ELLEN White capture two very different models of inspiration. The older, better-known painting depicts Ellen White, pen in hand, meditatively looking to heaven, awaiting divine illumination. A more recent, more helpful picture appeared on the cover of the *Adventist Review*: a desk top covered with reference books in the background, an open book in the immediate foreground, with a partially filled sheet of writing paper resting on the book and a pen temporarily lying on the desk.

The first painting reflects an authoritarian model of inspiration, in which Ellen White's message comes word-for-word from heaven. It was a model that emerged after her death. With its living prophetess dead, the Adventist Church succumbed to the temptation to elevate the prophetess' words to unhealthy emi-

nence. By the mid-20th century, this authoritarian model had gained pre-eminence in Adventism. Popular Adventist orthodoxy held Ellen White's writings to be an indisputable last word on church mores, policy, and doctrine. The live voice that played such a critical role in Adventist history had become a millstone around the church's neck.

However, in the past 20 years, two types of evidence have severely challenged the widespread authoritarian assumptions with which many church members have approached Ellen White's writings. First, historical studies have demonstrated that Ellen White's writings—their inspired character notwithstanding—are culturally conditioned. Second, inquiries into Ellen White's production of texts have shown considerable literary indebtedness.¹ This historical and textual research has not destroyed the credibility of Ellen White's prophetic ministry. It does mean that Adventism has to adopt another model for understanding Ellen White's prophetic ministry; rather than authoritarian, Ellen White is authoritative. This model is captured by the *Adventist Review* cover depicting

James W. Walters is associate professor of religion and ethics at the School of Religion, Loma Linda University, and associate director of the Ethics Center at Loma Linda. A graduate of Southern College, he holds a Ph.D. in philosophy of religion from Claremont Graduate School.

Ellen White's inspiration as including other works.

A new model of an authoritative Ellen White should include at minimum the following assumptions:

- The biblical gift of prophecy is one of various and important gifts with which God has blessed his church (see e.g. 1 Corinthians 12). The spectrum of spiritual gifts is supplementary and mutually beneficial in the healthy church, with no one gift throttling the other avenues of the Spirit's continuing work.

- The prophetic gift, as manifested in Ellen White, is vividly seen in her speaking forth God's word throughout the first 70 years of Adventist history. God used her as a dynamic founder-leader-counselor in the denomination's formative history.

- Ellen White's writings are an important aspect of her prophetic gift, but they are surely not the only or necessarily most important manifestation. These writings, regardless of the findings of current research, are a constitutive element in the study of how God led the fledgling Adventist movement in the past.

- If the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to remain Christian, the Bible must remain the church's primary authority for faith and practice. However, if the denomination is to remain Seventh-day Adventist, the legacy of how God prophetically used Ellen White must continue to be a secondary authority.

The distinction between the authoritative and the authoritarian nature of the prophetic gift, so central to the proposed model, calls for elaboration. No single statement—human or

divine—which passes human lips can be authoritarian; that is, every human statement is culturally encased and thus subject to interpretation.

The necessity of interpretation is illustrated by the fact that the early church, a few years after Jesus' ascension, was forced to call a Jerusalem council to interpret the gospel in light of changing circumstances. No one person determined church policy. Through mutual exchange of points of view, an authoritative church position was reached.

Various points of view are valuable even in understanding something as central and personal as a relationship to Christ. H. Richard Niebuhr's observation about our understanding of the person of Christ has implications for our understanding of the authority of inspired writings.

Without companions, collaborators, teachers, corroborating witnesses, I am at

the mercy of my imaginations. . . . If after the long dialogue with Mark, Matthew, John, and Paul, and Harnack, Schweitzer, Bultmann, and Dodd, I come to the conclusion that whatever Christ means to others and requires of others this is what he means to me and requires of me, I am in a wholly different position from the one in which I should be—if that were a possible position—were I confronted by him alone. The Christ who speaks to me without authorities and witnesses is not an actual Christ; he is no Jesus Christ of history. He may be nothing more than the projection of my wish or my compulsion.²

The issue of authority has been pressed to the forefront in the Adventist Church. The question revolves more around the authority

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of the Ellen White writings than the Bible because the Adventist Church has tended to limit its understanding of the Bible to Ellen White's perception of the Bible. Although the church does not officially teach verbal inspiration, many church members come close to following this view in their use of Ellen White's writings.

Because recent historical research into the cultural background of Ellen White and into the production of her books has made the idea of verbal inspiration increasingly untenable, the church is facing a considerable dilemma of authority. The words of G. B. Thompson spoken in 1919 seem prophetic:

It seems to me that if we are going to preach the Testimonies and establish confidence in them, it does not depend on whether they are verbally inspired or not. I think we are in this fix because of a wrong education that our people have had. If we had always taught the truth on this question, we would not have any trouble or shock in the denomination now. But the shock is because we have not taught the truth, and have put the Testimonies on a plane where she (Ellen White) says they do not stand. We have claimed more for them than she did.³

The responsible way forward is for the church to abandon any idea of gaining religious security through giving authoritarian answers meant to silence probing questions. The issue of authority in the church is complex, and there is no single authority that can unilaterally provide neat, tidy answers. We possess no inerrant golden tablets.

The Christian church has always used multiple sources of authority in its pursuit of truth. There are four sources of authority that have long served the Christian church and that are relevant to our denomination in this dilemma: *inspired writings, reason, personal Christian experience, and tradition.*⁴

Inspired writings are a vital source of authority, but their importance does not supersede reason, experience, and tradition. The latter are vital as an analytical person initially

decides to accept certain writings as divinely inspired and as those writings are interpreted. As the Adventist Church has become more analytical about its beliefs, we increasingly recognize the insightfulness of Ellen White's observation that Bible writers "were God's penmen, not His pen."⁵ A prophet relates his or her divine message in temporal language, a language that inevitably reflects a contemporary historical setting. Inspired writings are not a divine encyclopedia dispensing absolute knowledge on every topic mentioned. They are an eternal fountain of living water satisfying the deepest existential cry of humanity: Who are we?

Ellen White appears to subscribe to this basic perspective on inspired writings when in a related context she writes that "God alone is infallible."⁶ God is not contained in the mediate linguistic symbols and concepts to which the prophets were limited. If God alone is infallible, everything less than God is fallible and therefore subject to interpretation. Hence the need for multiple sources of authority, other than inspired writings, in the Christian life.

Inspired writings, reason, personal experience, and tradition are not new sources of authority in our denomination's theological deliberations. In fact, all four played a crucial role in the arguments given in the 1919 Bible Conference regarding the authority of Ellen White's writings.

Inspired Writings

The Bible is the inspired record of God's interaction with believers for more than a millennium. The climax of this record is the revelation of God through Jesus Christ. As the eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry died, and as the anticipated eschaton did not materialize, the early church began the task of determining its authentic written testimonies of faith. The maturing Christian community—active in worship, mission, and fellowship—found a diver-

sity of materials eminently helpful. These writings came to comprise the New Testament canon. It is not that these materials exhaust the meaning of faith, but they do genuinely and authoritatively reveal the nature of faith.

Only God is unconditionally free from error and partiality. Only God is infallible. But his Word is the all-sufficient path to salvation. As Karl Barth observed,

There is indeed only one single absolute fundamental and indestructible priority, and that is the priority of God as Creator over the totality of his creatures and each of them without exception. Yet how strange it is that we learn of this very priority . . . only through the Bible.⁷

The writings of Ellen G. White are an additional, yet secondary, norm of authority in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These writings tell the story of God's interaction with a modern-day Christian movement answering a unique, divine calling. A. G. Daniells, General Conference president in 1919, appealed to teachers of Bible and history to get their theological bearings first from the direct study of "the Book," and then from Ellen White.

The earnest study of the Bible is the security, the safety of man. He must come to the book itself and get it by careful study, and then whatever he finds in the spirit of prophecy or any other writings that will help him and throw light and clarify his vision on it,—that is alright [sic].⁸

The Seventh-day Adventist Church can only gain an understanding of itself and of God's particular guidance in its own history from these writings. By appealing to the writings of Ellen White, Seventh-day Adventists maintain a rooted consciousness of their distinctiveness. The writings of Ellen White are an integral element in God's action of bringing the Seventh-day Adventist movement into existence.

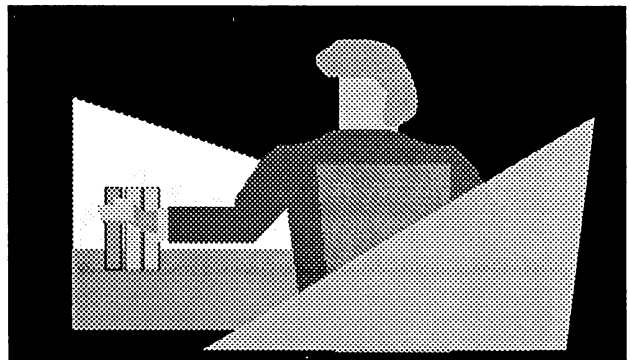
Reason is a god of human culture whose cult is of immense proportions in the modern world. The strides of reason in the scientific world are truly awe inspiring. The reasonableness of historical criticism has brought numer-

ous sacred cows tumbling down. However, who is to say that the canons of reason that are accepted today will remain unchallenged by future cultures? Isn't what is considered "reasonable" itself culturally conditioned by current philosophical and psychological notions? The above consideration is not advanced to deny the importance of reason, but to suggest that it can never be a final authority.

Nevertheless, while notions of what constitutes reasonableness may vary culturally, the use of one's creative, God-given mind is mandatory in all of life's endeavors. Reason is a necessary part of the Christian's pursuit of theological truth.

At the 1919 Bible Conference, the story was told of a Scandinavian missionary in Hammerfest who followed a stringent vegetarian diet. The missionary lived "a good deal on the north wind." The man, following strict Ellen White health counsel, appeared as though he "had hardly blood in his body." Later, when Mrs. White was told of how the Scandinavian missionary had implemented her health counsel, she remarked: "Why don't the people use *common sense*? Why don't they know that we are to be governed by the places we are located?"⁹ The value of common sense—the most basic variety of reason—in applying inspired counsel was evidently an obvious necessity to Ellen White.

Long-term General Conference President A. G. Daniells felt that rational human reflection was compatible with respect for Ellen White's inspiration. Daniells maintained that



Sister White never claimed to be an authority on history, and never claimed to be a dogmatic teacher on theology. . . . She gave out fragmentary statements, but left the pastors and evangelists and preachers to work out all these problems of Scripture and theology, and of history.¹⁰

Personal Christian Experience

The church has always believed that God makes himself immediately known to individual persons through his Holy Spirit. Of course, the Spirit illumines one's mind. But more importantly, the Spirit addresses the whole person, including one's affections. Persons are not merely rational beings. And the direction of one's active reasoning is determined by factors of the whole person quite beyond the narrowly rational. The early American theologian Jonathan Edwards once stated "that there never was any considerable change wrought in the mind of any person, by anything of a religious nature that he read, heard, or saw, who had not his affections moved."¹¹ Edwards' emphasis on the "sense of the heart" is an authentic touchstone of Christian authority.

The later believers in the early centuries of the Christian church had criteria for determining which writings to include in the canon. Personal claim to prophetic status obviously was not determinative. Even common acknowledgment of prophetic calling was not solely determinative. And lack of ecstatic experience was not prohibitive. *It was the quality, integrity, uniqueness, and usefulness of the writings* in nurturing the personal experiences of the believing community that determined the contents of the canon.

In the Bible itself, not all the books and chapters are equally valuable to the church's life today. The long lists of the Chroniclers have limited value to the modern church. Evidently

that was true even in the early church. The apostle Paul counsels: "I urged you . . . that you may charge certain persons not . . . to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith." (1 Timothy 1:3, 4, RSV). Paul wrote much more than is contained in Scripture. The epistles preserved in the canon were those that had proved useful to the experience of the early church.

These considerations have a bearing on the inspired writings of Ellen White and her authority in the Adventist Church today. Not everything Ellen White wrote in the *Testimonies* and in the *Conflict of the Ages* series is equally useful in the life of today's church. Which writings are authoritative in the church is significantly dependent on whether they contribute to the church's actual experience; whether they help the worshipping, working church to experience a life in the Spirit.

H. C. Lacy, in the same session at which Daniells gave his testimony, put the matter succinctly:

In our estimate of the spirit of prophecy, isn't its value to us more in the spiritual light it throws into our hearts and lives than in the intellectual accuracy in historical and theological matters? Ought we not to take these writings as the voice of the Spirit to our hearts, instead of the voice of the teacher to our heads? And isn't the first proof of the Spirit of Prophecy its spiritual rather than its historical accuracy?¹²

Tradition

The individual Christian does not encounter God in a vacuum. Assurance that a believer's experience of God and understanding of the Christian faith are authentic is gained when one can point to exemplary Christians of like experience and understanding in the tradition. The task of contemporary theology as a discipline in the church is to relate the traditional faith to the present generation. Theol-

ogy must not merely follow the dictates of the past. However, theology does need the normative role of tradition because it contains a wealth of concepts that perpetually recur in various eras of the church's existence.

Adventism's own tradition is useful in understanding the authority of Ellen White. In the 1919 conference F. M. Wilcox invoked the Adventist tradition to lend increased credibility to a particular theological position. Introducing a James White statement from the first volume of the *Review and Herald*, he said:

I have a paragraph here I would like to read. This is so completely in harmony with what Brother Daniells has expressed that I thought I would like to read it. James White, in the *Review* of 1851, wrote this, and it was republished again four years later, as expressing what he considered the denominational view with respect to the *Testimonies* back there.¹³

James White, reacting to those who singularly prized the gift of prophecy, wrote in the first volume of the *Advent Review and Sabbath*

Herald: "The gifts of the Spirit should all have their proper places."¹⁴ Surely James White, writing 140 years ago, had no idea that future writings of his prophetically gifted wife would eventually dominate the other gifts of the Spirit and even rival the Bible in practical authority in the church.

In the late 20th-century Adventist Church, complex issues have at times received easy answers because of our readiness to use abundant Ellen White quotations; our willingness to make Ellen White authoritarian. As we have recognized the inadequacy of this approach we have been tempted to abandon Ellen White as being *authoritative* at all.

The appeal here is to recognize Ellen White as a person inspired by God to elaborate the Bible in a way that established the distinctive identity of Seventh-day Adventism. The continuing importance of Ellen White's writings rests on persistent reliance on Scripture, reason, personal Christian experience, and tradition. Only in this way can an already discredited authoritarian Ellen White be replaced by a revered, authoritative Ellen White.

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1. E.g., William S. Peterson, "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White's Account of the French Revolution," *Spectrum*, Vol. 10 (Autumn 1979), pp. 57-69. Donald R. McAdams, "Ellen G. White and the Protestant Historians," revised edition (Unpublished paper, October 1977). McAdams' research is concisely and insightfully summarized in Eric Anderson, "Ellen White and Reformation Historians," *Spectrum*, Vol. 9 (July 1978), pp. 23-26. Jonathan Butler, "The World of E. G. White and the End of the World," *Spectrum*, Vol. 10 (Autumn 1979), pp. 2-13. Ron Graybill, "An Update on Ellen G. White's Literary Work," available from the Ellen G. White Estate. Walter Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M and R Publications, 1982). Fred Veltman, "The Full Report of the Life of Christ Research Project," November 1988. Four volumes, 2,561 pages. Released by and available through the president's office, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD.

2. *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), pp. 245, 246.

3. Transcription of two sessions of the 1919 Bible Conference, published in *Spectrum*, Vol. 10 (May 1979), p. 49. This highly significant conference was called by

the General Conference of SDA's to deal with the question of how Ellen White should be interpreted to the church membership.

4. Dennis M. Campbell has written a most constructive work, *Authority and the Renewal of American Theology* (Philadelphia: United States Press, 1976). Campbell advances the four norms of church authority which I now introduce, and he includes a fifth: creeds. Campbell's discussion has been very helpful in the development of my suggested norms.

5. *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 21.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

7. *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, pp. 497, 498.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 40. (Emphasis supplied.)

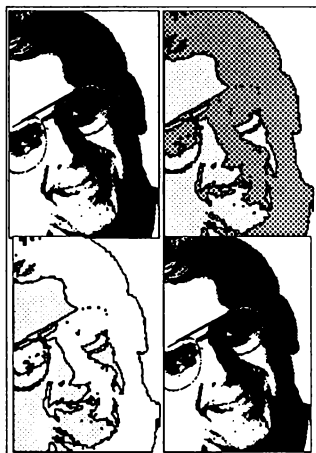
10. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

11. Sereno E. Dwight, ed., *The Works of President Edwards: With a Memoir of His Life*, 10 vols. (New York: S. Converse, 1829-1830), v. 15.

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Where Are They Now? The Movers, the Shakers, And the Shaken

A “shakee” of some years ago reports on the adventures of Adventist celebrities.

by Ronald Graybill

RECENTLY, I BELATEDLY READ MERIKAY'S BOOK *Betrayal*, in which she describes her efforts to win equal pay for equal work at the Pacific Press, and the wrenching emotional consequences of her successful lawsuit. I wondered about her and all the other Seventh-day Adventists involved in controversy and change over the years. Where are they now? How do they feel about the church and their changed relationship to it? What about Desmond Ford, Walter Rea, and Donald Davenport? For that matter, what about entertainers Little Richard and Clifton Davis? Those

After earning his doctoral degree in American history at Johns Hopkins University, Ronald Graybill resigned from the White Estate in a controversy over his doctoral dissertation. Today he chairs the Department of History and Political Science at La Sierra University, and spends a part of his time teaching courses on Adventist history and Ellen White for the School of Religion. His relations with the White Estate have remained cordial, and they have been generous, Graybill says, in providing him with all the materials he needs for his teaching. They have, however, kept him at arm's length when it comes to projects relating to Ellen White, refusing his repeated requests to engage in scholarly editing and annotation of Ellen White's documents.

mentioned here do not begin to represent all the prominent and well-known Adventists in whom people might be interested. They are merely those I wondered about and about whom I was able to get at least some current information. Some are saints, others mere survivors. Some are vocal, some are silent. Some are famous in society, some within Adventism.

