

Spectrum

The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Eastern Europe

ALBANIA AWAKENS

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN SDA'S
SUPPORT THE REVOLUTION

HEROIC GERMAN LAITY

YUGOSLAVIA'S AGONY

WHITES AND BLACKS
UNITE IN SOUTH AFRICA

GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED
TEN YEARS AFTER

COURT RULES SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST NOT TRADEMARK

POEM
Genesis II

March 1992
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Spectrum

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Beyond the Wall— A Special Moment

MORAL COURAGE DOMINATES THIS ISSUE. WHITE AND black Adventists in South Africa vote against self-interest and for a future together. Desmond Ford ignores greater popularity among evangelicals to reaffirm the importance of the seventh-day Sabbath in articles, books, and national media interviews. Tom Wehtje, a promising young Adventist academic, openly declares his doubting faith.

In this issue, Eastern Europeans most dramatically demonstrate their moral courage. In that still-mysterious region beyond the old Berlin Wall, also called Middle or Central Europe, Adventists publicly sided with humanity in the revolution of 1989. In Berlin, Karl Marx Stadt, Leipzig, Prague, and Tirana, Adventist members risked their reputations, their families' security, their lives, to resist the beast of tyranny and inaugurate a more just society.

Independently, Dr. Wagler in Leipzig, and Otakar Jiranek in Prague, call the fall of 1989 a "special moment." It was a time when both Wagler and Jiranek marched against a powerful, seemingly impervious empire of steel; a time when a young Adventist woman turned an ecumenical prayer service into a demonstration in the streets of Karl Marx Stadt; a moment when Jan Pospisil's unarmed body absorbed the violence of Czechoslovakia's security police and helped overthrow a tyrannical regime; a time when Meropi Gjika, a lonely Adventist woman in Albania, ordered her children to talk openly of their faith, even though she knew it meant risking persecution in the world's only officially atheistic nation.

It was even a moment when the corporate Adventist Church risked its well-being, possibly its institutional existence, to publicly stand with the peaceful forces of change in Czechoslovakia. The constituency of that union

challenges the rest of the world church to consider moral courage, at least in "special moments," a Christian, indeed a Seventh-day Adventist imperative.

The present challenge for the Adventist Church in Europe is to honor the recent fortitude of its members beyond the wall by continuing to struggle for truth and justice: for example, to fight for the health of neighbors against governments and business interests polluting the air and water; to advocate the human rights of religious and ethnic minorities, even if they happen to be hostile to our denomination; to fiercely resist Western corporations knowingly spreading disease and death among Eastern Europeans by targeting sales of cigarettes to their children.

It is also a time when the organized Adventist Church in Europe could show some administrative courage by divesting itself of lingering vestiges of colonialism (turning the member-rich fields of Angola and Mozambique over to an African division), and by focusing on the challenges of Europe. Is this not the moment to create a single European division? Could not the traditional interest of particularly Scandinavian and German Adventists in mission service beyond their borders turn from the southern hemisphere, eastward, to the vast possibilities breaking open within the countries of the former Soviet Empire? A single European division could achieve greater efficiency, while respecting re-emerging ethnic pride within a rapidly emerging "common European home."

The moral courage of Adventists punctuated Europe's recent history. The challenge now is to seize the present moment to embody in Berlin, Prague, and Tirana, as well as Berne and St. Albans, the coming City of God.

Roy Branson



Whites and Blacks Unite in South Africa

The Adventist Church catches the spirit of reform and merges the black and white South African unions.

by Curt Dewees

ON DECEMBER 10, 1991, THE IMPOSSIBLE happened. Many had said it would never take place, but at the end of last year, the constituencies of the white and black unions in South Africa voted to dissolve their own organizations and merge into a single church structure. What remains to be accomplished is the merger of racially separated conferences.

The constituency of the South African Union Conference (white, Asian, and colored) needed to dissolve their union and accept the new constitution by a 75 percent majority. Exactly 75 percent voted to do so. If even one person had voted the other way, the merger would have failed. As one observer noted, "It was a very tense vote."

"I think the fact that the motion passed by only one vote tells us something," said one General Conference observer. "God was trying to tell us that *He* did it. It wasn't us."

Curt Dewees, a graduate of Walla Walla College, lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he works as a freelance writer.

The constituency of the black Southern Union Mission voted almost unanimously to merge. These actions at the end of 1991 mark the beginning of the end for the racially-defined Adventist Church that has existed in South Africa since the 19th century.

How Seventh-day Adventist Apartheid Began

From the beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, during the 1890s, church leaders tended to get blacks involved in work for blacks, coloreds for coloreds (coloreds are those of mixed race), and whites for whites. Language groups within the church also tended to stick together. This was true for whites (Dutch, Africans, English) as well as for black Africans (Xhosa, Sesotho, Tswana, and Zulu, et cetera). Church leaders believed separate organizations for ethnic groups would benefit "the work." Nevertheless, racial prejudice helped ease the way toward separate organizations based on racial lines.

After 1948, the separation of racial groups became the South African law—apartheid—that legalized the existing distinctions within the Adventist Church. Over a period of years, many Adventists came to believe that this was the right way to organize the church in South Africa. Some even thought it was the only way.

In 1953 the blacks and whites split up into separate working committees for most of the day-to-day functioning of the South African Union. The union president at the time, W. Duncan Eva, an English-speaking white South African, opposed the separation, but was outnumbered. By 1956 the blacks left the union headquarters in Bloemfontein and set up a separate black headquarters in Johannesburg, more than 200 miles away. In 1965 the blacks applied to become a separate union, and the measure passed virtually unopposed during the 1966 General Conference session in Detroit.

Over the years, more and more people became uneasy about the situation in South

Africa. For one thing, having two separate organizations made it hard for the Adventist Church to deal with the government. Also, the existence of two organizations in South Africa flew in the face of one of the church's fundamental beliefs—the equality and unity of all members in the body of Christ.

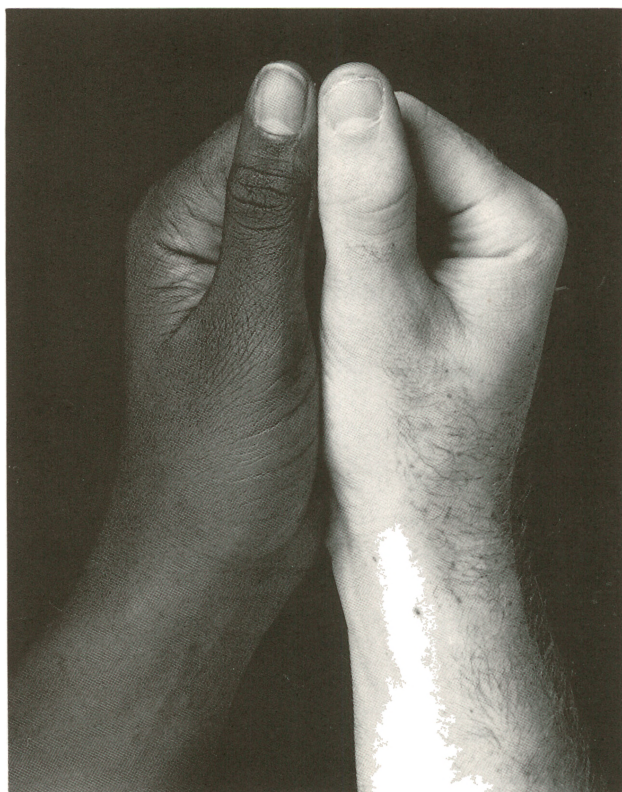
The 1981 Commission

In 1981 the General Conference appointed Eva—then a retired General Conference vice president—to chair a General Conference commission on church unity in South Africa. This commission traveled throughout the country from May 7-20, 1981, and met with many different groups representing Seventh-day Adventist blacks, whites, coloreds, church leaders, workers, students, and church professionals.

The commission found a number of problems that needed to be addressed. Black workers were being paid less than their white counterparts. Not all church schools were open to all races. At Helderberg College, student housing was racially segregated, and the staff included no colored or black African teachers or administrators.

Many whites claimed they were only observing the laws of the land. Black and colored Adventists responded that other denominations, especially Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and to some extent the Methodists, had openly challenged apartheid by their practices, especially in the area of education. Although integration of their parochial schools conflicted with South African law at the time, the government did not interfere. Nonwhite Adventists frequently pointed to this as an example of what white Adventists could do but chose not to.

Some local Adventist congregations limited church membership and attendance to whites, even though South African law did not require racial discrimination of church congregations



or worship services. Some Adventist churches and conferences even had racially discriminating clauses written into their working policies.

Understandably, many nonwhite members were embarrassed, even outraged, at belonging to a racially segregated church, especially when a growing number of non-Adventists, even among whites, were openly opposed to apartheid.

The 1981 commission made several recommendations that, had they been implemented, would have put the Adventist Church in South Africa on the road to unity a decade ago. "Unfortunately," Eva says, "the General Conference just left the situation alone."

Ten Years Later

Nine years after the 1981 report came out, the 1990 Annual Council decided to try again. Once again, the General Conference appointed a commission to go to South Africa. Jan Paulsen, president of the Trans-European Division, chaired the 13-member commission, which also included M. T. Battle, associate secretary of the General Conference, serving as secretary; Matthew Bediako, General Conference vice president; Don Robinson, General Conference undertreasurer; Duncan Eva, chairman of the 1981 commission; and the presidents of the two South African unions.

During March 19-29, 1991, the commission surveyed representative groups in South Africa. "All the people felt that there should be one church," says commission member Douglas Chalale, then president of the Southern Union Mission. "There were some reservations, but church members knew we were already behind the times. We were viewed as being two separate churches. This was not really the best. At least we should have one administration."

After its work, the commission recommended the following:

1. That the two Southern Africa unions be merged into a new unified administrative

structure. This is to be achieved by December 31, 1991.

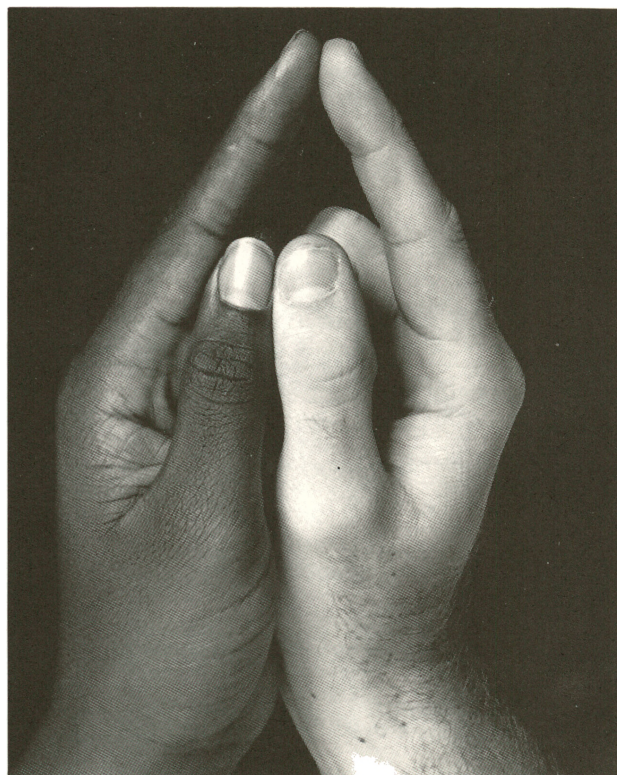
2. That the merged union be recognized as a union conference.

3. That local conferences and fields be merged into new unified structures with boundaries drawn geographically.

The commission recognized that some local conferences were more ready to merge than others, and therefore recommended that all church structures, including local conferences, become unified by December 31, 1993.

The commission also recommended that the new union administer Bethel College, Helderberg College, and Maluti Adventist Hospital, and that the newly merged union become a part of the Eastern Africa Division.

While Eva has consistently supported integration throughout his long career, he says, "I shuddered at the speed at which the General Conference commission wanted to achieve the union merger. I still shudder when I think of how fast they want the conferences to unite."



The World Church Supports the Merger

In Perth, 1991, these recommendations needed the approval of the world church meeting in the Annual Council of the General Conference committee. Calvin Rock, general vice president of the General Conference, was chairing the meeting when the commission's recommendations came to the floor.

Because Rock opposed certain points in the recommendations and wanted to speak out against them, he gave up the chair to General Conference President Robert Folkenberg. Rock opposed the report's introductory statement because he said it suggested that all structural systems set up along racial lines are against the will of God. Rock argued that this premise was shaky theology, and that in some cases, specific structures organized along racial lines are helpful. He cited the experience of the church in the United States, including Oakwood College, a historically black Adventist college; *Message* magazine, which is aimed at blacks; and black conferences.

Folkenberg responded by successfully recommending the removal of the introductory statement from the commission's recommendations. Rock still opposed the measure because it set specific timetables for the unification of South African unions and conferences.

Despite Rock's objections, the 1991 Annual Council overwhelmingly approved the commission's recommendations. Many people have questioned Rock about his opposition to the measure. He says he was and is concerned about protecting minority rights, regardless of the minority's race. "You can be very unfair to a minority by overwhelming it politically," he said. He also thinks the merger of black and white unions in South Africa will not stop black leaders from urging the creation of black unions in the United States.

To demonstrate its tangible support of the unification process, the Perth Annual Council

voted a special provision to help the church in South Africa. This action caps the 1992 Annual Sacrifice Offering at \$2.4 million. Anything over that amount will go to "help with the major financial needs of a unified church structure in South Africa." In 1991, the Annual Sacrifice Offering brought in slightly more than \$3.05 million. If church members give the same amount this year as they did last year, South Africa will receive \$650,000.

In addition to the offering overflow voted at Annual Council, the General Conference has approved \$400,000 in special appropriations to help the new South African Union Conference: \$50,000 for office relocation; \$50,000 for ongoing transition expenses, including expenses incurred by special committees, et cetera; \$260,000 for general "church unification" expenses; and \$40,000 for education of workers. (Some black pastors don't have bachelor's degrees, and the \$40,000 provision will pay tuition for those who want to take courses from Griggs University, which is part of Home Study International.)

Judgment Day in South Africa

Even before the Annual Council had approved the General Conference commission's recommendations, the General Conference had sent a transition team to South Africa to start clearing the way for unification. Chaired by Duncan Eva, this team met in Africa in July and August of 1991, and then again in October, November, and December.

The committee did a lot of groundwork with church administrators, pastors, and lay people. It also attended joint meetings of the two union committees. During this time, South African church leaders in both unions sent out waves of articles and information to pastors and churches. The materials informed members about the reasoning for unification and the process to achieve it.

After the Annual Council's resounding vote of approval at Perth to recommend the merger,



the two South African unions held separate constituency meetings in Bloemfontein to consider the proposed merger. The whites met on November 3 and 4 and the blacks held their constituency meeting on November 6.

The merger was not a problem among the blacks. It was to their financial advantage to join with the whites. However, the whites wanted to see the new constitution before voting. "That's understandable," reports Eva. "They were saying, 'Why should we join a new organization if we don't even know what the new organization is going to look like?'"

So the constituencies of the two unions came to Helderberg College on the same days, December 8-11, to hammer out a proposed constitution for the new union. This brought together about 400 delegates from all parts of South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland to Helderberg College. Of these, 151 represented the South African Union Conference (white, Asian, colored), and the rest represented the Southern Union Mission (black). At

that time, according to the General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, the South African Union Conference had just over 22,000 white, Asian, and colored members, while the Southern Union Mission had 41,000 black members.

The two delegations met separately, and there was a lot of "shuttle diplomacy" between them. But no agreement was reached. Finally, Matthew Bediako, vice president of the General Conference, assembled a group of 15 representatives from both sides to hammer out a constitution. They met in a joint subcommittee until late in the night. At last, they reached a compromise that both sides could accept. The next day the two constituencies met separately and voted to dissolve their respective unions and to accept the new constitution.

After forming the new union, the constituencies for the new union came together to set up procedures for the nominating committee, and for electing the leadership of the new union. Douglas Chalale was elected president. A black South African, Chalale had been president of the Southern Union Mission. For vice president, they elected James Bradfield, who had been president of the South African Union Conference. For treasurer, they elected Bertram Parkerson, a colored, and Hennie van der Ness, a white, as secretary.

Some were amazed at the ease and unity of the nomination and election process. When van der Ness was nominated for secretary, the blacks refused to nominate another name. Even though secret balloting was part of the new constitution, blacks wanted to waive the use of the secret ballot for elections. The waiver was approved, and the election proceeded by voice vote.

In his acceptance speech, Chalale said, "In these momentous times in the world, and particularly in South Africa, we must be willing to face the challenge of newness. With a new-born church structure come new hopes and new expectations.

"As in marriage, we must be prepared to

give and take. We will have to learn to be tolerant toward each other, to be forgiving, and to exercise patience.

"Left to ourselves, the task would be impossible, but inspired by the spirit of prayer and the faith of Jesus, we discover that our sufficiency is of God."

Now the real next step in integrating the two unions has begun. The headquarters of the new Southern Africa Union Conference has been put in Bloemfontein, in the office of the former South African Union Conference. As in 1955, there is not enough space for everyone. But the leaders are confident they can solve these logistical problems.

"So far the situation has worked out very nicely," said Bradfield. "We are very pleased."

What Comes Next?

Duncan Eva, head of the transition team, returned to South Africa in early March of 1992 to help the local conference unite. The deadline is December 31, 1993. "That's not going to be so easy," Eva said.

One of the major problems in this effort is resolving pay differences. The black pastors and conference workers were being paid a lot less than their white, Asian, and colored counterparts. They were also getting paid less in benefits and retirement. An intense stewardship program will be implemented among the

black conferences to help raise the money needed to pay everyone the same.

These financial difficulties may take months, even years to work through. This raises some difficult questions: Do you merge the conferences anyway, and continue to pay blacks less than whites, or do you delay the unification process until all the financial problems have been worked out? How about lowering the salaries for whites?

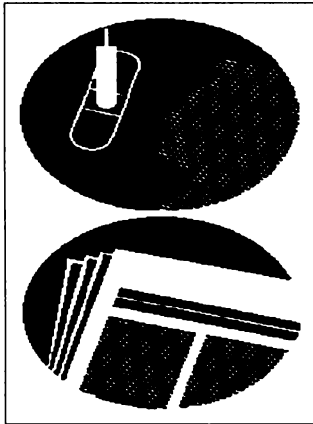
There are other problems, such as moving the union office to a more suitable location. Bloemfontein is basically a lily-white Afrikaaner community, where Afrikaans, rather than English, is generally spoken. There are probably better places in South Africa to locate the headquarters of a

unified black-white organization.

Another obstacle to complete unification is the continuing resistance on the part of some white Afrikaaners. In some parts of the country, white Seventh-day Adventists support the right-wing South African Conservative Party, which opposes the country's move toward a new democratic constitution recognizing civil rights for people of all races. "There are strong feelings against it in some parts of the country," says Eva. "We must be patient with them while they adjust."

"The Lord helped us merge the unions, the Lord will help us with the conferences, too," says Bradfield, the new vice president. "We're optimistic."

The two delegations met separately, and there was a lot of "shuttle diplomacy" between them. Finally, they reached a compromise that both sides could accept...and voted to dissolve their respective unions and to accept the new constitution.



Good News Keeps On Going and Going

A report on the continuing ministry of perhaps Adventism's most influential former minister and teacher.

by Michael Saucedo

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING, WHAT HAPPENS after death, and depression caused by tubal ligation. These are subjects tackled head on in the ever-expanding ministry of Good News Unlimited (GNU).

As Desmond Ford, spiritual founder and leader of Good News Unlimited proclaims, "Ours is a growing ministry meeting the total needs of Christians. The balance of life is based firmly upon the triad of Spiritual, Mental, and Physical well-being."

GNU's headquarters, manned by seven people, is located in Auburn, California. Good News Unlimited also has regional offices in Australia, Canada, and South Africa. They process publication requests and serve as bases for GNU ministers. Currently, there are full-time and part-time pastors in Australia. In other countries, several people minister on a volunteer basis. Ford refers to them as "non-denominational,

evangelical, para-church ministers."

When asked about GNU's budget, Ford stated, "We live and survive on about half a million dollars a year, which many Adventists pay for." Of this, \$340,000 goes to media output. Tangible contributions are made by offerings, nonsolicited speaking fees, book/tape donations, and paid-for radio time. Intangible contributions are made by what Ford calls, "a million enthusiastic gospel people who do all they can to push the GNU ministry one way or another."

On fundraising, Ford says, "We never push money. If at any time the money dries up, we would take that as a signal from the Lord to move on into other ministries and resign from this one." But Pastor Roy Gee, editor of *Good News Unlimited* magazine, interjects, "It is really breathtaking how the money comes in. It just comes in!"

Good News Unlimited had its beginning before 1981 when Ford was called to Pacific Union College. He sensed a strong current of revival rippling throughout Adventism. At the time, he remembers commenting to his wife, Gillian, "Are we going to catch the wave at its crest?"

Michael Saucedo, a graduate of Walla Walla College, is a legal analyst for the State of California specializing in law enforcement actions against abuse of children and the elderly.

Pacific Union College was inundated with requests for Ford to speak. These speaking engagements included doctors' seminars, ministers' meetings, and weeks of prayer at Adventist campuses. The talks produced thousands of contacts in the North American Division alone. Dr. Ford remarks, "It's the result of those meetings that GNU started. Those individuals are really the nucleus of GNU. All this happened before I left Pacific Union College."

