

Spectrum

The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Pursuit of the Millennium

IN SEARCH OF A GOD
WHO EATS RICE

IS CONGREGATIONALISM
ADVENTISM'S FUTURE?

WORLD ADVENTISM IS
BECOMING WORLDLY

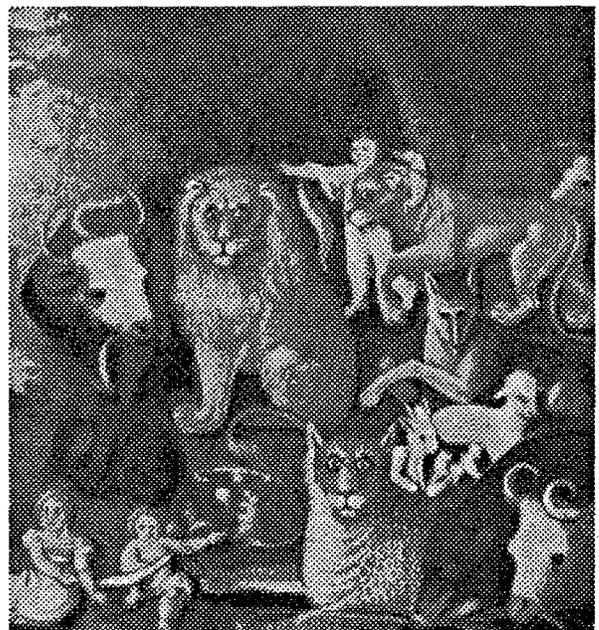
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OUR MAN IN PORT-AU-PRINCE

THE SAVAGE POETRY OF *JUDGES*

NEWS UPDATES

Oakwood's Mother of
All Alumni Weekends
Atlantic Union College's
Fight for Survival



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Spectrum

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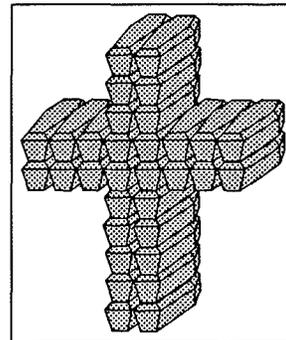
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Adapted from Edward Hicks' "Peaceable Kingdom"





Never Again

Adventism on the verge of the next millennium—that is the focus of this issue of *Spectrum*, and of considerable thinking by denominational leaders. But first there is this matter of Adventists killing Adventists. The evidence may not yet be conclusive, but it is already convincing: Some of the 10,000 to 40,000 Adventists killed in the Rwandan genocide died at the hand of fellow Sabbathkeepers.

The president of the General Conference has deplored the killing in Rwanda. He has visited the refugee camps in neighboring Zaire dominated by members of the former government that encouraged the Rwandan massacres. That is where many of the 100,000 Hutu Adventist refugees, including scores of Adventist pastors, have congregated. No Adventist is known to have confessed to any killings. The immediate past and present presidents of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division of the General Conference believe that it is best to forget the past (see "Sabbath Slaughter," p. 3).

To forget is to overlook a horror unprecedented in the history of this denomination—Adventists cooperating in the mass murder of other Adventists. To forget these crimes is tantamount to condoning them. The tribunals following World War II, and the international tribunals established to report to the World Court in the Hague on war crimes in Bosnia and Rwanda, have been attempts to remember and establish some responsibility in a court of law, as an alternative to continued violent acts of revenge in the streets, in homes, in churches. How can we remember and help stop the cycle of criminal violence against humanity and the body of Christ? We could:

- Cooperate fully with international tribunals attempting to establish the guilt or innocence of Rwandans—including Adventists—in the slaughter of innocents.
- Simultaneously establish a commission chosen by

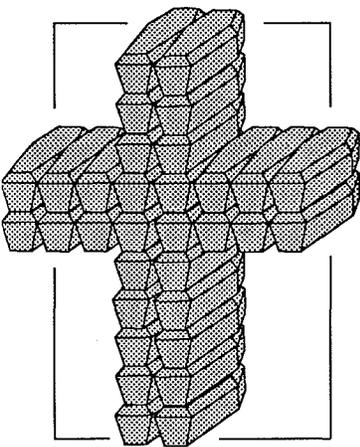
the world church that reports to the denomination concerning the nature of Adventist involvement in the slaughter in Rwanda, as well as acts of heroic rescue.

