

themselves with teaching the wealthy elite while enjoying the comforts of Lima, the Adventists braved the rigors of the altiplano to teach the disinherited classes. Educator and politician José Antonio Encinas wryly observed that whereas the village priests worked to save souls, Stahl worked to save lives. And in 1916, after a particularly savage attack in which the Stahls barely escaped with their lives, Catholic citizens took to the press in the Stahls' defense. They disparagingly contrasted the "two Yankees, who generously cure sickness, dispense remedies, and teach the people to read, gratis," with "the priests [who] have kept the native race in the most deplorable and inhuman conditions" for more than three centuries. . . .

Near the end of the Stahls' tenure in the altiplano, José Antonio Encinas led the call for a commission to investigate local abuses and instigate reforms. The call was answered affirmatively by an executive decree of June 19, 1920. . . .

When the commission arrived in a tense Azangaro, they were met by fully 8,000 such greeters, also massed in military formation. Nervous landowners wired Lima for troop reinforcements and at least one local *Indigenista* leader was placed in preventive detention. Newspaper accounts report that the local power interests debated whether the same fate ought not to befall Fernando Stahl. . . .

In recent decades, researchers from South America, North America, and Europe have swarmed upon the altiplano to pursue research in disciplines ranging from anthropology to zoology. A number of these investigators, while pursuing their particular areas of study, have given more than a nod to Adventism's presence in Puno. Within the past decade, two researchers—Ted Lewellen, a University of Colorado anthropologist, and Dan

Hazen, a Yale University Latin Americanist—have devoted the most extensive attention yet to the Adventist experience. . . .

In documenting Adventism's impact on Puno, Hazen asserts that "Adventists have consistently been in the forefront of change in the altiplano." Hazen thinks that Adventists enjoyed an edge in achieving reform because "the missionaries combined appeals for individual salvation with a broad-based program of medical, educational, and market facilities open to all." Moving from the subject of programs to implementation, Hazen cites the Adventist "organization, attitude, and ability to get things done" as factors that enabled Adventism to be "one of the major inputs for change in early-century Puno. He supports this assertion by explaining that: (1) the missionaries minimized imposition by only expanding on villager requests; (2) doctrinal controversies were played down in favor of new standards of hygiene, temperance, health care, and morality; (3) literacy was actively fostered as students read from the Bible and Peruvian texts; (4) religion was taught, but it did not dominate the curriculum; (5) Ad-

ventist instruction was generally better-regarded than state efforts; (6) native workers were quickly trained and put to work in schools and churches; and (7) finally,

Adventist missionaries carried with them a willingness to seek new answers. They also embodied a less status-conscious life style than local *mestizos* and whites.

Hazen concludes simply: "The members addressed one another as 'hermano' and 'hermana' or 'brother' and 'sister.'" . . .

The activities of the Adventists in the Lake Titicaca basin provide valuable insights into how Protestantism has been a force for social change in predominantly Roman Catholic Latin America. Here, beginning with the leadership of Camacho and the Stahls, Adventism functioned as a reforming and progressive movement, which contributed to reordering the social and political structure of the Peruvian highlands. In effect, this altiplano Adventism—grounded in indigenous schooling—may demonstrate for Latin America an alternative to both an authoritarian status quo and violent revolution.

Large SDA Churches: Adventism's Silent Majority



Monte Sahlin
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sion for ministries and executive director of Adventist Community Services, is author of the book, Sharing Our Faith With Friends Without Losing Either (Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1990). He has encouraged the leadership of his division to increasingly employ empirical social research of its membership.

When we think of the standard local church experience for North American Adventists, most of us have a picture of a few dozen

people gathered for worship. The congregation in our mind has one or two adult Sabbath school classes, meager basement rooms for children, "not enough" teenagers to have a real youth group, no office for the pastor and no organized outreach ministries: a congregation dominated by a small circle of poorly educated, out-of-touch people who are more interested in maintenance than mission.

Actually, more than half of the 775,000 Adventists in North America gather on Sabbath morning in a church with a membership of more than 300. One-quarter of North American Adventists meet in churches with 600 or more members. It is a little-known fact that the majority of the 775,000 Seventh-day Adventists in North America are members of the 600 largest churches. Less than half of the membership is found in the other congregations—the nearly 4,000 small churches that have tended to set the norms for church life in North America.

In reality, a typical Sabbath experience for North American Adventists features a congregation of hundreds, professional musicians and pastoral staff, sparkling programs for children and youth, a wide range of adult classes and small group ministries. These large congregations have the resources to address all kinds of needs, organize many meetings throughout the week, and undertake innovative forms of outreach. Most Adventists in the United States and Canada attend these large churches because they enjoy being a part of congregations with the resources to fund and staff significant and even ground-breaking programs of nurture, evangelism, and service. . . .

Typically, the small churches in the conference have a much lower ratio of members per pastor and their tithe does not cover the cost

of their pastoral staffing. The large churches have fewer pastors per capita, and the financial savings are used to subsidize pastoral staffing for small churches, as well as the conference educational institutions. In other words, the largest congregations are the "cash cows" of most local conferences.

Yet, at conference constituency meetings, a disproportionate number of the delegates represent smaller congregations. Because most conference bylaws prescribe one, two, or even three delegates per church in addition to the delegates apportioned by church membership, there are usually more delegates representing small churches than large churches. This is exacerbated by the fact that large churches typically do not bring to constituency meetings as many delegates as they are entitled to. . . .