Merikay

As for Merikay, she is still an active and involved Christian. From time to time she will drop in on a young adult Sabbath school class in a nearby Seventh-day Adventist church. More often she worships with the Society of Friends (Quakers), whose services are largely silent, but whose religious activities are highly practical efforts to help the hungry and homeless and promote peace in the world. Merikay is even pursuing a graduate degree in religion.

Although Merikay still cherishes many friendships among Adventists, she is beset by a healthy and understandable paranoia about

the Adventist zealots and crazies who continue to pursue her with pompous or awkwardly naive appeals and warnings.

She expresses no bitterness over what happened at the Pacific Press. She sees it as a time of growth and eventual triumph, not only for her, but for the Adventist Church as well. In spite of the pain, the bigotry, and the betrayal she felt, she cannot see that period of her life as a tragedy. Indeed, when Adventist lawyers gather early next year, they will be taking a retrospective look at the long term impact of the *Merikay vs. Pacific Press* case on the church's practices.

Merikay has continued her interest in women's issues. She served for three years on a county-wide Commission on the Status of Women and has given seminars on how to identify and stop sexual harassment in the workplace. She spoke several times at last July's conference of the Association of Adventist Women.

Merikay continues to be an active writer. She makes her living as an editor and writes in her free time as well. Recently she has been drawing on her experiences in Czechoslovakia, producing articles on the "Velvet Revolution" for local newspapers, an alumni journal, and a magazine specializing in world affairs. Why Czechoslovakia? Where else are writers and artists so involved in government? How thrilling to hear the ideals of Jefferson and Madison espoused as living realities!

Lorna Tobler

But why is Merikay virtually out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, while her co-plaintiff, Lorna Tobler, continues to be an active member of the Mountain View, California, church? For one thing, Merikay was much younger, and probably much more naive about the capacity of church leaders for venality and vindictiveness. For another, Tobler's steady, godly, and patient husband, Gus, suffered with her from within the confines of church employment, while the trauma of the Pacific Press experience broke up Merikay's marriage.

Lorna Tobler herself points to the fact that she was reared in the church, belonging to a family with long and extensive acquaintance with church leaders. If some leaders turned out to be cowards or liars, Tobler knew of generations of other leaders who were

devoted, friendly, and honest.

Merikay never made a decision to leave the church. She simply felt that there was no church where she could go, no congregation that wanted her in their fellowship. When 300 employees of the Pacific Press seemed to be against her, and only half a dozen helped and encouraged her, it seemed clear to her that the church did not want her.

For Tobler, it was different. She had a big enough circle of Adventist friends and family so as to be able to redefine "church." Church

Lorna Tobler points to the fact that she was reared in the church, belonging to a family with long and extensive acquaintance with church leaders. If some leaders turned out to be cowards or liars, Tobler knew of generations of other leaders who were devoted, friendly, and honest.

was not those leaders who lied in court and fought tooth and nail to deny women simple justice. No, there were still Adventists who stood for the right though the heavens fell.

Yet in the final analysis, these two women's differing responses can never be explained. People are different. Their reactions to hostility and rejection, to isolation and condemnation vary. They judge their own hearts and their own needs differently. Tobler and Merikay were the same only in the minds of those who saw them only as parties to a lawsuit.

Tobler currently makes her living as a paralegal dealing with workers' compensation, researching for litigation and preparing for trials. Her Pacific Press experience provided a logical transition to a new career.

Max Phillips

Max Phillips' job at Pacific Press provided a benchmark for the Merikay case by showing what the press did for males who did comparable work. Like Merikay, Max too went through a divorce at that time.

Phillips says he left the Adventist Church for two reasons: he lost confidence in the integrity of the leadership and he lost confidence in the integrity of the doctrines, particularly the church's beliefs about Ellen White and its understanding of Creation. He studied deeply in geological literature and concluded, to put it simply, that "evolution is a fact."

For seven or eight years he attended a Presbyterian church, but discovered that its right wing is no more hospitable to those who believe in evolution than is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Phillips says he likes Adventist people and from time to time he attends one of the discussion-type Sabbath school classes at Walla Walla College.

After leaving the Pacific Press, Phillips worked for a time at the Stanford University School of Medicine preparing teaching materials for medical students. Now he works for

Cecil Coffey Communications in Walla Walla, Washington, editing *Health Science*, a magazine that provides generic health-related stories to which 150 hospital-clients add their own local news.

Walter Rea

Walter Rea's current relationship echoes Merikay's in some respects. Technically, both are still members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in that their names are still carried on congregational rolls. Rea's problem is different, though. The Long Beach church has been willing to send his "letter" to another congregation, but none of the congregations in central California near his San Joaquin Valley home in Paterson is willing to accept his membership. At least one pastor has even invited him to attend services, begging him to understand why he cannot be accepted as a member. Rea doesn't relish that kind of fellowship.

After moving to Paterson from Los Angeles, Rea started a tax-preparation business from which he has since retired. He continues to farm 400 acres of walnuts, apricots, and cherries, and financially he is better off now than he ever was as an Adventist minister. Rea has also been very active in community affairs. He has served as president of the county's Commission on Aging for four years. He also spent four years as a member of the board of directors for the Del Parto Hospital in Paterson, and served on the county grand jury.

Rea's book about Ellen White's literary borrowing, *The White Lie*, continues to sell, and has been translated into several foreign languages. He is in touch with Adventists from all over the world on a weekly basis, people who call or write to request or offer information.

Rea, who is still an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister, believes he was fired not over the Ellen White issue, but over his agitation on the Davenport case. His book about church leaders' conflict of interest in investing church funds in risky, unsecured loans to Dav-

enport, titled *Pirates of Privilege*, has been translated into five languages. Unlike *The White Lie*, Rea circulates his Davenport book only among Seventh-day Adventists. In it he claims to demonstrate that it was this issue that cost him his job as a minister in the Southern California Conference.

Still, Rea says he harbors no animosity toward the church and doesn't consider himself an enemy of the church. "Adventism is the only thing I ever knew," he says. "I have no desire to go to another church."

Donald Davenport

Donald Davenport, whose dealings with the denomination so provoked Rea, lives quietly in retirement in Corona del Mar, California. For a time after his investments soured, he returned to the practice of medicine. He has been so berated in the press that he prefers not to talk to reporters. He still feels that much of what happened was beyond his control.

He and his wife were disfellowshipped by their local congregation. For some time they remained close to a Southeastern California pastor. Then one of their adult sons died in tragic circumstances. The pastor consoled them as any good friend and clergyman would, but paradoxically he reminds them of painful memories. The Davenports have had decreasing contact with him.

Desmond Ford

Desmond Ford's activities are better known to many Adventists because of his "Good News Unlimited" ministry operating from Auburn, California. He speaks on daily and weekly radio programs throughout the United States and in several other countries, maintains half a dozen weekly television shows, and travels, preaches, and lectures widely in the United States and throughout the world.

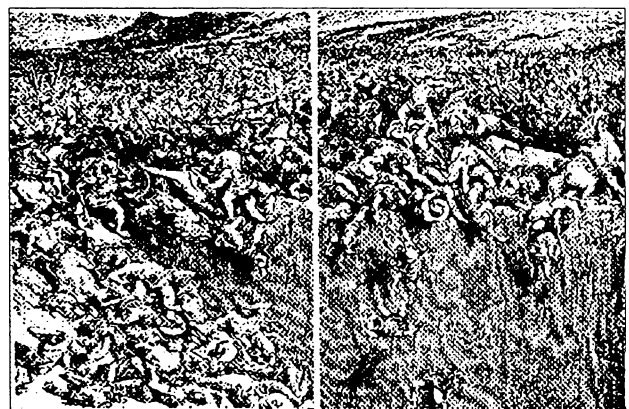
Ford characterizes the bulk of his supporters as "Gospel Adventists," some of whom are members of regular Adventist congregations, and some of whom belong to independent fellowships. He occasionally appears in some of the larger Seventh-day Adventist churches, usually during the Sabbath school hour. On other occasions he appears at the invitation of local chapters of the Association of Adventist Forums.

Unlike Rea, Ford's ordination was officially revoked. However, his local church membership remains with the Pacific Union College Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Southern College Alumni

Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists was also a hotbed of controversy in the early 1980s, what with self-appointed mothers-in-Israel and their zealous counterparts eavesdropping on religion professors, eager to discard any who had escaped the assembly-line cookie-cutters.

Not a few of the refugees from that overheated factory escaped to Southern California where they live in balmy and productive contentedness. Ed Zackrison spent several years teaching at La Sierra Academy before joining the School of Religion at La Sierra University. Jolene Zackrison heads the Department of Office Management for La Sierra University.



Both are very active in church and school activities. Ed continues his interest in drama, leading a Christian drama group for the university and supervising the annual drama production at La Sierra Academy.

Teamed with Bill Allen and Melvin Campbell, who are also both refugees from Southern College, Zackrison leads out in a popular and effective Sabbath school class for university students at the La Sierra University church. Librarian Charles Davis, another Tennessee transplant, is reference librarian at La Sierra University and serves on the faculty senate.

Lorenzo Grant, another former member of the Southern College religion department, now pastors the University Seventh-day Adventist Church near the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Jerry Gladson, who was voted Outstanding Teacher of the Year at Southern College in 1981-1982, was forced out in 1987. He is presently academic dean at the Psychological Studies Institute in Atlanta, Georgia. This institute is a graduate-level professional school in psychology and religion.

Frank Knittle, erstwhile president of Southern College, is a respected and beloved professor of English at La Sierra University. A former chair of the English department, he now heads



the Liberal Studies program in addition to his continuing work in English. In his spare time he operates one of the more successful Kawasaki motorcycle dealerships in Southern California, and serves as the senior pastor of the Riverside Seventh-day Adventist Church for \$1 per year.

Smuts van Rooyen

Actually, Pastor Knittle is rarely in the pulpit at Riverside anymore. That honor usually falls to Smuts van Rooyen, who is officially billed the congregation's minister of counseling. Van Rooyen, formerly a religion teacher at Andrews University, left Adventist employment because of his support for Desmond Ford. He even worked with Ford at Good News Unlimited for two years after leaving Andrews. Then he went to South Africa for a year to sell real estate. Returning to the United States, he spent two years as a substance-abuse counselor at the Battle Creek Adventist Hospital, then went back to Andrews to get his doctoral degree in counseling psychology.

Through it all, though, van Rooyen was unsatisfied. He felt a powerful calling to preach. He was, as he puts it, an organist without an organ. Then came the opportunity to serve in Riverside. Under van Rooyen's "counseling," the Riverside church's attendance has swelled from a little more than 100 to nearly 500 each week. Membership has increased by 55 in the year he has been there. Tithe is up 42 percent over the previous year, with August 1991 tithe 100 percent more than August 1990 tithe. Like Ford, van Rooyen suffered the revocation of his ordination. He now holds a ministerial license, but there is talk of renewing his ordination.

It was said of the great English preacher George Whitefield that he could move a congregation to tears just by pronouncing the word "Mesopotamia." Van Rooyen's earnest, loving, passionate preaching, which often

touches on the tragedies and triumphs of the Christian's walk, is like that, too. His power in the pulpit is even greater when one knows the deep personal anguish he has experienced.

Ronald Numbers

One of the earliest individuals to shake the Seventh-day Adventist Church was Ronald Numbers, who taught medical history at Loma Linda University until the mid-1970s, when his book *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* appeared. The book showed that, in her health teachings, rather than being ahead of her time, Ellen White was a product of her times.

Numbers has gone on to a highly successful career in academia. He is professor of the history of medicine and the history of science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison; editor of *Isis*, the leading scholarly journal on the history of science; and the author of several books. Numbers' latest work, a history of creation science, will soon be published by the prestigious Knopf publishing house. In it he covers the leading Adventist figures in creation science, from George McCready Price to those who have participated in the Geoscience Research Institute. The book also deals with creationists outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church, primarily Anglo-Americans.

Numbers' book on Ellen White as a health reformer is about to be republished with two long additions. One, by Jonathan Butler, covers the impact of the book itself, including the controversies it sparked within Adventism. The other, which Numbers co-wrote with his wife Janet, a clinical psychologist, is a discussion of Ellen White's personal mental health and her teachings on the subject of mental health. Numbers no longer professes Adventism, but he continues many friendships with Adventists from his past.

Grady Smoot

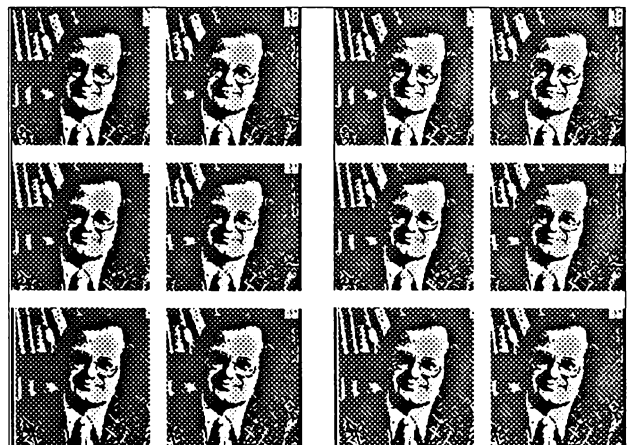
Also a refugee from Adventist higher education is Grady Smoot, who served as

president of Andrews University from 1976 to 1983, when personal problems forced him out. Smoot is still in education, now as vice president for development at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas. Under his supervision is a public radio station as well as the alumni, public relations, and development activities of the university. Pittsburg State, with some 6,000 students, is one of six regional Kansas universities. The school prides itself in its fine program in marketing studies and on its athletic teams. Since his arrival in 1984, Smoot has increased the school's endowment from \$2 million to \$10 million.

Smoot says nothing has changed in his relationship to the church, except that now, of course, he and his wife worship as lay persons rather than as leaders.

Donald McAdams

Don McAdams is another former Adventist college president with a new life. McAdams left Southwestern Adventist College of his own choice while going through a divorce. Except for the entertainers I will mention below, he has probably enjoyed the greatest financial success through his change in employment. McAdams lives in Houston, Texas, where he works as an adjunct consultant with the American Productivity and Quality Center, an organization of which he was previously executive director. His clients, which

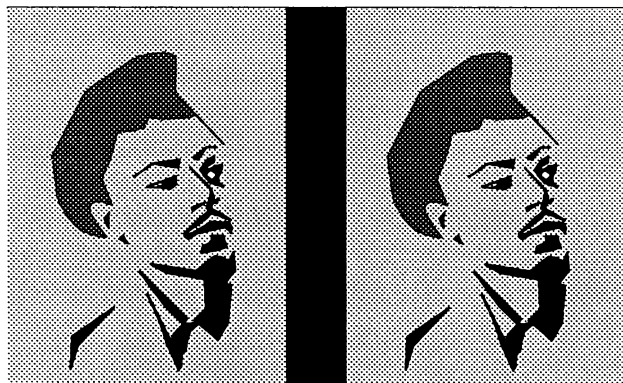


include some of America's biggest corporations, call on him to teach them the techniques such as those that have made Japan such a formidable competitor to American business. His company helped design the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 1987, and the techniques he now teaches to organizations could help them become winners of the award.

McAdams remarried in February of 1991. His wife, Anne Pace, is an attorney for Exxon, whose chief responsibility is the Exxon Pipeline Company in Alaska. He has two grown sons by his first marriage, and a three-year-old Peruvian daughter he and his new wife have adopted.

When McAdams quit working for the church, he says he found his mind free to be "logical." He did not have to reach any set conclusions on the troubling scientific, historical, and theological issues Adventism faced. He concluded that there was little or no evidence for some of the positions the church holds. Although he maintains warm friendships with many Adventists elsewhere, he has few Adventist friends in the Houston congregations, and his own participation in the church is largely confined to financial contributions.

Despite his marked financial success, McAdams is most proud of his public service. He has been elected a member of the Houston School Board, which administers the fifth largest school system in the United States. Sud-



denly, McAdams the historian has become McAdams the civic leader, dealing with the leaders of local and state politics.

"Public education," says McAdams, "ties in so well with what I do for a living and who I am as a person." In a school district plagued with the typical problems of crime, drugs, and poverty, McAdams has found a mission that employs his knowledge of history, his expertise in management, his Christian compassion, and his Adventist zeal to better the world.

Meanwhile, he has just obtained a huge contract to teach better management procedures to the entire Veterans Administration system—13 hospitals, including Pettis Memorial, and 14 regional administrative centers.

Little Richard

Then there are the artists, entertainers, and celebrities who name Adventism as their religion. Richard Penniman, popularly known as Little Richard, has doubtless puzzled many Anglo Adventists by his television appearances during which he often plays the rock 'n' roll songs that first made him famous in the '50s and '60s, before he attended Oakwood College and became a Seventh-day Adventist minister. Appearances aside, Little Richard is still very much a Seventh-day Adventist. He regularly attends the Ephesus church in Los Angeles. In fact, some of the limousine drivers who ferry him to church on Sabbath have themselves joined the church. During the intermissions at his concerts, his aides blanket the audience with copies of *Steps to Christ* or *Desire of Ages*—Tutti Frutti meets Ellen White.

Clifton Davis

And what of Clifton Davis, who played Rev. Reuben Gregory on the NBC television sitcom "Amen"? With the show now in syndication, Davis is in Chicago starring in the play *First Lady*, with Vicky Winan.