- Institute intensive, required sessions among Adventists in the refugee camps, and within Rwanda, regarding the embracing, by biblical Christianity and Adventism, of all ethnic groups.
- Compile a list of Adventist victims of Adventist murder, and read out their names in ceremonies of repentance conducted in Adventist church services within the refugee camps, inside Rwanda, and throughout the world church.

Adventists hope that the international tribunal at the Hague never announces indictments of Seventh-day Adventists. Instinctively, the world church wants to quietly walk away from what happened in Rwanda. But if the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is truly committed to the importance of unity, it will act vigorously to make certain that Adventists do not forget, but remember Rwanda.

For us to try to forget Rwanda as we move into the next millennium would be to remain frozen in horror at what *they* did. We must remember in order to honor our slain fellow Adventists, and to realize our identity with our fellow believers who murdered them. We must remember Rwanda because only then can we truly repent. We must remember because only by remembering can we remind ourselves and our children that each man, woman, and child is precious in the sight of God. We must remember in order to remind ourselves, and the relatives of the victims, and the murderers still worshipping from Sabbath to Sabbath within the Adventist Church, that God most assuredly remembers.

—Roy Branson



Sabbath Slaughter: SDAs and Rwanda

Did Adventist leaders help kill other Adventists? The International Criminal Tribunal at the Hague investigates.

by Alita Byrd

ACCORDING TO A SEPTEMBER 4, 1995, *Newsweek* report, a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church aided and abetted genocide in Rwanda. Elsaphane Ntakirutimana, an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister in the province of Kibuye, and president of the West Rwanda field (an office comparable to that of conference president in the United States), is on a list of those presumed guilty of genocide that has been compiled by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. According to survivors and several human-rights organizations, Ntakirutimana was involved in the massacre that took place at the Seventh-day Adventist church in the village of Mugunaro.

African Rights, a respected human-rights organization based in London, accuses Ntakirutimana and his son, Dr. Gerard Ntakirutimana, of “active [participation] in the

genocide,” along with two other Adventists—Salomon Mpayamaguru, secretary-treasurer of the Gitwe Adventist Association, and Eziro Tabaro, a deacon. According to African Rights, Mpayamaguru is in detention in Gitarama, and Tabaro “is responsible for many deaths, including [those] of Adventist pastors.”¹

According to the *Washington Times*,² an investigator from the Hague came to the United States in September to look into Ntakirutimana’s case. Members of the Rwandan community in the U.S. report that Ntakirutimana is now living with his son in Laredo, Texas. He has not returned repeated phone calls or responded to fax requests from the *Times* to discuss the reports. Church officials have denied knowledge of his whereabouts.

According to a special *Adventist World Report* released in December 1994, at least 3,000 people died in the slaughter at Mugunaro, and close to 1,000 were killed at the Adventist university in Gitwe. In addition to accusations that certain Adventists aided the killers in both places, there is also evidence that Adventists

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risked their lives to save others.

Adventists are not the only religious figures accused of participating in the genocide. In a country estimated to be 90 percent Christian, many professed Christians and their church leaders were involved in the killing. Priests, nuns, and pastors of various faiths have been accused of crimes, including providing names of Tutsis and Hutu moderates to be eliminated. Clergy even betrayed the hiding places of people fleeing death.

Most of the published evidence against Ntakirutimana and leaders of other denominations—including the reports in *Newsweek* and the *Washington Times*—draws from research done by African Rights, whose work is being used by the International Tribunal at the Hague. In 1995, Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal, directors of African Rights, published a revised edition of *Rwanda: Death, Despair, and Defiance*, a 1,200-page report on the 100 days' genocide that began on April 6, 1994. The evidence, based on scores of interviews with refugees conducted during and after the genocide, varies in quality and must be examined carefully. But although it may not yet be conclusive, it is deeply disturbing.