Later, at the Glacier View Conference, in 1981, Dr. Ford defended his position on the Investigative Judgment. This marked the beginning of action to revoke his credentials to minister within the ranks of Adventism. The Actual revocation of his credentials provided the catalyst to embark on this successful, independent avenue to spread the gospel, which Ford calls "a positive ministry, not a negative one."

After Glacier View, GNU moved to an apartment in Auburn, California, along with a few people like the Fords, Smuts van Rooyen, and Marian Fritz. There were seminars and radio to establish the GNU ministry upon. "Then Gillian put out a tiny little rag which grew and grew and has now become the *Good News Unlimited* magazine under the editorship of Pastor Roy Gee," states Ford.

The magazine has a current circulation approaching 6,000 subscriptions, and reaches 44 countries as far flung as Finland, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Philippines. It is published only in English. However, the magazine is translated into many different languages by the receiving parties, including

Polish, Spanish, and Romanian.

Other publications within the GNU ministry include a catalogue listing of more than a dozen books ranging in topics from theology, stress, and personal tragedy to healthful cooking. Good News Unlimited's perennial best seller is *Crisis*, a commentary on Revelation. Dr. Ford points out that GNU has about 50,000 books circulating around the world.

Good News Unlimited also has a cassette tape ministry with hundreds of subscribers receiving presentations by Ford, van Rooyen, Gee, Calvin

Edwards, Noel Mason, Brad McIntyre, Peter Johanson, Kenneth Kantzer, and others. They also have a video tape ministry, dealing mainly with medical issues and physiology, including selections on cancer, diabetes, obesity, and the Christian view of sex.

As part of an ongoing ministry to developing countries, many books and cassettes are sent overseas free of charge. Africa is one major beneficiary of this program.

A less well-known part of GNU is the letter ministry. Ford says, "We send out hundreds and hundreds of personal letters each year. Friends will send names of ailing members and they each get a brief personal letter rather than a form letter." He sees this as an important part of GNU's ministry.

For GNU's radio ministry, shows are produced locally. However, Ford has on many occasions traveled to Los Angeles and Oregon to personally address issues ranging from theology to the health message.

Ford has been interviewed on the Walter Martin Group's "Christian Research Institute." He has even appeared with well-known

Good News Unlimited is part of a broad interactive network with other Christian groups. It enjoys its closest ties with other Sabbatarian groups such as the Seventh-Day Baptists and the Church of God—Seventh-Day.

northern Californian media personality "Captain Carrot" (Cary Nosler) to discuss aspects of healthy living, and has appeared on "The John Ankerburg Show" and "California Tonight."

In terms of radio and television, Ford estimates that GNU makes close to 500 media presentations a year, since its programs air five days a week in some cities. In Canada, they reach every province either by radio or television.

Apart from publications and media output, seminars account for a large amount of time spent by GNU members. Hundreds of presentations are made every year. Some are done locally at GNU's headquarters, but most are made abroad.

Both Ford and Gee get speaking requests, including engagements at Adventist churches like Capital Memorial and Sligo. When they spoke in Germany, all degreed church scholars were present and all meetings were published in church papers. "They [Seventh-day Adventist churches] are increasingly opening their doors," says Ford.

Gillian Ford has also developed an increasingly active ministry. She conducts many seminars on depression caused by women's hormonal changes related to premenstrual syndrome and tubal ligation. She also addresses stress, personal tragedy, and grief recovery.

Moving away from the "nuts and bolts" operations, and toward ascertaining GNU's philosophical underpinnings, Ford outlined his view of GNU's role in gospel ministry and its future direction. He quickly pointed out, "Good News Unlimited does not claim any sort of infallibility. Good News Unlimited wants to clearly proclaim what the Bible teaches."

Without criticizing the Adventist Church, Ford regrets its tendency to major in minor issues when the everlasting gospel should be

trumpeted. He says prophecy is only *one* way of revealing the gospel, and describes how GNU has distinguished itself from traditional Adventism in this area.

"Good News Unlimited does not teach prophecy with specific dates, since no apocalyptic scholar in Adventism believes that stuff down to the dates," says Ford. It creates unstable beliefs that the church has been so ready to drop when they have turned out wrong. He goes on, "We [Adventists] used to teach East-West Armageddon. We've dropped about 20 'major' teachings in the last 100 years. I know what most of the scholars think and I know many of them personally, and we at GNU are saying what the vast majority of those scholars already think. They just aren't free to say it, whereas we at GNU *can* say it!"

Good News Unlimited is part of a broad interactive network with other Christian groups. It enjoys its closest ties with other Sabbatarian groups such as the Seventh-Day Baptists and the Church of God—Seventh-Day. As Gee explains, Adventists are so successful that they don't know a great deal about other Sabbath groups. They are so into their own *total* world. But other Sabbath groups know about their successful big sister, Adventism. Members of GNU have spoken to the Church of Christ, Pentecostals, and many other different faiths. "We respond to wherever the name of Christ is honored and Scripture is upheld," says Ford.

When asked how he would want GNU's purpose to be understood, without missing a beat, Ford said that rather than exalting things that are pride engendering, such as "We are the remnant; we are the people," at GNU, it is Christ exalted, the gospel exalted, the Scriptures exalted. GNU embodies Paul's exhortation, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus Our Lord." That is the ministry of Good News Unlimited.



Good News Bursting Forth

On the 10th anniversary of his defrocking,
Desmond Ford remembers.

*Transcribed by Daisy Stanley
Edited by Roy Gee*

Desmond Ford, whose membership remains at the Pacific Union College Seventh-day Adventist Church, is the president and speaker of Good News Unlimited, a nondenominational gospel ministry. Ford, who has two doctorates, including one in New Testament from Manchester University in England, has written more than 15 books.

This interview is reprinted from Good News Unlimited (June, 1991).

Cleary: Hello, there, and welcome to *Sunday Night Talk* on ABC Radio, right across Australia. John Cleary with you, from now until midnight, where it's your turn to join me—and my guests—for just that: a little *Sunday Night Talk*. [Music]

This Sunday night actually the program is going to be a tad shorter. At eleven o'clock we're taking you to the cricket in the West Indies. Great time, the cricket in the West Indies this time. I guess I'll be here through the night with a lot of you.

But for now, my guest this evening is an Australian who has been instrumental in turning a church of some 6.4 million people on its head—theologically speaking, that is.

Until the death of Azariah Chamberlain in August 1980, few Australians had heard of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; and if they had, it was usually in association with conservative, clean-cut, healthy, mom-dad-and-apple-pie American Christianity. And, perhaps, that they'd some connection with the giant Sanitarium Health Food Company, purveyors of Weetabix and Marmite [Vegemite].

Some may also have known that Seventh-day Adventist run large hospitals, are teetotalers, vegetarians, and had the unusual Christian practice of going to church on Saturdays.

Well, the controversy which surrounded the Seventh-day Adventists during the Chamberlain affair hit newspapers worldwide. That, and later the film *Evil Angels*, starring Meryl Streep, brought from Australia all the negative publicity any church could handle.

But not so (it seems), for during much of the past 20 years, a controversy largely centered on another Australian has been threatening to split the church worldwide, and in a fashion which makes the Chamberlain tragedy a passing piece of human interest. The controversy of which I speak goes to the heart—and very reason for being—of Adventism.

In the 1840s, it seems, the church's founding prophet, Ellen G. White, rallied the group that became known as the Adventists, following what was called 'the Great Disappointment' of the 22nd of October, 1844, the date when thousands of Protestants in the United States expected the second coming, or advent, of Jesus to occur. When it didn't happen, White (claiming to be a messenger of God) had two visions: one stating that on the 22nd of October, Christ had entered the sanctuary of heaven to begin investigative judgment of the lives of all believers. That's sitting down, going through the big Book of Life, and adding up those who had done

wrong against those who had done right, and seeing how the sums came out.

The second vision confirmed the necessity of Saturday worship, hence, *Seventh-day* Adventists.

And so it remained for some 100 years, until recently—when both Ellen White and the meaning of her visions have come under scrutiny, even from within the church itself.

In 1982 it was revealed that much of what Ellen White said and wrote during her life was not inspired by God so much as borrowed and plagiarized from other writers. Perhaps more substantially, an Australian Seventh-day Adventist theologian, Dr. Desmond Ford, the holder of two Ph.D.'s, and following years of patient study, concluded that the theology coming from Ellen White's teachings was not supported by, and was—in some places—not consistent with the Bible itself.

Ford was defrocked in 1980, the year the Chamberlain story broke. Well, the imbroglio stirred up by Ford and others has seen a church in search of its soul, with the emergence of liberal, evangelical, and traditional sides seeking to redefine what it is to be an Adventist, and where Adventism stands in relationship to the rest of Christendom. Is it a sect forever outside, or a growing part of the wider Christian church?

It's my pleasure to welcome to *Sunday Night Talk* this evening, that Australian: Dr. Desmond Ford. Des, welcome.

Ford: [On phone] Thank you so much, John.

Cleary: I hope my summary of the situation wasn't too inaccurate.

Ford: No, it was very accurate.

Cleary: The controversy of which you are a part is still rather deep, it seems. News of your visit to Australia came from the Seventh-day Adventist college at Avondale; and yet, when church officials were informed of your participation in tonight's program, they withdrew

rather than appear with you. Why is that?

Ford: Perhaps, because I have been an embarrassment to the church in suggesting, along with the majority of its scholars—who speak to themselves rather than to administrators—who have said that there is necessity for doctrinal revision on its eschatological teachings about the judgment. And I have voiced these. So my crime was that I voiced what the scholars of the church have long thought. So that's been an embarrassment to the church.

Cleary: It seems to be that not only is it an embarrassment, but there are people sufficiently sensitive about it to feel that perhaps the church is really dealing with fundamental issues here, and you can't be nice about it. You have to either withdraw or accept.

Ford: Well, not everybody in the church knows that changes are taking place in the direction that I suggested they should be made....

I have several things before me, printed by the church, where there is a great shift already begun. But it has to be admitted, John, that most Adventists who do not read a lot aren't even aware of these progressive changes.

Cleary: Perhaps the PR [public relations] department of the Adventist church here at Sydney ought to catch up with a little of it.

What led you to your stand? What were the fundamental things that you found? Was it something that you found through your own studies, or was it part of your cultural interaction with other churches as well?

Ford: It really began in my teens, before I was an Adventist. No one can read Hebrews 9 without seeing clearly that it teaches that Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension was the antitype of the Jewish Day of Atonement (when the high priest went into the very presence of God symbolized by the sec-

ond apartment of the Jewish sanctuary). The book of Hebrews clearly teaches that Christ fulfilled this in his ascension into the very presence of God.

Now the traditional teaching of Adventism had Christ in the first apartment until 1844—and then moving within the veil into the second apartment to do a work of investigative judgment. Of course, through the years, this has become less and less literal, and we have talked about two phases of ministry; but none of that's to be found in Hebrews. The fact is, John, that Adventist scholars have known it for decades. I can document it very clearly from top Adventist leaders, where they say that scholars have known that the Adventist teaching on the judgment wouldn't hold water. And they've known it for most of this century.

Cleary: And that's not the only problem, is it? You've come at it from the theological angle; but also other people have started to look at what Ellen White said in her writings, and

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have found that, in fact, there is some question about what she wrote and how she arrived at it.

Ford: Yes, Ellen White certainly taught the traditional view of the Investigative Judgment. Her chapters on it in her chief book, *The Great Controversy*, mainly draw from two other Adventist writers, Uriah Smith and John N. Andrews.

It's not so much the way Ellen White put it as what Adventists have done with it. So many Adventists have lacked assurance of salvation. In a large Adventist church some time ago, its 800 members were asked were they sure that heaven would be theirs if they died that very day. Only two raised their hands out of 800! Now, it wouldn't be that way in every Adventist church; but it's tragic that it should be that way in *any* Adventist church.

My objection to the traditional teaching on the Investigative Judgment is that it has robbed many people of the assurance that they can have that they are right with Christ this very moment, if they are trusting in his merits. And, interestingly enough, Ellen White also believed what I have just said: that people can be assured here and now if they're trusting in the merits of Christ.

So that was my main objection actually—not *just* the technicalities that the New Testament says Christ has entered the very presence of God and that our justification before Christ gives us the verdict of the last judgment now without any attenuated judgment process beginning 150 years ago. But my objection is that many people have been robbed of the joy, the hilarity, the gladness of knowing that in Christ they have acceptance right now. They have eternal life from the moment they believe.

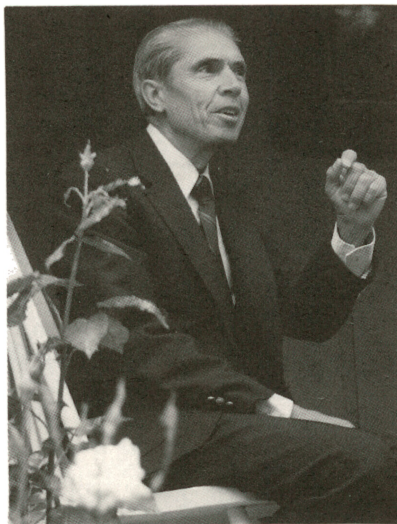
Cleary: Instead of having somebody sitting there in heaven at some point in time going through and weighing . . .

Ford: Even the *Review*, which is the official church paper, put out an article about the time of Glacier View on the Investigative Judgment. Here are some of the expressions it uses: "It seems clear...It seems clear...assuming...suggest that...the Scriptures do not offer a detailed explanation of the work that was to begin in heaven in 1844...it is reasonable to assume...the term 'Investigative Judgment' is not found in the Bible..." Hardly a tone of definiteness for what was considered a pillar of Adventist doctrine.

So the church is certainly making progress. Immediately after Glacier View, the church published an article in its ministerial magazine, for the first time in its history, granting that the expression "within the veil," used in the book of Hebrews, means what it says: that Christ went into the very presence of the Father at his ascension. That was a first. So progress is being made; but not all Adventists know it.

And it's one great thing about the Adventist Church: that they are students of the Bible and they are looking for light. They have made considerable changes. Originally, the church was anti-Trinitarian, no longer so.

Cleary: Seventh-day Adventists is the topic. We're on *Sunday Night*



Talk, right around Australia. John Cleary. My guest this evening: Dr. Desmond Ford, an Australian born in Queensland; still considers himself an SDA at heart, but has provoked considerable controversy over the last few years by challenging the church's biblical views (or views on the Bible).

Now, there's another element to this controversy that surrounds the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A few years ago, 1982 to be exact, another pastor, Walter T. Rea, of Patterson, California, in the course of doing a Ph.D., stumbled in his research across some long-buried writings by forgotten divines that matched huge swatches of prophet Ellen White's books. Accusations of plagiarism began to surface. Des, what's your attitude to that? Is Rea credible in what he's saying?

Ford: Rea is acknowledged by church leaders—Adventist church leaders—to be correct in the sources that he names that Ellen White used. They would question the fact of it being plagiarism, because the first American laws about plagiarism in prose didn't come in until after Ellen White had written most of her books . . .

Cleary: Whether it's legal or not, she borrowed extensively.

Ford: She certainly did. There's no question about that. The church does acknowledge it. However, it should also be said that she acknowledged it too. She only wrote one introduction to any of her books, and in that book she said she had used other writers but hadn't given sources because she did not want it thought she endorsed everything they said.

So the Adventist church admits the accuracy of Walter Rea's selection of sources that Ellen White used. For example, Adventists have pointed out that in their chief doctrinal book by Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, at least 50 percent are the words of other writers.

Cleary: Fifty percent is a rather large wedge, isn't it?

Ford: Yes, but it's a historical book. Nevertheless, all the major books of Ellen White draw very largely from other sources, and she recommended some of those sources through the church paper. I do not think she was being dishonest, myself, because she very loudly proclaimed the necessity for church members to read some of the very books she was reading. That's in print in the church paper.

Cleary: What is her status? Is she regarded as having some sort of semi-divine insights?

Ford: Traditionally, Adventists have regarded Ellen White as a prophet on a similar level to the prophets of the Bible. The modern position, in this time, in the 1990s, has switched from that: rather, that she had a special gift such as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14, a gift of prophecy—not to be placed as a parallel with that of Daniel and Isaiah, but a gift to rebuke and to counsel. That makes her a good pastor.

More and more Adventists are teaching that. For example, the latest issue of the *Ministry* magazine published by the church, says that Ellen White should not be used as an authoritative commentator on the Bible. So here's the official journal for all its ministers—the latest edition—in an article by George Knight, condemning Adventists who use Ellen White as the authoritative interpreter of Scripture. Now that's a direct reversal of the practice of Adventists for over a hundred years.

Cleary: It's extraordinary! I mean, what the church is saying is that perhaps even though its founder gave them some enormous benefits—Ellen White gave them enormous benefits—that the church has for a hundred years been theologically wrong in the path it has been pursuing, and needs to get

back towards mainstream Christianity.

Ford: You're right; and of course it wasn't really Ellen White's fault. She told them, "Don't quote my writings as long as you live until you know what the Bible teaches." There are over 100 quotations from Ellen White saying the Bible and the Bible only should be used for doctrine.

You know, Lutherans use Luther, Wesleyans use Wesley, and Adventists can use Ellen White; but only the Bible should be used for doctrine. That was her position, too.

Cleary: Let me just ask a more general question. It does seem that much of what this controversy is about is rather esoteric, and damaging to a church (which in certain areas may have some eccentric edges), but on the whole has been seen to be one offering enormous social good to people right around the world.

Ford: Yes, and not only social good.

Number one, it's as true as steel to the great evangelical verities at its heart. It has—as you have rightly said—some esoteric fringes that can tend towards cultism, particularly on its misuse of Ellen White and also its teaching on the Investigative Judgment, all its scholars are pretty well agreed—the vast majority agree—is not biblical.

But it does have a lot to offer. I think even its emphasis on the fourth commandment in our frenetic age, our madly driven age where everyone is like a harassed, driven leaf tossed to-and-fro in the wind, I think Adventism's call to worship and to taking a day for the family and for God is a very healthy spiritual *and* social emphasis.

And then its stress on the body as the temple of God—that's a great and important teaching. For centuries we were led by middle-aged . . . er, the Middle Age theologians who taught that the soul was the only

precious thing in a sack of dung, and that it didn't matter what happened to the body. Well, Adventists have gone back to the biblical teaching (and more and more scholars are acknowledging that it is the biblical teaching) that the body-soul is precious and sacred, and we should present the body as a precious sacrifice to God, dedicated to him.

Adventism has much to offer; and it offers hope because this world is careering toward the fate we all are fearful about. But Adventists point to the blessed hope of the return of Christ.

It is not in the business of setting dates. It gave that up. Adventists have never set them. William Miller was not a Seventh-day Adventist. Adventists have rejected date-setting; but it does offer the blessed hope and that's a good thing.

Cleary: I'm talking with Dr. Desmond Ford, Seventh-day

The church is certainly making progress... It's one of the great things about the Adventist Church; that they are students of the Bible and they are looking for light. They have made considerable changes. Originally, the church was anti-trinitarian, no longer so... Adventists have rejected date-setting; but it does offer the blessed hope and that's a good thing.

Adventist—something of a rebel within his own camp, but still loyal to the cause, obviously, from what he is saying.

You're on *Sunday Night Talk*. John Cleary with you; Seventh-day Adventists are the topic . . . and I will give you some numbers to call.

In a few moment, perhaps in about 10 minutes, you can line up and we'll take your calls, but I'll give you the number now. If you need to go away and get a pencil, do so, if you'd like to join us.

If you're an Adventist, have been, would like to be—or just simply interested, here's the number: 008 022 266. It's toll-free from wherever you are in Australia, except Western Australia (where, don't call because time's beaten you).

008 022 266 to join us here on *Sunday Night Talk*, this Sunday night before the cricket—where we're talking Seventh-day Adventism with Dr. Desmond Ford, an Aus-

tralian who has established quite a reputation within Adventist circles, as somebody who's tried to nudge the church towards more mainstream biblical faith as accepted by—I guess—those groups who'd associate themselves with mainstream Councils of Churches. Would that be the area that you're heading towards, Des?

Ford: Certainly towards the evangelical teachings of the Reformation as expressed in modern mainline churches—yes.

Cleary: How, in that sense, can you call yourself an Adventist then? I mean, isn't Adventism defined by Ellen White?

Ford: No. The heart of Adventism is the phrase, "the everlasting gospel," found in Revelation 14:6. Adventists declare *that* is their charter; and the heart of Adventism should be the affirmation that the cross of Christ is the center of all true religion; and trust in his merits is the only adequate motivation to a holy and true Christian life. The best of Adventists see it that way.

Cleary: Uh huh. OK, let's talk about a couple of the things that Adventism is famous for. The emphasis on health you have already mentioned; the Sanitarium; the health food company. Now, that's an enormous investment worldwide. Does the church get a direct profit out of that? And what sort of service? Where's the theology behind that?

Ford: The theology behind it is that the traditional teaching of Christendom—that there is something mystical called the soul that can function without a body—is not a scriptural teaching.