Davis, who has a B.A. in theology from Oakwood and a Master of Divinity degree (1987) from the SDA Theological Seminary, served as an associate pastor at the Loma Linda University church for a time. He resigned from that position because the pressures of his television series and other public appearances made it impossible to do justice to the job. He still does the radio show "It's a Celebration" on a Christian radio network, and has a gospel album, *Say Amen*, in circulation. As the tabloids have reported, Davis is currently going through a divorce, but his ties to the Adventist Church remain strong.

Archie Moore

Meanwhile, in San Diego, California, Archie Moore, once light heavyweight boxing champion of the world, continues both his sport and his devotion to Adventism. Moore works with inner-city youngsters, and helps train and coach prize fighters. His ring exploits include helping to prepare heavyweight George Foreman for his recent unsuccessful comeback bid. Moore is a member of the 31st Street church in San Diego, California, although his attendance is not regular due to his travels.

Herbert Blomstedt

On a gentler note, what of Herbert Blomstedt, the music director of the San Francisco Symphony? While Blomstedt may not be a household name for many Adventists, his achievements are commanding widespread attention in the music world.

Blomstedt, a Swede, was actually born in the United States. His father, an Adventist minister, pastored Swedish congregations in New England before returning to Sweden to minister when Herbert was only two.

Blomstedt received his musical education

in Sweden, but also studied at Juilliard School and with Leonard Bernstein at Tanglewood's Berkshire Music Center. He conducted orchestras in Sweden and Denmark before becoming music director of the Dresden Staatskapelle, the world's oldest orchestra.

Blomstedt became music director of the San Francisco Symphony in 1985. Many critics have been favorably impressed with his work. National Public Radio called him "a model of old-world integrity, and a conductor with an almost mystical relationship with music. Still waters run deep . . . but not too deep for Blomstedt." The *New York Times*, reviewing one concert, said he "conducted with clarity and a sense of unswerving interpretive drive." Reviews of the recordings he has made with the San Francisco Symphony have been equally glowing. When *Gramophone* published its "Critics' Choice" selections of favorites from 1990, five different critics and the editor himself named Blomstedt recordings.

His faith continues to inform his artistry, although in ways that may not be apparent on the surface. Consider, for instance, the story behind the new symphonic work by Charles Wuorinin, *Genesis*. Wuorinin (WAR-nen), a MacArthur Genius Award recipient, was composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Symphony in September, 1991. The choral parts consisted of excerpts of the Creation story drawn from the Latin version of the Bible. The work is dense and demanding, both on the orchestra and on the listener. Still, the *San Francisco Chronicle* found it cast in a "striking and profoundly thought-out form." The *New Yorker* noted how the setting for the Sabbath rest was "treated calmly . . . not in a busy flap and flurry of construction and manufacture but as a depiction of creation by dictate." But the message of the composition that most impressed Blomstedt was the shouted praise to the Lord who "himself made us and not we ourselves."

He travels widely, conducting orchestras around the world, but when he is in San Francisco on Sabbath, he will be found at the Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church for services.



In Search of A Giving World

A star trek: Harvard surgical nurse, to world-class immunologist in Manhattan, to Baby Fae consultant in Loma Linda, to member of the University church.

by Gayle Saxby

ON THE LAST DAY OF 1940, SANDRA NEHLSSEN was born into a family that was rich in many ways, though her parents had little money. When she left home to begin nurse's training at Chicago's Augustana Hospital, she looked forward to visits home when she would sit again at her parents' feet, their knees touching her shoulders, and pour out her heart to them. They, in turn, would pour their hearts out to her. Always they would laugh together.

After finishing nurse's training, Sandra wanted to see a bit of the world. She went to the new state of Hawaii and found a job on the surgical floor at Queen's Hospital in Honolulu. One of her patients there, Wally Boquist, was a nuclear physicist who was testing bombs in the South Pacific. He suggested to Sandra that she move to Boston and look for work in a large teaching institution, but he also told her

that his employees in American Samoa were sick, and that no medical personnel lived there. Before three hours had passed, Sandra was aboard a plane bound for Samoa.

While there, Sandra learned that during World War II, American soldiers had brought a virus to the area that had caused the deaths of many of the native Polynesians. The heart valves of those who had survived the virus were badly deformed. Several physicians landed there two weeks into Sandra's stay, and with her as first surgical assistant, they performed closed-heart surgeries in a bombed-out army barracks.

After traveling a bit more, Sandra moved to Boston as Boquist had suggested. She signed up for an advanced nursing degree program at Boston University and landed a job as staff nurse in the operating room at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. There she participated in the earliest open-heart surgeries performed, as well as in numerous kidney transplants. After each surgery, she would ask to be the patient's private duty intensive-care nurse. She worked two shifts four or five days a week; all the while

Gayle Saxby earned a B.A. in English from Walla Walla College and an M.Div. from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. She is currently an assistant professor on the faculty of religion at Loma Linda University.

she attended evening classes.

After Sandra had worked in Boston for two years, witnessing the evolution of transplantation and open-heart surgery, she learned that Frank Veith, the chief surgical resident at Brigham, was about to set up a transplantation unit and research laboratory in New York. She asked him if he would need an assistant there; he was not sure he would be able to pay one. She went to New York and worked for him without pay for two weeks, until he found money for her salary.

Sandra became the senior supervisor of the surgical research laboratory in the Cornell Division of Bellevue Hospital, where Veith taught her surgical procedure. In the laboratory she transplanted the kidneys and some 300 other organs of rats. Meanwhile, she was studying for a premedicine degree at New York University, but by the time she completed it, she knew she wanted to become a research scientist, not a physician. She also knew she wanted to work in the field of immunology, as people were doing transplants, but no one knew much about how to make those transplants work yet.

In April of 1964, Sandra fractured her back, hips, skull, and pelvis in a horseback riding accident. The orthopedic surgeon who treated her was about to take a sabbatical to study with Sir Peter Medawar, the Nobel laureate of 1960. Later, when he returned from his sabbatical, he urged Sandra to allow him to talk to Medawar about taking her on as his student. "He's the best in the world," he told her.

She laughed. "The Nobel laureate? Take on little Sandi Nehlsen? Ha!"

Take her on he did, however. She became Medawar's only pupil from 1968 to 1971 at the

National Institute for Medical Research near London. There she received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Immunology.

While in England, Sandra was active in the United Church, just as she had been in the First Congregational and Lutheran churches while growing up. When she returned to the States, however, she stopped attending church. She believed profoundly, but something was missing in the churches she'd come to know.

In New York she did postdoctoral work at Sloan-Kettering Institute, and then, in 1978, became the director of the Transplantation Immunology Division of Montefiore Medical Center and Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

In June of 1984, Sandra spent three and a half weeks in China teaching the immunology of renal transplantation along with physicians and nurses from around the U.S. On this trip, Sandra met Ralph Harris from the Loma Linda University Medical Center in Loma Linda, California, who regaled her with tales of his

experiences as a "medical missionary" in Africa. "At Loma Linda," he told her, "we're all medical missionaries." This fascinated her; it hinted at something she was looking for.

On the flight back to the U.S., Harris also told Sandra, confidentially, that a pediatric cardiac surgeon at Loma Linda, Leonard Bailey, wanted to put a baboon heart into a human infant. Sandra had always believed that cross-species (xenograft) transplantation was the answer to the need for organ donors; she agreed to be a consultant on the case. She spent July and August in Loma Linda, then from New York continued to help the hospital prepare to perform xenograft surgery.

Late one October evening in 1984, Bailey

Ralph Harris regaled her with tales of his experiences as a medical missionary in Africa. "At Loma Linda," Harris said, "we're all medical missionaries." This fascinated her; it hinted at something she was looking for.

called Sandra from Loma Linda. "How are the experiments going?" he asked her. "Are they done?"

"Yes, we're all done now," she told him. "I have the results of the last test."

"Good," Bailey said, "because I have a baby and six baboons downstairs."

Sandra caught a flight from New York shortly after midnight that night, and, once in Loma Linda, began working around the clock preparing for the surgery. Six days later, Baby Fae received her new heart.

Throughout the process of preparing for the surgery, Sandra had felt in the Medical Center a warmth akin to that which she'd felt in her home while growing up. Also, Waldo Concepcion, a resident working on the Baby Fae case, had almost insisted that Sandra attend the Loma Linda University church with him, and when she did, she sensed she had found something she had been

looking for—a community of faith that embodied the kind of ideals she had always lived by. Her parents had not had much money when she was growing up, but they had always given of themselves liberally. They had taken in needy children, worked for their community,

taken under their wings friends of Sandra's who were from less loving homes, and even, when there was no money to buy fabric or clothes, torn up their own clothes to make outfits for Sandra and her sister.

Sandra, too, had lived her life this way, and thought it was the way the world ought to be. In Loma Linda she thought she had found a corner of the world that was that way. She was troubled, then, at the thought of leaving and going back to New York.

After the surgery, however, she was offered a job as director of the medical center's immunology center. Three months later, she resigned her position at Montefiore/Albert Einstein and took up her new duties at Loma Linda University. A while later, her husband Bud Cannarella, a professional photographer in New York, joined her and became a vice president of the Loma Linda University Medical Center.

Through a series of experiences, Sandra soon realized that the institution was not perfect. One physician informed her, rather ominously, that "The only thing worse than a non-Adventist is a rebel Adventist." The statement was a personal attack, but this didn't concern her as much as did the fact that it belied a "malignancy" within the institution.

On the other hand, Sandra reveled in the fact that working, worshiping, and caring for

one another were parts of a whole in her new community. Throughout her life she had been troubled by people who acknowledged their faith only on Sunday mornings. At Montefiore/Albert Einstein she had been enriched by the way friends and colleagues of the Jewish faith had

woven their belief into every aspect of their lives, and this had come close to what she wanted in a worshiping community. In Loma Linda, however, she felt even more that people there were trying to live all the messages of the Bible in everything they did. The value placed on giving through service to humanity, the inclusion of a healthful lifestyle, and a day of true rest each week—these factors all blended together to create for her the atmosphere she had known and sought since her childhood.

Sandra attended the Loma Linda University church and when she did, she sensed she had found something she had been looking for—a community of faith that embodied the kind of ideals she had always lived by.

In 1989, after several months of Bible studies, Bud and Sandra were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Sandra continues her active and successful research at Loma Linda University Medical Center. She sees an integration of her religion with her furious pace of research and teaching (she sleeps only three to four hours a night.) "Maybe I think I'm indestructible," she says. "I certainly rest. I rest in different ways than other people, I guess. Sabbath is absolutely to me a blessing I needed because of the way I live. It truly is peaceful and I feel cleansed and refreshed and ready to go."

Ready to go, indeed. Sandra's 70 publications in scholarly journals included frontier work on immunosuppressants (the chemicals that keep surgical patients from rejecting transplanted organs) and the effects of moderate exercise on immune responses.

"I find that doing creative things is very satisfying and also very restful," she explains. "Sometimes it's creating an experiment in my head. Sometimes it's sitting down with clay and creating sculpture. And sometimes it's a walk through nature, because my sculpture is nature, too. . . . I also love music. I had a really hard time trying to decide among science and music and art. Every scientist I know is some-

how involved in art or music or both. I live all of them together. I never separate them. Never. I can't. And that's how I feel about religion."

Some of Sandra's research reflects her commitment to a wholistic view of life. When she left home, she always missed the fun, the loving, the touching, the hugs, the laughter. When she got into immunology in New York she was so convinced of the fact that there was a link between laughter and the immune response that she started fooling around (in an informal way, because she was doing mostly clinical work) in the lab. She and co-workers would watch films, and see what crying or laughing did to the immune response.

When Sandra went to Loma Linda, she met Lee Berk, Bill Eby, Stanley Tan, and others who had already started work on the effect of laughter. They sat down and had long discussions, including passages in the Bible that supported what they were doing. Then when they actually did the science, when they put numbers to it, they said, "We cannot deny this." Somebody cracks a joke, says something that makes him or her feel warm, and in five to 10 minutes, the response can be measured in real, hard, cold figures. She thinks it's "so neat" that the research is coming out of Loma Linda, that "we're" really leaders in the area.



Sailing from Byzantium

From Piraeus and the glory of the Greek Orthodox liturgy to a personal walk with God and a religion of the new world.

by *Demetra Lougani Andreassen*

I GREW UP IN PIRAEUS, THE GREEK PORT AT ATHENS. World War II and the civil war, which threatened the country with Communism, left devastating effects on the land and its people. My father, an officer of the Royal Navy, was injured during a bomb raid and died from a lack of prompt medical care. My mother had to make a home for my two sisters and me (I was the middle child).

As a child, I felt a terrible sense of helplessness. Although I often felt sad and intimidated by the absence of my father and our constant economic hardships, I had a strong sense of pride, a sense of direction, and a will that could not be defeated by the misfortunes of war. I even felt defiance toward the winds of adversity blowing in my face.

Demetra Lougani Andreassen, a medical social worker, is the Drug/Alcohol Prevention Coordinator of Walla Walla College. She has dedicated this memoir to her sisters; her husband, Nils-Erik Andreassen, who, she says, taught her tolerance, patience, and a calm, practical way of facing challenges; her son, Michael; and her adopted American family, whose financial support made it possible for her to stay two years at Newbold College and then to move to the United States.

My mother, a woman with a limited formal education, had a tremendous influence on me. She taught us the importance of self-respect, integrity, honesty, and openness. Those values were reinforced by the Christian principles taught in church.

In my community there was strong loyalty to the three most important institutions of Greek society: religion, country, and family. Ours was a homogeneous society, and one could not betray any of the institutions and be considered worthy of respect. Our lack of money did not destroy our sense of self-worth, our pride, or our integrity. Rather, it inspired us to strive for spiritual qualities, inner strength, and commitment to tasks well performed.

I was more religious and had a stronger drive for higher education than my other family members. I attended church regularly and took communion. I was drawn to Christ because of his life of discipline, service, and compassion toward the afflicted. I was impressed with his strength and steadfastness despite rejection by his peers and his community. I liked to think of him cooking breakfast

for his disciples that morning on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, knowing how physically tired and spiritually weak they were. They had decided to return to their old professions, defeated and discouraged by his death. They had turned their faces away from the strong wind of disappointment. Christ understood and was compassionate.

How I enjoyed the Easter services, listening to the deep male voices singing *a cappella* Byzantine hymns. I could imagine Christ going through the terrible test of full obedience to his Father. The Greek Orthodox Church had a tremendous reverence for the Creator of heaven and earth, and a sense of awe for his holiness and power. Sometimes I miss this type of worship, when the human soul, assisted by solemn music and beautiful art, finds itself in awe in God's holy presence.

There were other significant influences in my life. While my father was alive, he used to arrange for my mother and us three children to spend summers out in the country or on a nearby Greek island. After my father's death, my mother maintained this tradition, and we would go to the island of Salamis to stay for two or three months in a lighthouse. There we enjoyed swimming, hiking, exploring, and staying up late watching the stars, the boats passing by, and the moonlight shining on the calm surface of the Mediterranean Sea. The memories of our family togetherness are still a source of strength and energy as I face tests in my life's journey.

One summer on the island my family became acquainted with another vacationing family. My older sister in particular became a lifelong friend of their only daughter, Anna. I

often trace the beginning of my journey to the Adventist Church to their acquaintance. A couple of years after we met, just after my high school graduation, I received a phone call from Anna, offering me her job in a law office in Athens. She was soon to leave for a better position. I accepted eagerly, because it was usually impossible to find employment straight out of high school.

Oh, the innocence of youth! I had no secretarial skills or professional training; only enthusiasm, energy, and a strong sense of commitment to tasks

well performed. How did I really dare become a secretary for four prestigious lawyers and a judge in the center of the most sophisticated section of Athens? I taught myself how to type, to answer the phone, take longhand dictation, and make sure my Greek spelling was correct. In one month I tried to

learn as much as Anna could teach me. Once I worked until I passed out from exhaustion and lack of food; I had been so busy that I forgot to eat.

I kept that job for five years. I learned to speak like a lawyer. I won discussions with my friends and family, using legal terms and rhetorical arguments. As I worked for the lawyers, I knew that one day I would look for a job with shorter working hours and medical benefits. I began to study English at a private school, during siesta time, from one to five o'clock. At the same time I started to pray that God would lead me to a better understanding of his will. I wanted to find a way to serve him. While in high school I had visited sick people in hospitals and participated in street demonstrations organized by a priest, protesting certain ills of our society. Now that I was working full time

The decision to leave home and attend a Protestant college in another country was an extraordinary one. None of my friends, neighbors, or acquaintances had done such a thing. It had to be the Lord's leading.

and studying English, I missed these religious activities, although I continued to attend church.

The English we learned in those days was not conversational. We learned grammar rules and wrote compositions, but we could not converse freely. I wanted to improve my English speaking ability.

I met a young woman at the National Gardens in Athens one afternoon, and we started talking. I mentioned my wish to practice conversational English. "Oh," she said, "I know someone. She works for a Protestant church and she uses her English all the time." She eventually introduced me to a young secretary named Aliko, who worked for the Adventist Greek Mission in Athens.

Aliko Grivas Snow was a bright young woman who translated the Sabbath school lessons and some of Ellen White's writings into Greek. Aliko was not an Adventist at the time, and she would argue with the Greek-American missionary leader about theological differences between the Greek and Adventist churches.

Aliko decided to go to Newbold College, in England. "Newbold," she wrote, "would be an excellent school to study and practice speaking English." She invited me to join her. She did not mention that by that time she had become an Adventist.

I started to save every cent that I could. In the fall of 1960, I sailed to Venice and from

there traveled by train through Calais to London. Doctor Viggo Norskov Olsen had just become the principal of Newbold, and he accepted my application with half of the required tuition. The rest I would have to pay by praying and working.