An international war crimes tribunal finds the evidence sufficiently credible to name Ntakirutimana as a suspect of mass murders. "The tribunal is investigating what happened in Kibuye, and Elsaphane Ntakirutimana is on the list of persons presumed guilty," said Alain Sigg, spokesman for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. At the time of publication, this tribunal, connected with the International War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague, has indicted two individuals, held in Zambia, and eight others whose identities have yet to be revealed. All eight, currently outside Rwanda, are implicated in killings in the region of Kibuye. Consequently, the tribunal's strategy is to present the evidence to the countries concerned in the hope of encouraging the suspects' arrest.

Six Hundred Years of Bloodshed

Conflicts between the Hutus and Tutsis, the two main ethnic groups in Rwanda, date back about 600 years. The most recent fighting took place in 1994 after the death, in a plane crash, of Habyarimana, the Hutu president. The country erupted in an orgy of violence and murder. A Hutu militia, the *interahamwe*, prepared lists of Tutsis and Hutu moderates to be eliminated, then went from village to village and house to house murdering unsuspecting victims. The mostly-Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front invaded Rwanda, and death counts rose even higher. It is estimated that somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million people lost their lives.

Until the 1994 killings, the church in Rwanda was one of the fastest growing in the world. According to the General Conference Archives, in 1993, one in every 27 Rwandans was an Adventist, one of the highest concentrations in the world. If the ratio of those killed (500,000 to 1 million) to the population of the country were the same among the Adventist population, between 20,000 and 40,000 Adventist members were killed. A General Conference World Report says that, of the nearly 300,000 Adventist Rwandans, more than 100,000 fled as refugees and 10,000 more were killed in the crisis.

Sabbath Slaughter in the Mugunaro Church

Many Adventists were murdered in their homes, while others were killed in churches where they fled for safety. One of the worst tragedies occurred in a large Adventist community in Mugunaro, in the region of Kibuye. The Adventist headquarters for the area boasted a large church, a nursing

school, a hospital, and a primary school. It was an "Adventist ghetto," said Elder L. T. Daniel, president of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, and many people went there for protection. On April 16, 1994, the Mugunaro massacre began when the *interahamwe* and their supporters attacked the thousands seeking refuge in the church and surrounding buildings. A few escaped, but most died in the slaughter.

In *Death, Despair, and Defiance*, African Rights published the testimonies of several survivors of the Kibuye massacre. All name Elsaphane Ntakirutimana as responsible for the killing. The information contained in these testimonies varies in detail and seriousness of accusation, and constitutes much of the evidence against Ntakirutimana.

Elia Gashi, a 32-year-old man who lost 40

members of his immediate and extended family during the killings, describes the tragedy:

As soon as we knew that Habyarimana was dead, we had the idea of seeking protection at the church. As there were a number of Seventh-day Adventist pastors living there, we went to the Adventist church on Friday the 8th. Soon after that, the white missionaries left. Three gendarmes came and said they would provide security for us. In the meantime the number of refugees was growing. . . . On Saturday the 16th, the day of the Sabbath, the gendarmes came and said they had a message for us . . . that the prefet wanted the refugees to leave the church. We hardly had any time to take this message in. Within a few minutes, the same gendarmes returned, accompanied by a lot of *interahamwe* [militia]. Then the killing started. Seth Sebihi, the head of the church, took the women and children inside the church. The men remained outside because we wanted to defend ourselves.

Seventy Times Seven . . .

L. T. Daniel, president of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, tells the story of a Seventh-day Adventist pastor's wife.

When the crisis began, a Hutu member of one of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Rwanda killed his pastor and thought he had also killed the pastor's wife. The children ran for their lives. After the killers had left, the couple's 20-year-old son came back to see if the parents were still alive. He found his father dead. His mother also looked dead, but when he came to lift her, he could feel that she was still warm. He immediately called for help and rushed her to the hospital. Suffering from a deep gash in her forehead, for two weeks the pastor's wife remained in a coma. It took her months to fully recover.

Finally able to function, the pastor's wife went to the village market. There, she looked up and

found herself eye-to-eye with the fellow Adventist who thought he had killed her. The man fell down, began rolling on the ground, and went into convulsions. Since it was in the middle of the marketplace, a crowd quickly gathered.