There are approximately 1,646 references to *soul* and *spirit* in the Hebrew and Greek scriptures; and in not one of those is it said that the soul or spirit can function consciously without a body. So Adventists are really up-to-date with where the best theologians

are. If we look at the most modern encyclopedias of theology, such as Alan Richardson's, if we look at Kittel—the vast majority of them today concede that the Jewish view of man was as a body-soul unity. The Jews knew nothing about a mystical, immaterial part of man known as the soul.

And scholars on Paul say he took the same position. So does Christ, who stressed the resurrection.

There is nothing in the Bible about the intermediate state, except a parabolic story by Christ which cannot be taken literally. So, the trend of modern theology supports the view that the body-soul is important; and therefore we should care for it, as good stewards of health. And Adventists, by and large, live longer than non-Adventists—that is, genuine Adventists who are vegetarians or lacto-ovo-vegetarians.

Cleary: Now I could have an argument with you over this. See, my background's with the Salvation Army; and the Salvation Army's very strong on sort of teetotalers, and sort of . . . You know, we could probably get into the merit of whether playing in a brass band helps you more than sort of eating your Weetabix every morning.

Ford: (Laughter) Well, possibly so. I think that's probably right. But, John, we'd agree with you about being teetotalers, you see? And we would add tobacco in as well, and we have done that for over 100 years. We were ahead of all the Royal Commissions.

Cleary: OK, look, I can see there's room for a mutual admiration society here. But there's also a lot of people who want to talk about this, and we want to give you a chance in just a few moments.

If you would like to give us a ring, 008 022 266.

Now, Des, you're in Australia to give some lectures, but you're taking up a thing which I can see has a connection to the health aspect of

T*he heart of Adventism is the phrase, "the everlasting gospel," found in Revelation 14:6. Adventists declare that is their charter; and the heart of Adventism should be the affirmation that the cross of Christ is the center of all true religion; and trust in his merits is the only adequate motivation to a holy and true Christian life. The best of Adventists see it that way.*

SDA belief—that is, the New Age.

Ford: Yes, the New Age, with its holistic health teachings—you know, which is a mixture of good and evil. Even a clock that's stopped tells the truth twice a day. There are some things that are truthful in the New Age teachings about health, when it stresses the influence of the mind on the body.

But a lot of its other things are weird, nonscientific—and sometimes, anti-scientific—positions. You may remember Carl Sagan wrote an article called "The Fine Art of Baloney Detection" in the magazine *Parade*, in which he berated some of these New Age teachings—and correctly so. It's a mixture of science and superstitions; fads, facts, and fancies. So I am speaking on it.

Cleary: But, ultimately, the religious quest is one where you're stepping outside a scientific view of the world, aren't you?

Ford: Yes, but not necessarily anti-scientific. Rather, beyond: trans-scientific. There's a difference between the two.

True Christianity shouldn't be anti-scientific, though it goes beyond science.

Cleary: So you would say that those things where science can demonstrate that it has facts on its side through the rational method, we should accept?

Ford: Yes. We should accept it. God's laws are written in nature.

Cleary: How do you line up with things like creationism then?

Ford: Well, I'm not altogether in favor of many things that modern creationist groups have said. Those that have contended for a short aged earth have not a leg to stand on, either biblically or scientifically. So I'm not at all in favor of that.

But I'm very much in favor of the fact that the world is a planned affair. It's not an accident. It's a ship, it's not an iceberg. I agree with the stress on creation given by Adventists,

though I do not agree with those extreme Adventists who want an earth only 6,000 years old and who deny the geological column.

Cleary: What about evolution as a hypothesis? Do you have a problem with that?

Ford: Well, I don't think any Adventist scientist denies micro-evolution. What they do deny is macro-evolution, because of the complete lack of transitional forms between the major phyla. So, micro-evolution, all Adventist scientists agree with; macro-evolution, pretty well all Adventist scientists would deny.

Cleary: Somebody like Stephen Jay Gould, though, would offer a view that . . .

Ford: "punctuated equilibrium," yes. Which is just a guess to supply the lack of transitional forms.

Cleary: Sure. But wherever there have been lacks in the past, they have eventually been filled in, haven't they?

Ford: Often so. We don't want to just worship a god of the gaps, that is true. Nevertheless, there have been a thousand guesses, and not all of them have been fulfilled; so we'll wait for the evidence before we're committed.

Cleary: OK. Another topic: the worldwide growth of Adventism.



It's one of those religions which sprang up . . . er, classified out of America in, I guess, the middle of the 19th century with groups like Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism. They all had an enormous—if you like—frontier spirit. They captured that frontier, adventuring, pioneering spirit, wedded to evangelicalism, which made them very strong missionary religions. So there is a cultural similarity between them even though their theology is widely divergent. Now, does that still hold in Adventism?

Ford: Well, the genuine Adventist is challenged to share his faith. The great drawback is so many Adventists lack assurance of salvation, they're not good missionaries. The average Adventist doesn't give one Bible study a year. Why share their uncertainties?

My ministry for the last 20 to 30 years has been on the gospel of righteousness by faith: that by sheer trust in the merits of Christ, one can have the verdict of the Last Judgment right now—and that's known as justification. We're not talking about once-saved-always-saved; but we're saying that while trusting in Christ alone, and thereby fleeing from sin, one can have assurance one is right with God.

This is a rising stress [emphasis] in Adventism even among administrators. For example, in this division. The local division recently sent a complaint to American headquarters that the Sabbath School *Quarterly* for the world church has twisted the doctrine of righteousness by faith.

So that is something that is very good. Here in the Australasian [South Pacific] Division, its administrators are trying to give the gospel its right place. I am pleased about that.

Cleary: How fast has the church grown worldwide, do you know?

Ford: It is growing chiefly in the third world. Of course, that is true of

the mainline churches even to a greater degree. In some parts of the world—America, Europe—the church is not growing that much at all, keeping up with the dead, hardly. But in third world countries Adventism, along with pentecostalism and other groups, is growing rapidly.

Cleary: Pretty much in the same vein as mainline churches.

Well, let's take some calls. Time to say hello to you at home and see what you'd like to have to say on Seventh-day Adventists, tonight on *Sunday Night Talk*, right around Australia. 008 022 266 if you'd like to give us a call. We're talking to Dr. Des Ford. . . .

And let's say good evening. Hi, there! How are you?

Caller 1: [Unintelligible]

Cleary: Yes. Welcome to the program.

Caller 1: Oh, yes.

Cleary: Great. Would you like to talk to Des Ford?

Caller 1: Yes. I was wondering what his views were about the very

conservative element within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There's quite a fundamentalist, and dare I say anti-intellectual, element which would not respond very willingly to the changes which he is espousing. And I was wondering...

Ford: You're quite right.

Caller 1: Yes. I was wondering in the long term what sort of changes could develop within the Adventist church.

Ford: You are quite right in what you are saying. The Adventist church is more afraid of what it calls the 'lunatic fringe' (which is an unkind denomination [name] of the conservatives, the extreme traditionalists) than it is of those it would classify slightly liberal. They are usually perfectionistic. The church is afraid, deadly afraid, of the extreme narrowness, the fundamentalism, the lack of biblical literacy, that exists in these fringe groups.

Caller 1: Yes, but don't these fringe groups have a very strong hold on the grass roots within the Adventist church?

Ford: Oh, you're quite right. The decision at Glacier View was triggered by them. The fringe groups put so much stress on the local division president here, who then put stress on the General Conference president in America, that it precipitated the decision after Glacier View.

You are quite right; but since then, leaders in the church are becoming more and more allergic to such influence. I think that now the battle is turning against those conservatives. For example, another Australian who is very prominent in this area [conservatism], who runs a self-supporting college in America, has recently had his credentials removed by the world church leadership.

Caller 1: Very interesting.

Cleary: Thanks, Glen. Des, would it be always the case that church leadership, because of its

very nature, tends toward taking pressure from the more conservative elements rather than the more liberal elements? It's far easier to stay where you are than to make a decision which takes you into uncharted territory.

Ford: Tragically, that is true. It is probably why Ellen White said that the greatest sin in the church is neutrality in a religious crisis. She was exiled to Australia because she disagreed with the head administrators of the church.

Cleary: Ellen White actually spent time in Australia, did she?

Ford: Oh, yes. She was here for many years.

There was a revival on righteousness by faith in 1888, and she (along with just a few other of the administrators) took the right side on the gospel—stress on the gospel rather than just on law. Because of that the leaders of the church exiled her to Australia.

Cleary: Some people can't win. (Laughter.) Where did she live while she was here?

Ford: She lived mainly near Avondale College, which is a very fine school.

It's a college of advanced education about 35 miles south of Newcastle; about 70 miles north of Sydney.

It has an excellent faculty. I was there. I've been there about a third of my lifetime, actually. It's a very great college.

Cleary: She died in what, 1915, didn't she?

Ford: Yes, that's correct.

Cleary: How much of that time did she spend here in Australia?

Ford: I would say that at least a good decade of [Ellen White's] significant work was done in this country.

This is where she wrote some of her best books: *Desire of Ages*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, *Mount of Blessing*—which are beautiful books, by the way. If a person followed them they could not but be

At least a good decade of Ellen White's significant work was done in Australia. This is where she wrote some of her best books: Desire of Ages, Christ's Object Lessons, Mount of Blessing—which are beautiful books, by the way. If a person followed them they could not but be good Christians. She wrote those here.

good Christians. She wrote those here.

She had a great deal of impact on the establishing of this college, which has sent people, missionaries, to all the mission fields of the Pacific; and also to India, and to Africa, indeed, all around the world.

Cleary: OK. To David, now. Hi there, David. How are you?

Caller 2: I've been interested to follow the discussion and I am all in favor of Dr. Ford's fellowship. I am pleased to see he has readjusted his view of the SDAs on the basis of his profession. But personally I don't think he goes far enough, because in actual fact there is now a very respectable historical argument that suggests that Jesus never actually existed at all. So no church, of any shape or color, would really be justified in being in existence on that basis.

Ford: May I answer that one, John?

Cleary: Sure.

Ford: There isn't a respectable historian in the world who would agree with you. Until the 18th century, it was popular to deny the historicity of Christ. But it has not been now for probably 200 years. If you look at any encyclopedia—though the majority of the writers are not evangelical Christians—they do not deny the historicity of Jesus Christ. He is a more established historical figure than Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great.

Caller 2: Well, I have to disagree there.

Cleary: Where are you getting your background on this, David?

Caller 2: I have an interest in history and I teach history. I must say that I recognize what Dr. Ford is saying there. There was a challenge about 200 years ago. But in actual fact Professor George Wells of London University has put up a very comprehensive case in the past 20 years or so. And yet, as is evident from Dr. Ford's comments, they

don't seem to be very widely recognized at this point.

Cleary: I certainly think that would be true amongst the wider Christian denominations as well. Even those most radical, liberal scholars—particularly so in the past 40 years—wouldn't agree with that position. They'd at least accept the historical personage of Jesus.

Ford: It would have taken a Christ to invent a Christ. The words are so unique. No committee could have ever come up with them.

Caller 2: Well, er...I would say that's debatable too. In that to take one small example, I mean it could be argued that it is very difficult to discern exactly what Christ's ethics were. And one could point to examples where Christ didn't actually observe his teachings.

Ford: David, I think that would be a difficult project.

We have 5,300 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament; we have nearly 10,000 of the Latin Vulgate; many ten thousands of

other versions, and over all, we have a fairly competent summary of what he taught.

To my mind, there are some things he said that are self-validating, self-authenticating. Let me give you one: "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away" [Mt 24: 35; Mk 13: 31; Lk 21: 33]. There isn't another person in the five thousand million on the planet that could say that; and there isn't a person of the millions or billions of the past who could say that.

I would suggest to you that one statement alone is a self-authenticating one about the authenticity and historicity of the One who said it.

Caller 2: Well, it does, er...I grant you, it does imply an enormous degree of confidence. But, er, very briefly...we haven't time to go into this in much depth, but very briefly, the argument hinges on the dates of the very early Christian writings.

Cleary: Without getting into this, David, because you've raised this before on the program some months ago, I think, it's almost impossible to get into an argument on the historicity of Christianity when we're talking about Seventh-day Adventism. So give us another ring on another night. We'll have to push on. Thanks for that.

Let's push on. I'm sorry for that, Dave, but things do need to push on, on a night like this.

Graham in Melbourne. Hi, there Graham, how are you?

Caller 3: I am well, thank you. I would like to just ask a question of Dr. Ford. I don't know if he will remember me. He was my teacher back in the late '60s.

One of my concerns was as a current—and I am a current Adventist minister—was that so many young ministers left the Adventist Church in the early '80s. So many of them were not able to make a transition to another faith, they dropped out of Christianity altogether. It al-

As regards the Sabbath: no true Adventist thinks he is saved by a day. He believes he is saved by Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. The Bible says, "We which have believed do enter into rest" [Heb 4:3]. The physical rest of the seventh day—to an informed Adventist—is a symbol of the rest of conscience they have all the week because they trust in the merits of Christ.

most seemed as though it was Adventism or nothing.

Des, I'd just be interested to know what your comment would be on that.

Ford: I find it very sad indeed, Graham, that it's happened.

I think it's the result of not taking at face value the biblical teaching about man. The Bible forbids us to trust in man or in human institutions. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the living God" [Jer 17:5].

You see, human institutions are only enlarged individuals; and the visible church is not the church of God. The church of God is the church invisible, "Fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners" [Song 6:10]. But the church visible is a human institution, full of follies, frailties, weaknesses, and often denials of its Lord. If ministers make an idol of their church,

then they invite a great deal of disappointment.

Caller 3: Yes. I couldn't agree more. It just seemed to be one of those tragic things. Those sort of things happen.

Cleary: Could I ask something here of you both?

It seems to me that when you get an organization like the Seventh-day Adventist—or any other group—that's had to fight for its existence, built up a powerful tradition through a hundred years—then for people born into it, the culture is as *strong* as anything could possibly be.

The bond is not just for this world. It's for the world beyond; and to separate oneself from it must require an *enormous* personal wrench. I mean, Des, how did you find it when you were shown the door—as it were—back in 1980? Was that a deeply disturbing personal experience for you?

Ford: No, it really isn't, because I haven't lost a friend, hardly, through the upheaval.

Many of the church scholars and even some of its administrators keep in communication with me, and they are my very good friends. And that's at all levels.

From very early as a Christian I came to believe that the true church was a very big family. It wasn't limited to any denomination. Christ is no polygamist. He is married to one bride, not to 600 churches. (Laughter)

Caller 3: Yes.

Ford: So, I am first of all a Christian, and secondly an Adventist. And I think every true Adventist is the same.

Cleary: Graham, how do you respond? What about your friends who are left?

Caller 3: I would agree with Des on that. I would feel much more comfortable in regarding myself as a Christian first and an Adventist second.

From my experience going through those times and being regarded as somewhat of a disciple of Des Ford (whether that's good or bad) you know, just because he happened to be my teacher way back in the '60s and so on—there were difficult times.

And it was very necessary to re-evaluate a whole lot of things. And I think for me too it was necessary to work out why I was an Adventist. Some of the old reasons didn't hold true too much. You had to re-focus again on what Jesus Christ meant to you.

Ford: Amen.

Cleary: Thanks for that, Graham. We'll have to push on.

To Steven in Sydney. Hi, there, Steven, how are you?

Caller 4: G'day, how are you? I'm a bit nervous, so I will try to get this out as sanely as possible.

Back in the '80s I was looking for a...not a religion to join, but something to believe in. I come across a mate who had recently joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was just around the time of the breakup. I would go to the church's meetings every Saturday, and so forth, but after all the venom that used to come out of some of these church meetings, just drove me away.

I thought, "Well, this can't be the true church, if this is how they are." Especially when they got on to the Catholics. You know, I don't class myself as a Catholic, even though I was baptized as one. I think now I am more an atheist than anything. But some of the stuff I used to hear them spiel out at their services—I just thought it was just pure hatred. And I thought, "Ah well, these aren't the right mob," and—there I was gone again.

Cleary: Sectarianism. A continuing problem?

Ford: John, can I comment on that.

Cleary: Sure.

It's true that Adventists do not do enough of social work; but it is not true that they don't do any. They have a whole department of the church that is dedicated to helping in time of tragedy, tornado, flood, and the like. It is a very vigorous department that operates in Third World countries, including Thailand and Cambodia.

Ford: I think most Adventists would say that their opposition to Catholicism is to the teachings and not the people. A large number of proselytes to Adventism are from Roman Catholic circles—that's number one.

The second thing that should be said: according to one Adventist publication, Good Samaritan Institute, near Chicago, at the Merikay legal case, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists said, "We have consigned to the garbage the former hatred against Roman Catholics; and it's no longer a part of Adventist teaching."

Now, of course, that statement of the General Conference (which was affirmed afresh by the public relations director Herbert Ford, at the latest General Conference [session] in Indianapolis) would be news to most Australian Adventists—who have been taught strongly an anti-papal theology.

But even in that theology it has always been against the system and not against the people. No true Christian hates any other person. They can hate evil but they cannot hate people.

Cleary: It can be a handy device though, can't it?

Ford: Yes, tragically.

Caller 4: The other thing I thought that the church was was an elitist religion.

It was more interested in social standing. Not so much social values, but that was a part of it, but social standing: possessions, the nice house, the car, the job.

I always remembered where they've got that hospital up there at Wahroonga, I think it is, somewhere. It seemed to me that it was a private hospital, though the Catholics have one at St. Vincent's. But I could never ever see where the Seventh-day Adventists were down there doing a job like the Salvation Army at the Cross, with the Wayside Chapel (or whoever did that)—try-

ing to round up the drug addicts, the prostitutes, the AIDS victims. In fact, they seemed to shun that kind of thing

And the other thing that got me was the continual harping on the Sabbath law, how it was "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day." And the Catholics and all the others mostly went on the Sunday. And lo and behold, I get to Tonga one day, and here are all the Seventh-day Adventists running up to church on Sunday and not Saturday. And I thought, "Oh, well, forget it," you know.

Cleary: (Giggle) Alright, there's a few there, Steven. Thanks for that. Des?

Ford: Yes, if I may.

It's true that Adventists do not do enough of social work; but it is not true that they don't do any. They have a whole department of the church that is dedicated to helping in time of tragedy, tornado, flood, and the like. It is a very vigorous department that operates in Third World countries, including Thailand and Cambodia. If anyone has been with the Adventist missions in the South Pacific, they do a marvelous job of cleaning up the places to which they go.

I agree with my friend that we

don't do enough. But it's not true that we don't do any.

As regards the Sabbath: no true Adventist thinks he is saved by a day. He believes he is saved by Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. The Bible says, "We which have believed do enter into rest" [Heb 4: 3]. The physical rest of the seventh day—to an informed Adventist—is a symbol of the rest of conscience they have all the week because they trust in the merits of Christ.

Cleary: There are a couple of things that come up there.

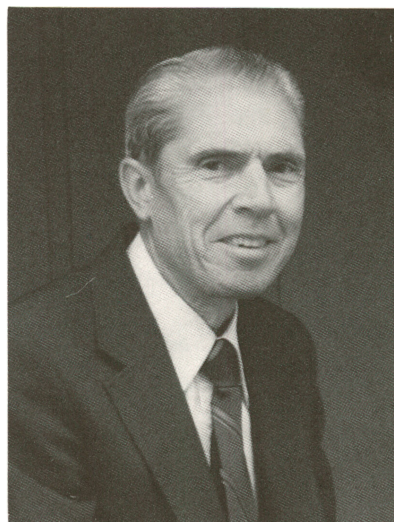
For instance, there has been criticism over the years of Seventh-day Adventism—and if you like, American cultural imperialism (if I can use a somewhat dated term but I still think one that's useful)—the governing structures of the church are very tight, very hierarchical, originating in America, and not very easily accessible by other communities. So there's a question there about the domination of American values...

Ford: Yes, you're right...

Cleary: ...and a second question there about whether or not the flavor, if you like, of SDA theology has been very positivistic; and that the sacrificial dimension, the costly dimension, of Christianity—sort of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer dimension—is not emphasized so much?

Ford: On number one: the General Conference president has admitted on oath that Adventism is a hierarchical structure, which, of course, is quite opposed to the New Testament teaching. The New Testament teaching is that "All ye are brethren," [Mt 23: 8] "He who would be first among you, let him be as the least" [Mt 20: 27]—and so on. The Bible forbids any such thing as a hierarchical church structure.

The second thing: when you talk about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, I think Adventists do believe in sacrificial living. They're probably among the best donors in the world in Christian churches. Pretty well all of them are



tithe payers; and some of them give a second tithe—and they are very generous in many other offerings besides.

But your suggestion—and the previous speaker's—that we haven't been sacrificial enough with our needy neighbors in the big cities, that is tragically true. We have a lot of room for progress there.

Cleary: I mean, it's a criticism that can be made of a lot of western Christianity generally. I mean, the prosperity gospel, if you like. To what extent has that made inroads into...

Ford: Not very much. The prosperity gospel is well-entrenched in charismatic churches, but Adventism is the other extreme from the charismatic church.

Adventism is sometimes so cold you can skate down the aisle. (Laughter.) It needs to learn from the charismatic churches to have more joy, more happiness—without losing grip of the kingly power of reason sanctified by divine grace.

Cleary: OK, time for one more call. It's from Roy in Sydney. Hi, there, Roy, how are you?

Caller 5: I was listening with interest to your program.

If I can just pose a question to Des Ford. He mentioned earlier that his doctrine had changed; that at one stage they were anti-Trinitarian, and now were Trinitarian. Now to me that is a fairly dramatic change in a

person's belief.