The decision to leave home and attend a Protestant college in another country was an extraordinary one. None of my friends, neighbors, or acquaintances had done such a thing. It had to be the Lord's leading, since my family, after my father's death, had neither the financial means nor the social exposure to take advantage of such an opportunity.

Going to a Protestant school made me uneasy. I thought seriously of asking permission from my priest, whom I greatly admired. I tried twice to visit him in his office, but something kept me from entering. I thought he would not allow me to attend a Protestant school. So instead of visiting the priest, I promised God that I would not let "those Protestant apostates" interfere with my faith.

Two years later, I, like Aliko, joined the Adventist Church. I had not known anyone before who could explain clearly and with a personal testimony how to walk with God daily in life's journey. To learn that God was interested in my physical and emotional needs, just as he was in my spiritual needs, was completely new.

I knew that I could not possibly turn my back on this new religious knowledge, but I was also painfully aware that in my family's eyes, I had betrayed them. I had sacrificed the bond that made us strong and loyal to each other, and I had shown disrespect to the memory of my father. My family was less angry than hurt—disappointed, embarrassed, abandoned. My sisters needed my support to cope with mother's illness and advancing age. They felt alienated by my strange new eating habits, Sabbathkeeping, and association with a handful of Seventh-day Adventist Greeks who sang foreign hymns and worshiped in churches that looked like public lecture halls. To them the

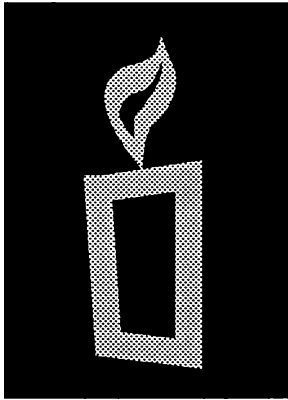


Greek Orthodox Church was the strong mother church for almost all Greeks. They even invited a theologian friend to speak with me, hoping that he could persuade me to give up my new faith. But my convictions became even stronger as he failed to give me satisfactory explanations for religious practices of my former church that had no biblical basis.

My mother tried to encourage me to think of marriage. When I told her that I had met a fine Dane at Newbold, she said, "My poor child, of all the Greek young men, could you not find one here and stay in your country?" I tried to explain that I could not marry a Greek Orthodox. Two years later I left Greece for Andrews

University, to be with my fiancé. Again my family felt betrayed and rejected. I had broken the link that kept us together.

My spiritual journey has been long since those days. I learned to rebuild my relationship with my Greek family, based on the things that united us: memories of childhood, of our parents, and of our heritage. My sisters have come to look upon my family with respect and admiration, and wish that they could finance their children's education in Adventist schools. One of my nieces has attended summer school at Newbold, and another is thinking of coming to Walla Walla College. The next generation is continuing the pilgrimage.



Missionary From Cathay: David Lin's Own Story

A man who traces his ancestors back 2,500 years to the court of China's first emperor, becomes the best-known Adventist in China.

by David Lin

I WAS BORN IN 1917, THE SECOND SON OF LIN BAO Heng, a graduate of Columbia University. He was serving at the time as Chinese vice consul in Manila. In the years that followed, my father was transferred first to Vancouver, British Columbia; then to Shanghai, and then to Surabaya, Java. While in Surabaya, my brother Paul, and I attended a private school where we learned to speak Malayan and to walk barefoot like the Java children.

My mother, Pan Cheng Kun, had, in her childhood, attended a Christian school in Suzhou, Jiangsu. While there, an American missionary, Miss Pyle, taught her to pray. Although for many years she neglected to do so, the trials of family life drove my mother to her knees. Once, when my brother, Paul, and I were small, I developed a high fever and was rushed to the hospital. My worried mother

knelt in prayer and promised God that if he healed me, she would bring me up as a preacher. Before the doctor had a chance to diagnose my case, I miraculously recovered. True to her word, my mother, from that day on, drilled into my head that I belonged to God and that I would one day become a preacher.

When Chiang Kai Shek came to power in 1927, my father lost his official position under the now-defunct Peking regime. We moved back to Shanghai for a time, and then on to Peking. I attended sixth grade at the Peking American School where Miss Moore was principal. One day she asked her pupils to tell what they wanted to be when they grew up. When I told the class that I was going to be a preacher, they were shocked. After that, I was regarded as an "odd fellow."

On Sundays, my mother took us to the Methodist church where we made friends with Pastor and Mrs. Fred Pyke, whose children were my schoolmates. In 1932 my father and mother moved to Hankow where he worked for the Bureau of Internal Revenue. I was left to stay with the Pykes.

David Lin, a former student of Pacific Union College and the SDA Theological Seminary, served as secretary of the China Division during the Communist takeover. A former editor of the Hong Kong edition of Signs of the Times, Lin is now retired and living in Shanghai, where he serves as a pastor of the Adventist church in Mu En Tang.

Missionaries assisted the governments of the countries from which they came in formulating treaties that provided for extraterritorial rights. This accorded aliens free access to the hinterland under government protection. These privileges were often abused by missionaries, who pressured local magistrates to render verdicts in favor of Christian landlords in lawsuits over land tenure. In disputes between Christians and non-Christians, the latter always lost. Adding to this source of aggravation, unfair treaties provided that Chinese courts had no right to judge cases of felony committed by foreign civilians, who were legally responsible only to their respective consuls. Foreign communities in treaty ports likewise prescribed special privileges for aliens. One park in the British concession in Shanghai posted a sign, "No admittance to dogs and Chinese."

It takes little imagination to see why such bullying practices caused widespread resentment. This bore fruit in 1900 in the Boxer uprising of patriots, who aimed to drive out foreign aggressors and punish the corrupt Ching officials. Mounting animosity against imperialist aggression was also a cause of the bourgeois revolution led by Sun Yat-Sen, who finally succeeded in overthrowing the Ching Dynasty.

An understanding of the political background of missionary activities requires mention of the Taiping revolution, which agitated China from 1850 to 1864. This movement left a dent in the history of the nation and of the Chinese church. Hong Xiu-Quan, the leading genius of the Taiping revolution, studied the

Bible for himself, and created what he called the "Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom," which had as its aim the establishment of God's kingdom on earth through military conquest. A visiting missionary once asked his spokesman, "Do you keep the Sabbath?" "Yes," was the reply, "we observe the Sabbath. At midnight we offer prayer and praise. After peace is restored, we plan to enforce the Sabbath in earnest. Saturday is the Sabbath."

Missionaries first saw Hong Xiu-Quan as a wonderful convert, but later on despised him

as a radical ignoramus, theologically speaking. Their opinion of him influenced the imperialist forces, who were already dissatisfied with his program of dealing with foreign powers on equal terms. They could hardly count on him to honor the treaties they had concluded with the Ching Dynasty. Hence they decided to work

with the imperial government, which they knew would serve their purposes better, suppressing what they called the "Taiping Rebellion." No less significant a figure than Charles G. Gordon was enlisted to command the colonial forces to fight with the Ching army in its assault against Nanjing, the capital of the Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom. Thus the first grand attempt by a Chinese convert to Christianize his country by force of arms was defeated before it could be tested on a nationwide scale.

Years of missionary expansion also produced rapid gains made by colonial forces. Due to imperialist aggression, China had deteriorated into a semifederal, semicolonial coun-

Hong Xiu-Quan, the leading genius of the Taiping revolution, studied the Bible for himself, and created what he called the "Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom," which had for its aim the establishment of God's kingdom on earth through military conquest.

try. China's economy was strangled by alien powers that engendered a "comprador class" in the church as well as in trade circles. Instead of Christian fellowship, a master-and-lackey relationship arose between missionary and convert. Plans for gospel work were laid by missionaries, who put little stock in what Chinese workers had to say. The guiding policy was, "He who pays the money decides how the work should be done." Mission funds coming from abroad gave the impression that an abundance of money was available, and the offerings of Chinese converts made little difference. Still, they gave their "widow's mite," not aware that one day God would remove the extra burden of the missionaries' salaries, and provide for the creating of a truly self-reliant indigenous church in China.

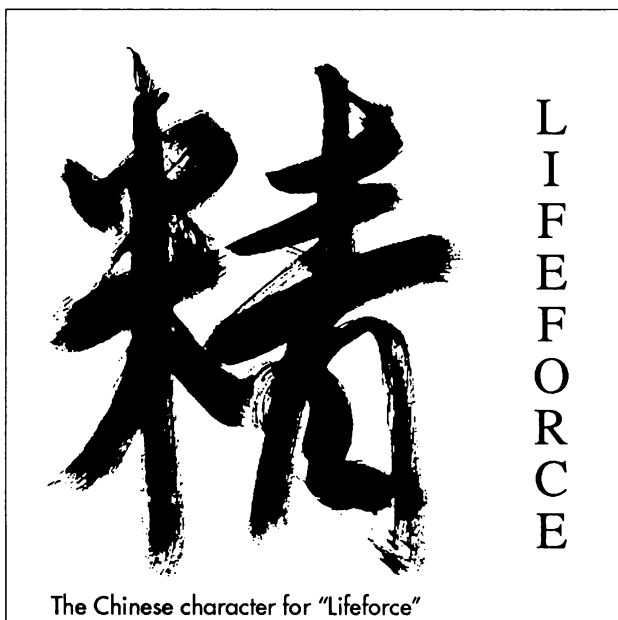
Adventist missionaries first landed in China in 1902, when it was shackled by a number of treaties forcibly imposed on it by foreign imperialists. Adventist pioneers in China worked under the disadvantage of being unfamiliar with a political and economic system for which they were not responsible. They had to learn a new language and strange cus-

toms. Just learning to reach the soul of the people and break down the wall of prejudice was a great challenge. Some missionaries resorted to offering material benefits to draw an audience. But the bait attracted only "rice Christians." Some wise missionaries lifted up Christ crucified, but the imperialist curtain obscured his image. So genuine conversions were few.

There was no Methodist church in Hankow, so my mother began visiting different churches in the city. One day an Adventist missionary came by, selling the Chinese *Signs of the Times*. My father bought a subscription and talked with the missionary for some time. Soon thereafter, a Bible worker, Miss Abbie Dunn, invited my mother to attend the Hankow Adventist church. Mother accepted the invitation and was impressed to find Adventist believers reciting the Ten Commandments.

This made her recall an experience she had had some years earlier. Her brother-in-law, a lawyer, had questioned her regarding the rules of the Christian faith. When she said that Christians lived by the Ten Commandments, he asked her, "Which ten?" She tried her best to recall them, but all she could remember and repeat were nine precepts. Her brother-in-law smiled and remarked, "You've been a Christian for 10 years, and you can't even recite the Decalogue correctly." Mother was chagrined. The Adventist church's emphasis on the Ten Commandments convinced her that they taught the truth.

During summer vacation, I visited my parents in Hankow. Mother explained the Sabbath doctrine to me. However, when I returned to Peking, the Pykes learned of my new belief and tried their best to dissuade me. Meanwhile, Abbie Dunn wrote to another Bible worker in Peking, Lucy Andrus, who came to my school one day, introduced herself, and invited me to study the Bible with her. Thus began my internal battle: Would I or would I not keep the seventh-day Sabbath? Finally, in 1934, when my mother came back to



The Chinese character for "Lifeforce"

Peking, I decided to attend the Adventist church with her.

Shortly after I graduated from high school in 1935, my brother, Paul, was killed in a motorcycle accident, leaving me the only child in our family. Relatives tried to dissuade me from studying for the ministry, pointing out that preachers in China are poorly paid, and I would need a more lucrative vocation if I planned to bear the family's financial burdens in the future.

But the Lord arranged for me to attend an Adventist junior college, the China Training Institute in Chiaotouzhen. There I majored in Bible and was the only ministerial student to pay my own tuition. All my ministerial classmates were beneficiaries of a scholarship set up to encourage young people to train for the ministry. (Any student who could afford to pay tuition took pre-med, business, or the teaching course. Only those who could not afford an education applied for the ministerial scholarship.) In this respect, I was again an "odd fellow."

Then in 1937 came the Sino-Japanese war, and the school closed down. I went to Hong Kong. Funds from my parents subsequently enabled me to obtain passage to Pacific Union College, where I continued to study for the ministry. During the dreary war years, the northwestern city of Lanzhou where my parents were staying was badly hit in an air raid. All buildings around the house where my parents stayed were razed, but their home remained standing amid the rubble, a silent witness to God's care for his own.

To pay my way through college I held numerous jobs, from canvassing in Chinatown and working in the college cafeteria, machine shop, and bindery, to cutting cord wood in the forest. When I graduated in 1941, I continued my studies at the Adventist Theological Seminary in Takoma Park. While there I spent my spare time canvassing. In the winter I worked in Danville, Virginia, as a colporteur.

I soon began working on my Master's thesis. During this time I was called to teach Chinese at Pacific Union College, then spent a year as a colporteur in Honolulu. There, I gave Bible studies to a Japanese family and won them to the Sabbath truth. Next, I was called to conduct the Chinese Bible Correspondence School at the Voice of Prophecy. Since the Voice of Prophecy lacked Chinese type-characters, I printed the lessons by hand and duplicated them. I returned to Shanghai with a group of missionaries in December 1946, to work with Milton Lee in the radio department of the China Division.

In 1947, when foreign missionaries returned to China and the China Division held its first constituency meeting, a Chinese worker presented a formal request to the division president to turn over the division administration to Chinese workers. The plan was rejected. In a large meeting, the American division president stated that Chinese Adventists were spiritually immature and financially unable to assume the burdens of church leadership.

Just as that first serious attempt of Chinese workers to run their own church was squelched, the Kuomintang forces were facing

A Chinese worker presented a formal request to the division president to turn over the Division administration to Chinese workers. The plan was rejected. In a large meeting, the American division president stated that Chinese Adventists were spiritually immature.

disaster on the battlefield. The victorious Red Army was making speedy progress toward Shanghai.

By 1948, the liberation of Shanghai was imminent. Most of our missionaries had moved to Hong Kong, where a provisional China Division headquarters was set up. The radio department moved to Canton, where it functioned for six months; then it, too, moved to Hong Kong. I was appointed editor of the Hong Kong edition of *Signs of the Times*. In December 1949, the provisional office of the China Division turned over all duties to the Chinese staff in Shanghai, and I returned there as division secretary.

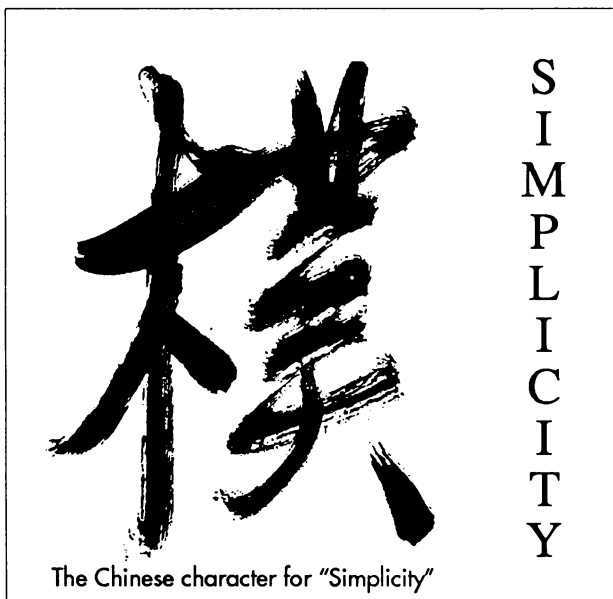
In 1950, shortly before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, a team of Christian workers headed by Y. T. Wu and L. M. Liu called on the new government to demand implementation of the "Common Programme," which guaranteed religious freedom to all churches. They requested that the government investigate cases of violation and post notices on all churches to assure the people of their freedom to worship.

Premier Chou En-Lai received this group of Christian workers, and conducted three extended talks with them concerning the

government's policy on religious liberty. He explained that the country had just been through a tremendous shake-up, and might be likened to a patient recovering from a major operation. Church closure and Bible confiscation were just normal "side effects" that could be remedied. He also pointed out that simply posting public notices would not effectively solve the problem. Chinese Christians must examine themselves to discover the cause of the animosity of the masses against Christianity. For more than a century Christianity had been looked upon as an exotic foreign religion. The people had painful memories of atrocities perpetrated by imperialist forces working hand-in-glove with "Christian" missionaries.

The group of Christian workers got the point. They wrote the "Declaration for Reformation Through Self-administration, Self-support and Self-propagation." This document clarified the issue confronting the Chinese churches and called on all Christians who loved their country to stand on the right side. Thus, the program popularly known as the "Three-Self" Patriotic Movement was inaugurated. It set out to change the basic foreign essence of the Christian cause in China so that the masses would no longer look upon Christianity as an unwelcome intruder. Premier Chou En-Lai's proposal was not a new idea. Conditions were ripe for converting a foreign proselyting agency into a truly Chinese religious cause, so that the masses might recognize the change and lend their support.

Then, in June 1950, the Korean War broke out. As American GIs, fighting under the United Nations flag, drove into North Korea, Chinese volunteer troops marched across the border to push them back. Meanwhile, the American seventh fleet was ordered to patrol the Taiwan Straits. The fleet was to block any attempt by the Red Army to liberate Taiwan. China and the United States were at war.



Since the Adventist mission was an American organization, its assets were frozen in December 1950. In time the organized Adventist Church disintegrated. Politically active elements among our workers got the upper hand, and in December 1951 the division officers were replaced.

For the next several years, a number of us who had been discharged got together to make slide rules for a living. At the same time, we began translating the *Desire of Ages*. Eventually, we completed translation of the entire Conflict of the Ages series. These books were micrographed and distributed by a group of young people from the Shanghai Seventh-day Adventist church.

