



# Spectrum's Voices of Excellence

*A carousel of friends, a cascade of thought, a concert of convictions, a virtual reality of perhaps Adventism's most boisterous years—hopefully, the selections that follow will be all of the above, and more. How better to celebrate 25 years of a journal devoted to nourishing voices of excellence than a homecoming of the choir? The editor, in consultation with the editorial board, invites you to listen once again to a community in full voice—an oratorio of creativity.*

## The Establishment of the Adventist Forum and *Spectrum*



by Richard C. Osborn  
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*Richard C. Osborn, director of education for the Columbia Union, served for over a decade as executive secretary, then treasurer of the Association of Adventist Forums. A historian, with a doctorate in American history from the University of Maryland, Osborn produced the closest thing to an "official" history ever written about the founding of the Association of Adventist Forums and Spectrum. Sorting out the slightly varying memories of close friends was probably one of the*

*most delicate writing assignments of his career.*

Many of these second, third and fourth generation Adventists began leaving the church because their questions and needs were not being addressed—indeed, they were held in suspicion. So many were leaving that some who still desired to remain Adventists saw a need for forming groups to maintain ties to a church they had been reared in. Many of them thought they might be able to grow within the church and ultimately serve it if someone could help them through this critical transition in their maturation process.

In major educational centers such as Cambridge, Massachusetts; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and the San Francisco Bay Area, California, groups of concerned Adventists began informal discussion groups. Although some remained very informal with home meetings, the Cambridge

group experienced rapid growth. The Cambridge group had started in 1963 under Roy Branson's direction with a few people meeting socially on Sabbath afternoons as a book discussion group, which included such individuals as Joe and Adrienne Battistone, Bruce Wilcox and Vinson Bushnell. In 1964, Alvin and Verla Kwiram joined the group when he took a position in Harvard's chemistry department. In 1966, as a result of Verla Kwiram's initiative, the group's mailing list had reached 150 and resulted in a constitution and membership dues. Throughout this period, the Cambridge and Ann Arbor groups began to talk of communicating with like groups in other parts of the United States, and of possibly tying them together in one organization with a newsletter or journal. Vinson Bushnell, a Harvard graduate student in music, even worked on a constitution. . . .

During May 1967, Bietz and Wilson led out in a discussion of the proposal in Washington, D.C., where Bietz felt most of the leaders displayed "very good interest." Next, the ideas were taken to a group of college presidents, academic deans, and board chairmen, which resulted in the establishment by the General Conference of a 23-member Committee on SDA Graduate Students in Non-SDA Schools chaired by Wilson.

From this stage on, Wilson became the key church contact and liaison for the association's beginning and throughout its first decade. In fact, without Wilson's support there would have been no association. . . .

Plans progressed rapidly, and on October 6, 1967, the General Conference convened a Committee on National Association of Graduate Students with the church paying for the travel expenses of three discussion group representatives out of the seven who came to Washington, D.C. . . .

The proposed journal proved to be the most controversial aspect of the committee's work. Agreement came easily on the purpose of the journal, basically following the original proposal. However, Wilson insisted that each article be read and approved by one of the General Conference representatives, thus giving the denomination veto power. He noted that the church had never recognized such an organization where it did not have such controls. The graduate student representatives could not agree to this condition. Kwiram, for one, wanted an independent organization established on the basis of mutual respect and admiration. The group felt that a journal could provide a kind of "loyal opposition" in which sophisticated, informed analysis and evaluation could be provided the church through constructive study reports and articles in a journal. At one point, someone suggested that the journal be completely on its own, but the lay people wanted a church relationship. Over the noon hour, Branson met with Wilson in his office to see if any accommodation

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could be achieved. Although Wilson pressed his points vigorously, he was not ready to break off negotiations. During the afternoon session, the church's representatives agreed that their tie to the journal would be through five out of 20 editorial consultants. These five would be selected by the association board from a list of 12 names to be submitted by the North American Division Committee on Administration (NADCA). . . .

On October 25, the Autumn Council through a session of NADCA approved the plans of the committee for an association of graduate students with a local and regional organization and a magazine to serve as a forum for the students. The church leaders no longer demanded official representatives on either the association board or journal. Rather, they agreed to serve in an advisory capacity at the invitation of the association.