I was just curious to know what would prompt something like that. Was there something that was taken from the Bible that would dramatically change, you know, the overall concept of that?

Ford: The Adventist church was Arian: that is, the belief that Christ was a created being and the Spirit was a person, right through the 19th century.

It was only when Ellen White wrote a very beautiful life of Christ called *The Desire of Ages*, which set forth the doctrine of the Trinity very clearly, saying there "never was a time when Christ was not, from the days of eternity he was one with the Father"—it was only after that book was written at the end of the 19th century the church became Trinitarian.

Caller 5: Right.

Cleary: Thanks for that, Roy. We're rapidly running out of time.

Caller 5: Thanks very much.

Cleary: Only time for one question there.

Des, we've only had time for a brief skate around the thin ice.

Ford: I've appreciated the skate.

Cleary: (Laughter.) It's been great to have you on the program.

Ford: It's been a privilege.

Cleary: How long are you in Australia for?

Ford: Just another two weeks and then I have meetings outside Australia. And then back to America.

Cleary: Where are you going to be talking?

Ford: I'll be speaking in Perth, and then Adelaide tomorrow night. I'll be in New Zealand.

Just recently I had the privilege of speaking to some of the biggest Adventist churches in the world. Sligo, which is the second biggest Adventist church in the world, I think, Capital Memorial Church, and Loma Linda University. Adventism's fears, I think, are breaking up to some degree, and so there are many encouraging things on the Adventist scene.

Cleary: In 30 seconds, how do you think the direction is going? Is there a traditionalist revival back to Ellen White? Or is it moving toward mainstream Christianity?

Ford: No, that will never fully revive. The idolatry of Ellen White is gone forever in Adventism. It can never revive.

It's like that serpent that was lifted up on the brass pole: when it was worshiped it was ground to powder. So that will never revive.

But there is an increasing emphasis on the everlasting gospel of grace—that we are saved by grace through faith alone, and that works are only the fruit and never the root of salvation. That is spreading in Adventism, and so it should. That is the essence of true religion.

Cleary: Dr. Des Ford, thank you very much for joining us on *Sunday Night Talk*.

Genesis II

by Tom Wehtje

Children as they please in kindergarten
Except ye become as one of these . . .
Adam and Eve at ease in the garden
Satisfactorily
Satisfactorily

A tree in the midst of the garden
Let it be! Let it be!
Ye may eat of any tree of the garden
save Curiosity
Mystery, let it be

Don't eat of the tree of knowledge
Lest ye die! Lest ye die!
Lest it open your eyes!
Don't touch the tree of knowledge
naked that ye be, lest ye see why!
Lest ye be wise!

A serpent in the midst of the tree
more subtle than any beast of the field
Cursed is he! Cursed is he!
Don't talk to the slippery snake lest ye yield
to the thirst quenching faith wrenching tree
Worst that be! Worst that be!

Pray, Adam, pardon fair advice:
Beware of the tree! Be wary!
Eat, drink, and be merry
in your garden paradise
lest ye die, Eve! To the contrary

hew down the tree and cut off the branches
Branches of vain scholarly advances
Fence in the truth, defend it from knowledge
in university, book store, and college
(for faith is inversely proportioned to knowledge)

No

Give me to eat of the bittersweet meat
till I'm filled complete, thrilled complete!
Quench my lips on the poison with passion!
I lust after the sensuous fruit of that tree!
Lesser trees give too meager a ration
Unsatisfactory
Unsatisfactory

Curiosity
killed also the man. Hide it not from me!
Wisdom that is death to find
I have a mind
to know
I step willingly into the tree's dark shadow

And if it is wrong
And if it is wrong to learn
And if it is wrong to yearn to learn
and innocence must be naive
Then I'd do the same as Adam and Eve

Tom Wehtje graduated from Atlantic Union College in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in English. He is currently teaching freshman composition at Andrews University, while completing a master's degree in English.



Albania's Dawn

The only country that officially declared itself atheist opens its doors to Adventism.

by Ray Dabrowski

APRIL 15, 1991, WAS MEMORABLE FOR THE Albanian people. Their freely elected parliament met for its first session. It was also a memorable day for me. John Arthur, director for the Trans-European Division of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and I became the first Seventh-day Adventists to visit the country in almost 50 years. We didn't know what to expect or how to approach the state officials, but with a prayer on our lips we plunged in.

After acquainting ourselves with some of the country's needs, we asked our hosts from the Health Ministry to allow us to visit the city of Korce, four hours south of Tirana, the capital of Albania. In Korce, during a luncheon with Dr. Edmonda Prifti, the local health authority director, I mentioned the name of Flora Lewis, and asked where her street—Rruga Quemal

Stafa—could be found. Dr. Prifti seemed surprised. "That's my street," she said, "and number 28 is almost next door." I asked if we could visit Flora Lewis, to deliver a gift—medicine, toiletries, and sweets—from her friends in Italy. Permission was granted.

Rruga Quemal Stafa, like many of the streets in old town Korce, proved to still be paved with cobblestones. It is lined with neatly-painted Mediterranean style houses with red tile roofs. Terraces shaded with creeping vines provide some relief from summer's heat.

Flora Lewis's daughter came to the door. Flora, we discovered, was across town visiting relatives. When I said that we brought greetings from their friends in Rome, Flora's daughter welcomed us into the home.

I asked if I could empty my travel bag, and was directed to the kitchen. While my traveling companion, John Arthur, engaged the others in conversation, I quickly explained to Esther that I was a Seventh-day Adventist. Tears filled her eyes as she kissed me on both cheeks and hugged me. "So," she asked, "missionaries are coming to Albania?"

Ray Dabrowski, the Public Affairs, Religious Liberty and Communication director of the Trans-European Division, worked previously as a journalist, writer, and editor in the Polish Seventh-day Adventist Publishing House in Warsaw, Poland. He is the editor of Conscience and Liberty.

I gave her two copies of the New Testament and a few copies of the book of Matthew in the Albanian language. Her eyes brightened and she kissed the books quickly. We promised our new friends that we would return to visit, and to bring medical supplies for the children's hospital in the city.

In July of 1991, I returned to Albania and met with Esther again. Her mother, Flora Sabatino Lewis, 75, the widow of the last Adventist minister in Albania, was in Italy. Flora Sabatino, originally from Italy, met Daniel Lewis, an Albanian from Boston, Massachusetts. Daniel had been born and raised in Albania, but moved to America and became a pharmacist. He first returned to Albania in the 1930s. In 1939, the *Review and Herald* reported that there were five converts in Albania, with six more waiting for baptism. In the early 1940s, Daniel briefly left Albania, met Flora, and married her in 1943. After the end of the war in 1944, Daniel took Flora back to Albania and resumed his activities as a Seventh-day Adventist missionary.

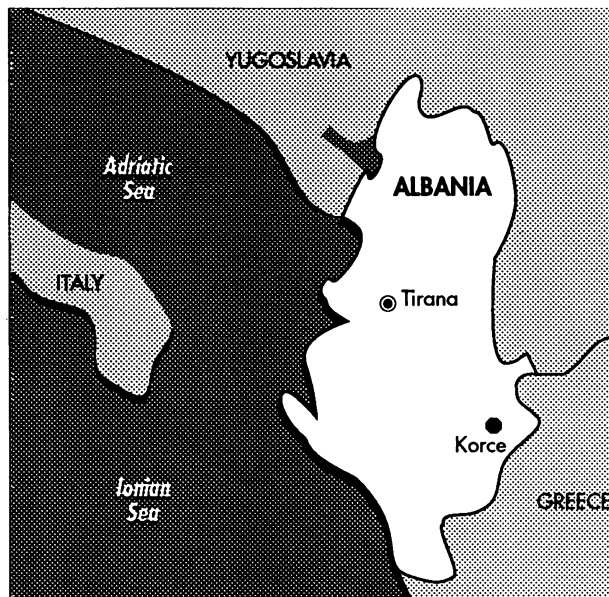
On the same July 1991 trip, I met another important link to Albania's Adventist heritage, one of Daniel Lewis's early converts to Adventism. Meropi Gjika, now 87 years old, remembers when she first met Daniel Lewis, 50 years ago. Meropi recalls,

His first words were, "Have you read the Bible?" I responded in the affirmative and from then on I began to study the Bible with him. After the first meeting was over, Daniel asked me if I could come the next time with my daughter. See,

there was another woman who used to come for Bible studies with Daniel, and there were rumors spreading around town about them. So, the next time I saw Daniel I took my daughter Pandora with me.

Meropi remembers that it was Daniel's wonderful style of preaching that so impressed her. Once she was so overwhelmed that she took out all the money she had with her and gave it to him in gratitude. Daniel explained to her that she should not pay him for his preaching, but explained that tithing was the best way to show her gratitude. For five years, Meropi passed her tithe on to Daniel. Later, she continued to save her tithe in a wooden box hidden under her bed.

Both Flora Lewis, Daniel's widow, and Meropi Gjika remember that after World War II, life became more and more unbearable. Enver Hoxha, a teacher from Korea, became the General



Secretary of the Communist Party of Albania in 1941. The communists declared Albania the People's Republic in 1946. Hoxha remained First Secretary until his death in 1985.

Throughout his 40 years of rule, Hoxha remained loyal to Stalin and his policies. He also sided with China, though after the overthrow of the "Gang of Four" he broke off the Chinese connection. Constantly fearful of revisionist tendencies in the world of communism, Hoxha isolated his country from the international community, creating his own version of a socialist society. His version of communism excluded, among other things, freedom of religion. His hatred toward "foreign influences"

fostered a campaign to destroy every form of religion in Albania, and in 1976 religion was outlawed. At that time, Albania's constitution stated that "the State recognizes no religion whatever and supports atheist propaganda for the purpose of inculcating the scientific materialist world outlook in people" (Art. 37).

The Christian community—including the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches—can join the Muslim community in citing the names of thousands who were tor-



Esther, daughter of Daniel Lewis, and Pavullo Misbo, her husband.

tured or executed.* The regime closed more than 2,000 Christian churches and other places of worship. Some were completely destroyed. Others were turned into sports stadiums, cinemas, workshops, or warehouses. Clergy, together with thousands of Christians, ended up in prisons, labor camps, or as exiles to distant parts of the country. The fate of many will never be known.

The Bible and Koran were banned and, when discovered, publicly burned. Sharing one's religion brought harsh punishment under a penal code designed to punish every form of religious "disobedience." Even names given to newborns were screened, so as not to reflect the Christian, Muslim, or Jewish heritage of the family. "Thunder sheets" (Flete-rufe) were

posted in public denouncing parents who had given their children religious names.

After World War II ended, life was unbearable for most Albanians. Daniel Lewis, the Albanian who had lived in America, rebelled early when the state ordered registration of every religious denomination. Lewis felt that registration meant state control of their funds and activities, and he refused to comply. By 1947, the Lewis family decided to leave Albania. But all four members of the family—Daniel, Flora, and their son and daughter, Jony and Esther—were arrested. Their rights as citizens were taken away and their property was confiscated.

Flora Lewis tearfully recalls that after two days in prison, her two children, Esther and Jony, were taken from her and placed in an orphanage. Meanwhile, Daniel Lewis was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Later, his sentence was reduced to 10 years. But in 1951, after only four and a half years in prison, Daniel died. He lies buried in a cemetery in Elbasan.

Meropi Gjika recalls how she used to visit the Lewises when they were in prison:

The moment they were imprisoned the news spread all over the town. After one or two months a letter came from Daniel. He pleaded with me to take care of them. No one went to visit them and they were suffering much. So I went to the jail, and continued to do so month after month. I used to wash Daniel's clothes and bring him food. Flora was separated from Daniel and stayed in a different prison block.

After about two years, Daniel was moved from a prison in Korce to Elbasan. Meropi recounted what happened then.

The jail in Elbasan was terribly overcrowded, but later I was told that Daniel was...much loved...by his fellow inmates. He preached to them every night.... Those who knew him and were later released [said] that he died all of a sudden. He was gone in a minute. It was a heart attack, I suppose.

Daniel Lewis had survived only four and a half

years in prison. Jony, the Lewis's son, remained separated from his parents. He never recovered from the ordeal of his arrest, imprisonment, life in the orphanage, and the trauma of his father's death. He died in 1971 in a mental hospital.

Flora and her daughter Esther were released from prison and survived. When they went home to Korce, they had nothing to return to. But people like Meropi and their former neighbors gave them shelter and whatever food they could spare. For many years, Flora was accorded no rights because of her faith. But it was her faith—and the generosity of her neighbors—that kept them going.

I asked what it was like to be a Sabbath-keeping Adventist in Albania during those days. Meropi responded:

At first, we used to meet regularly. I still remember who was meeting in Korce. . . . But then my husband didn't like this and prohibited me from having these people studying the Bible in my house. Some people in the neighborhood used to spread rumors about me. They said, "She is keeping the Sabbath; she is crazy. She is a Jew."

Her son, Viktor, noted that Sabbath keeping for them was important even when religious practice was completely forbidden. "And we still do it today," he added, "though probably not in a perfect way."

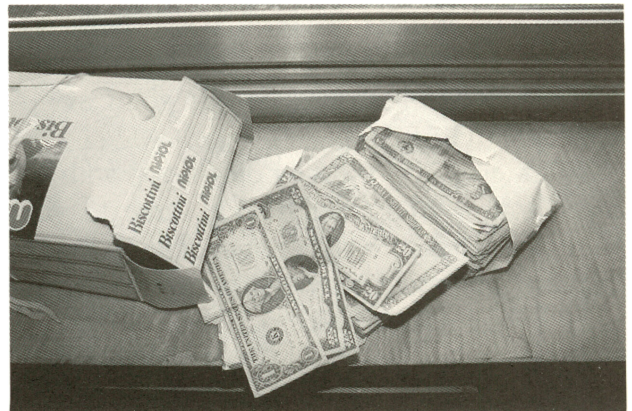
At one point, Meropi's husband became so angry with Meropi's dedication to her faith that he asked her to pack her things and leave. He threatened to divorce her. Finally, in desperation, he visited the local Greek Orthodox priest to ask support for his decision. The priest asked about Meropi's faith and when he discovered that she was an Adventist, he told her husband that Meropi's faith was not to be denied, and that he should accept it. The priest explained that he saw faith as a column bridging heaven and earth. At the bottom of the column, embracing it, were the Muslims; then, further up, came the Roman Catholics and his own Orthodox believers; finally, above them all, were the Adventists.

During my visit, Meropi brought several

notebooks into the sitting room. Each was filled with hand-written Bible texts and comments. Her granddaughter, now employed as a secretary in the newly re-established Albanian Adventist mission, explained:

My grandma used to distribute pieces of paper with messages translated from the Bible. She gave them to everyone she met. I remember that whenever I visited my grandma she used to give me these letters. She put them in my pocket.

Meropi's son Viktor, now one of Albania's prominent film directors, explained further:



Meropi's tithe: 47 years of faithfulness.

My mother had a little book from Italy. It was printed in 1947 and had a list of daily Bible verses. I copied this particular book by hand and still have those pages at my home. Whenever I met my mother she inquired, "Have you read the verse for today?"

All Meropi ever asked for as her birthday gift was a new notebook and a ballpoint pen. She put them to good use. She had kept a copy of the Greek Bible hidden away, which she translated and copied into the Albanian language by hand.

Meropi's influence on her son was strong, and eventually Viktor eventually also translated books of the Bible into Albanian from French, English, and Russian versions he had smuggled into the country. The risks he and his mother took were not small. Thanas, another

son of Meropi's and now an associate professor of history of the Albanian literature at the Albanian Academy of Science, explained:

My mother not only translated the Bible verses, but she used to write down some of her own comments and thoughts. Religion was prohibited and if anyone should discover these notebooks—one for every year—they were reasons enough to be arrested. These notebooks were considered to be religious propaganda. But we have been fortunate all these years.

Thanas went on to say that Meropi's convictions were strong and that her influence on her children was evident. Often, Thanas said, she would stop him as he left for work and ask, "Have you read your daily Bible text today?"

"Only when I said yes could I go to work!" Thanas laughed.

But Meropi's witnessing didn't stop with her own family. When her friends came to visit, Meropi was eager to talk about her faith. Thanas says that he would often tell his mother, "Hold your tongue. Don't talk about religion. You are going to destroy this family!" But Meropi would respond, "You are a coward and you are nothing else! You must not be afraid because it is the hand of God which is protecting us."

One of Meropi's greatest desires, when I visited with her, was to be relieved of the burden of keeping her tithe hidden. "What must I do with my tithe, which I have saved all these years?" she asked me. "Can you take it?" Meropi's two sons explained that their mother wouldn't keep the money in a bank because she didn't trust the authorities. Agreeing to return her tithe to the church, Meropi brought a plastic bag out from under her bed. In it was a carton full of Albanian leke and a few American dollars. For more than 20 years she had been on a \$4.00 per month pension, yet she paid her tithe and offerings. When we opened the carton, we found 24,629 leke and \$41.00 in US funds. All told, she had saved the equivalent of \$533.89 in U.S. dollars.

At the end of my fourth, most recent visit in January 1992, I was privileged to study and



An Albanian Christian woman from Shkodra.

pray with more than a dozen Adventist believers who are awaiting baptism. Four families in Tirana and a number of people in Korce form the nucleus of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albania.

Before leaving Korce in July 1991 we met with the Lewis and Gjika families and others for the first organized Adventist worship service in decades inside Albania.

Meropi's sons—Thanas, the professor of literature and Viktor, the prominent film maker—spent time with me discussing the present state of religion in Albania. Thanas's first concern was that not all modern Bibles in Albanian are well translated.

The old New Testament which you gave us, the one in the old Tosk-Albanian, has a soul. It is a spiritual translation. A modern translation from Norway or Sweden, which was recently distributed, was not very accurate. If you need good translators, we can help you.

One of the first projects they will undertake is the translation of *Steps to Christ* and *Christ's Object Lessons*. Thanas and Viktor introduced

me to other sources of information about religion in Albania.

According to several sources, the majority of Albania's population—more than 60 percent—is still affiliated with Islam, although Tirana's Islamic leadership says that "there are only 100 Muslims in the country who know how to pray properly." Of the rest of the population, 20 percent are Orthodox Christians and 10 percent are Catholics, mostly located in the northern part of the country.

Both the Orthodox and Catholic communities have begun reconstructing their cultic life. Supported by the Vatican, which has already re-established diplomatic ties with Albania, Father Simon Jubani is regarded as the most influential person in northern Albania. He has set out to turn Albania into "a spiritual kingdom," and seeks to enlist the help of the other religious leaders in the country. Also supporting his cause is Mother Teresa, a native of Albania, whose works of charity for the homeless and orphans take her from town to town. (At one of her homes for the poor in Tirana, she thanked me for helping Albania.)

The Orthodox community, chiefly located in the southern part of the country, is also reclaiming its religious identity. Their churches are being restored, after having been used as industrial and cultural facilities, and members are returning icons and religious objects that they kept hidden during the years of suppression.

This new freedom of religion, with the new Provisional Constitution recognizing freedom of conscience, is already challenging society.

Youth from Muslim homes often become fascinated by Christianity, much to their parents' distress. Dr. Elira Cela, a sociologist at the newly established department of sociology of religion at Tirana University, says that identity is a problem for many once religious people. "It appears that those who bring material help from abroad have the edge. Their brand of religion becomes appealing."

Currently, our two international religious freedom organizations (the International Religious Liberty Association and the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty), in cooperation with the University of Tirana, are staging an international symposium titled "Freedom of Conscience: Basis for Social Peace." This conference was organized in response to requests from Albania's legislators, the intellectual community, and many Christians. It is an opportunity to ensure that the abuses of Enver Hoxha's era will never be repeated.

It came time for me to say goodbye to Korce—to Flora Lewis, to her daughter Esther and her family, as well as to Meropi Gjika, her sons Thanas and Viktor, and their families. I ended up in the tiny one bedroom flat where Meropi lives with her children. We didn't need to speak. Finally, I walked down the stairs and out of the apartment building. I looked up at Meropi's balcony. She was waving. Then she paused and raised her hand heavenward.

*The 1938 census revealed that 69 percent of the population of Albania was Muslim—54 percent Sunni and 15 percent Shiite—primarily Bektashi.



Two Years After the Revolution: Germany and Czechoslovakia

Spectrum's editor gets to meet some of the Adventists who helped bring down the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain.

by Roy Branson

THE 20-YEAR-OLD ADVENTIST WOMAN HAD TO walk past East German security police. She couldn't help but see that they were snapping pictures of everyone entering the Evangelische (Protestant) church in Karl Marx Stadt (near Chemnitz). Once inside, she became part of a prayer meeting for peace and justice that had been gathering every Sabbath afternoon for several weeks.

After the prayers, hymn singing, Scripture readings, and testimony, a discussion began. Should those inside the church bear witness to the community outside? Should a Christian commitment to peace and justice lead to public demonstrations? Should the church stay out of what might be interpreted as political protest against the regime, or should Christians actively invite all to join in the fight against injustice by marching in the streets?

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Finally, as the debate that particular Sabbath afternoon in September of 1989 droned on inconclusively, a 20-year-old woman, the daughter of an employee of the German Seventh-day Adventist Church, stood up and called out, "Follow me." She strode out of the church, through the security police, and on to the streets of Karl Marx Stadt. The marches didn't stop until the communist regime in East Germany had been toppled.