In April of 1958, I was arrested and charged with being a counter-revolutionary, and given a 15-year sentence. I was sent to a water conservancy project where I pushed wheelbarrows, operated a power winch, and served successively as an x-ray technician, power station switch operator, and tractor electrician on a state farm. However, during my entire imprisonment, I received humane treatment. At times, I could even arrange my work so as to keep the Sabbath fairly well. My children were allowed to visit me several times. On one of these occasions, I had the privilege of baptizing my son, Roger, in a moat.

During the "Cultural Revolution" my whole nation went berserk. The rumpus started with the organizing of young people into the "Red Guard" to protect Chairman Mao from "bourgeois elements." It was said that these elements threatened to undermine our socialist system. Religious people naturally became targets of

attack. Our oldest daughter, Flora, had been an annoyance to her school because of her Sabbath "truancy," so our home was the first to be attacked when the Red Guards launched a city-wide onslaught on the bourgeoisie. Our home was ransacked six times through those tempestuous months. The Red Guards made it a point to come with their war drums on the Sabbath. All my books were piled in our alley and burned.

At one point, a voice told my mother, then 72, to go stay with her aunt in Tientsin. She stayed in Tientsin long enough to escape the most dangerous months. During the time she

was away, my wife, Clara, was beaten, had her hair cropped, and was forced to stand in the street as a public spectacle. She faltered under the strain and for a time lost her sense of God's presence, but she rallied, repented, and served the Lord faithfully thereafter.

During my absence, my wife managed, with God's

help, to nurture each of our five children in the way of the Lord. When our youngest daughter, Angelina, was quizzed by a panel of grade-school teachers, they asked her, "Who taught you to keep the Sabbath?"

"The Bible," she answered.

"Do you mean that you will read only the Bible, and not Karl Marx?" was the next question.

"No," Angelina replied, "I read the Bible and also Karl Marx, and I will obey what is true."

We can only believe that the Holy Spirit gave her wisdom to answer as she did. If her mother had not taught her to love the Lord and his Sabbath, the Holy Spirit could not have helped her as fully in that crucial hour.

My wife, Clara, was beaten, had her hair cropped, and was forced to stand in the street as a public spectacle. She faltered under the strain and for a time lost her sense of God's presence, but she rallied, repented, and served the Lord faithfully.

However, our children's lives were not without difficulty. For a time, three of them succumbed to political pressure and signed up for the rustication program that was implemented in 1969. Eva, Flora, and Roger answered Chairman Mao's call for unschooled youth to go "up to the hills and down to the countryside." They went together to the hills of Gweizhou. Life was difficult. Only Roger, who could cut wood in the forests, made a fair living. He helped his sisters survive through those eight dreary years. Of course, God did not forsake any of them.

When Eva returned, she found work in a factory, where she determined to faithfully observe the Sabbath. She was forced to relinquish the bonus paid to workers who put in full hours, and this drastically reduced her paycheck. However, the management saw that she was truly conscientious, and arranged to allow her to finish her weekly quota in five days if she could. The Lord gave her hands speed and improved her productivity until she became the only worker paid a full bonus for working a five-day week.

During these trying years, my family would have suffered far more had it not been for God's protection through a rich aunt. When she left China, she entrusted her funds to my mother, asking that they be used to assist needy friends and relatives. When this aunt later died in the United States, her funds—which included not only a savings account but also several gold bars and some silver coins deposited in a bank vault—remained in my mother's custody. When the notorious "Gang of Four" came to power and ransacked the banks, the crypt containing the aunt's gold and silver was left intact. After the "Gang" lost power and we were free to open the vault, bank clerks expressed surprise at the miraculous preservation of this one crypt.

When my term of imprisonment ended, I was transferred from the state farm to a mining

establishment in Huainan, Anhui, to translate technical literature. There I worked for five years, received regular wages, and enjoyed Sabbath privileges. Finally, on March 28, 1991, I was fully exonerated. Today, in retirement, I receive a pension and live in Shanghai, serving as one of the pastors in Mu En Tang.

When the People's Liberation Army defeated the Chiang Kai-Shek forces in the bloody battle along the Huai River and then crossed the Yangtze River to liberate the South, some Christians prayed that God would drown the hated Communists. But when the Communists came to power in 1949, they lost no time cleaning up the brothels, gambling casinos, and opium traffic. Stringent measures were taken to stop the white slave traffic.

Among moral values, God regards especially highly filial obedience. The "first commandment with promise" requires us to honor our parents. Among ancient peoples of the world, China is the only one with a book called *Xiao Jing*, whose contents are devoted to teachings on filial piety. Its folklore boasts 24 anecdotes to be taught to the younger generation on the meritorious acts of sons and daughters who honored their parents.

China enjoys a rich heritage. I believe God has preserved this country for a purpose. Although China did not enjoy the privilege of direct revelation as did the Jewish people, it was not wholly ignorant of saving truths. The name *Shang Di*, the Chinese term for God, corresponds to the Hebrew *El Shaddai*, God Almighty. Chinese linguists affirm that the Cantonese dialect has preserved the ancient pronunciation of Chinese characters most accurately. Now the Cantonese pronounce the word for *God* as "Sheong Dai," which is closer to *El Shaddai* than the Mandarin vocalization given above.

China does not claim to be a paragon of morality. It is afflicted with its share of social ills and moral decay. But when compared with other nations, and despite its ignorance of Holy Scripture, the annals of Chinese history do not

record a single instance of the visitation of God's wrath on a Chinese city for moral depravity. In ancient Chinese art and sculpture one does not encounter pornography, such as was discovered in Near and Middle East excavations.

Recently, the government launched a nation-wide "Clean Sweep" campaign against obscene literature, films, and videotapes, raiding the secret hide-outs where these things were produced. Results were gratifying. Even if these measures may not be thoroughgoing, such an ethical stance in itself puts the Chinese ruling party on a higher moral plane than professedly "Christian" nations that collect taxes from licensing brothels and casinos.

Chinese churches made a fortunate decision indeed when they broke their ties with foreign missionary societies and thus "quarantined" themselves from Western decadence. However, the full significance of the severing of their ties with foreign missionary boards is not limited to this alone. This self-reliance has contributed to spiritual maturity. Chinese Christians have learned to look to Christ instead of to men for power to finish the gospel commission.

Many people outside China think that the Three-Self Committee is an institution subsidiary to the government. This is not true. It is a civilian organization that receives no money from the government, but operates on funds derived from church offerings and rent on church property. Mu En Tang, the church in Shanghai where Adventist members worship, is supported entirely by their offerings. Sermons in the Adventist church are not cen-

sored, and no government cadre sits in the committee meetings. The minutes are not submitted to the Bureau of Religious Affairs or the police for inspection. Adventists are free to preach all the cardinal doctrines of their faith. The same is true of the congregation that meets on Sundays in the same building.

The Chinese Christian Council is a nationwide organization in charge of the religious activities of all churches. Denominational names have been discontinued, but their different beliefs and practices remain and are respected. The Shanghai Christian Council, with the Three-Self Committee, arranged for Adventist believers to worship in the centrally located Mu En Tang instead of in separate homes. They worked out an agreement

whereby Adventist services are conducted by Adventist pastors paid from Adventist tithe, and their freewill offerings go into a common pool for operating expenses. The first Sabbath service was held on February 18, 1989, and since then four baptismal services have netted 360 converts.

According to the present arrangement, the Seventh-day Adventists in Mu En Tang are recognized as Adventist believers (*xin tu*), not as the Seventh-day Adventist Church (*hui*). (This last name would indicate the existence of a distinct ecclesiastical organization, which in fact does not exist. The China Division of Seventh-day Adventists, with its union and local missions, ceased to exist in 1958.)

A number of Chinese Adventists still refuse to have anything to do with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Some complain that it smacks of a union of church and state. They

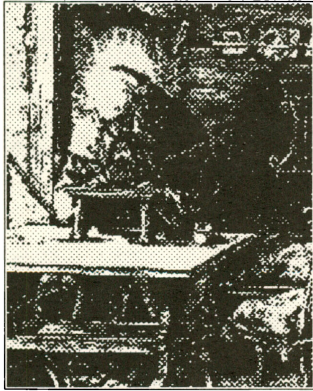
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refer to Ellen White's statement entitled "Our Attitude in Regard to Politics" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 391). But we note that these words were written in 1899 to teachers and managers in our schools in America, where party politics created a situation of rivalry quite different from what exists in China today. Ellen White's words in *Testimonies*, Volume 1 are more applicable here:

Many Sabbathkeepers are not right before God in their political views. They are not in harmony with God's word or in union with the body of Sabbathkeeping believers. Their views

do not accord with the principles of our faith. . . . These brethren cannot receive the approval of God while they lack sympathy for the oppressed colored race and are at variance with the pure, republican principles of our Government (pp. 533, 534).

Many forms of church-state relations have existed and continue to exist in different countries. We cannot fully fathom the purposes of God. But as I review the past hundred years and the history of China, Christianity, and the Adventist Church, I can only exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"



Detail from A. Dürer, *St. Jerome In His Cell*.

Convert to Scholar: An Odyssey in Humility

Jerry Gladson set out to wage war against untruth. Studying the Old Testament taught him humility.

by Jerry A. Gladson

I WAS NOT REARED A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST. I joined the church in my teens, through an evangelistic crusade. I argued with anyone who would debate me about Adventist doctrine. Adventists, I had learned, were people who had their theology straight. All that remained was to persuade the world of this extraordinary fact. I became obsessed with having most, if not all, of the right answers.

I wore this viewpoint like a badge all through public high school, where I attempted—against their will—to convince my peers; on to college, where I scorned all but the study of theology; and out into the ministry, where I labored as a pastor-evangelist for almost a decade. I felt myself to be a thoroughly convinced Adventist. But my faith has become more complicated, and that experience can

serve, in some respects, as a case study of faith development in the context of Adventism.

I have learned that faith is a struggle that inevitably takes place in a context of uncertainty. My doubts have often stimulated me to broaden my understanding of faith, to seek deeper levels of belief. I have discovered that faith is an ongoing, dynamic experience, not easily contained in creedal statements. Two events changed me from an Adventist with all the answers to one with less certainty and more humility.

Reframing Faith

I began graduate studies in Hebrew Bible at Vanderbilt University and, during my graduate work and afterward, found myself serving on committees of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. I was a representative of the religion faculty of Southern College, where I taught from 1972 to 1987.

One of the reasons I went to Vanderbilt was to gather ammunition to hurl at the opponents

Jerry Gladson is vice president and dean of academic affairs of the Psychological Studies Institute, an interdenominational graduate school of psychology and religion in Atlanta, Georgia. Previous to this, he was professor of religion at Southern College, from which he received his B.A. Gladson holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Old Testament from Vanderbilt University.

of Adventism. If I could learn opposing viewpoints firsthand while mastering the methodology that led to them, I reasoned, I would have an inside track to refute them. The more seriously I took my studies, however, the more I became aware there were issues I had never considered.

Vanderbilt shook my overconfident, arrogant Adventism. I began to realize my formative relationship with the church had been uncritical and painfully naive. I had—although I would have vehemently denied it—blindly accepted my tradition. I firmly resisted the reframing of Adventism on which I had begun. I passionately argued with my professors and other students over whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch (a view they didn't accept), fought with them over the historical-critical method, all the while carefully keeping their theological conclusions at arms' length.

I pitied my professors because they didn't know the truth as I understood it. Wisely, they put no pressure on me to accept their opinions. "We'd be disappointed if you changed your views," James Crenshaw told me. "We only want you to demonstrate you can use modern, scientific methods in analyzing the Bible. What you believe about those methods is your own business." Professor Crenshaw, a leading authority in Hebrew wisdom, was my dissertation advisor.

A highly complex methodology, the historical-critical method (or simply "critical" method for short), uses the scientific method adapted from the study of ancient documents. To ascertain more carefully the origin, mean-

ing, and significance of the biblical text, a critical scholar analyzes the history of the textual transmission, the literary forms, and the development of theological ideas, all against the background of the ancient Near Eastern or Greco-Roman world. Conservative scholars, including Adventists, have generally opposed the critical method because of its assumption that all events in history, including the miracles and other supernatural events mentioned in the Bible, can be explained in terms of natural cause and effect. Rudolf Bultmann expresses its critical viewpoint as follows:

Vanderbilt shook my overconfident, arrogant Adventism. I began to realize my formative relationship with the church had been uncritical and painfully naive. I had—although I would have vehemently denied it—blindly accepted my tradition.

This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no "miracle" in this sense of the word. Such a miracle would be an event whose cause did not lie within history.¹

While I could not bring myself to accept this closed view of reality, and thus give up belief in a supernatural Bible, I realized that critical scholars had noticed many details about the biblical text that conservatives, including Adventists, seemed to ignore. They pointed out that ideas of authorship in the ancient world differed from ours. In the ancient Near East, authorship tended to be a communal matter. An editorial modification, or even addition—sometimes even of an extensive nature—in a writing did not disturb anyone. Regardless of who wrote them, ancient books were essentially communal products.

I also saw, as critical scholars often suggested, that there was a bona fide development

of ideas within the Bible. Even when the canon reached its final status, these ideas were not reconciled. A good example is Ecclesiastes, mentioned below. This meant that biblical faith was genuinely pluralistic, quite unlike the monolithic claims of the Adventism I knew. To borrow Luther's words from his characterization of the Eucharist, God, in inspiring Scripture, worked "in, through, and under" human writing processes. As a result, the Bible is simultaneously human and divine.

I gradually came to what I considered a "modified" critical view; that is, a view of Scripture that fully affirms its divine element, while recognizing the human methods used in its production.² Eventually, I would discover that many other leading conservative scholars had already reached similar conclusions.³

As with most internal conflicts, this simmered beneath the surface for a long time. I remember the day—almost the exact time—when it finally erupted. Sitting in an old stuffed chair, a remnant left over from a living-room set we had long discarded, I was reading Rudolf Bultmann's essay, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?"⁴ The reading was part of an assignment for a seminar on Bultmann, one of the last courses in my Vanderbilt curriculum. Bultmann pointed out that no one approaches the biblical text without presuppositions that are determined by complex features in his or her life experience. One must take great care, however, not to allow these presuppositions to determine the interpretation of the text.

It suddenly dawned on me that all along I had been allowing my Adventist presuppositions to filter out any new insights—particularly of a theological nature—that I might have gained from my graduate studies. As a result, I had not seriously listened to *anything* I had studied at Vanderbilt. I remembered a comment often made by one Adventist scholar who held a doctorate in theology from a non-Adventist university. "For every page I was assigned in non-Adventist literature," he

boasted, "I read one page in Ellen White to counteract it. As a result, I've come through my doctoral studies with my Adventist faith intact."

Of course! Whether he realized it or not, he had deliberately closed his mind! If Adventists fail to listen seriously to other theologians, I wondered, how can they honestly expect these same theologians to take seriously their claims? The enormity of such a simple question, with all its implications, towered menacingly before me. If I wanted to be honest, should I not listen seriously, not only to Bultmann, but to my professors as well? At least, shouldn't I try to understand their point of view?

As a result of years of Adventist conditioning, I instinctively grasped the dangers of such openness. Horror stories of those who had drifted from the church after earning non-Adventist university degrees flashed before me. And I was seeking a non-Adventist doctorate in Bible! I was studying the *source* document of the faith in such a setting! Already, my studies had generated many questions that I couldn't answer. But I knew, if I wanted to pursue truth, I *had* to take the risk. I had to get under Adventist presuppositions to what one of my professors was fond of calling, "the question beneath the question."⁵ That spring afternoon was a turning point. It was a metamorphosis that would lead me to look at my church of origin in an entirely new—and disturbing—light.

Trials of Faith

At first, these profoundly disturbing questions didn't reach the inner core of my life because I was sure an Adventist theologian—somewhere—had the answer. As questions arose, I "filed" them away until I could find the answers. When I was asked to serve on some of the Biblical Research Institute committees, I took heart. The institute's committees brought

together the finest Adventist theological minds to research critical issues facing the church. Surely here, I thought, I would get the answers I desperately needed.

The first committee on which I worked studied the issue of women's ordination. We produced nearly a thousand pages of biblical, historical, and theological research, and finally concluded there were no theological impediments that should keep the church from ordaining women. After voting to send that conclusion on to the General Conference, some of us were crushed when the church leadership announced that our committee had concluded the exact opposite: there were no theological reasons why we *should* ordain women! Eventually, of course, the church set aside our research completely and recommissioned a new study. It was my first experience with the way politics shapes and determines theology—even Adventist theology.⁶

Although I enjoyed my work on the Biblical Research Institute committees, it was a disillusioning time for me because I discovered that the finest minds in Adventism had no better answers than I for the theological problems facing the church. My graduate training had already raised several problems relating to Adventist interpretation of Daniel and Revela-

tion for which I had no solution. To my great surprise, I discovered that these dedicated Adventist scholars, many of them far older and more experienced than I, had few or no solutions either. Several years before Desmond Ford's disclosure, the committee had identified, but not satisfactorily resolved, a number of problems in our interpretation of Daniel 8:14.⁷

Even more disconcerting was the way the committee was often compromised by church leadership. They seemed to expect the committee to provide impressive research to bolster or reach already agreed-upon conclusions. I had been taught by my early Adventist teachers that one should try to follow the evidence wherever it led. One should be open to new directions.⁸ Sadly, I did not often see this spirit of honesty in the work of the committee.