The pastor's wife knew that if she showed the scar on her forehead and accused the man, the crowd would kill him immediately. So, she told everyone, "Please don't touch him; don't touch him. He saw me, and since he thought I was dead [she didn't tell a lie!], he couldn't believe it. He must have gone into some kind of shock."

So the crowd helped the man to his feet, and took him to the woman's house. The man had torn his clothes, rolling around on the ground, and the pastor's wife gave him water to bathe himself. After he bathed, she took the shirt of her 20-year-old son, who had rescued her, and gave it to the man.

She told him, "I know you killed

my husband and you attempted to kill me. God saved me. I will not be the one who will turn you in. I will not be the one who will call people to kill you. I just plead with you to make yourself right with your God. My husband is gone and it is by the special grace of God that I am alive. Now go away. I don't want anyone to hear that my husband's killer is in my house. They will come and kill you, and maybe kill me."

She also told the man, who had stopped going to church, "If I were you, I would make things right with my God. I have forgiven you for killing my husband. You had better go and make things right with your God, and begin going to church again. Where you run to, go to church. Go and fellowship with the brethren."

I have seen this courageous, forgiving woman. The scar is still there. So is her voice, in a Shepherdess singing group. This, too, is Rwanda.

The attacks were coming from all sides since the *interabamwe* were many, having come from a number of communes. A lot of soldiers were there. There was a lot of shooting and a lot of dying.

According to Gashi's account, he and many others rushed to the Adventist hospital. The killers pursued them.

By 11:00 a.m., they invaded the hospital, looting and killing. Around 1:00 p.m. they threw pepper gas into the hospital. Of course those who were still alive sneezed and coughed. This way the killers knew who was still alive and went in and killed them.

The attempt to save the women and children by placing them in the church was equally disastrous, Gashi says.

There were no survivors among the women and children in the church. The man who is responsible for their death is Elsaphane Ntakirutimana, president of the Adventists in the region of Kibuye. He is the one who mobilized the other pastors and the population which was scared to go to the church. He is also the man who brought the gendarmes. Sebihi wrote to Elsaphane asking for help. In fact, Sebihi wrote three letters, one to the bourgmestre, Charles Sindikubwabo, one to the bourgmestre's father, who was a fellow pastor, and one to the prefet. We heard that Elsaphane refused to take the letter. He came and told us, "You die like men, not like children." He is a pastor. But those are the words he left us with. You can imagine how we felt. The bourgmestre was also physically present at the church on the 16th and had a gun.

Edison Kayihura, 34, a farmer from a district in Ngoma, lost his wife and three children inside the Adventist church. He, too, mentions the letter to Ntakirutimana, begging for protection.

Many people sought protection at the church because the gendarmes told them that they would find protection there. For eight days we had that protection, which encouraged more and more people to come to the church. Then on the 16th, Sabbath day, the protection ended and the killing began. A lot of *interabamwe* from different communes turned up on the 16th. Many of the pastors who had taken refuge at the church wrote to the bourgmestre's father, asking for help. They asked someone to give the letter to another pastor, Elsaphane Ntakirutimana, who was meant to get it to the bourgmestre's father. The pastors wrote the letter when the gendarmes said they could no longer look after our security. They asked for protection or at least further

advice. Elsaphane sent a message back saying that there was nothing he could do to save them. The pastor of the church, Seth Sebihi, took the women and children into the church. He said he did not see what else we could do except to pray and wait for our death.

When the killing started, they killed both in the church and in the hospital. I was in the church. As the killing continued, I fell under dead bodies. I made sure I was ad-

equately covered by dead bodies and soaked with the blood of others. When they thought that everyone was dead, they started the looting. The fact that there are any survivors is due to the fact that a few of us were able to sneak out in the night.

Jerome Bayingana was in his fourth year of secondary school at the time of the crisis. His testimony corroborates the others' eyewitness accounts of the slaughter on the 16th.