Two years later, in September of 1991, I visited the eastern part of Germany and Czechoslovakia. I learned that in 1989 Adventists in Germany, and also in Czechoslovakia, had risked their lives to protest injustice. They had joined in the largely peaceful revolution against what they considered to be tyranny. While the official position of the Adventist Church in East Germany was ambiguous, the Czechoslovakian Union adopted a statement in the midst of their "velvet" revolution identifying Seventh-day Adventists with the demands of the reformers in the streets.

Germany: Active Lay Persons, Cautious Leaders

Leipzig, the second largest city in what was East Germany, was the heart of resistance in 1989 to the Communist regime. One Sabbath in September I traveled to the edge of downtown Leipzig to visit Adventhaus, the largest Adventist congregation in the city. Upstairs, in a sunny sanctuary complete with a modern sculpture of the three angels of Revelation and a small pipe organ, some 200 members of all ages participated in a lively worship service.

After the worship service, member after member hustled up to a middle-aged gentlemen of medium height who greeted them in a warm, informal manner. He was Dr. Dietrich Wagler, one of the two local elders of Adventhaus. Dr. Wagler is a physical chemist who has worked for 20 years at the East German Academy of Science. That Sabbath, and in a later extended conversation, Dr. Wagler talked about 1989 with wonder, as though he can still hardly believe what was achieved. "I thought we might be able to get a better German Democratic Republic; to become unified with West Germany was only a dream."

Actually, it was Wagler's friend, Gerhard Ruehle, the other local elder of their congregation, who first got involved. Through the years, Ruehle had had the courage to send signed protests to the government. In the summer of

1989, the large Nicolai church, a congregation of the established Evangelische (Protestant) church located next to the university and the central Karl Marx square, began holding Monday evening prayer meetings for peace, justice, and freedom. At once, Ruehle began faithfully attending. A few other Adventists joined him.

By September, other Protestant congregations in Leipzig (and other parts of East Germany, like Karl Marx Stadt), began holding similar Monday evening prayer meetings. Wagler, his wife and daughter, and some other

Adventists, began attending the Reformation church. In the Sabbath morning worship services at Adventhaus, Ruehle and Wagler would ask the members to pray at home for freedom and peace.

The two elders wanted their downtown congregation to do more. They thought Adventhaus should also hold Monday evening prayers meetings for peace, justice, and freedom. Already Gunter Hampel,



then the choir director at Adventhaus (now an editor at the denominational publishing plant in Hamburg), had adjusted rehearsals so members could attend the Monday evening prayer meetings at the Nicolai church. The youth pastor for Leipzig, Hartmut Lipke, was one of those attending the prayer meetings. However, in vigorous discussions, other pastors and members successfully opposed Adventists holding their own Monday night prayer meetings in Leipzig. I didn't meet anyone who knew of an Adventist congregation in East Germany that held prayer meetings for peace and justice.

Later in September, the second stage of the peaceful revolution began. At the conclusion of prayer meetings, participants marched from the sanctuaries outside and quietly circled the churches. The marches rapidly grew in size, until the fateful third stage was reached: those attending the prayer meetings began marching in widening circles around downtown Leipzig. Wagler estimates that 30 or 40 Adventists from Leipzig congregations participated. He also remembers meeting 10 or 15 strangers at these demonstrations who turned out to be Adventists who had traveled from other parts of East Germany to participate. Some took part in more than one march.

Monday, October 9, 1989, was the climactic day for Leipzig, indeed for all East Germany. Wagler remembers that his friend Ruehle left work about 3 P.M. to go to the Nicolai church. About 5 P.M. Wagler and his family, along with three or four other Adventist families, went to the Reformation church. Around 6 P.M. worshipers from the churches set out on a march around the inner ring-road of downtown Leipzig. So many others joined that the march grew to more than 100,000 citizens. Wagler and his family could only move a few meters in a half hour. For them, "It was a special moment." I asked if he and his wife had discussed the danger of violence and the advisability of only one parent going on the march. He looked genuinely surprised. "Oh no. It was always clear our whole family would go together." Then he grinned, and said proudly, "In fact, a few weeks later, on my daughter's birthday, December 4, she was part of the crowd that broke into the Stasi [secret police] headquarters here in Leipzig, and seized their records."

Later, they heard that leaders of security forces had refused, on October 9, to carry out orders from Erich Honecker, the leader of East Germany, to disperse the marchers, even if it meant shooting some of them. Mass demonstrations spread to Berlin. Within a month, the Berlin Wall had begun to come down. Wagler, Ruehle and the other Adventists continued to

participate in the demonstrations in Leipzig until March of 1990, when the first free, multi-party elections were held in East Germany.

In the midst of these marches, Wagler was challenged one morning by his colleagues at the Academy of Science. Why did his Seventh-day Adventist church officially support the Honecker regime, when the Protestant church of East Germany was leading the opposition to it? Wagler looked at the headline and story printed in the Communist party newspaper, the largest in East Germany. He was dumbfounded to read about a letter from the East German Adventist Union congratulating the government for its 40 years of service to the people.

When Wagler came to the point of describing his reaction, and that of Ruehle and the other lay members, he leafed through my German-English dictionary until he found the precise word he was looking for: "indignant."

The laymen wrote to the union president, and in October he traveled down from Berlin for a stormy meeting. Wagler recalls the union president having a variety of reasons for sending the letter. He explained that all denominations routinely sent letters of congratulation to the government on the anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic, and this was the 40th. And to be honest, increasingly the government had allowed Adventist children to miss school on Sabbath. The government had also permitted the union to print a 10-page, monthly news sheet for Adventist members in East Germany. And not to be forgotten was the government's tolerating the Adventists' operation of Friedensau Theological Seminary, with its large plant and extensive property.

The union president also pointed out that the Adventists were not in the same position as the large Evangelische, or Protestant church, which had a special, official status with the German Democratic Republic. Adventists, after all, were a small denomination, with only 19,000 East German members. The union

president also wanted members in Leipzig to know that the letter from the union had included some implied criticisms, which the report in the party newspaper had excised.

Nevertheless, before the two hours of discussion were over, the union president acknowledged that the situation was very unfortunate. It wasn't just Adventists in Leipzig who were upset. He had received complaints about the union's letter from Adventists throughout East Germany.

The lay leaders, in turn, recognized that some good points did appear in the letter, as originally written.

They still wanted the church to open its buildings to Monday evening critics of the government. They felt that at least denominational leaders should have found a way to avoid leaving the impression that Adventists supported the Communist regime.

One denominational worker I met elsewhere in Germany suggested that the union leadership, before sending off their letter, should have called one or two of the other small denominations, such as the Baptists or Methodists, and asked how they were going to handle the usual letter of congratulation to the German Democratic Republic. After all, whatever they had said or written in 1989 had not allowed the regime to give the impression it was receiving official Baptist or Methodist endorsement.

What has been the legacy of this recent past? Have the events of 1989 had any impact on the present Adventist church in Germany? What about its future? I pursued these questions in my conversations with a union denominational leader in Berlin and with the faculty at

the Adventist school at Friedensau.

Pastor Helmut Sass, director of church ministries for the East German Union, invited me to meet him at his home deep in what had been Communist East Berlin. ("When you get off the train, I will be the one carrying a copy of the *Adventist Review*.") He, his wife, and two teenage children live several blocks from the train in an upstairs apartment. Without prior warning that she would have a visitor, Mrs. Sass returned from work and graciously included me in supper. Afterwards, while his daughter practiced her music in the next room, Sass and

I settled down in their high-ceilinged living room with minimal lighting to get acquainted.

His mother had been an Adventist, his father, for 50 years, a communist party official. A vociferous anti-Nazi, Sass's father had become convinced that the party was the best vehicle for building a better society. In the first city

in Germany to become Communist, the father became the party secretary among the textile workers. His commitment to the party remained strong until he was told by party officials that his wife being a Christian was an embarrassment; he should either get rid of her Christianity or divorce her. He refused to give in to their pressure. Still, Sass's father was disappointed when his son chose the church instead of the party.

But the father did pass on to his son a thirst for social justice. Sass described preaching sermons calling for a frank acknowledgement by Germans of their responsibility for perpetrating two world wars and persecution of Jews and Slavs. Some of those who heard his ser-

A huge demonstration of 200,000 or more at Berlin's central Alexanderplatz went on through most of the day, Sabbath, November 4. Sass went to church in the morning and to the demonstration in the afternoon. He knows of other Adventists who did the same.

mons said Adventists should not worry about society. Others, particularly older members, told him to stop reminding them of these unpleasant actions in the past. And some of the younger Adventists said he was preaching about problems of the older generation, not theirs.

Sass knew all about the young Adventist woman leading the demonstrations in Karl Marx Stadt. Soon after she started the marches, he had been asked for his advice. As the growing demonstrations became a major development in East German public life, the police in Karl Marx Stadt grew increasingly nervous. They began pursuing specific demonstrators. One target, a young man, remembered the young Adventist woman who had led the first demonstration. In October he sought refuge from the police in her parent's home. The father, the denominational worker, asked Sass's advice and ended up giving the young demonstrator shelter for 10 days.

Sass recalled that in Berlin the pattern had been the same as elsewhere: first, prayer meetings during September in the Gethsemane congregation of the established Protestant

church, then marches in October around the church building, and finally a huge demonstration of 200,000 or more at the central Alexanderplatz. That event went on through most of the day, Sabbath, November 4. Sass went to church in the morning and to the demonstration in the afternoon. He knows other Adventists did the same.

Sass also remembers November 10. He was up early and heard the news on the radio. He hurried around waking up his three children. "Today we go to West Berlin." They thought he was crazy. But at the Friedrichstrasse elevated train station the family saw a line of people actually going into West Berlin. Then, when they crossed the wall, the Sassses, like everyone else, were cheered and hugged by West Berliners. The family spent the day just walking around, but they still talk about it as though it were a visit to a magical kingdom.

Sass remains convinced that a central reason the Berlin Wall came down in November of 1989 was because so many Christians had gathered in prayer meetings, confessing the guilt of Germans in unjustly treating other peoples through two world wars. In response

Letter From the Union Executive Committee to Erich Honecker

Reported
in East Germany's
Largest Newspaper

September 1989
To the President,
Council of State of the German
Democratic Republic
Mr. Erich Honecker
Marx-Engels-Platz
Berlin 1020

Very Honorable President of the
Council of State!

On October 7, 1989, the German Democratic Republic will be 40 years old. For those of us who lived through and experienced the last four decades as members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this occasions a look back on the path that now lies behind us. We have much to be thankful for.

We were able to build and dedicate new houses of worship. Our

theological seminary regained international recognition. Young people from churches in the GDR as well as students from Angola, Mozambique, the USSR and other countries were able to receive their education at Friedensau. Donations from our church members made possible a variety of aid that we were able to send via the Committee on Solidarity of the GDR to our African congregations.

The establishment, on September 7, 1964, of a non-combatant alternative service in the People's Army lifted a burden of conscience from many men whose religious convictions prevented them from bearing arms. We became gratefully aware that the state showed a growing recognition of our right to "an

to these confessions, God could act to bring down the Wall.

Sass is surprised and disappointed that since the 1989 revolution young people, in and out of the Adventist Church, have failed to sustain a concern for society. Everyone, he said sadly, has become preoccupied with his own narrower, personal problems.

The same assessment is made by Dieter Leutert, professor of church history at Friedensau Theological Seminary. He said that apart from a few intellectuals, most Germans, including Adventists, are now expending all their energy coping with personal crises. Furthermore, Adventists had not traditionally been concerned with social issues. Adventists, unlike Catholics and other Protestants, have not honored those members who sacrificed for moral principles. But such members existed.

One warm afternoon in early September, Leutert and I walked to Friedensau's cemetery. He recounted the experiences of many buried there, pausing to point out the headstone of Hermann Kobs, 1890-1972. He had been the dominant theological influence on generations of East German pastors trained at

Friedensau. But Kobs had been condemned by the Gestapo to a concentration camp, where he remained throughout World War II. What was his crime? Baptizing a Jew. Leutert pointed to other Adventist pastors who had not survived those years because of punishments for opposing the Nazis. But, Leutert said, Adventists don't remember their martyrs for social justice; we have not developed a theological rationale for social concern. Consequently, while some members had become caught up in the revolution of 1989, Adventists had no basis for sustained involvement.

That may change if plans being laid for Friedensau are fulfilled. Between the fall of the Honecker regime and the integration of East Germany into the Federal Republic of Germany, Friedensau, for the first time, was officially authorized to grant university level degrees—and not only in theology. Dr. Baldur Pfeiffer, like other West Germans who now are mayors or governors in East Germany, has recently come from West Germany to be the president of Friedensau. For several years he had been in charge of religious liberty for the Adventist churches in West Germany, and in-

undisturbed and unencumbered Sabbath observance" (*Law Encyclopedia*, State Publishing House, GDR, 1988). Difficulties that nonetheless arose we were able to resolve through open and objective talks with various government offices. We would like hereby to make special mention of the office of State Secretary for Church Affairs which continues to be motivated to find appropriate solutions to church-state conflicts.

Currently we feel a burden over the defection of many of our citizens, including some of our church members. The question that troubles us: Why are they leaving us? What causes lie behind the fact that particularly many of our young people, who were schooled and trained here, lived and

worked among us, have left, or still want to leave, the GDR? We entreat you to contemplate these questions on a higher plane of seriousness and to find helpful answers.

We are grateful for statements such as the following: "Our socialist society offers every citizen, irrespective of age and gender, ideology and religious confession, the right to safety and security, clear prospects for the future, and the opportunity to develop fully his talents, competencies, and individuality" (Erich Honecker, October 1976). We would wish, however, that such positive declarations be put into practice at all times and in all places so that the GDR might, indeed, become a happy and secure home to "every citizen."

The personal needs of the ill, elderly, and handicapped in many parochial and state institutions are enormous. We bid you to consider whether a federal initiative using military construction personnel might not provide needed relief and a solution satisfactory to both sides.

We ask you to accept the above reflections as an expression of our continued participation in the shaping of the GDR.

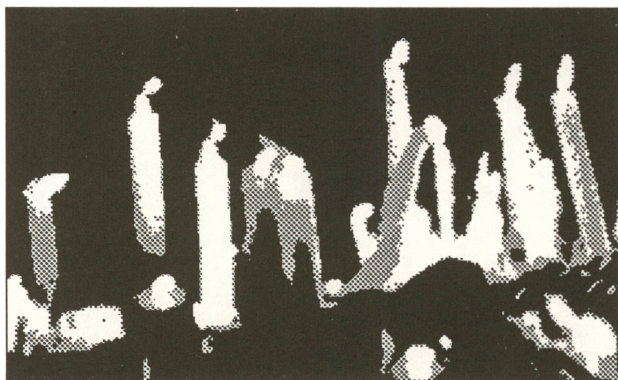
With prayerful consideration and mindful of your considerable responsibilities, I greet you in the name of the denominational leadership.

L. Reiche
President, Denomination
of Seventh-day Adventists

involved in discussions of human rights at the relevant organizations of the European Community. At Friedensau, Pfeiffer has already started teaching a course in human rights.

The school now has less than 40 seminary students, but Pfeiffer and the Adventist Church in Germany have great plans for Friedensau. Darmstadt, where West German Adventists, since World War II, have received their theological training, has become strictly a gymnasium (pre-university education, roughly equivalent to an American junior college). Friedensau will offer only university degrees, initially in three areas—theology, social sciences, and health policy. Dr. Pfeiffer plans to offer courses in several languages and draw students from everywhere, particularly Eastern Europe. Although at its height, between the wars, Friedensau had about 300 students, Pfeiffer doesn't see why Friedensau can't eventually grow to 500 or maybe even 1,000 students.

A large men's dormitory is already under construction, with more buildings planned. They will expand a campus that already includes many other single-story buildings, faculty homes, and four massive, multistory brick edifices constructed between 1899 and 1910, when Friedensau was established as the first Adventist seminary in Europe. Friedensau has room to expand. About two hours away from Berlin, the school is situated on 153 hectares (or 378 acres) of contiguous property. "Do either Andrews or Loma Linda sit on that much land?" wondered Dr. Pfeiffer.



Czechoslovakia: Official Support for the Revolution

Friday evening, November 17, 1989, security forces of the Communist government of Czechoslovakia beat up unarmed civilians peacefully demonstrating in downtown Prague. Two hundred and fifty people were injured, and 40 were hospitalized. Within hours, photographs of a badly beaten, disfigured face, along with a copy of the young man's hospital report, were plastered on walls all over Prague. The people of the capital city had proof that their government had violently turned on them. As the entire world knows, demonstrations resumed that toppled the Communist government within days. Very few know that the badly beaten face in the photograph was that of a young Seventh-day Adventist, and that the person who took his picture was an Adventist photojournalist. I was privileged to visit for several hours with both of them.

Jan Pospisil, the man in the accompanying picture, may be the softest-spoken revolutionary in Christendom. Dark, slightly built, and given to long pauses before answering questions, Jan seems much more typical of the conscientious objector to military service that he now is, than a determined rebel against totalitarianism. One evening, in a bustling Prague restaurant, Jan and his girlfriend, Karin, told me that while Jan's defiance of the repressive Communist regime went back earlier, it was January 15, 1989, when Jan and the regime clashed openly.

Around 2 P.M. that day, a group of only 10 or 15 people brought flowers to the center of Prague—to the spot in Wenceslas Square where Jan Palach, a university student, had several years before immolated himself. Some Czechs were determined not to forget his sacrificial protest against tyranny. As the number of observers began to grow, police with unmuzzled dogs pushed some back and beat

others. When the police allowed one of the dogs to knock down an elderly man, Jan protested—loudly. He was arrested, interrogated, and held in custody. He wasn't released until 9 P.M.

The next day Vaclav Havel, a playwright already known for his championing of human rights, was also arrested and sentenced to an eight-month prison term. The day after that—Tuesday, January 17—25,000 people protested his arrest. Wednesday and Thursday twice that number gathered in Wenceslas square, including Jan Pospisil (out of jail two days), and three or four other Adventists.

In June, Jan accepted another challenge. A petition began circulating around Prague. Much later it was learned that Havel had been the author. The petition called on the government to meet several demands, including freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom from the designation of the Communists as the "leading party." Every night from Munich, Radio Free Europe broadcast the names of the latest signatories. An astounding 80,000 people put their names on the petition, risking their careers, even their safety, to register a lawful, nonviolent, and very public commitment to basic human rights. Jan was convinced that the petition was a turning point for Czechoslovakia. "It was important for the government and the people to realize that if citizens spoke out in great numbers they might not automatically suffer reprisals." Only two or three of the signatories, including Jan Pospisil, were Adventists. (Jan's girlfriend, Karin, admitted, a little sheepishly, "No, I didn't sign it.")

Adventists in Prague continued to have opportunities to join those openly seeking changes in the government. Non-violent demonstrations took place on August 21, October 28, November 1, and November 15. Jan continued to attend church faithfully. In fact, he and Karin did not attend the October 28 demonstration because it fell on Sabbath.

As a matter of course, he talked with his

Adventist friends about the demonstrations and why he was taking part, but the discussions never took place in the church sanctuary. Early on, he had been warned that he must be wary that some church members might be government informers. Gradually, more Adventists participated in public demonstrations. Jan estimates that about 35 were involved. Most of Prague's Adventists were passively pleased that other members were trying to change the government. Only 10 to 15 percent, Jan estimates, opposed any involvement by Adventists.

Given the pace of protests, Jan knew that the officially sanctioned commemoration on Friday, November 17, of a student who died fighting for Czechoslovakia in World War II might well develop into a major demonstration. Although it would probably persist from its scheduled 4 P.M. start past sundown, into the beginning of the Sabbath, Jan decided to join.

Just south of the heart of Prague, in a section occupied by several universities and professional schools, including his own, Jan found 30,000 to 40,000 people, primarily students. Jan recalls the electric atmosphere. Many in the crowd held up posters denouncing the Communist Party. At the end of the commemorative proceedings no one left. Everyone expected more.

Rather than dispersing, the crowd walked over to a historic church in the Vysehrad section, closer to downtown Prague. The crowd lighted candles. Speakers began taking enormous risks. Older, former students denounced the incumbent head of the Communist Party by name. Younger speakers attacked the hardline communist mayor of Prague. By now, thousands of others had streamed in from all over the city, almost doubling the crowd to 70,000. Some set out on the most direct route north to Wenceslas Square. They ran into police. The crowd waited for 15 minutes, not sure what route to take, but determined to reach the symbolic

center of the city.

Finally, the leaders started the huge mass along the avenue running north beside the Vltava (or Moldau) River. Along the way, demonstrators called out to people on side streets, "Come with us." The crowd grew. It passed the corner apartment, facing the river, where Havel still lives. At the corner where the crowd turned east, away from the river on to National Street, which leads to Wenceslas Square, is the national theater. The actors—the most prominent and privileged in Czechoslovakia—interrupted their performances to come outside and cheer on the demonstrators.