While these inner conflicts tore at me, critics of Southern College demanded that its theology professors give clear and certain answers to many of the issues that had begun to surface in the Adventist Church. Many of these, such as the investigative judgment and the nature of Ellen White's experience, had been on the agenda of the Biblical Research Institute for several years. When we tried to point out that things were more complicated than they appeared, these persons took their campaign to the Southern Union administration and college board. For these critics, some of them church administrators, genuine faith could not exist in tension with uncertainty. Although the best theological minds in Adventism had no convincing answers for the matters facing the church, certain members of the Southern College religion faculty, including myself, were tried, condemned, and tarnished for life because they could not bring themselves to deny that problems existed. They were caught between the "Yes" and the "No" Paul Tillich describes so eloquently:



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The theologian is obligated to be critical of every special expression of his ultimate concern. He cannot affirm any tradition and any authority except through a "No" and a "Yes." And it is always possible that he may not be able to go all the way from the "No" to the "Yes." *He cannot join the chorus of those who live in unbroken assertions.* He must take the risk of being driven beyond the boundary line of the theological circle. Therefore, the pious and powerful in the church are suspicious of him, although they live in dependence upon the work of the former theologians who were in the same situation. Theology, since it serves not only the concrete but also the universal *logos*, can become a stumbling block for the church and a demonic temptation for the theologian. The detachment required in honest theological work can destroy the necessary involvement of faith. This tension is the burden and the greatness of every theological work.⁹

Stages of Faith

Eventually, I discovered James Fowler's hierarchy of faith stages, and learned that my experience at this stage of faith development was perfectly normal, whatever church leaders or college critics might think. Fowler identifies seven stages of faith:

Primal faith, a sense of intimacy and trust within the family developed in the first two years of life.

Intuitive-projective faith, a preschool stage in which a child, through appropriating the symbols, stories, and liturgical life of the religious tradition in which it is nurtured, begins its first efforts to find meaning.

Mythic-literal faith, a childhood acceptance of the rules and implicit values of the family's faith community.

Synthetic-conventional faith, in which an emerging self-identity seemingly compels an adolescent to challenge her or his tradition and to try out alternative patterns of belief or nonbelief.

Individuative-reflective faith, a reappropriating in early adulthood of the faith of one's community in personally revised form.

Conjunctive, or paradoxical faith, where life ceases to be black or white, and takes on shades of gray.

Finally, *universalizing* faith, where one embraces humankind, with its welter of beliefs and religions, in an attitude of universal acceptance.¹⁰

Like all archetypal theories, Fowler's developmental scheme fails in specific instances of faith development.¹¹ Not everyone's faith develops in precisely these stages.¹² Nevertheless, after more than a decade of research, Fowler has provided a highly attractive model of what happens to a normal person over a lifespan, one that I wish to use as an interpretive context for how my faith and that of many others in contemporary Adventism has been nuanced.

It is the sixth stage, the *conjunctive*, that is especially relevant. In this stage people gradually come to realize that the answers they have received from their tradition, along with those they have worked out on their own, don't always work. Questions and paradoxes abound. Fowler borrows from Carl Jung the idea of *conjunctio oppositorum*, the "conjunction of opposites," to designate the new polarities that come to characterize this stage of faith. Faith moves beyond either/or categories to the richness and ambiguity of truth. It becomes open to the truths in other faith communities. Truth cannot be approached from a single perspective—even an Adventist one—but is best perceived in a dialectical interplay. Even then, the paradoxes can neither be reconciled nor comprehended. Alluringly, at the heart of reality a mystery persists.

Such a paradoxical, yet mature, developing faith ought to be celebrated in the church as an evidence of spiritual growth. Provision should be made in our polity and local church programming to meet the spiritual needs of people in the various stages of faith.

Persons hung up in a literalistic stage of faith development sometimes persecute and "purge" from the church others in a different

faith stage. Unfinished spiritual and psychological needs are imposed on the church at large, sometimes with disastrous effects. Some of the polarities within the North American Adventist community over the past decade have resulted from just this dynamic.

Mature Christian faith is able to live with uncertainties; immature faith denies they exist. In these discoveries, I found a new way to live in the church that, although unacceptable to many in church leadership, is definitely grounded in the biblical witness.

The Biblical Dynamic Of Faith

During this time of personal and professional anguish, I turned instinctively to Scripture, where I discovered in a new way that genuine biblical faith often keeps company with uncertainty. Scripture reinforces the dynamic, pluriform nature of faith. The Bible makes room for all stages of faith development within the household of faith. Even the conjunctive stage is amply provided for. Doubt and uncertainty never stand very far away from biblical faith.

One of the strangest books in the Bible portrays a faith struggling with uncertainty. The book of Ecclesiastes, so cynical and pessimistic that many people refuse to read it, challenged the smug, literalistic faith of its contemporaries.

Largely a series of musings on the orthodox thinking of the day, Ecclesiastes forces us to contemplate a faith that can hold tensions of doubt and belief together in an uneasy truce. Over and over, the author cites a conventional dogma of his time, then refers to his own experience as challenging or refuting it. Against those who claim to find a clear pattern of divine meaning in history and life, he writes: "I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun, and see, all is vanity and a chasing after

wind" (Ecclesiastes 1:14, NRSV). *Vanity* translates the Hebrew, *hebel*, "fleeting, insubstantial, futile." He corroborates his point by reference to the apparently endless, and therefore meaningless, cycles of life (verses 2-11). Nothing seems to be going anywhere; inane repetition characterizes human experience.

Against those who think they have the right theological answers, who are confident that they know the movings of God, he writes: "I have seen the business that God has given to the sons of man to be busy with. He has made everything appropriate for its time; moreover, he has put an enigma into their heart, so that man cannot find out the deed that God has done from beginning to end" (3:10, 11, lit. tran.). God has placed an enigma (*'olam*), or "obscurity," within the heart of humankind, leaving people in the lurch of crippling uncertainty.¹³

Against those who claim that life has an intrinsic balance in which the good get rewarded, the wicked punished, he demurs: "I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, wickedness was there, and in the place of righteousness, wickedness was there as well" (3:16, NRSV).

It hardly seems possible to get beyond the pessimism of this author. He appears overwhelmed by all the unanswered questions in his world. Only in the end does he return to his faith, which he places in sharp tension with his uncertainty: "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14, NRSV).¹⁴

Because of its intense pessimism, Ecclesiastes has always been problematic for readers of the Bible. Yet, as Gerhard von Rad has observed:

One may even ask whether the church, if it had remained open over the centuries to the theological perspectives of . . . [Job and Ecclesiastes], might not have been able to con-

front the fierce attacks of modern man more effectively and more calmly.¹⁵

Ecclesiastes, in other words, provides an example of a person experiencing Fowler's *conjunctive* stage of faith. The author has to hold all kinds of paradoxes and tensions together. Here, the author seems to be at the extreme edge of his faith, teetering on the brink of "skeptical rationalism and tired resignation."¹⁶ He concludes, however, if we accept chapter 12:13, 14 as the author's final word: "I have all kinds of questions and doubts, *nevertheless* . . ." The presence of such a radical expression of uncertainty in the Bible should caution us against condemning those in the church who may exhibit similar tendencies.

Ecclesiastes is not the only biblical example of this searching, probing, and sometimes pessimistic faith. As Job, Habakkuk, many of the Psalms, and even certain New Testament passages show (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 11:24-29), a faith that wrestles with doubt and uncertainty is precisely what the Bible means by "faith." If we have trouble accepting some of the things the church teaches or does, we are normal, thinking people. We are "Protestants," for that is what *Protestant* means: *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*, "the church, reformed, always undergoing reformation." If our faith is growing, it could not be otherwise. We should fear most of all a faith that blindly accepts everything without question. Such uncritical, accepting trust built the Nazi empire, and dragged the Soviet Union through 70 years of brutal despotism.

Faith and Contemporary Adventism

The challenges facing Adventism today are real. They will not simply go away. We besmirch our honesty when we deny them or pretend they do not exist. Many of my Protestant friends thoughtfully watch from the sidelines to see whether Adventism will somehow find the courage to deal openly with the issues confronting it.¹⁷ Despite several new attempts, some of which have originated with the Biblical Research Institute, we have not fully met the challenge of Desmond Ford's penetrating criticisms of the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8, which he detailed in a 900-page thesis.¹⁸

Neither have we dealt adequately with the questions raised by Walter Rea regarding Ellen White. Although his claims tended to be overstated, the church has gradually come to concede almost all his major points.

In 1990, Fred Veltman reported to the church at large his findings in two articles appearing in *Ministry* magazine.¹⁹

Careful to point out that he had examined only a small section of the *Desire of Ages*, thus making it difficult to generalize, Veltman concluded that Ellen White did use sources without giving credit, and that she, at times, even denied doing so. The *Desire of Ages*, he noted, was dependent on secondary materials. On the whole, an average of about 31 percent of the 15 chapters was in some way indebted to other material. Worse, her history, chronology, and theological interpretation—often cited confidently by

The challenges facing Adventism today are real. They will not simply go away. We besmirch our honesty when we deny them or pretend they do not exist. . . . We have not fully met the challenge of Desmond Ford's penetrating criticisms.

Adventists—were not always reliable.²⁰

In the area of church polity, the intransigent organizational structure of the Adventist Church should give everyone pause for concern. Plagued by bureaucracy, wasteful duplication, and resistance to change, the powerful organizational structure poses an even more serious threat to the future of Adventism than theological difficulties. The fact we have so few checks and balances in our denominational structure makes a new Davenport-like abuse of power not only possible, but likely.

Fortunately, we have new leadership. Whether this means a period of “glasnost” or “perestroika,” only time will tell. While maintaining order in the church, can the new administration bring into being a new day when a variety of versions of Adventism—a variety of faith developmental stages—can live together peacefully? Can it lead us past the reactionary attitudes that have all but extinguished the appeal of Adventism for the present generation? Are we poised on the brink of a renewed future for Adventism, or standing on the verge of its extinction? To be an Adventist today is for many to live a life of faith in a world of disappointment.

But whatever the future holds, I am convinced God is still present and active in the Adventist Church, as he is active in all communities who proclaim Jesus Christ. He is still active in our lives. Whether we can, as individuals, solve any of Adventism’s problems is irrelevant to our personal or communal standing with God. “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9, RSV).

Adventists may have to live at a more humble, less arrogant level than in the past when we were convinced that we were totally right and the only people so blessed. A mature Christian faith, however, is able to live in peace with uncertainties. Like the writer of Ecclesiastes, the Christian is assured that God is somehow still there, even when the answers aren’t.

Disillusionment can begin the liberation of our souls. If we can see disillusionment as a challenge to wean us away from uncritical trust in an organization and center it upon God, it will be one of the greatest moments in our Adventist pilgrimage.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Existence and Faith* (New York: Living Books, 1960), p. 292.

2. Cf. my “Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of the Giants,” *Spectrum* 18:4 (1988), pp. 19-34, for a more extensive study of this method and its implications for Adventist theology.

3. E.g., Carl E. Armerding, *The Old Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); G. Eldon Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967). Evangelical scholar R. K. Harrison writes: “Many professional students of the Old Testament, including some scholars of the highest intellectual caliber, have come to the conclusion that it is becoming increasingly impossible to ignore or dismiss the results of honest scholarship and research any longer. Accord-

ingly they have begun to devote themselves to the task of ascertaining as far as is possible the actual facts of the ancient Near Eastern cultural situation, and against such a background are making a strenuous attempt to interpret the literary and other phenomena of the Old Testament” (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969], p. 81).

4. *Existence and Faith*, pp. 289-297.

5. The exact expression is: “the problem beneath the problem of theological method” (Edward Farley, *Ecclesial Man: A Social Phenomenology of Faith and Reality* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975], p. 3).

6. Although he is discussing science, the words of Emil Brunner apply in principle as well to theological research: “The dynamic heir of positivist philosophy,

the totalitarian state, has taken hold of science and succeeded in making it serviceable to its own purposes: science has to take its orders from political power. It has to start from its ideological presuppositions and has to prove that they are correct. Whether these are the racial philosophy of the *Herrenvolk*, or the Marxian doctrine, makes no difference. In both cases it means the prostitution of science, which in the long run would mean its end" (*Christianity and Civilization* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948-1949], pt. 2, p. 18). It seems to me that Adventist leadership has, in effect, often imprisoned theological research within a political agenda.

7. E.g., the date at which the 2300 days begins; the manner in which the 2300 "evenings and mornings" is to be calculated; the date of the birth of Jesus; the date of the Crucifixion; the precise event to occur at the end of the period or the 2300 days; the uncertainty and basis of the October 22, 1844, date, and so on.

8. This statement must not be understood as deprecating tradition. The church exists through tradition, that ancient memory passed down through the generations. The church, however, must seek, without giving up either, to interface tradition with contemporaneity. Adventism, at least in recent years, has erred too heavily on the side of tradition, while remaining closed to new, vital insights into its faith and life.

9. *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1965), vol. 1, pp. 25, 26. Italics supplied.

10. Perhaps Martin Luther King, Jr., or Gandhi, attained this level.

11. Fowler's hierarchy is based on Piagetian and Kohlbergian developmental hierarchies in its broad outlines. However, it coincides remarkably with the lived faith experience of most people. Fowler's own research takes the form of faith stories gathered from numerous people at various stages of life. Out of this data he has worked out his hierarchy.

12. One must ask, too, why he or she regards universalizing faith—which tends to melt religious distinctions down to an almost unrecognizable, amorphous whole—as the highest stage. A person at the highest level of faith, it seems, should be able to affirm a single tradition while simultaneously holding others in respect. Fowler's sixth level, in other words, could reasonably be posited as the highest level because it holds in tension contrasting views of reality.

13. James L. Crenshaw, "The Eternal Gospel (Eccl. 3:11)," *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*, ed. J. L. Crenshaw and J. T. Willis, eds. (New York: KTAV, 1974), pp. 23-49.

14. Because Chapter 12:13, 14 seems so out of harmony with the general tenor of the book, many

scholars think these verses have been added by a later writer, perhaps in response to the pessimism of Ecclesiastes. While it is impossible to determine exactly, additions of this type, aimed at setting up a dialectic, are known elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Proverbs 26:4, 5; 30:5, 6).

15. *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), p. 239.

16. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 494.

17. Cf. Kenneth R. Samples: "Our criticism of Adventism should not be interpreted as an attack from an enemy, but rather concerned words from a friend, who earnestly prays that the present leaders of Seventh-day Adventism will honor Scripture and the gospel of grace above their own denominational distinctives." ("From Controversy to Crisis: An Updated Assessment of Seventh-day Adventism," *Christian Research Journal* [Summer 1988], p. 14).

18. Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14, The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment* (Casselberry, Florida: Evangelion, 1980).

19. "The *Desire of Ages* Project: The Data" (October 1990) pp. 4-7; "The *Desire of Ages* Project: The Conclusions" (December 1990) pp. 11-15. A less widely circulated, photomechanically reproduced full report had previously been made available on a limited basis from the Ellen G. White Estate. In an interview in the same December issue of *Ministry*, Robert Olson, emeritus secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate, concedes the major problems Veltman discusses. He then shifts the emphasis from the cognitive elements in Ellen White to the affective: "Her main purpose in writing was not to present historical facts, either biblical or otherwise. Her main purpose was always evangelistic" (p. 17). This represents a significant change from the way Ellen White has generally been regarded in Adventist history.

20. Awareness of this new, more ambiguous role of Ellen White in Adventist thinking is addressed sensitively by Richard Rice in his *The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology From a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1985). Rice concludes his discussion by noting: "What we have learned requires us to re-examine our concept of prophetic inspiration. But those for whom her writings have been of great spiritual benefit are hardly inclined to discard them. Clearly, this is an area where more theological work needs to be done, and where the community needs to be more sensitive to the views of all its members" (pp. 204, 205).



Spiritual Journeys: Three in Transit

They say you can't go home again, but sometimes you can't stay either. Here are accounts of people who found leaving or joining complicated.

by Harvey Brenneise

Thompson, James J., Jr. *Fleeing the Whore of Babylon: A Modern Conversion Story*. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1986.

Bennett, Mildred. *The Autobiography of Mildred Bennett, The Early Years: The Winter Is Past*. Mellen Lives, volume 4. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989.

Holmes, Shirley S. *No Turning Back*. Berrien Springs, MI: Pointer Publications, 1988.

THESE THREE VOLUMES ARE RECENT EXAMPLES OF two related genres of writing that have had an important, if largely unstudied, role in Seventh-day Adventist literature—personal accounts of persons joining or leaving the Seventh-day Adventist Church. An early example of the latter is D. M. Canright's *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, an important book in denominational history because of the author's prominence in the early years of the church and his personal acquaintance with its leaders.

Harvey Brenneise is head reference librarian in the James White Library and an associate professor of library science at Andrews University.

These books have not resulted in the scandal (and need for rebuttal) that Canright's caused. The church's publishers have over the years released many volumes of conversion accounts, designed largely to inspire church members, and incidentally sometimes titillating them with the details of the biographee's preconversion life (a type of vicarious entertainment).

These volumes have a number of characteristics in common, along with striking differences. The authors all exhibit a sense of searching, a dissatisfaction with the religio-social status into which they were born, even though they can never entirely leave it behind them. Thompson and Bennett, born into the Adventist Church, search for freedom from its strictures, while Holmes joins the church in a search for truth and an escape from the liberalism she found creeping into the Lutheran Church of her childhood and youth. Thompson and Bennett reject the fundamentalism they find in Adventism, while Holmes joins largely because of it.

All three volumes exhibit a remarkable sense of place—the place of the authors' childhood and youth. For Thompson it was rural Montgomery County, Maryland—a part of the real South and quite unlike the chic suburbs of Washington, D.C.; for Bennett it was the wide-open spaces of the northern Great Plains; and for Holmes the woods and mines of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Readers may wonder about the motivation for writing such an autobiography and making the effort to have it published, in some cases by self-publishing. It may be almost a compulsion. Some who make a change in religion, which often results in rupturing social, cultural, and familial ties, have a strong compulsion to explain "why I done it" to themselves, their friends and their families. Perhaps the process is also cathartic.

James Thompson

Thompson uses the "whore of Babylon" as a metaphor for the Roman Catholic Church, a church that as an Adventist he was taught to fear and even hate. Yet he felt strongly drawn to it, eventually becoming a member. His memory of childhood is strongly imbued with the beliefs and practices of a small Caucasian Adventist church in the rural South.