We fled to the hospital. There were a lot of us. All the rooms of the hospital were full, as were all the teaching establishments of the hospital. When we got there, there was a doctor called Gerard, a son of a certain Ntakirutimana, the president of the Adventists in Kibuye. This doctor telephoned the prefet of Kibuye to say that a lot of Tutsis had

J. J. Nortey, former president of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division: "There should be a point where we just say what is gone is gone. Let's begin afresh." Echoing his predecessor, L. T. Daniel, the current division president, says, "Our approach is to forget the past and begin afresh."

come the hospital and that this was getting on his nerves. He could not appreciate the reasons why we were there. . . .

The *interahamwe* [the militia] encircled the whole place and started shooting and throwing grenades. That was about 8:00 a.m. The women and girls were inside the church. The men went to confront the attack. We had only stones, spears, and machetes. That day, almost everyone was killed.

Before the genocide, the region of Kibuye had the largest Tutsi population in Rwanda. According to African Rights, within 100 days, a population of more than a quarter million was reduced to fewer than 8,000.

L. T. Daniel, president of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division since the 1995 General Conference Session, was president of the Nigerian Union at the time of the crisis. He says, of testimonies such as the ones published by African Rights, "Some of it is true, some is not."

Heraldo Seidl, head of disaster response for ADRA, agrees. "Nobody tells the truth. People are afraid to. You cannot prove anything in a confused situation like that."

Nevertheless, according to Daniel, Ntakirutimana has been questioned by church authorities regarding the massacre in the village of Mugunaro. Ntakirutimana's defense against accusations, Daniel said, was that the killers told him to leave the area or he would be killed along with the thousands they were planning to murder. So he left.

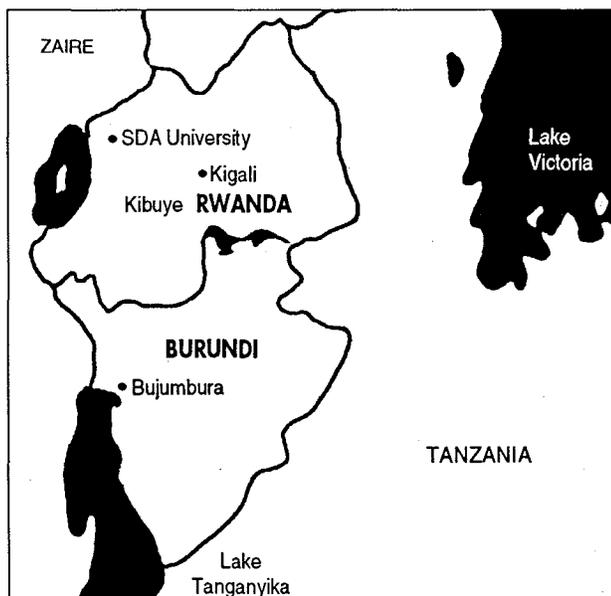
"He Did Not Act Officially . . . There Was No Official Action"

The church has not made an official statement concerning Ntakirutimana. "He did not act officially, if he acted at all," Daniel said. "There was no committee meeting, as we know of, which he called and [which] passed any action. So the church cannot defend him

officially because there was no official action. . . . If he acted at all he acted on his own . . . so the church does not have an official position on him."

Ray Dabrowski, communications director of the General Conference, says, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church condemns atrocity in any form. We are supportive of the initiatives of the Rwandan government and the United Nations to bring to justice those who are responsible for the illegal activities in that country's crisis."

The church where the massacre occurred has now become a sort of museum. Several Adventist young people exhumed four bodies from the mass graves and placed them in coffins in front of the pulpit in the church, "as a reminder that people came to the church for safety, but met death," Daniel says. The young Adventists first proposed that bodies should be placed in glass coffins all around the church. The government supported the plan, but Adventist administrators objected, saying the building was built and consecrated as a church. The Adventist officials were overruled by the government and some members of the congregation. The congregation now worships in a nearby building. The church is a museum, showing, Daniel says, how deep-rooted the hurting is.