Jan was at the end of the crowd. After the last of the more than 70,000 people had made the turn from the river avenue on to National Street, police moved quickly to block both the front and rear of the column. Jan and the other demonstrators stood, trapped, for an hour and a half. White-helmeted regular police, now joined by red berets, tough security forces from the ministry of interior, started sealing off side

streets. When armored vehicles, with metal shields mounted on their grilles, began pressing the back of the column into the people ahead, Jan decided to act. He somehow slipped out of the main column, into a side street, then turned and walked on a street parallel to the trapped demonstrators. He wanted to pass the head of the column, cross back across National Street, and head home.

He didn't walk far enough. As he turned to cross National Street, he discovered that he had come up behind the police blocking the front of the column of demonstrators. For a few minutes, Jan stood with a few others, silently watching the standoff. But the police and security forces were nervous facing demonstrators with onlookers at their backs. All of a sudden, without warning, some police turned and attacked the onlookers.

Jan remembers old people and children being beaten. Then he was hit. The police used a weapon with the wallop of an American baseball bat to batter Jan, including six or



Medical Report

Name: Ing. Pospisil Jan

Born: 1964

17th November 1989

He has been injured tonight during intervention by the police on Narodni trida. He was hit on his head by a truncheon, after he fell down he was further beaten and kicked. He protected his face, injury of the right upper extremity.

Objective finding: Lacerated wound 6 cm in length, swelling of the 3rd finger of the left upper extremity, motility limited, tenderness of the right forearm, tenderness of the right costovertebral angle. Neurological scan without pathological finding, state after epistaxis. He was non unconscious, neurological scan without pathological finding.

X-ray of the cranium, nasal ossicles, right forearm, 3rd finger of the left upper extremity without traumatic signs.

Conclusion: V. lacerum frontis l.sin.

Contusio capitis, haematoma periorbit l.dx. incip.

Status after fracture of nasal ossicles (nose without tenderness)

Contusio dig.III. man. sin., antebrachii l.dx.

Recommendation: resting regimen, analgetic and symptomatic therapy, suture removal in health center next week. TAT 1986

Urine: Sediment - ery 1-2, WBC 8-10, other - without pathological findings.

Dr. Valdman

seven blows to the head. Even when he was on the ground, the police kicked and beat him. He remembers that one of the others injured was a female American journalist.

Jan was taken by ambulance to the hospital. Physicians told him that he had a broken finger, and took six stitches to sew up his head. He was finally released that night, and walked home. The next morning Karin didn't see him in church. She was told that Jan was sick. "I know what's happened," she said, and went across Prague to see him at his home. She found him with a torn lip, an injured mouth, and a face swollen out of recognition. To this day his scalp still has a six-inch scar. Three days later Jan was out demonstrating again.

I asked him what he said to Adventists who argued on the basis of Romans 13 that church members should not participate in movements to change even totalitarian governments. He said that he took the whole Bible seriously. Sometimes people looked at only parts of Scripture because they didn't have the courage to live lives of truth. He felt that the church needs to help others in society, not just itself.

When I leaned across the restaurant table and pressed him more personally, why—why did he get involved—he looked down, didn't say anything for a long time, and then only that it was difficult to talk about. Finally, he looked up. Because of "several experiences in my life," he had gone back to examine his "foundations." He decided he "wanted to live a life in freedom and in truth."

Jan and Karin walked with me the few blocks back to my hotel. They told me that, unfortunately, with times economically harder than before, people—especially foreigners—sometimes got robbed at night. "Before," Karin said, "the people were afraid of the police. Now the police are afraid of us."

On our walk I asked where they were putting their moral energy now. Jan referred to the problem of ecology, but then grinned. "We're very serious about travel." After not being able to go anywhere, they had been to Sweden,

Norway, and Finland. When they said they would very much like to go to Australia, my eyes must have widened. Karin assured me, "Monday it's Australia, Tuesday it's the United States."

"And Wednesday it's Africa," Jan chimed in.

Later in the week, on Sabbath, I learned from Dr. Jiri Moskala, the young dean of the Adventist seminary in Prague, about the official reaction of the Czechoslovakian Union to the revolution of 1989. I met Moskala after a service conducted in the building that houses one of Prague's Adventist congregations as well as the small Adventist seminary—one classroom and dormitory space for 15 students. When Moskala graciously invited me to lunch I discovered that the dean's apartment is also located in the same building.

Over soup, I learned that Moskala had studied for a year at Andrews University before the old Communist government forced him to return home. Undaunted, while still active as a local pastor, he enrolled in the Protestant faculty of theology at Charles University. Recently, Moskala became the first Seventh-day Adventist to receive a doctorate in theology from Czechoslovakia's oldest and most famous university. Moskala has invited his professors to speak on special occasions at the Adventist seminary. Although the seminary is very small, the professors have talked with admiration of the efforts of the Adventists to establish theological training in Prague.

The fact that the Protestant faculty Moskala attended is housed in a building near Wenceslas Square speeded up his awareness and involvement in the efforts to change the government. Early in 1989, after a day of studying, Moskala came out of the Protestant faculty building to discover that the police were chasing demonstrators in his direction from Wenceslas Square. In fact, Moskala had to run to avoid being rounded up in a police dragnet. In succeeding days, demonstrations continued, and Moskala decided to attend.

By the time the large demonstrations took place in mid-November, Moskala said other Adventist pastors showed up. The number grew when pastors from outside Prague came to the city to attend constituency meetings of the Czechoslovakian Union. Delegates would attend constituency meetings during the day. In the late afternoon and evening, some would observe and even join the demonstrations.

In the midst of this historic turning point in Czechoslovakian history, the union constituency meeting took two unusual actions. First, it swept in a generation of new, young leaders, most still in their thirties. The most obvious example was the election of an editor and the head of the publishing work, Karel Nowak, to become president of the union. The second

unprecedented action of the constituency was the adoption of an official statement of concern, protesting policies of the incumbent Communist regime.

Moskala could not help remembering with shame that in the 1970s the Seventh-day Adventist Czechoslovakian union committee, at the request of the government, had officially and publicly condemned Charter 77, the human-rights group led by Vaclav Havel. Its members provided the nucleus for the later nonviolent revolution of 1989.

The 1989 union constituency debated the propriety of Adventists making a statement protesting government action. In the end it was adopted by a substantial majority of the delegates. [See below.] The statement was sent

Protest Letter From the Czech Union Constituency

An open letter of the Czechoslovakian Seventh-day Adventist
Union Conference's delegates to Prime Minister L. Adamec

Prague, November 23, 1989

Dear Prime Minister:

In these days the Seventh-day Adventist Church is holding a Union Conference of about 300 delegates from the whole of Czechoslovakia. This highest institution of our church evaluated five years of the church's life, elected a new Executive Committee and made a program for the next years. The stormy events which have been experienced these days in our country are also affecting us.

We cannot agree with the brutality and violence of the emergency patrols of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs against a peaceful demonstration on November 17, 1989. This attitude is not leading to

the constructive dialogue needed for the regeneration of our society.

We are sure that one reason for the critical situation of our society in political, economical and ecological areas is moral failure, based on past deviation from biblical principles. The loss of the reverence for God the Creator corrupted human relationships, destroyed respect for life, and for all creation.

We fully support the open dialogue of all strata of society, including believers. We are for distribution of objective information, for civil freedom and for true evaluation of the past. Because we follow Christ's teaching and because we advocate the Christian and democratic traditions of the Huss and Comenius heritage, we wish further developments will lead to

close, reciprocal contact, greater confidence, and reconciliation.

We understand that our mission consists of efforts to remedy corrupted human relationships among families and youth, improve ways of living, and perform social activities.

This open letter, accepted by all delegates, we send as an expression of our sincere effort to help in the complicated situation in which our nations find themselves. We hope that it will be accepted with understanding.

Karel Nowak
Union President

ThDr. Oldrich Sládek
Director for Public Relations

formally to the president of the Republic and released directly to the press. The contrast with the action of the executive committee of the union in East Germany could not be more striking.

Otakar Jiranek was one of the delegates at the union constituency meeting who argued strongly in favor of the statement of protest. In fact, he was given the task of releasing the statement to his colleagues in the press. At that time, and for the prior decade, he was a professional photographer and photo-journalist. He is now the manager of the Country Life vegetarian restaurant in downtown Prague. We talked more than once, the last time for several hours in the Mediterranean-style apartment he had expanded and remodeled for his wife and three children. He not only threw light on what Adventists did during the time of the 1989 revolution, but also on what direction Czech Adventism might take in the future.

Jiranek is a convert to Adventism. Since his father, an agronomist, was sent by the Czechoslovakian government to consult with overseas agricultural experts, Jiranek grew up in a variety of countries. In Switzerland his sister encountered Adventists and joined the church. At her suggestion, Jiranek visited Adventist congregations in Prague, began attending regularly, but never joined. When he fell in love with his present wife she was an atheist. She was astonished to learn he was a believer, enjoying the fellowship of some community called the Seventh-day Adventists. They decided to become married when neither were yet members. Nevertheless, Jiranek requested an Adventist pastor to conduct their marriage ceremony in an Adventist church. He is still amazed that for the first time ever, their request was officially approved. Jiranek says that that response was a "binding experience." Subsequently both Jiranek and his girl friend were baptized and became active church members.

Jiranek did not participate in as many 1989 demonstrations as did Jan Pospisil. But he was

anything but passive. Immediately after the beatings of demonstrators on National Street, November 17, he took the photograph of his friend, Jan Pospisil, that shocked the citizens of Prague. Jiranek's pictures also stirred the delegates gathered from all over Czechoslovakia attending the union constituency meetings. Jiranek found himself informing fellow-delegates in morning sessions about demonstrations he had photographed the previous afternoon and evening.

Jiranek covered all the major events of November 1989. The evening Alexander Dubcek and Vaclav Havel both addressed the cheering thousands in Wenceslas Square, Jiranek was one of those who had to be shooed off the balcony from which they were speaking, for fear that it would be overloaded. As he recalled this and the other major demonstrations, Jiranek would repeat softly, "It was a special moment." (See accompanying photo essay.)

The moral passion of the 1989 revolution has continued to drive Jiranek. Three weeks after the mid-November demonstrations in Prague, Romania erupted. Jiranek immedi-



ately urged the Adventists to help. Although the union would not agree to get officially involved, an officer in the local Bohemian conference cooperated with Jiranek in offering to the Czechoslovakian Red Cross the services of two trucks owned by Adventists. Within hours, four Adventist drivers, including Jiranek and the local conference officer, were driving the two trucks loaded with eight tons of Red Cross supplies over winter roads, south through Hungary to the middle of Romania. The Czech Red Cross has continued to be grateful, saying the Adventists were the quickest to help.

Some months after the revolution in Prague, Jiranek suffered a bad fall. During an enforced convalescence and period of reflection, he decided to leave photo-journalism and dedicate his life more directly to service. He discovered *Country Life*, a name used by self-supporting Adventist restaurants, health-food stores, and country retreats in different parts of the United States and Europe. After being trained in France, Jiranek agreed to found *Country Life* in Prague. Visitors to Prague will inevitably pass it as they walk between the two centers of the city: Wenceslas Square and City Square. At mealtimes they will discover that they have to wait in line.

Through his family, a decade of journalistic contacts, and the introduction to Czechoslovakia of *Country Life*, Jiranek has become a part of the network of leaders building the new Czechoslovakia. While consulting with the head of the organic food section of the agricultural ministry, his father's old stomping ground, Jiranek was told that during his training period

in France he should look up the Czech ambassador. He did. The ambassador and his wife ended up spending a weekend on a *Country Life* retreat.

After an exploration of Adventist health principles, the prime minister of the Czech republic, one of two republics within Czechoslovakia, offered his assistance at any time. Jiranek took him up on his offer. With the prime minister's help Jiranek obtained *Country Life's* prime location. Jiranek negotiated permission to occupy two-thirds of a building shared with the editorial staff of the newspaper established by Civic Forum. At one time an underground publication, its editor was imprisoned by the Communist government. It now is one of the major newspapers in the country. Recently, Jiranek has agreed to help a group providing food to disabled mothers. He has met and talked with the chairperson of this association's governing committee, Olga Havel, wife of President Vaclav Havel.

The Adventist Church in Eastern Europe is defining its mission in the midst of a political and social environment that has been radically changed by the events of 1989. Society is more open than before to even small communities of concern; open to proposals for healthful living, education, the environment. Hopefully, as the church shapes its ministry in the new context, it will remember those members who cared enough to march boldly for freedom and justice. Hopefully, the Adventist church will remember those members who, because they know they risked everything, even their lives, for their neighbors, remember the nonviolent revolution of 1989 as a "special moment."

Czechoslovakia's Special Moment

by Otakar Jiranek



November 20, 1989. The first big meeting on the Wenceslas Square.

Before and after his conversion to Adventism, Otakar Jiranek was a successful photojournalist. From the front lines of Prague's streets and squares, Jiranek recorded the revolution of 1989 for Czechoslovakia's newspapers and magazines. He also took the photo of his badly beaten fellow Adventist Jan Pospisil; opponents of the regime plastered it all over the city (see p.38).

In November, 1989, after covering demonstrations and rallies during the day, Jiranek, a duly elected delegate, would attend evening meetings of the Adventist Czechoslovakian Union Constituency. Not surprisingly, Jiranek was assigned the responsibility of releasing to the press the Union's statement critical of the regime. After the revolution, Jiranek, still in his late thirties, gave up photojournalism. He is now manager of the successful Country Life Restaurant in the heart of Prague's old city.

—The Editors



The police units which participated in the beatings of November 17, 1989, closing the Vltava Bridges on November 20.

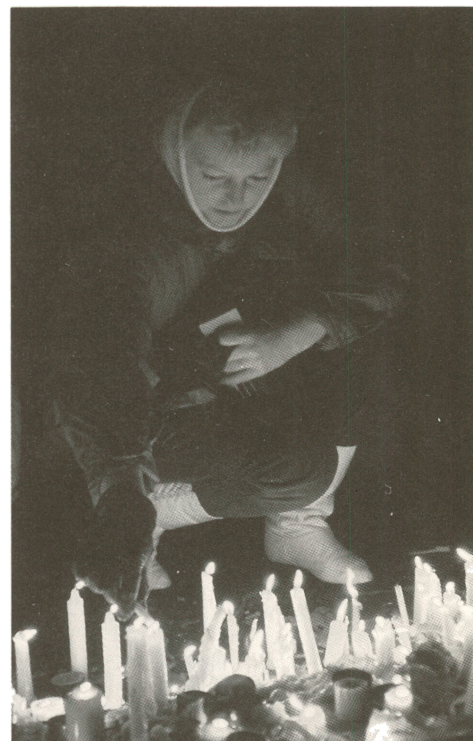


Students sleeping at the University during their occupation strike, November, 1989

Candles are lit at the site of the November 17 beating.



Morning of November 20th. Meeting of 2,000 top artists who all went on strike.





Candle-lit memorial, November 20, to Jan Palach on Red Army Square, later renamed Jan Palach Square, to honor young man who several years before, immolated himself to protest the totalitarian regime.

Among the seven Seventh-day Adventist churches in Prague, the largest is at 5 Smichov. That is where the SDA Union Constituency meeting adopted the open letter to the Prime Minister protesting the beating of peaceful demonstrators.





Jan Pospisil, an Adventist student, recounts in a theatre his experience of being beaten by police, November 17.

A candle-lit memorial to the victims of the communists flickers on Wenceslas Square.



Alexander Dubcek addresses 750,000 people on Letná Esplanade on November 26, the largest rally of the revolution.



*The day after the
November 27th
general strike.*

*December 17th, a
Catholic mass is held
in commemoration of
the November 17th
massacre.*



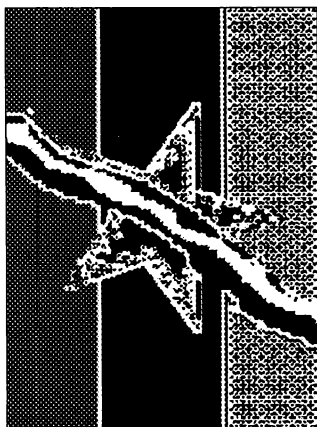
*Vaclav and Olga Havel
in St. Vitus Cathedral
after his election,
December 29, 1989.*



Two girls celebrate at a popular feast in honor of Havel's election, December 29th, 1989.

Midnight, December 31, 1989— the Wenceslas Square is full of people dancing for joy.





Lipik, Croatia—Where Armageddon Began

An Adventist Croatian takes a wrenching journey back to what the war has left of a village he once called home.

by Josip B. Takac

Translated by Tihomir Kukolja

AS WE TRAVEL EAST ALONG THE MAIN CROATIAN motorway, we become aware of some thing unusual: we are almost the only ones using the modern, recently completed highway. My friend, Tihomir Lipohar, AdventPress photographer and cameraman, draws my attention to a petrol station. Although it is broad daylight, a heavy blanket of undisturbed snow makes it clear that it has been hours since a vehicle stopped for service.

Kutina is a small town 70 miles east of the Croatian capital. Although the motorway continues for another 200 miles, this is as far as we can go. Beyond Kutina are the regions of uncertainty, fear, and death. Two Croatian policeman make sure that the occasional traveler does not venture into the unknown. They are friendly, and point to an exit from the

motorway onto an ordinary asphalt road.

Our destination is the Pakrac region. For Tihomir and myself this journey is more than just a journalistic assignment. He was born in Lipik, a small town in the area, as was my wife. I lived in the town for awhile as well. It has had a strong Adventist community. In our wildest dreams we never imagined that this friendly and peaceful region would become known as the Pakrac Battlefield. We would never have imagined that since September of last year, 100 Adventist homes and 15 church buildings would be damaged or destroyed in Croatia and that of the 10 Croatian Adventists killed in the war, six would be members of the Pakrac-Lipik Adventist Church.

The times are dangerous, and no one is permitted into the region without special authorization. A special permit from the authorities in Zagreb, however, lets us pass safely through all the checkpoints and we reach our destination—Lipik. We see here what eyes should never see: carcasses of domestic animals; family dwellings and whole villages burned, some utterly destroyed—ghostly,

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empty places without a living soul.

Kukunjevac, Dobrovac, Lipik, Pakrac . . . It is impossible to find a house anywhere that could be lived in. Empty windows of burned and shattered houses stare at us like the eyes of ghostly creatures. Rain and snow only add to the sense of desolation.

In Lipik, a few missiles have hit the roof of Tihomir's home, doing irreparable damage. A pine tree in his front yard has been split as if by an axe, the work of an exploding grenade. We enter the house cautiously.

Tihomir sorts carefully through the scattered pieces of furniture, kitchen utensils, and books. He is a photographer, and he is looking for pictures of his little girls. I watch him with sympathy, searching for words to break the painful silence, but he speaks first. "What on earth has happened to my wife that she left the house in such a mess?" he asks drily. Then he grows serious. "I feel like leveling all the rest to the ground," he says, "and building it all over again from scratch."

We enter the center of Lipik. It used to be a prosperous little town in central Slavonia, but war has taken its toll. The huge windows of the Lipik greenhouses are shattered. The well-known Lipik horse stables have been destroyed by fire, and we are told that the horses were taken to Bosnia. Rumors tell us that a number of these beautiful creatures were shot and thrown into a large pit somewhere nearby. A beautiful town with aged trees and a lovely park that Austrian emperor Franc Jozef once came to visit, Lipik now looks like a haunted graveyard.



Nothing—not even churches—has been spared. Both the Serbian Orthodox church in Kukunjevac and a Catholic church in Dobrovac show signs of the fierce fighting in the area; but the flattened remains of the deliberately bombed Catholic church in Lipik testify to the anger and cruelty of this war. The Children's Home, the local supermarket, the hotel, and the primary school have all been bombed on purpose. Lipik is no longer alive.

More than anything I want to know what has happened to a home where, a few years ago, I first met my wife. Ever since then, this house has been a personal friend of mine. But not so today. Although it has not been burned like many of the others, it has still received "mortal wounds." Its roof and windows gone, its walls shattered by machine-gun fire and exploding grenades, the house is strewn with fragments of furniture and personal belongings that have been shattered and destroyed. It is no longer the friend I used to know. It lies like an unwelcome, dead beast.

My attention turns to five other houses in the neighborhood. These belonged to good people, well-to-do families, three of them Croatian and two Serbian. Their children used to play and attend school together. Now their houses have been demolished, two so utterly destroyed by flames that only the outlines of the basements show where they used to stand. It is the work of the heavy grenades, mines, missiles, and napalm bombs of the Yugoslav army, launched from nearby Caglic. The

bombs, at least, were no respecters of nationality.

I have brought plastic tarpaulins with me from Zagreb, and I do my best to cover the windows of my wife's former home against the driving snow. Looking through a broken window, I see the completely burned home of a near relative. She has sought shelter in Czechoslovakia, along with her children. Nothing is left of the home that she and her husband managed to complete only a few months ago. Tihomir and I take picture after picture, knowing that no one will believe us if we only try to describe the scenes.

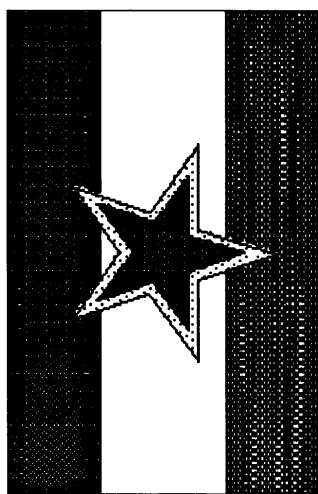
In dead silence, we move on through the desolated streets of Lipik. "Like a ghost town," I whisper to myself. "The place where Armageddon began," Tihomir murmurs. A number of prosperous Adventist families used to live here—Skorupan, Maravic, Strehovac, Lipohar, Presecan, Margaric, Melic, Dragicevic. Today their homes are all remains of the same tragedy—blasted, bombed, plundered, set ablaze. Six church members are dead. We have no desire to stay longer. Rather, we feel the urge to run from the black walls made even more black in contrast to the falling snow.