He movingly describes his grandmother, nicknamed Gonnye, a selfless, big-hearted, strong-minded woman who was largely responsible for his early upbringing and religious background.

All this I learned from her: of beauty and joy, of love and self-sacrifice, of books and education; but most important, I first heard from her the plan of salvation and the promise of eternal life. . . . I knew a woman who followed God and bore

testimony to the transforming power of Christianity. She is gone now, but the influence of her faithful witness will never die (p. 41).

As a child, Thompson moved with his mother to Takoma Park in order to attend Adventist schools. He gives a vivid description of the Adventist anti-Catholicism of the 1950s and the 1960 presidential election. While on a school trip to New York, however, he was strangely moved by a visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral. But it was while a student at Columbia Union College ("an institution dedicated to the

three R's of Religion, Righteousness, and Republicanism") that he began to question his faith.

I focussed [sic] on Adventism's weakest point: those moralistic strictures and prohibitions with which it abounds. . . . Could

a puff on a Marlboro or a chew of Red Man really cost one eternal life? Would the eaters of pork chops go to hell? Would the illegitimacy rate soar if we danced? Would the angels weep if I stepped inside a movie theater? . . . Their Bible was a truncated handbook of legalisms and their church a small sect that had arisen out of the heated fantasies of nineteenth-century millenarians (p. 64).

When Adventists asserted that "the church teaches it," they really meant that Ellen G. White, the denomination's founder, had issued a dictate on the matter. This lady's omnipresent authority began to oppress me. Her spirit hung like a thick fog over the comings and goings of Adventists. One could sit through an entire sermon and hear scarcely a mention of Jesus Christ, but find Mrs. White quoted repeatedly on everything from toilet training to the Second Coming (p. 65).

As a history major, Thompson especially resented the way Ellen White was used as a historical authority.

A crucial event in his disaffection with the church was an incident in a Christian ethics

When Adventists asserted that "the church teaches it," they really meant that Ellen G. White . . . had issued a dictate on the matter.

course in which a student complained about having to sit in the same congregation with flagrant sinners.

For the first time I saw clearly the arrogance of the Adventist conception of the Church—this huddling together of a handful of saints who cling to their list of niggling dos and don'ts while the rest of humanity gropes blindly toward perdition. . . . I was more comfortable in the company of sinners than in the embrace of self-proclaimed saints (p. 66).

In 1966, along with his new bride, Thompson left for Charlottesville to pursue doctoral study in history. They then discarded the remnants of their Adventism.

I felt immense relief at ridding myself of a burden, but at times a pang of remorse would stir memories of the security and certitude of the fellowship I had abandoned. Carol shed her Adventism more easily than I did; for her, it had always been bound inextricably with the rigid authoritarianism of her father [an Adventist minister], and without him to enforce belief, her belief vanished (pp. 66, 67).

The implications of his rejection of the church struck home when Joseph Smoot, then vice president for academic administration at Andrews University and formerly Thompson's mentor at CUC, came to interview him for a job at Andrews. "Widely read, erudite, blessed with a powerful and probing mind, humorous, compassionate and deeply committed to the idea that teaching is a vocation and not simply a job," Smoot had become Thompson's hero and model. It was with great difficulty that Thompson admitted to Smoot that he had left the church.

Thompson then drifted religiously, retaining a belief in God but not participating in organized religion. After he joined the faculty at the College of William and Mary, Thompson's marriage disintegrated, and he turned to alcohol. It was through reading Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* that he read himself into Catholicism. However, in his search for traditional beliefs and practice, post-

Vatican II Catholicism was a disappointment, and he did not find social support in a subculture of Italian and Irish "born Catholics." Two influences ultimately kept him in the Catholic Church—Pope John Paul II and the *New Oxford Review*.

Thompson's search now led to Southern traditionalism, rejecting the liberalism of the William and Mary faculty. He resigned from William and Mary, and became an editor at a conservative magazine, the *Chronicle of Culture*. After quarreling with the editor, he left the magazine and was "ready to cease fleeing the Whore of Babylon, willing to surrender and return to full communion with the Church." However, his remarriage without an annulment blocked the way. He could not be accepted into full communion, yet found no appeal in mainline Protestantism, rejected the literalness of fundamentalism, and found Orthodoxy too ethnic.

It was Catholicism or nothing, but the measure of peace he found was an uneasy one. Published when the author was 41, this autobiography shows him still searching. He concludes,

I struggle to live as a Christian, to be a decent man, to love the right and hate the wrong. I am a sinner, perhaps . . . the worst kind of sinner. . . . I cleave, however tenuously, to [the] cross, and I cling to the Whore of Babylon who pursued me tirelessly for so long; after all, she is the Bride of Christ (p. 159).

Mildred Bennett

The *Winter Is Past*, the first volume of Willa Cather scholar Mildred Bennett's autobiography, was published shortly before her death. It covers the years from birth to her marriage and leaving the church. Winter here is a metaphor for the lack of warmth she found in the church, its judgmentalism and paranoia. Over all she felt the hovering presence of "Sister White" stifling her natural artistic nature.

Bennett came from pioneer Adventist stock. Her maiden name was Rhoads, and she was related to a number of prominent church workers by that name. She was also related by marriage to the Bresees, Minchens, and Youngbergs (she was sister of Norma Youngberg and aunt of Dorothy Minchen Comm). Thus it is not surprising that writing and love of literature came to her naturally. The book is written in the present tense, and reads much like a diary, although her recollections are no doubt colored by later experiences. Her memory for small details from her childhood is impressive, and she reconstructs dialogue.

The personality Bennett describes is that of a sensitive and imaginative person who is awkward and unsure of herself, for whom religion does not provide comfort but guilt, insecurity, and a feeling of wickedness. She appears to have had little sense of self-worth in her growing-up years and the natural rebellion that a child might feel toward a parent is inextricably linked with the church.

Bennett's father was an Adventist church school teacher and conference educational secretary in the Great Plains, so in her childhood and youth she lived at such places as Plainview Academy (South Dakota), Oak Park Academy (Iowa), Enterprise Academy (Kansas), and Union College (Nebraska). She gives a firsthand glimpse of Adventist life in that time and place, including the many vicissitudes of her father's career and how it was affected by church politics.

Bennett's most moving writing is her description of the hounding for alleged heretical beliefs and sudden death in 1931 of Elder H. U. Stevens, a returned missionary and religion department faculty member at Union College (see *Spectrum* 18:2, pp. 8 ff.). Bennett blamed the church for this, which proved to be the final event in the process of her leaving the church.

Leaving Lincoln, Bennett taught public school in rural Nebraska. As she left, she declined to promise her father to keep the Sab-

bath or not attend movies, to which he replied that this was the worst thing that ever happened to him.

I know what he's saying. My leaving the church hurts worse than [my sister] Ruth's death. He would rather see me dead than living like this. So be it. Like Judas, I will go into the night (p. 152).

Subsequently, she did with difficulty the Adventist "bad things": eating ham, wearing make-up, playing cards, and smoking. The book concludes with her courtship and marriage to Wilbur Bennett.

As an Adventist period piece, the book is invaluable. It includes many photographs of the family and places where they lived and worked. In the acknowledgements, Bennett describes *Spectrum* as "a publication of advanced Adventist thinking." At the end of her life, there appears to have been a partial rapprochement between Bennett and the church, as she was willing to accept an honorary doctorate from Andrews University (though reported to have expressed surprise at being offered this honor), and was honored by Union College. This volume was published shortly before she died, and unfortunately was the only portion of her autobiography that Bennett completed for publication.

Shirley S. Holmes

In contrast to the above two authors, Holmes' autobiography is the story of her leaving the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church—Suomi Synod—to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The metaphor she uses is horticultural—a transplantation. Evangelical religion is obviously very important in her life, and the book is written to inspire readers. She was seeking a sanctuary in her new-found church, and the writing is that of biography as spiritual journey, even homiletic.

Holmes' attitudes toward church and society are conservative. For example, she is quite

opposed to feminism. She describes her father working in the mines with male co-workers, sharing “a male subterranean sub-culture uniquely and exclusively their own, with no envious liberated women demanding to join their ranks!” (p. 20). She also advocates a hierarchical structure in church and home, with everyone serving in his or her proper role.

This role principle was settled at creation. It has not been seriously challenged until recently. The advent of the modern feminist movement, universal in scope, has emerged as one of the most significant developments of this century and constitutes, I believe, one of the “signs of the times” (p. 101).

Holmes was born to Finnish immigrants in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, a sparsely settled area of mines, woods, and long winters. These, and the conservative attitudes of the inhabitants, have been strong influences on her life. She was the youngest of 12 children born to a “yours, mine, and ours” family (four in each). Death in the family was not unknown, with several children dying from accident or disease.

Her mother’s first husband was killed in a mining accident, leaving a pregnant wife and three young children. Holmes describes her mother being comforted at that difficult time by

a shining angel [sent] to that desolate room to comfort her and provide the strength and courage she needed then and for the trying, grief-filled days to come. One of my most sacred memories is that of Mother relating this incident to me when I was young. It left an indelible mark which [the passage of] more than five decades has not succeeded in diminishing (p. 17).

Sometime later, Holmes’ mother “deliberately set about making herself available,” and married another Finnish miner with four children, a widower who attended the same Lutheran church. Eventually, the daughter became a Lutheran pastor’s wife in a small-town parish.

Holmes expresses a strong need for female friendship, and she recounts becoming the friend of a local Adventist woman. She read all the Adventist literature she could find, hiding it in the bottom of the dirty clothes hamper because her husband, Ray, would throw it against the wall or burn it if he found it. The marital conflict was eventually resolved when Ray also became a Seventh-day Adventist. Like many new converts, he felt compelled to become a minister, and he and Shirley were sent as missionaries to the Philippines. He tells his story in *Stranger in My Home*. Shirley is currently library assistant in the seminary library of the James White Library at Andrews University, and Ray is Professor of Preaching and Worship at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

All three volumes show how different individuals expressed their spiritual needs in different times and places. They show how difficult it is, if it is possible at all, to ever entirely leave the religious culture of one’s roots. Holmes maintains that Adventism need not cancel or replace her Lutheran heritage, that she can graft it to Adventism and become a “Lutheran Adventist Christian” (p. 134). She does not explain what happens when her Lutheran heritage conflicts with that of others in her new church. Bennett and Thompson are also never entirely able to leave behind their Adventist upbringing.

These books raise interesting questions about the relationship between a person’s personality and religious affiliation, with the possibility that the relationship between particular personalities and the beliefs and practices of some church communions might be dysfunctional. In these three volumes, ironically we see two individuals rejecting exactly what the other is looking to—a close, sometimes controlling, religious community with well-defined and largely inflexible beliefs and practices.

A Layperson in Church Wonderland: Annual Council Held Down Under

by Susan Sickler



Susan Sickler received a B.S. in nursing from Columbia Union College, and an M.P.H. from Loma Linda University. She serves on the Columbia Union executive committee, and paid her own way to Annual Council.

What was it like for a female layperson from the North American Division to attend Annual Council in Perth, Australia, as an uninvited observer? It was major culture shock, but it was also a very rewarding learning experience. As a member of Elder Folkenberg's Commission on Governance, I had devoted 23 days over a period of eight months to putting together a plan for the reorganization of the General Conference headquarters operation. Because we were painfully aware of the fate of previous attempts at bureaucratic reform within the church, I decided to go to Perth at my own expense to observe firsthand the fate of our report. I had no illusions that my presence would affect the outcome in any way, but I had a personal need to observe the process to its end—to see if we would deliver a stillborn or a viable baby.

Readers of *Spectrum* will find much to celebrate in the two major issues decided in Perth—a unification plan for the church in South Africa that is far more inclusive than what we have evolved in North America, and the acceptance of the recommendations of Phase I of the Governance Commission. The Annual Council also voted to proceed with Phase II, which is to be known as the Commission on Church Orga-

nization. It includes world church representation, will be chaired by Folkenberg personally, and has extremely broad terms of reference. Beyond these two major issues, the only way to distill nine days of non-stop meetings, conversations, and worship experiences is to share some of the strongest impressions that I brought back with me.

- *The wonderful friendliness and no-nonsense attitude of the Australian people.* The phrase "G'day, mate," will be special to me for a very long time.

- *The gracious way that church leaders treated an uninvited guest.* I was made to feel welcome and included in many activities.

- *My new respect for the stresses involved in the itinerant lifestyle of world church leaders.* Twenty-five hours in a tourist-class seat on four successive aircraft, plus intervening hours in assorted airports, not to mention ingesting what the airlines euphemistically refer to as "food," will do things to one's biological clock and gastrointestinal tract that should never happen to mortals.

- *The lack of representation.* While Annual Council is the most representative meeting apart from a General Conference Session, world church leadership does not reflect the diversity of world church mem-

bership. The most under-represented groups were laypersons, young people, and women.

- *The group dynamic.* There is a totally different dynamic in a group with negligible lay representation. I heard very few challenging questions or other evidence of committee members' holding officers accountable. The General Conference Committee, as it is presently constituted, resembles a congregation more than an executive committee.

- *The "housekeeping" nature of the agenda.* There is something very sad about a large group of intelligent, committed people coming together at great expense to deal with an agenda that devotes far more time to housekeeping items than to visioning sessions on major issues. The devil has little to fear from a church that spends more time revising its policy manual than it devotes to Global Mission. One lay delegate, a mental health therapist, made a profound observation: "What these people do when they get together is not nearly as important as the fact that they are meeting together in dialogue and fellowship." If that is the case, and I strongly suspect that it is, wouldn't we get far more for our

money if the meetings were structured differently?

- *The new model in South Africa.* The debate on South Africa produced a wonderful gift for North America. When our brothers from South Africa politely but firmly announced that they had devised a plan that met their needs far better than "the North American model," many of us wanted to shout, "Praise the Lord!" Being constantly told that we must do this or we can't do that because we are a model for the world church has caused just as much resentment in North America as it has caused overseas when people there are pointed to "the American model."

- *Coping with independent ministries.* We sometimes think that stridently critical independent ministries are a burden confined to North America. Not so! I was amazed to hear the desperation expressed by world church leaders over some of our less-constructive exports. These people are getting the worst of both worlds. Their appropriations are cut because of the money flowing to independent ministries; consequently, the General Conference is less able to provide resources for their pastors. Then the independent

ministries use the diverted tithe dollars to flood these fields with literature that distorts church doctrines and is devastatingly critical of church leaders. The end result is not a major step forward for Global Mission. This situation was the impetus for the Perth Affirmation (see box).

- *Exuberance overwhelms caution.* Everyone is celebrating freedom and the opportunities that recent political changes present for the church. No one seems to be concerned about the implications of increased freedom for church governance.

- *The church as family.* By far the best part of any Adventist meeting is the people that you meet and the amazing way that you can feel like family after just a short conversation. We are held together by our shared values and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, not by a policy manual.

When all is said and done, the fact that I can feel so incredibly close to people that I just met, who share neither my race nor my cultural background, is what makes me believe in heaven. I long to be there soon with all of my brothers and sisters from around the world and the Father who calls us to be one family throughout all eternity.

The Perth Declaration

Approved during the Annual Council session in Perth, Australia, the following document was considered by world leaders as a significant appeal to church members and leaders to pull together in unity and to proclaim the fundamental doctrines of Adventism.

We representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church assembled in Annual Council believe

that momentous social, economic, and religious developments now occurring signal the approaching fulfillment of events described by the Bible prophecies of the end-time.

Being involved in the final struggle between Christ and Satan that we call the great controversy, we find the enemy of truth exercising every agency to subvert and keep

the church in a Laodicean condition. During this council we sense a special moving of the Holy Spirit that leads us to acknowledge our need for His outpouring of power to complete God's work on earth.

We reaffirm confidence in Christ our righteous Redeemer and in the fundamental truths that bind us together as a people. Among these are belief in Christ, the Lord of Creation, in His mighty acts as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, and in His atoning death at Calvary that made possible our salvation and final restora-

tion in eternal life. We rejoice in full assurance of our salvation as a gift from God, and in victory over temptation and sin by His overcoming power. We accept the Scriptures as our teacher and final authority, and respond to His limitless love in grateful obedience. We affirm as well our confidence in His leading through the Spirit of Prophecy.

We believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be a prophetic movement more than an institution, the remnant people called of God to bear a unique message to earth's last generations, to announce the imminent return of Christ in power and glory. Being firmly convinced we live in the hour of His judgment, we are dedicated to the task of unitedly carrying Christ's final invitation to every inhabitant of the earth.

We note with regret that there are some among us who wish to participate in and be thought of as contributing to the Adventist work, while at the same time denying or ignoring fundamental components of our message and work. Their influence weakens efforts to build faith and unity. Others exercise a separatist spirit to present themselves as defenders of the authentic Adventist faith, the correctors of others, often elevating to importance issues not agreed upon by the body as vital.

Still others advance speculative prophetic interpretations or organize meetings without consultation and in competition with those of the church. Many circulate private publications and electronic media presentations among the believers in a manner to suggest they represent the authentic teachings of the body as a whole. Whatever the original intent, such activities are producing distrust and division that hinder the work of God.

We appeal to those who promote private programs to set aside divisive side issues and join with the organized church in affirming the fundamentals of our message. In unity we can rededicate ourselves, our abilities, and our efforts in cooperative service to God, pressing forward the work in the brief time that remains. We include in this appeal a call for personal spiritual renewal, for prayer, worship, Bible study, and committed lives. This means renewed preaching and teaching of the core truths with their timeless message of hope, and outreach in personal witness to those about us.