According to unconfirmed reports, Gerard Ntakirutimana, the son of Elsaphane Ntakirutimana, accused of participating in the genocide, was said to have found work in an Adventist hospital in Zambia after leaving the Adventist hospital in Mugunaro, where the Sabbath slaughter took place. African Rights has gathered an extensive number of detailed, firsthand testimonies about Gerard Ntakirutimana.³ According to Pastor Daniel, Gerard Ntakirutimana is now in Abidjan, capital of the Ivory Coast and location of the headquarters of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Daniel says Gerard Ntakirutimana wants to be absolved. Currently, he is not receiving pay from the Adventist Church.

Animosity "Deeper Than Religion"

Many people want to know how those who profess Christianity, including Adventists, can take part in such atrocities. "There is such deep-rooted animosity; deeper than religion," Daniel says. J. J. Nortey, the division president at the time of the massacre, supports this view. "Until Christianity begins to value itself above tribalism and nationalism, then we have a problem. We are trying to bring people together—Hutu and Tutsi."

"There were many factions in the church already," says Bob Prouty, an Adventist who helped start the Adventist University of Central Africa, in Mudende. "There were a lot of bad feelings and problems along regional lines. . . . Corrupt leadership also contributed to the problem. Administratively, the church was very weak. . . . Rwanda was isolated and inward-looking, cut off from the correcting influences of society. The Adventists stuck together for the most part, but the church was not prepared for such a crisis."

The Adventist Church is one of many church organizations that experienced serious ad-

ministrative problems during the 1994 crisis. Many churches expressed great concern that their members were involved in the killings. "[There is] absolutely no doubt that significant numbers of prominent Christians in parishes were involved. . . . Catholics, Anglicans, and Baptists [were] implicated by omission or commission in militia killings," says Ian Linden, general secretary of the Catholic Institute for International Relations. As spokesperson for the Catholic Church, Linden assumes some responsibility for dealing with the crisis. "The danger is [in assuming] an apologetic role and, by seeking explanation, inadvertently to excuse."⁴

The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, as leader of the World Anglican community, sharply criticizes leaders of the Anglican Church in Rwanda. The church "should have been pointing out some of the atrocities, but by and large its voice was silent." During a London news conference, following a pastoral visit to Rwanda, Carey said he was appalled no one had been brought to trial, and that "the entire church structure in Rwanda may have to be reorganized."⁵ He subsequently dealt personally with individual bishops accused of involvement in the violence.

What Is Gone Is Gone— Or Is It?

Nortey has a different answer. "There should be a point where we just say what is gone is gone. Let's begin afresh."

Echoing his predecessor, Daniel, the current division president, says, "Our approach is to forget the past and begin afresh. It is not easy to preach to the deeply aggrieved people in Rwanda after hearing of such atrocities. But we must forgive those who hurt us. We must forgive anyway."

Adventists around the world wonder if more should not be done, in terms of public

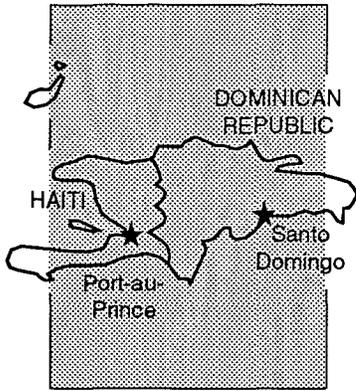
accountability and intense re-examination of Adventism, to reduce the possibility of Ad-

ventists again engaging in genocide, including the slaughter of other Adventists.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Letter from Rakiya Omaar, of Africa Rights, to Roy Branson, March 1, 1996.
2. See "Rwandan in U.S. Linked to Massacre," *Washington Times* (April 11, 1996).
3. Letter from Omaar, March 1, 1996.

4. "The Churches and Genocide: Lessons From the Rwandan Tragedy," *The Month* 28 (July 1995), pp. 256-263.
5. "Carey Criticizes Rwandan Church Leaders," *Christian Century* 112:602 (June 7-14, 1995).



Our Man in Port-au-Prince

A recent college graduate joins ADRA, and ends up seeing the U.S. invasion of Haiti.

by Joel Sandefur

I was on my way to Haiti via the Dominican Republic. It was early September of 1994, a few months after I graduated from La Sierra University with a B.A. in French. The U.N. embargo on Haiti was at its tightest: no flights in or out. The only way for me to get to Port-au-Prince and my job with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was to travel overland by bus from the Dominican Republic.