The "founding fathers" were delighted at the outcome, and by a telephone vote decided to ask Neal Wilson, Charles Hirsch, and Wilber Alexander to serve as the first official church guests. Meanwhile, the first board meeting was scheduled for December in Loma Linda, California.

At the first board meeting, the direction of the association began to take shape. *Spectrum* became the name of the journal, [and] membership dues were established. . . .

A name for the association remained the major unfinished business. The board tentatively approved the name, "The Adventist Forum," tentatively because of the need for further consultation with church leaders who objected to the word "Adventist" appearing so early in the title lest people think the association was being given official status. New names suggested included "*Forum: An Association of Academic and Professional Adventists*," "FORE (Forum of Re-

sponsible Exploration): A Forum of Adventists dedicated to responsible exploration of truth," and "Associated Adventist Forums." Finally, both the association and church leadership compromised on "Association of Adventist Forums" (hereafter referred to as AAF).

During 1968, the hard work of building membership and developing a journal proceeded. The *Review* on January 11 printed the all-important NADCA action approving the association. However, without a tangible product to sell, membership grew slowly. Initially, some AAF leaders thought optimistically that as many as 5,000 might join, but only 600 members joined by November. Andrews University provided AAF valuable help by giving Executive Secretary Branson a phone budget and the right to use his Andrews University secretary part time on AAF business.

*Spectrum* Editor [Molleurus] Couperus spent 1968 soliciting articles for the journal. He had established as a condition for taking the job that he be allowed time to collect enough manuscripts for four issues before beginning publication. Loma Linda University also gave help by providing free office space for *Spectrum*.

Meanwhile, local chapters grew in New England, New York, Washington, D.C., Ann Arbor, Andrews University, Walla Walla College, Seattle, Berkeley, and Stanford University. Popular topics during these years included the church's relationship to civil rights, inner-city ministry, politics, war, and the arts. In some areas such as the Southern New England Conference, a part-time chaplain, Charles Teel, Jr., graduate student at Boston and Harvard University, was provided to minister to graduate students with the support of conference president, Lowell Bock. The association's relations with the General Conference remained cordial, but as Branson pointed out in a

newsletter to AAF members, "the journal hasn't appeared yet."

*Spectrum* first appeared in March 1969, representing the organization's first tangible product and its most successful accomplishment of the first decade. Couperus proved to be an excellent choice for editor. Early in his career, he had studied theology in the United States and served as a missionary in Indonesia. Even after training as a medical doctor with a specialty in dermatology, he retained a lifelong interest in theology with special emphasis on the relationship between science and religion. During the 1950s, he edited a journal devoted to the defense of creationism. Because of his independent financial status and friendship with affluent individu-

als, he also aided the journal's financial undergirding. Couperus solicited articles and made the crucial decisions about balance of topics and articles that would appear in each issue. Fritz Guy, then a religion teacher at Loma Linda University's La Sierra campus, did a great deal of editorial rewriting. Major credit for the appearance and accuracy of the journal goes to Ada Turner, the well-trained and tireless executive editor. She was largely responsible for the journal's design, and followed the "old school" of editing copy—checking every footnote. This Loma Linda-based group produced six volumes of *Spectrum*, each volume consisting of four issues with each issue averaging 80 pages. . . .

## Ellen White's Pastoral Authority as Bible Commentator



by Joseph J. Battistone  
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*Joseph J. Battistone, now retired, was pastor of the Fletcher, North Carolina church when he wrote this first articulation within Adventism of Ellen White's role being a pastoral one. Prior to producing what has become a widely-quoted article, Battistone had earned a doctorate in New Testament from Duke University and taught for years in the religion department of Andrews University.*

In her study of the old Testament prophets, including Elijah, Ellen

White focuses more attention on their actions than on their words. She is more interested in relating the practical results of the prophetic preaching than in explaining the theological significance of the actual messages. Consequently, her writings tend to be more homiletical than exegetical. This becomes more apparent in the frequent parallels she draws between the time of the prophets and the period of the church today. These parallels enable her to draw lessons from the biblical material which relate to the theme of the great controversy.

This points to a fundamental feature of her writings, an interest in the practical nature and value of Bible study. To her way of thinking, Bible study is more than a matter of learning facts or concepts. It is an exercise that generates from an attitude of prayer, faith and humility, culminating in the spiritual edification or enrichment of the student. . . .