Suddenly, gunfire shatters the silence—a machine-gun! Far away at first, it comes nearer, nearer. This is no time to linger. We run to the car and drive hurriedly out of the area. We pass armed young men moving back the way we have come—soldiers from the north-west Croatian districts of Varazdin and Ivanec. They are on their way to take up their fighting positions not far away. They wave goodbye to us. We hear more machine-gun fire, detonations, explosions. Night is falling.

Along the road are the battered hulks of abandoned cars, tractors, and the mangled bodies of cows, goats, and dogs. Pigs and chickens wander aimlessly along the street, looking for food. We stop to take a picture of a blasted house, and the chickens run away in panic; they are afraid of people.

We switch on the car radio to hear the news. Croatian Radio is giving a news update on the recent changes in our banking system. "This is news from another world!" Tihomir says. Graffiti on the once-white facade of a farmhouse catches my eye: "Seventh Vojvodina Brigade!" it says, in Cyrillic writing.

"This too is from another world," I say, "from a distant and unwanted past!" We turn the car and head back to civilization and the future.



The Massacre of Yugoslavia

The chief Central European correspondent of the British Broadcasting Company gives an eyewitness analysis of the forces within Yugoslavia that have torn it apart.

by Misha Glenny

AN UNEXPECTED DRIZZLE ONE GLOOMY MORNING late last August served to heighten the tension as I left the northern Croatian town of Karlovac and was waved through the front line by a Croat National Guardsman. Violence had become so common in Croatia by then that nobody bothered to mention the dangers of crossing from one side to another. The checkpoint on the other side was jointly patrolled by the federal army (JNA) and Serb irregulars called Marticevci, from the town of Knin, one hundred miles to the south. The federal soldiers were polite, although they appeared unconcerned when the Marticevci shoved their automatic weapons into my stomach and subjected my car to a meticulous search. They ripped the film out of my cameras, took away my tapes to examine them,

and inquired about my presumed relationship to the Croatian National Guard. Eventually I persuaded them that I was only trying to get an interview with Milan Babic, the Luger-toting prime minister of the self-proclaimed Serbian Autonomous Region (SAO) Krajina, the center of radical Serb nationalism in Croatia, and I was allowed to continue on my way.

To travel through Marticevci country is one of the more unnerving experiences of covering the war in Yugoslavia. The Marticevci, now the largest Serb paramilitary force, emerged when the first serious fighting between Serbs and Croats broke out in Knin in August 1990. Many of them had been Serb policemen who were thrown out of their jobs by the new Croatian government. They got their money, their weapons, and their name from Milan Martić, the first interior minister of the SAO Krajina, who like Babic is supported by both the Serbian president, Slobodan Milošević, and the JNA leadership.

During World War II, Knin was the major center of the Serb nationalist Chetnik movement inside Croatia. In other parts of Croatia

Misha Glenny is Central European Correspondent of the BBC's World Service. His book The Revenger's Tragedy: Yugoslavia and the War will appear in the summer. This article is reprinted with permission from The New York Review of Books. (Vol. 39, No. 3) Copyright © 1992 Nyrev, Inc. Since this article first appeared, UN forces have been deployed in Yugoslavia.

Serbs mostly joined or supported Tito's Partisans, whose internationalist ideology dominated the Croatian resistance movement. In their tactics and political attitudes the Marticevci have been heavily influenced by the traditions of the Chetnik movement of World War II. They are, however, an integral part of the self-proclaimed SAO Krajina and as such command greater respect among most Serbs than the wilder new Chetnik units from the Serb heartlands, who are largely beyond any systematic control. After reporting for more than a year on the reborn Chetnik movement in Serbia I have found its most striking characteristic to be its obsession with violence. Its members apparently take pleasure in torturing and mutilating civilian and military opponents alike.



In the fall of 1990, President Tudjman of Croatia and President Milosevic of Serbia, the latter working through Milan Babic, his man in Knin, began their struggle for control of three districts with mixed Serb and Croat populations that lie south of Zagreb—Lika, Kordun, and Banija. Initially, most of the conflicts in these districts were provoked by the Croat authorities. President Tudjman and the government of his Croatian Democratic Union were determined to create a new state identified exclusively with the Croat nation, and the new regime in Croatia took steps to discriminate against the Serbs, who make up between 12 and 20 percent of Croatia's population, depending on whose statistics you be-

lieve—there are no reliable figures. After the elections of April 1990, which brought Tudjman to power, the Serbs were stripped of their status as a constituent (*državotvorn*) nation within Croatia. "Literary Croatian," which uses the Roman alphabet, became, according to the new Croat constitution, the only official language in the republic.

Tudjman also refused to offer the Serb population of at least 600,000 cultural autonomy, including, for example, control over schools in districts where Serbs were a majority, or the right to use Cyrillic script in official documents. He ordered the Serb police in such districts to be replaced by Croats, and Serbs in key positions in the local administration were dismissed. At the same time, the principal Yugoslav sym-

bol, the red star, was replaced everywhere by the most important insignia of Croatian statehood, the red-and-white checkered shield, the coat of arms of the historic Croat kingdom, which had also been widely used by the Ustasi, the murderous Croat fascist organization installed by the Nazis as rulers of Croatia in 1941. One now sees the shield, without the Ustasi "U," everywhere in Croatia, whether on official buildings or on police helmets. Serbs view the red star not just as a Communist symbol, but a sign legitimizing their equal status with Croats, and they believe the ubiquitous presence of the checkered shield underlines the loss of that equality.

When the Interior Ministry in Zagreb tried to

impose Croat police forces on Serbian villages, Milan Babic would send his political and military representatives to demand that the local Serb mayor order the storming of the district police station by armed villagers, who were expected to drive out the Croat police. If the local mayor refused, the Marticecvi would often get rid of him either by packing the local council, of which the mayor is president, or by intimidating him with threats or physical attack. Beginning in April 1991 Babic was able to take over another local administration every two weeks or so, and, in many other parts of Lika and Krajina, force the Croat police out without a struggle.

The insensitivity with which the Croats carried out their nationalist policies is well illustrated in the case of Glina, a small town forty miles southeast of Zagreb in Banija with some ten thousand inhabitants, 60 percent of them Serbian. In peacetime, Glina is a picturesque town resting in a gentle, shaded valley between two ranges of hills, which were Partisan strongholds during World War II. The town was the scene of two notorious massacres by the Ustasi. In 1941 some eight hundred Serbs were slaughtered in Glina's Orthodox church, while later over a thousand more lost their lives on the outskirts of town. The memory of Croat atrocities in Glina remains vivid.

Beginning in the early autumn of 1990 Croat police came into Glina in what the local citizens described as "raids." The Croat police took away the weapons of the Serbian policemen, first the reserve police and later on the regular police, and reinforced the Glina station with members of the Croat militia, thereby insuring that most of the armed police in Glina would be Croats. They made it clear that they were now in control, and Serbs from Glina told me that they felt intimidated by them. Tudjman's officials also insisted on displaying the Croat flag throughout the town.

Despite the sense of alarm that first spread through the Banija district in September 1990, the local Serb leaders in Glina maintained

regular contact with the Croatian government in Zagreb. They appealed to the government and the local police chief in the nearby town of Petrinja not to continue intimidating local Serbs by a show of force. The authorities in Zagreb refused to change their tactics. The local Serb leaders tried to keep out of the growing political struggle between Milan Babic's organization in Knin and the government in Zagreb. But when Croatian independence was declared on June 25 of this year, Glina's Serbs, fearing the worst, sided with the thuggish forces of the Marticecvi.

On an extremely hot day early last July, while all attention was concentrated on the fighting in Slovenia, the Marticecvi began their first sustained attack in Central Croatia. Several hundred of them swarmed into the town from their stronghold in the surrounding forest. Despite dozens of reinforcements sent by the Croats into Glina, the Marticecvi sealed off the town in a matter of hours. Several Croat policemen were killed before the police station surrendered. At the time it was still possible to surrender—six months later such incidents almost invariably become fights to the death. On the same day, tanks of the federal army, which has a majority of Serbian officers, started to separate the Serb fighters from the Croat reinforcements sent into the district. While the army announced that it would stop the bloodshed between the two nationalities and did so, it also protected the territorial gains of the Serb militia.

With the fighting in Glina, a real war started in Croatia. This war is largely the consequence of aggression sponsored by the Serbian regime in Belgrade and the JNA, but it also partly originated in the contemptuous treatment of the Serb minority by the Tudjman government. It is also, too, partly a revival of civil war, although in a purer, more nationalist form than was the case between 1941 and 1945, when almost two thirds of the Partisan fighters in Croatia were Croats opposed to the Ustasa

state. In the current war the two sides are divided almost entirely along national lines. Croatian officials say that this is not a nationalist war but a struggle between a Bolshevik administration in Belgrade and their own free-market democracy—a claim as misleading and contemptible as the Serbian view of the conflict as a war of liberation against a revived fascist state. Tudjman and his elected government, like Milosevic's government, still have many connections with the old Communist bureaucracy, and they have acted harshly and provocatively toward Serbs; but they have not revived a fascist state.

By the end of September 1991, the Marticevci and the JNA had occupied all but a narrow strip of land in the Kordun district below the Kupa River in central Croatia. About

25,000 peasants live in this fertile land between the towns of Karlovac and Sisak. Most of the villages are Croat, but they traditionally had good relations with the nearby Serb and mixed villages. On October 1 a joint force made up of the JNA, Chetnik units from Serbia, the Marticevci from Knin (100 miles to the south), and conscripts and volunteers from the local Serb villages began one of the most ruthless offensives of the entire war. Its victims were the defenseless Croat villagers living near the Kupa river, most of them older people, the younger inhabitants having left to work in northern Europe, mainly Germany, since Kordun, in spite of its fertile land, is one of Croatia's poorer regions.

According to several Serb spokesmen, the Serb forces attacked in revenge for the murder, on September 21, of thirteen JNA prisoners of war on the Korana bridge on the outskirts of Karlovac—killings that even the Croat Interior Ministry admitted had taken place. This will-

ingness to justify one atrocity by pointing to another committed by the opposing side has helped to create the current pattern of reciprocal massacre in Yugoslavia.

The tactics of the JNA forces and the Chetniks in Northern Kordun were repeated from village to village. First the artillery would "soften up" the villagers, with bombardments lasting between twenty minutes and four hours. If there was no resistance (as was the case in all but a few of the villages), JNA officers would enter the town and demand the surrender of any National Guardsmen or Croat police, and they would

then allow the Serb irregulars to come into the town. In the eastern part of Kordun, the Chetnik detachments were made up primarily of men from Loznica and Valjevo, two towns from Serbia's

In Kamensko and other villages, the desecration was complete—churches and schools were destroyed while federal tanks ran over the local cemeteries.

Chetnik heartland about 250 miles away. Both groups set about burning and looting the villages, and each village was bombarded continually with gunfire and grenades for between twelve and twenty hours. Houses were searched for weapons and for any young Croat men in hiding. The buildings were then thoroughly plundered.

Croats in the villages to the east were fortunate, since their neighbors from Serb villages warned them to travel north across the Kupa River as fast as they could. While hundreds of people in boats desperately paddled to reach the northern river bank, the JNA pounded them with mortar and tank fire. In Karlovac's hospital, I talked to survivors with appalling shrapnel wounds who described how their friends and neighbors drowned or were blown apart before they were able to cast off.

The people in the nearby villages of Vukmanic, Skakavac, and Kablar suffered even worse treatment. Witnesses from

Skakavac told me of an extensive massacre of Croat civilians there. The numbers of dead are unknown since the JNA has refused to allow the Croat Red Cross into Skakavac to claim the bodies. In Vukmanic, all seven members of the Mujic family were killed after being denounced by a local Serb who had a grudge against them; the Chetnik brigade that took over the village of Kablar slaughtered the remaining men in cold blood, including an eighty-two-year-old Croat. Here too, the bodies have not been turned over to the Red Cross.

In Kamensko and other villages, the bodies of Croats killed during the fighting were allowed to lie decaying in the streets. Between eight and twelve days after their deaths, the JNA finally permitted the Karlovac Red Cross workers to come to collect them. The eighteen

bodies I saw were so badly putrified that the chief pathologist at Karlovac hospital could no longer say with any certainty which injuries had been the cause of death. Whether they were caught in crossfire or deliberately slaughtered, the JNA and the Chetniks had afforded them no dignity in death. The desecration of the Croat villages was complete—churches and schools were destroyed while JNA tanks ran over the local cemeteries.

The attack on northern Kordun was among the most barbaric suffered by Croats during the current war. Nonetheless it remains one of the least known abroad, mainly because major towns such as Vukovar, Osijek, and Dubrovnik were not involved. But at least it can be said that their visible destruction alerted the world to the crimes being committed by the

Forty Eight Hours With Adventists in Zagreb, 1992

By Karl Rhoads

I n early February of 1992, I had the opportunity to revisit Zagreb, Croatia. I was only there for 48 hours, but had the chance to again visit my friends, Sretko Kuburic, a pastor of a Seventh-day Adventist Church in the capital of Croatia, and his wife Jasminka. Our conversation focused primarily on the civil war that has pitted Serb against Croat, and in some cases family member against family member, and even Adventist against Adventist. Sretko, who pastors a new Adventist church in Zagreb, and his wife related to me how during the fighting, which was ended at least temporarily after 14 failed cease-fires, they could hear the artillery every night from their house in Zagreb.

It was during my first visit to what was then Yugoslavia in the winter of 1983 that I first met Sretko Kuburic. He was kind enough to take me with him on a pastoral trip to several cities in Croatia, at that time a

constituent member of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. While Yugoslavia was not large by American standards, trains there were not known for their rapidity. Sretko and I had dozens of hours in smoky rail cars to discuss virtually every subject under the sun from Soviet foreign policy, to the weather in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to the restrictions placed on evangelism in Communist Yugoslavia.

From Tito's break with Stalin in the late 1940s, Yugoslavian society had evolved away from the ultra-orthodox Communism that had characterized the immediate post-World War II years. By the time of Tito's death in 1980, restrictions on evangelism were still evident, but paled in comparison to other countries in Eastern Europe. The major obstacle by the time of my first visit was a ban on public meetings which promoted a particular religion, although the importance

public meetings have played in traditional Adventist outreach made the ban a major impediment.

In the 1992 civil war, Zagreb has been spared the devastation that has occurred in other areas of Croatia. But on my second day in Croatia we visited a small town called Karlovac. A quarter of the buildings had major structural damage and many had been completely gutted. Close to 75 percent of all buildings in Karlovac had taken some damage. Nearby villages were abandoned and their residents undoubtedly make up some of the 600,000 refugees and 10,000 casualties already reported in a war that has continued since Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence in June of 1991.

Fortunately, no one in the Kuburic family has been injured, but their future is probably more uncertain than most. Sretko is a Serbian working in the capital of

JNA and the Chetniks at the expense of the Croats. Unfortunately the suffering of the innocent Serbs in Croatia has had no such attention.

During July and August of 1991, eastern Croatia became one in the most violent fronts in the war. As fighting spread through the villages in northeastern Croatia, small shops and kiosks, owned and run almost entirely by local Serbs in Osijek, the regional capital, were destroyed systematically in a series of bomb attacks. A pattern of intimidation and arbitrary violence against Serbs in Croat-held areas then spread through most of the regions in Croatia where fighting had broken out.

In August respected Serbs began disappearing in one town after another, even in the larger cities—including Zagreb—which had been spared the worst of the violence. Among

those who disappeared, to name only two of many, were Dusan Trivuncic, a member of the Croat Parliament for the SDP, the reformed Communist Party, and Dragan Rajsic, the retired head of the safety department at the Sisak oil refinery, thirty-five miles southeast of Zagreb. Both were kidnapped by armed Croats in uniform; the Croat minister of interior, Ivan Vekic, says he has been unable to find out what happened to them.

Attacks on Serbs have since sharply increased. The bodies of thirteen murdered Serbs were discovered in the Sisak region, which has been under extremely heavy bombardment from JNA units in Petrinja—bombardments that virtually everyone I talked to agreed made the Croat forces there treat local

Croatia. Jasminka is Croatian, but her parents live in Serbia. Her parents have received threatening phone calls and have had rocks thrown through their shop windows. The situation in Croatia is also very unsettled. The Croatian government denies that it encourages anti-Serbian discrimination, but reportedly Serbs are being fired solely on the basis of ethnicity.

The Adventist Church structure in what was Yugoslavia has not split on ethnic lines. One denominational officer is reported to have said, "There will be no Serbs nor Croats in heaven, only Adventists." (Hopefully, there will be some Jews, Moslems, and Buddhists as well, but I digress.) The question of service in the warring militaries, though, is of obvious concern to both Serbian and Croatian Adventists. There are Adventists in both armies. In Serbia, draftees have no legal recourse to military duty, although draft evasion is widespread. The Croatian government has allowed those opposed to the war for ethical reasons to perform

alternate service.

The conditions under which the church engages in evangelism in Croatia have improved since a democratically elected government took power in Zagreb. The ban on public meetings has been lifted and the church has taken full advantage of the new opportunities. Sretko pastors a church in Zagreb that has been established in the last year. He is conducting seminars on both Daniel and Revelation. Currently, he spends five days a week conducting these meetings. Unlike the old days, the only limiting factor is funding to rent meeting places. Sretko's meetings in Zagreb will be followed by meetings conducted by David Currie, the Ministerial Association Director for the Trans-European Division.

The civil war in what was Yugoslavia has apparently tended to discourage interest in organized religion. The security situation is so unstable that people are reluctant to move about at night. In addition, many Croats have left the country to protect themselves from the war.

Since the war began, Sretko says attendance at meetings has fallen.

I asked Sretko and Jasminka if they had considered joining their relatives in the United States. They said, "No, at least not for the time being." Jasminka's parents have no plans to leave, and they did not want to leave the region under those circumstances.

I left Croatia grateful for the fact that the United States has not had a war fought in the lower 48 states since 1865, but feeling a little guilty that my life is so stress free in comparison. We can hope and pray that peace will find Croatia and Serbia soon, and that whether the war ends or not the hope of Christ's second coming will bring a measure of peace to all believers in those two countries.

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Serbs all the more brutally. In September thousands of Serbs began leaving their homes in the port town of Zadar after many people were beaten in the streets by Croats and forced out of their apartments; several were lynched. Many Serbs leaving Croat towns who have relations in other European countries have tried to find temporary refuge abroad. But most are forced to go to Serbia or Montenegro, although few have any desire to go to either place. A large minority has also left Croatia for the multi-ethnic republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Again the wave of uncontrolled Croat anger apparently was provoked by the violent attacks by JNA units in the region.

Before long I heard reliable reports of a massacre carried out by right-wing Croats. This happened in Gospić, a mixed town in the western part of Lika, which was first attacked by Chetnik and JNA units in late August. As with many towns in Croatia, the division between nationalities in Gospić is reflected in the town's geography. All but a few of the residents of the eastern part of the town were Serbs, who fled behind JNA lines as soon as the first attacks began. But a considerable number of Serbs also lived in the western, largely Croat, part of town and, in response to the appeals of the Croat government, they remained there. These are colloquially known as "loyal Serbs" or slightly more frivolously, "Hrbi" (a conflation of the words for Croats and Serbs in Serbo-Croatian).

On October 16, an alarm signaling a Serb attack sounded in the town, and once again the miserable inhabitants of Gospić took refuge in cellars. Life in the bomb shelters in Croatia is a humiliating experience. After the first rush of

intense anger and frustration toward an enemy who only reveals himself in a shower of deadly projectiles, people become apathetic and gullible, ready to accept any orders or demands made of them. When groups of uniformed Croats entered several of Gospić's cellars on the night of October 16 and took away over one hundred Serbs who had taken shelter in them, witnesses told me, they complied without protest.

Most of the Serbs were professionals working in Gospić's local administration. They included the town's deputy district attorney and

the deputy head of Gospić's prison, to which, in terrible irony, they were at first taken. After this at least twenty-six were murdered, according to a list later obtained by the Croatian government. The final figure of the massacre victims is still to be confirmed, although

over seventy-five Serbs, including many women, are unaccounted for. The only Serb minister in the Croat government, Zivko Juzbasic, says he fears that over one hundred were killed in the Gospić massacre. Ten weeks after it took place, Interior Minister Vekic has not given any explanation of what happened, although he has said his ministry is preparing a statement on the case.

If a UN peacekeeping force is not deployed, the civil war will very probably intensify in Croatia and in all likelihood spread to Bosnia-Herzegovina, as Serbian forces continue their merciless attacks. Meanwhile Serbian civilians in Croatia face serious threats to their lives every day. The Serbian Democratic Forum, a movement which has attracted most of the prominent Serb intellectuals and professionals in Croatia, has appealed to the government in Zagreb to arrange the orderly evacuation of

The most striking characteristic of the Chetnik movement is its obsession with violence. Its members apparently take pleasure in torturing and mutilating civilian and military opponents alike.