We call for a new commitment on the part of all members and every worker in the Adventist movement. We include writers and editors of our publications, pastors, administrators, boards, leaders, and staff

members of our institutions, whether educational, health-care, or other, lay leaders and members of all our congregations—in short, every believer in the three angels' messages. We acknowledge that in the past we have not done all we could, but in the conviction that earth's time is short and much remains to be accomplished, a new dedication is imperative. Despite her weaknesses, we believe the church remains God's special agency on earth.

We challenge all leaders, especially our pastors as the primary spiritual leaders of our people, to lift high the fundamental truths of our message from the pages of the Scriptures. In pulpit discourses, in personal instruction, in ministers' meetings as guided by the Ministerial Association and administrators in every field, in presentations for the public, we must present Jesus in the setting of present truth as the answer to every human need. We must lay aside all traces of cynicism, self-advancement, of party spirit and distrust to unite as one people carrying the everlasting gospel to all the world.

We commit ourselves to this great purpose, praying that the Holy Spirit will use us as one dedicated people, together at work in preparation for Christ's return.



The Presidents And Anonymous Donors

It is disquieting, at the least, to again read of unwise practices by Adventist leadership, even if they are under duress ("The Presidents and Anonymous Donors," *Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 4). Wisdom is seldom as badly needed, of course, as under duress. However, one must sympathize with the dilemmas of those called in recent years to serve at Washington headquarters. One might, if given a choice, prefer to live and serve in another area with somewhat more primitive "headhunters."

Actually the financial stress and the logistical problems of moving into the Washington, D.C., area only point up again the strained reasoning that has kept us there. In our technological age, headquarters can operate from any site in the United States or Canada. It would have been nice if leadership had given that option more serious thought before building at great expense, and ensuring many future headaches, in Silver Spring. We really need nothing more in Washington than a liaison office. The hard questions for leadership will now expand over time. What will be the eventual expense and diversion of resources to recognize Washington as a "hardship post" for everyone? Where was Neal Wilson when the groundwork for such problems was being laid and cemented in place?

Retrospective critics Wilson and

Tyner are right. On the face of it, any solutions that require pussyfooting around (e.g., anonymity and secrecy) have to be wrong, not to mention dangerous. This "deal" is the more stupefying, however, as one reads that apparently no one among Columbia Union's officers, executive committee, or constituency raised a warning flag about the appearance of impropriety or the potential for a tax-status disaster. It looks as though they were all out to lunch. That is grim!

In some ways the interplay in the affair, as reported by Roy Branson, is amusing for several reasons. I have to assume that secret pay for invisible work has long been known in the right circles. Surely it did not all begin just a year ago with Folkenberg. Union president Wisbey alluded to "courtesy payroll(s)" which "also exist elsewhere in the denomination." Do tell? If we cannot put the whole play on top of the table, why wonder about the decline in North American "church channel" giving (e.g., the *Adventist Review*, Oct. 3, 1991) that has been startling in the past 10 years or so? Perhaps we need another "presidential commission" looking into all of the special arrangements currently operating or contemplated.

Tyner surely provides a light moment to his criticism of leadership when he suggests that the

The article on the presidents and their anonymous donors generated thoughtful responses from our readers.

“potential conflicts of interest raised by these arrangements would *never pass the ethical standards required of the United States judiciary or Congress*” (my emphasis). The Congress? Come on! Things would be professionally buried deeper and more permanently in their hands—regardless of “requirements.” I do hope that the General Conference never sinks to the ethical level of the United States Congress. I don’t think it has so far come even remotely close to their standards.

Frank R. Lemon
Beaumont, CA

The article by Roy Branson, “The Presidents and Anonymous Donors” (*Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 4), has placed me in a unique position. For a record 16 continuous years (1973-1989) I served as a national officer of the Association of Adventist Forums. As treasurer of Forum for 12 of those years, I made decisions about contributions made to Forum similar to the decision I made as one of 60 members of the Columbia Union who voted in favor of allowing Anita Folkenberg and Frances McClure to be placed on our union’s courtesy payroll.

Given this background, how could I conscientiously vote the way I did? First, the spouses of church employees moving into a high cost area like Washington, D.C. often need special assistance. Second, any organization or individual receiving either anonymous or nonanonymous donations have to make judgment calls.

The tone of the *Spectrum* article focused on “anonymous donors” and “private sources” who could then peddle their influence on the husbands. Another focus of the article could have been the near impossibility of church workers to survive on one salary in a high-cost area. In normal economic times, the spouse

would be able to find a job easily, but with the economic downturn in the Washington area and at the General Conference and other church organizations in particular, such provisions for the spouse of a high church official at a time when others are being fired would have presented a serious problem. Most employees moving into such an area have time to make their demands before they accept a position, and they usually do. Most often this involves a guaranteed job for the spouse, which has resulted in bypassing normal interview processes and passing over other qualified candidates or even changing job descriptions for employees already in place to accommodate the spouse. Sometimes it might mean special housing help from wealthy interested laypeople. I have never felt this was wrong unless it resulted in compromises made by the employee in meeting the needs or demands of the employer or donor.

In a time of two-career families and the need for two salaries in a family, special accommodations have to be made in order to get quality pastors, teachers, and administrators to move into high cost areas. When serving as principal of Takoma Academy I put aside any possible feelings of jealousy when I paid a Bible teacher more than I received as his administrator in order to match the pay and benefits he had been receiving as a pastor, because I wanted the best I could find.

My wife and I know from personal experience what it is like to live on a single income in the Washington area. While she stayed home with our children for several years, we barely subsisted but survived thanks to low house payments and the generosity of parents who felt we needed an “advance” on a will rather than much later in life when we would not need it.

At a General Conference Ses-

sion we give a prospective employee a few hours to accept a position and hope all of these concerns fall into place. In the case of Robert Folkenberg, he had a few minutes on a Friday afternoon in a totally surprising development to decide. Individuals on the nominating committee such as Ron Wisbey and Susan Sickler, a member of Forum’s board, have described their intense feelings of God’s leading in the surprise developments. In that context, would it not seem providential that funding might become available to enable the General Conference president’s wife to accompany him as a fellow ambassador on the many ceremonial visits now considered important for major world leaders?

After becoming so familiar in watching the wives of James Baker, George Bush, and Mikhail Gorbachev accompany their husbands on foreign travels, the growing role of spouses in international diplomacy has become evident. The article could have addressed the need for the president’s wife to receive a regular salary from the church for such a role.

The spouses of Adventist college presidents in North America already are allowed to earn a percentage of the president’s salary to help cover entertainment costs and other ceremonial duties such as travel to important meetings. I know of at least one conference executive committee that has afforded the same privilege to the conference president’s wife. But given the cutbacks in staff at the General Conference, how could a similar privilege be extended to the Folkenbergs without heavy criticism being leveled against them? The American political scene has solved this problem by electing officials who are independently wealthy, but is this the model we want to adopt?

Another factor is the need for the families of Adventist administra-

tors to have more time together. We have frequently focused on the children as sole victims of such extensive travel schedules. I know from experience when my division treasurer father in the 1950s would be gone on two-and three-month itineraries. On one of those lengthy trips to a General Conference Session, we even had a civil war erupt in Lebanon in 1958.

In my current job, I average between 90 and 100 nights per year in hotel rooms away from my family. Have we also thought about the heavy toll such travel places on the wife? Ron Wisbey, president of the Columbia Union, is probably gone from his home two-thirds of the nights in a given year. When his wife, who is a secretary and editor in the Ellen G. White Estate, takes off from her hour-time job, they lose income in their effort to have a little more time together as a married couple with grown children. One can understand that he would have great sympathy for the provision made by these donors. After getting positive signals from the General Conference's regional auditing office and from legal counsel that the details could be worked out appropriately, he gave initial approval and ultimately followed through on asking for the appropriate committee approvals.

After the original offer was made just for the General Conference president, how could Ron Wisbey turn around a few days later and refuse to consider a similar offer for Al McClure, newly elected president of the North American Division, who had just defeated him for that position—a position that many in our union hoped Wisbey would get because of our great respect for his leadership talents? Such a refusal could have been seen as “sour grapes.” But more importantly, he viewed this as a very generous gift that helped solve a real dilemma.

How ironic that in helping the man who had won he would get criticized in the process.

When Ron Wisbey asked for the support of the Columbia Union executive committee, I believe the vote of this very vocal and independent-minded committee was unanimous. Some probably wished the donation could have been handled through the General Conference in a less charged atmosphere. Most felt the arrangement was proper. Many felt sympathy for the plight of spouses of all denominational leaders. Without getting jealous, they felt that for once two women were being treated right and praised God for the generosity of the donors. Others voted support out of respect for our union president who has earned the committee's trust and confidence.

On the matter of the interest-free house loan for McClure, this does not sound like a very good financial investment for him. When most of us take out a loan we expect to pay off the loan and receive money back when we sell, plus appreciation. In this case, the entire \$140,000 comes back to the Columbia Union, thankfully for Christian education. But all McClure benefits from will be any appreciation on his home, which is very flat today and tax benefits through the parsonage exclusion and deductions.

If *Spectrum* wants to enter the arena of helping establish the ethical ramifications of donations, it may want to begin with other possible examples. I am proud to say that on several occasions major donors have gotten upset that Forum did not take a more proactive stance during certain church disputes and quit making donations, thus showing Forum's independence. But one might ask if donations made from certain employment segments of the church have resulted in less coverage of certain issues in *Spectrum*, which could also prove embarrassing to

the contributors.

One might ask about other church employees or organizations similar to Forum who have received nonanonymous donations for salaries that ultimately impacted on their ability to function ethically and independently. In such cases, are anonymous or nonanonymous donations more dangerous? Of course, the presumption by most readers is that everybody “really” knows who the donors were for the spouse salaries. Our union officers have not revealed the names of the donors to either the Columbia Union executive committee or the recipients. If they are truly anonymous donors, then I feel more comfortable than with some of the nonanonymous donations received by Forum. If they are not anonymous, I would hope that the recipients would not be open to being unduly influenced in running the church by donors any more than Forum or similar organizations might be compromised by nonanonymous donors.

I hope that *Spectrum* will address this issue in a broader context and begin to provide constructive suggestions on the ethical dilemmas faced by all nonprofit organizations when receiving donations. It is unfortunate that only one example has been cited where others closer to home could have proven of value in this discussion.

Richard C. Osborn
Vice President for Education
Columbia Union Conference

Your straightforward and factual report on the curious financial dealings of Robert Folkenberg and Al McClure (“The Presidents and Anonymous Donors,” *Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 4) was appreciated by many people. While I doubt anyone is happy about what occurred, at least concerned church members feel confident that they have received a sub-

stantial and unbiased report of the relevant details.

If Folkenberg and McClure consider the facts for a moment, they should also appreciate the wisdom of *Spectrum* publishing a full chronology of the events. The unsubstantiated and often wildly inaccurate stories that began circulating widely and rapidly through the Adventist grapevine have largely disappeared since the *Spectrum* article. While no one likes to be caught in embarrassing circumstances, *Spectrum* was the only independent vehicle with enough credibility to report the facts and lay the rumors to rest. Even if the *Adventist Review* had attempted to address the issue, many would undoubtedly question the objectiveness of its report.

The matter, as it unfolded, raises some additional troubling questions beyond the important points listed by Mitchell Tyner at the General Conference Committee meeting. Tyner listed the following difficult problems that were created because of the presidents' actions: (1) the many potential conflicts of interest with several different levels of the church organization; (2) the fiduciary responsibilities inherent with the office of president, that is, always putting the church's interests first; (3) the obvious effort to keep the matter secret, as if there was something to hide; and (4) the difficult issue of self-dealing, and the vital need to submit one's actions to review by others.

There are at least two additional questions that are raised by their actions: (1) Delegates to the 1990 General Conference Session were sufficiently impressed with Folkenberg's and McClure's capabilities and judgment to vote them into office. Even if the intent of the two presidents was honorable (and I'm confident that it was), the lack of judgment shown is appalling. While Folkenberg said he only spent about

10 minutes at the General Conference Session studying the matter, he certainly had plenty of subsequent opportunity to reconsider the issue. In addition to the aforementioned aspects, did they not even stop to consider that many others might be facing similar financial difficulties, without the benefit of "anonymous donors"? This leads to the second question: (2) Why do most church leaders continue to refuse to adequately address the reality that pastors and teachers in high cost-of-living areas are drastically underpaid, and many have already been forced to leave their life's calling simply because of a lack of finances?

Notwithstanding the way they went about it, I believe that even with the additional funds Folkenberg and McClure were receiving, they weren't being overpaid. No, the shame is that so many other workers continue to be severely underpaid. Pastors and teachers who are located in high cost-of-living areas (primarily on the East and West coasts) do not come even close to receiving the "living wage" that the denomination has always promised them.

Three years ago, in response to efforts in Southeastern California Conference to address and correct the pay shortfall, the General Conference pulled together a group called the North American Division Church Finance and Employee Remuneration Taskforce, which was composed of almost 80 North American Division, union, and local presidents and treasurers, and only nine laypeople (see *Adventist Review*, Sept. 20, 1988). After considerable time spent getting to the real issues, the group made a few potentially significant decisions and agreed to meet again in one year. Unfortunately, the few actions voted largely disappeared at Autumn Council that year, and the group was never recalled.

My dream is that something

positive can be learned from the unfortunate incident with our current presidents, and that significant and lasting changes to the church's pay structure can be made. The presidents were right when they realized that their pay was totally inadequate; unfortunately, they failed to address the cause of the problem. The message that their actions sent to other struggling workers cannot be seen as positive; if I were a church worker I couldn't help but be disillusioned with their responses to what is a crisis situation.

The church can get serious and start to address the issue by asking a group of committed and knowledgeable laypeople to address the problem of remuneration. It is vital that laypeople be placed in charge of any effort. That would avoid any appearance of conflict of interest. Also, many talented and dedicated laypeople with extensive practical business experience and better qualifications than an ordination certificate would love to serve the church in a significant way.

I believe that even with the additional funds Folkenberg and McClure were receiving, they weren't being overpaid. No, the shame is that so many other workers continue to be severely underpaid.

Until the subject of remuneration for all denominational workers is resolved properly, the church will continue to face difficult and uncomfortable circumstances like the current one. Even more seriously, the church will perpetuate the neglect of those “lower level” workers who are the vital link with the laypeople to fulfill the mission of the church.

Jay M. Du Nesme
Treasurer, AAF
Lake Arrowhead, CA

I was not totally surprised by “The Presidents and Anonymous Donors” (*Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 4), which reported how secret gifts were seen as “an answer to prayer.” Adventist history has many stories of church need and divine supply. When needs of the church or church leaders (sometimes seen as inseparable) are being met, to some it seems sacrilegious to scrutinize what appears to be a miracle. Thus, to some of us, your report—even-handed journalism at its best—hit a raw religious nerve. Nevertheless, if the trust of our increasingly educated membership is to be retained, leadership behavior must be guided by more than individual feelings of divine leading. Confidence in the church must be based on knowledge that sound policies are in place, and leadership behavior must be open to scrutiny.

The issue of remuneration of top denominational leadership deserves open discussion and appropriate church action. However, I here briefly comment on our history and the interrelated notions of sound policy and free reporting. Our history is the story of great pioneers: Bates, the Whites, Loughborough,

Andrews, Prescott, Daniels, and the list goes on. Contemporary Adventism calls for equally great leaders, but the challenges today are different. Our early leaders often met challenges by inventive, ad hoc means; the survival of a fledgling group of believers demanded it. However, today the survival of our multimillion-member denomination demands thoughtful policies, including checks and balances, and accountability to an informed church membership.

Only as a church organization rests on widely accepted policies of fairness and equity is it really Christian, from a Calvinist perspective. For John Calvin, law served three functions. First there was the accusative and second the civil function, but his primary emphasis was on the law (in our context, “policy”) as a guide for the converted Christian. As “The Presidents and Anonymous Donors” demonstrates, even our finest leaders and committees need fair and equitable policies to guide in church affairs.

I am baffled how modern American church leaders and laypersons on a union executive committee would not have been sensitive to the blatant conflict of interest inherent in largely secret funds going to leaders from anonymous members. If a policy does not exist in the Columbia Union prohibiting such transactions, why did not the request for clandestine channeling of funds raise the demand for a conflict-of-interest policy?

The maturing Adventist Church is shifting from a leadership-driven to a policy-based management style, and such an evolution is essential for our corporate well-being and survival. It is interesting that evidently the “Adventist underground press,” as

Spectrum reports Ron Wisbey putting it, played some role in this current growth-producing incident. As the world becomes increasingly democratic, our church must not flout our long-held claim to be “representative” in church government. And representative or democratic governance is based on an informed citizenry or membership that reads news, both good and bad.

The *Adventist Review* has stated its intention that readers get their news first from the general church paper and it has taken large strides in that direction. But the church is also admirably served by journals such as *Spectrum*, which print so many articles of news and views, essential for the reading of informed Adventists. I personally do not read many independent Adventist magazines, but view such publications as indications of a thriving, thinking church body. Denominational efforts to thwart independent endeavors could be more profitably directed toward making the official institutions and publications so robust that the need for members to seek independent channels is lessened.

By now, one thing should be clear: in this communication age, for confidence in our church to remain high, members must be informed of success and failure. A rose-tinted portrayal of the church is not biblical, it is not in keeping with Adventism’s theology of Laodicea, and it is not true to life in our fallen world.

The story of top leaders and anonymous donors need not be a millstone around our denominational neck; it can be a stepping stone to a more mature organization.

James W. Walters
Associate Professor of Religion
Loma Linda University

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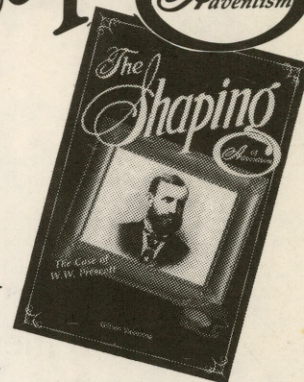
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