At a deeper level it is possible

Spectrum as Source

The following volumes draw significantly from *Spectrum* essays:

Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream

—Malcom Bull and Keith Lockhart

Adventism for a New Generation

—Steve Dailey

Adventism in America: A History

—Gary Land

The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century

—Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler

Millennial Dreams and Moral Dilemmas: Seventh-day Adventism and Contemporary Ethics

—Michael Pearson

The Reign of God: An Introduction to Christian Theology in Seventh-day Adventist Perspective.

—Richard Rice

that many Adventists are simply prejudiced against large churches. "They are unfriendly," is a common attitude. I have often been told that "people go there who want to hide out and not do anything." "Worldly," is another often-heard description. Yet, recent surveys indicate that members of small churches are as likely to be uninvolved in witnessing or ministry as are members of large churches. It appears that the common impressions about large churches are simply myths.

Large churches are often looked upon as costly and nonproductive by the denomination's evangelism strategists. The facts are the reverse. Analyses conducted in two local conferences demonstrate that in those fields, the net growth in those conferences came entirely from a handful of the largest congregations. Significant growth rates in some of the small churches were equaled by larger losses in other small churches, with no net effect on growth in membership of these two conferences.

Large churches have more resources for outreach and more contacts in the community. They are better able to absorb prospective members. There is strong evidence that as the Baby Boom generation begins to return to church, they prefer large churches with a menu of quality programs. Large Adventist churches tend to be located where there is the greatest degree of favorable public awareness of the Adventist message. All of this means that large churches are key to the North American Division leadership's emphasis on a revitalization of evangelism.

The significant church growth in largely black regional conferences has often been contrasted with the slower growth rate in "white" conferences. The average size of local churches in regional conferences is much larger than the average across the division.

These larger churches are a key to the higher growth rate in regional Conferences.

The more than 50 percent of North American Seventh-day Adventists who are members of these large churches are not the ones who are most likely to write scorching letters to conference presidents, cancel subscriptions to denominational periodicals, or send their tithe to private organizations that have a reactionary agenda. They

are less likely to stand up and make emotional speeches at constituency meetings or buttonhole speakers at camp meetings. But these large churches provide most of the human and fiscal resources that are so necessary to the Adventist global mission. Even though they are the majority, they are not heard from by denominational leaders as often as are other voices. They are the vital "silent majority" of the North American Adventist Church.

My Disability, My Church



by Kathy Roy
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Kathy Roy is the congressional liaison for the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board. She previously worked for both the federal government and private sectors on public policy regarding persons with disabilities.

In my professional life, I work on public policy issues that enable persons with disabilities and their families to live independent and productive lives. I am also a practicing Seventh-day Adventist, a convert who was lucky enough to find a community I could call my own. I also happen to have cerebral palsy. Thus I live in two worlds: developing policy on the one hand, and on the other hand recognizing that all the federal legislation in the world cannot replace a higher law to which I am accountable. . . .

I must say that my own church has, in a sense, been converted

over the years. In my early days of attendance at Sligo church, I think many in my congregation didn't quite know how to take me. But gradually, I think that members at my church have come to understand that my disability is not an impediment to being a full part of the fellowship. Now, I feel a part of the family. Now I can be teased and hugged on Sabbath morning and pulled onto committees just like everyone else. And this acceptance—acceptance by the church—is critical. This enables me, like other members, to live out my faith in the context of a community.

All too often, people with disabilities are greeted with pity and not empathy. But pity and empathy are two entirely different things. Pity says that you are inferior and need "taking care of," whereas empathy looks at the individual as a human being—a child of God—and seeks to understand that individual as a person. It's funny, but as someone with a lifelong disability, you can smell pity a mile away. And don't get me wrong, these folks mean well, to be sure. For example, I have a speech impairment and when I meet someone for the first time, I'm usually tense, which only makes things worse. (Besides, it's Sabbath, and by the end of the week we're all tired, right?) So I slur

a "Hello" introduction, and I quickly pick up that the individual assumes that all my cookies aren't in the jar. (A word of honesty here: All of my cookies aren't in the jar, but this has nothing to do with my disability!) I've developed a method of very quickly letting that individual know that yes, I work, I pay bills, and I'm happily married, thanks very much. I give this illustration to make the point that many people have preconceived ideas about people with disabilities. Often, people believe that having a disability means that the individual is, by necessity, dependent on others. But all of us are dependent in one way or another. And isn't this what the church is about?

When I was young I was taught and believed for many years that "God has given you cerebral palsy for a reason." I grew up thinking that my own disability was a part of God's grand scheme. It was not until I had attended Sligo for many years that then-senior pastor James Londis and I had a long and rather heated debate about God, cerebral palsy, and the universe. I remember that Jim had just finished a sermon entitled, "Why Bad Things Happen to Good People." His conclusion, not surprisingly, was that God does not do terrible things to "teach us a lesson." Further, God wants only good things for his children. To those of you who have had the blessing of growing up in our church, this is no great revelation. I was flabbergasted. I vividly remember speaking to Jim after the service in a rather animated discussion. I even recall stating that this could not possibly be correct, that this flew in the face of how I'd been raised. But this fundamental Adventist understanding of God's grace has gradually helped me, not only with my personal understanding of my disability, but in other personal tragedies I have experienced. And it is this fundamental