Serbs in Croatia under international supervision. The appeals have so far been ignored. Those who rightly denounce the Belgrade regime for its aggression should be concerned about aggression against the Serbs in Croatia as well.

The Zagreb government has in effect done nothing to stop the violence against Serbs for two reasons. The war has intensified radical chauvinist sentiment among the Croat population and in particular among its fighting forces, which now include thousands of fascist Black Legionaires, and members of the Ustasi and of the extremist paramilitary organization called HOS. Many Croats would regard strong statements of public concern for Serbs as a demonstration of weakness by President Tudjman and his government. Croatia also presents itself as a democratic state which abides by Western European standards on human rights. Instead of confronting violations of human rights, the Croat government attempts to hide them in the hope that they will disappear, and escape the attention of the West. This policy cannot work for long and can only bring dishonor to the Croat cause.

Notwithstanding the marked nationalist character of the conflict, the federal army has claimed from the very beginning that it represents Yugoslavia. In fact, the assumption that behind the war lies a well coordinated Greater Serbian plan is a serious misconception, and one that makes a diplomatic solution to the crisis all the more difficult. "Serbian" policy is determined by three political forces—Milosevic, the JNA officer corps, and the leaderships of the self-proclaimed Serb republics in Croatia and Bosnia. Each has its own program which sometimes coincides with the others, but frequently differs. In addition, there are often bitter divisions within the officer corps and among the leaders of Serbian enclaves, and these disagreements can have unpredictable and dangerous consequences.

One often hears how the army is "Serbian-led" or "Serbian-dominated," which it is, but this does not mean that the first concern of

many of the top officers is to serve the cause of greater Serbian unity. The Hague Peace Conference, which first convened last September under Lord Carrington's chairmanship, tried to find solutions acceptable to all the republics and ethnic groups in Yugoslavia; but it failed to take into account the political motives of the men who are doing most of the fighting. The JNA officers have tried to justify their military attacks by claiming that the rights of the Serbs (i.e., Yugoslav citizens) were threatened by Croatia's secessionist government. They were, however, primarily concerned with the need to protect their own status and privileges. No federal Yugoslavia would mean no JNA. The diplomats and politicians trying to stop the war realized too late that this powerful army could not just be wished away.

Although the primary allegiance of the army officer corps has been to Yugoslavia and not Serbia, the decay of federal institutions has aroused the latent Serb nationalism within the army. Seventy percent of the officer are Serb, and no doubt they are as much affected by the spread of irrational nationalism as everyone else. Early in the Yugoslav conflict, two main factions formed within the army leadership. The first was associated with the federal defense minister, General Veljko Kadijevic, and his deputy, the Slovene Stane Brovet, two of the three-man joint chiefs of staff. With a Serb father and a Croat mother, General Kadijevic has always associated himself with Yugoslavia and not with Serbia. The Serbian nationalist press has heaped abuse on him during the past three months, accusing him of undermining the war effort because he refuses to support Serbia's chief war aim—the expansion of Serb territory by military means. Kadijevic, it seems, genuinely believes in a political solution that has by now become a fantasy: the restoration of the Yugoslav state, including parts, or even all, of Croatia.

At the same time, a powerful network of Serb nationalists emerged among the officer corps to compete with Kadijevic's Yugoslav

ideology. Its best-known representative is Blagoje Adzic, a Serb from Croatia whose entire family was slaughtered by the Ustasi during the war. As the member of the three-man joint chiefs of staff who is responsible for operations in the field, Adzic is in a position to decide military strategy. From the beginning of the conflict, he has advocated that Yugoslav federal ideology be cast aside and the JNA be converted into a Serbian army which would integrate the Chetnik fighters into its command.

Adzic is also linked politically to one of the most powerful men in the army high command, General Marko Negovanovic, the former head of the military intelligence organization KOS, which has an immensely effective network of agents and informants throughout the army and indeed in all the Yugoslav republics. General Negovanovic and the KOS have put their weight behind the army's nationalist wing. Negovanovic's influence recently increased further when he was appointed the Serbian minister of defense. As the federal government fades steadily in importance, the new republican cabinet in Serbia, which in addition to Negovanovic includes some other ambitious nationalists, has further undermined the position of the federal defense minister, General Kadijevic.

Such overt Serbian nationalism presented Milosevic with a diplomatic problem since his strategy depended on maintaining the increasingly dubious concept of a federal Yugoslav state. At international negotiations, and particularly at the Hague Peace Conference, he tried to disguise Serb aggression against Croatia by defending the right of Yugoslavs (notably the Serb minority in Croatia and the Serbs in Bosnia) to remain where they are in

Yugoslavia. If he were to agree to General Adzic's demands that the national army should be transformed into a Serbian army, the war of the Yugoslav state against irredentists would become simply an expansionist war guided by a Greater Serbian ideology at the expense of Croatia, which has an elected government.

Their mutual need to cling to the Yugoslav idea led to the close relationship between Milosevic and General Kadijevic. Recently they have made it clear that they want a political solution to the crisis. They have done so largely

because Milosevic needs international support for his republic if he is to remain in power after the war. His flexibility was demonstrated during the crucial session of the Hague Peace Conference in the middle of November, when he agreed in private to drop the

The assumption that behind the war lies a well coordinated Greater Serbian plan is a serious misconception, and one that makes a diplomatic solution to the crisis all the more difficult.

demand that the Serbian-dominated areas in Croatia be allowed to detach themselves from Zagreb's rule. He did so against the wishes of both radical Serb leaders like Babic, who publicly denounced his decision, and the army's nationalist wing. Just as the document with this concession was about to be signed, however, the nationalist officers ordered the heavy bombardment of Dubrovnik, completely undermining Milosevic's position.

In early December, General Kadijevic was close to an agreement with Cyrus Vance on a cease-fire that would allow a UN peacekeeping force to be deployed. Once again Dubrovnik was bombarded and the agreement undermined. Kadijevic was forced to apologize and he called for an investigation to find out who had ordered the attack—an implicit and humiliating admission that he did not control all his forces. Vance returned to the UN aware that while he could talk for hours with

Kadijevic, any agreement would depend on the will of others.

Although it is Croatia that has had to suffer the violence of the war, the divisions in the Yugoslav or Serbian camp now threaten the stability of the current regime in Serbia, the very existence of the federal army, and the security of the Serb mini-states in Croatia. The possibility that Milosevic, the JNA leadership, and the Serb leaders in Croatia and Bosnia could fulfill their disparate aims is receding steadily. According to senior army officers with whom I recently spoke, the JNA is beginning to break up for three reasons. First, the military is buckling under pressure of ideological divisions within its own ranks; second, in the wake of the economic collapse throughout eastern Yugoslavia, the army is no longer guaranteed a sponsor; and, finally, the army is unable to attract anything approaching the number of recruits it requires to wage a long war.

In early January, Milosevic and Kadijevic were working hard to bring about a cease-fire and thus create the conditions for the arrival of a UN peacekeeping force in Yugoslavia. This is not because these thoroughly unattractive men believe in the inherent justice of a UN-led solution, but because without a UN buffer zone in Croatia, they see a political and even a military defeat staring them in the face. Their moderate alliance has in turn produced a new flock of hawks including the Serb nationalists in the army and Milan Babic in Knin, who has warned that any UN troops deployed inside the Krajina are likely to be fired on. The hawks continue to believe, wrongly I suspect, in the efficacy of a nationalist war. Yet the JNA cannot sustain its operations indefinitely. It will, however, cause further havoc in Croatian towns, and may ignite a new conflict in Bosnia if a political solution is not found. Ironically, without a UN peacekeeping force in Krajina, Bosnia, and Eastern Slavonia, the Croatian National Guard, bolstered by the support which international recognition promises, stands an excellent chance of regaining most of the territory containing a considerable Serb

population that it has lost to the Serb irregulars and the JNA. Such a defeat for Serbia would create a new nationalist grievance in the Balkans comparable in its emotional force to the hatred of the Versailles treaty in Weimar Germany.

Meanwhile the decision of the European Community Foreign Ministers on December 16 to accept the independence of the Yugoslav states that ask to be recognized as such has far-reaching implications. First, it reinforces the growing confidence of Germany in foreign policy matters, since throughout the autumn the United Kingdom, the United States, and the United Nations publicly asked that recognition of Croatia and Slovenia be postponed until a comprehensive settlement had been agreed on by all parties. Germany ignored this request and in mid-December announced that it would recognize Croatia and Slovenia on January 15.

The French, who are traditionally suspicious of the US and Britain and fear playing second fiddle to Bonn, proposed a compromise: that only the republics that met democratic standards should be recognized. Unfortunately, the French plan, commendable in principle, was thrown together in haste simply to prevent an open split in the European Community. Germany showed that the issue of democratic standards was not decisive when it announced that it would recognize Croatia and Slovenia "unconditionally."

Until now Germany's recent policies in Eastern Europe have been much more beneficial to the countries there than those of the United Kingdom or the United States. Despite its preoccupation with the former GDR, German business has been investing steadily in Eastern Europe, notably western Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungary; in doing so Germany is contributing more toward regional stability than any other Western nation. Mrs. Thatcher's nightmare of German expansion would carry some political weight if her government or that of John Major had shown the slightest inclination to encourage investment in Eastern Europe.

In its new policy toward Yugoslavia, Germany demonstrated for the first time that it could, on a major issue, openly oppose the stated aims of American policy, which are often transmitted to the Europeans through the United Nations or through British diplomats within the European Community and at the Hague Peace Conference. From the point of view of the diplomatic power game, the unilateral German move is understandable, especially since American and British policy in Yugoslavia has been concerned to restrict the growth of German influence in the region. But it is most disturbing that the place selected for this test of strength should be Yugoslavia. Serbia, for its part, interprets the determination of Germany (together with Italy and Austria) to recognize Croatia as a revival of the wartime Axis alliance. This could be said to be true only in the sense that Germany now has strong economic interests in some of the same regions that it did in the 1930s—western Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, and northern Italy. The Belgrade government also believes that the Catholic Church has had an important part in bringing about this alliance, a claim that is not entirely without foundation. The recognition of Croatia now is likely to open still further the breach between the Orthodox and Catholic churches.

The decision of the Kohl government to recognize Croatia “unconditionally” is unfortunate in several ways. It implies that Germany has such a single-minded concern for its own interests that it is willing even to recognize East European republics that are unable to guarantee the safety of citizens under their control. The massacre in Gospic, for example, was not carried out by irregulars but by forces of the Croat state. Britain, which is under pressure not to undermine the unity of the EC, may follow Germany’s lead and also recognize Croatia. And now that the federal prime minister Ante Markovic, Washington’s main ally in Yugoslavia, has resigned, the United States, too, may recognize the Tudjman regime.

But recognition will not stop the fighting. The army and the Serbs have said they will not with-

draw if Croatia is recognized but will fight all the harder. If Germany uses recognition to supply Croatia with weapons—which it has not been able to do so far because of the UN arms embargo against Yugoslavia—then the conflict will be fairer but it will be much bloodier as well. Recognition probably also means an end to the Hague Peace Conference, which presumed that a comprehensive settlement would be arranged before recognition was granted to anybody. It also makes the work of the United Nations more difficult. But, above all, it raises the possibility of the war spreading to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The German recognition of Croatia and Slovenia has forced the president of Bosnia, in which Croats and Muslims make up the majority, to apply for recognition. The Serb leaders in Bosnia immediately said that if the republic were recognized they would form their own state within Bosnia. The Muslims warned in return that such a step would lead to “tragedy.” Such a possible chain of events underlines the urgent need for the deployment of UN troops inside Croatia. If they are deployed in the three regions with large Serb populations, as proposed by Cyrus Vance, then these would assume the status of demilitarized zones under UN control. The three regions would belong neither to Croatia nor to any Yugoslav or Serbian state. This is clearly not a satisfactory long-term solution—and it depends as I write on the ceasefire of January 3 holding up—but if UN troops are deployed, the military conflict should come to an end, without doubt the most important task at the moment.

No doubt the Serbian politicians, by their aggressive and irrational behavior, have contributed greatly to the current tragedy, but Croatia bears a share of responsibility as well, and therefore Germany’s unilateral move to recognize Tudjman’s regime is of dubious moral value. In its practical consequences, recognition risks causing more death and destruction. As a model for a future approach to disputes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, moreover, it is nothing short of catastrophic.

“Seventh-day Adventist” Not Always a Trademark

by Kenneth Edward Piner



Kenneth Edward Piner is president of the senior class at Columbia Union College. He is an assistant in the college's public relations office.

In an October 3, 1991, decision, Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. won the right to use the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) name in its title. The ruling was the result of a suit filed by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on December 7, 1987, claiming that SDA Kinship's use of the name "Seventh-day Adventist" constituted federal trademark infringement. SDA Kinship was incorporated in 1981 as a ministry for gay and lesbian Adventists, their families and friends.

U.S. District Judge Mariana Pfaelzer, of the Central District of California, wrote in her decision, "The Court finds that, as used by SDA Kinship, the term 'Seventh-day Adventist,' and its acronym 'SDA' are generic, and are not entitled to trademark protection."

Robert Bouchard, former president of SDA Kinship and chair of its litigation committee, said that in ruling that the Seventh-day Adventist name was generic, Judge Pfaelzer picked the "most sweeping" decision. It shows, Bouchard says, that

the church "didn't have the right to trademark the name in the first place."

Robert Nixon, associate in the office of general counsel for the General Conference, offered a different view. "Our major thrust is to protect the name of the church." The decision is a narrow one, he said, that is "limited to a usage by Kinship, or a usage like Kinship's," and "still leaves the Seventh-day Adventist Church fully protected."

The church did not appeal the decision, Nixon said, "mainly because it [the decision] was so narrow." He added, "We didn't think it did that much damage." Furthermore, Nixon said that the church felt an appeals court would have sent the case back to the district court for further consideration by the same judge, putting the church "back in the same ball park." However, Nixon said, "We still don't like Kinship using the name."

Bouchard said members of Kinship were quite surprised that the General Conference didn't appeal the case. He said that "a district court

opinion is only persuasive" when used in other cases. In addition to the expense consideration, Bouchard said the possibility of the General Conference losing an appeal and perhaps setting an even wider precedent, could be the reason for no further appeal.

Nixon, on the other hand, said that would not necessarily be the outcome of an appeal. The appellate court could affirm the circuit court's opinion, strengthen or weaken the circuit court's decision, or reverse the original decision. He said that not all written decisions from appellate courts are published, so they may not set precedent, but they are available for persuasive purposes. Nixon emphasized that the General Conference's only two reasons for not appealing were the low damage, and the possibility of having the case sent back to Judge Pfaelzer.

Whatever might have happened to an appeal, Mike McLaughlin, president of SDA Kinship, said he feels "vindicated" by Judge Pfaelzer's decision. "It was very hard on us [Kinship] emotionally to go through the last five years since it started," McLaughlin said. "It's like a burden has been lifted and we can get back to business."

Sherri Babcock, public relations director for SDA Kinship, said, "I was thrilled when the verdict came through. I had been doing a lot of praying about it." Since the General Conference filed the suit, "I felt like my family was trying to kick me out"

and that the church was trying to ostracize her, Babcock said.

McLaughlin said that the litigation took the energy of the organization away from its mission of outreach to gay and lesbian Adventists and Christians. According to McLaughlin, the case has had a personal as well as financial impact on Kinship.

McLaughlin said that Kinship spent approximately \$10,000 on the defense of the case; Nixon said the General Conference spent more than \$200,000 over the five year period. Kinship's costs were considerably lower because the National Gay Rights Advocates accepted Kinship's case and arranged for the prestigious firm of Fulbright & Jaworski to defend them pro bono.

Nixon—in November of 1985—was the first person from the General Conference to contact Kinship regarding its desire that Kinship stop using Seventh-day Adventist as part of their name. He initially approached Ron Lawson, who was serving as Kinship's appointed church liaison.

Lawson said Nixon asked for Kinship to quietly change its name because the church had a trademark on "Seventh-day Adventist." Lawson said, "I took it to a few of the key officers and we decided that it wasn't the sort of issue that could be decided by the officers."

The officers presented the request to Kinship members at their Kampmeeting during the summer of

1986. "It was a very emotional time; the meetings went on for a long time," Lawson said. "Our name is terribly important for us." The request, he said, "was basically interpreted as the church saying to us... 'We don't want to be associated with you.'" He said the result of Kinship's discussion was "a firm decision that we could not change our name."

The General Conference pursued the issue in court and Kinship did offer to settle the case if certain proposed conditions were met. Those conditions included, among others, having balanced articles on homosexuality appear in the *Adventist Review* and *Ministry* magazine, as well as the inclusion of information on homosexuality in the sex-education classes within the church's educational system.

Nixon said that the General Conference felt the settlement would have been unacceptable. "It would appear that the church was working hand in hand" with Kinship, and "Kinship's philosophy of homosexual practices is unacceptable to the church."

Following the decision, McLaughlin wrote an open letter to General Conference President Robert Folkenberg encouraging interaction between the two organizations. Assistant to the President B. E. Jacobs responded to McLaughlin's letter for Folkenberg, saying that it would be impossible for the General Conference and Kinship to interact as McLaughlin desired.

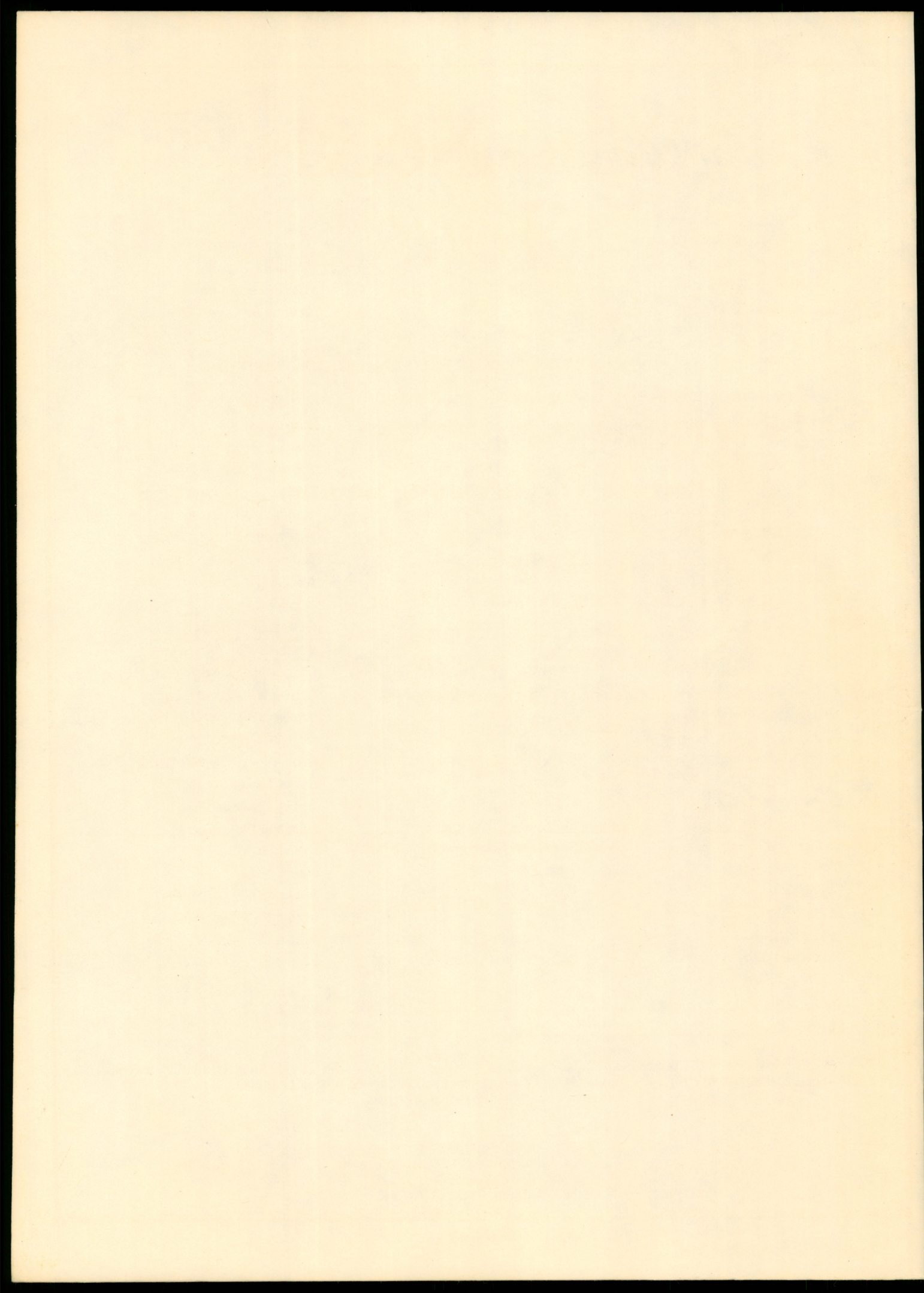
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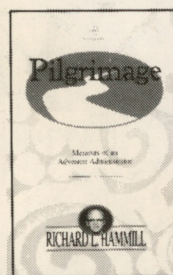
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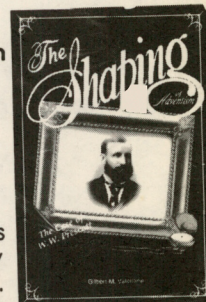
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