I had exactly three qualifications to go work for ADRA/Haiti: I had a U.S. passport, I spoke French, and I was willing to go. I was all for feeding the hungry, though I had no idea how it happened in real life. What was clear in my mind was that I absolutely had to beat the invasion. I wanted to be in Haiti when the troops waded ashore or dropped from the sky. Here are excerpts from the first month of a diary I kept during my year as the logistics officer of ADRA/Haiti.

SEPTEMBER 14

It is my second day in Haiti. It's overwhelming. I am beginning to wonder about my choice to come. It was one thing to say "I'm going to Haiti." But it's quite another to actually be here. I was

Joel Sandefur, a graduate of La Sierra University, is entering the University of Virginia Law School this fall.

prepared—at least I thought I was. I knew all about the filth and the crowding and the rigors of the embargo. It's one thing to know about something and another to live it.

Tonight is the first night of the curfew, seven to seven. This morning the helicopters dropped leaflets in Creole with pictures showing people the proper procedure for throwing down their guns.

The rumor is that the Marines land tomorrow. We're all keeping our radios handy. Why the hell did I come here? I'm not really sure. It's hot, filthy, the electricity rarely works. My spirits are at a low ebb.

SEPTEMBER 15

War and rumors of war. Saw a U.S. destroyer just off-shore. A group of Haitians were gathered on the beach pointing and staring. The airport is supposed to close today, maybe tomorrow. Rumor has it they're parking shipping containers on the airport runways to keep planes from landing. The ambassador said the invasion is going to happen, but didn't know when. The mood among the expatriates is odd. Everyone is nervously anticipating something, but they're not sure when it will come. All anyone knows is that it will be soon. Some say this weekend, some next week, others that it's all a bluff.

There doesn't appear to be much hostility toward

Americans. I don't understand why not. A lot of places with a lot less reason to hate the U. S. than Haiti have us as enemy No. 1. Here it's not the case. The guy at the appliance store (who didn't have any washing machines, but did have rows of refrigerators) told me everything would be OK if we would just lift the embargo. He was very much against the idea of an invasion. I told him that it wasn't me personally who was invading. He agreed. It was nothing personal.

SEPTEMBER 16

Today I drove for the first time. It's like nothing I've ever done. There are no traffic rules. Generally people seem to prefer the right hand side of the road, but there isn't much to hold them to it. I kept having to resist the urge to use my blinkers—a futile gesture. Suffice it to say, I did things on the road today that would have landed me behind bars in the U.S.

I drove through Kuwait City today, a section of road along the waterfront lined with black-market gasoline vendors. Most of it gets sold out of one- and five-gallon cans. The customers are mostly upper-class Haitians. They look terribly out of place in their Mercedes and Land Cruisers. It's something to see a man dressed in an expensive suit and an old woman dressed in rags haggling over the price of one gallon of diesel. It is a sick kind of economic empowerment of the underclass. One match could send the place sky high. The embargo hasn't shut down the gasoline industry—only forced it underground, nominally at least. Rumor has it that there's a pipeline running across the border with the Dominican Republic.

Just heard a cryptic message on the radio: "VIP coming tomorrow for high-level meetings. Expect a long weekend." My theory is it means Jimmy Carter is coming tomorrow. Just a guess. Something needs to happen quickly. This place is strangling to death. I'm all for peace. But a quick invasion is better than a drawn-out peaceful resolution. Clinton seems to have committed himself to an invasion. It is a strange feeling, a bit surreal, to think that the place they're talking about in the news, is right here; that the news isn't going to happen on the news, it's going to be live—right here in Port-au-Prince.

It happened about 1:30 a.m. I was sure the "show" was starting. Planes flew low overhead. People tell me they were dropping leaflets and radios. They also say the Haitian military went around roughing people up and confiscating the radios.

This is a shadowy, fantastic place. In my four days here, I have yet to see overt evidence of voodoo, though I imagine the decorations on the tap-taps (Haitian fixed-route taxis) are voodoo inspired. It doesn't mesh—that place I'd read about and seen in the movies—and this place. I really don't see how I'm going to last a year here.

SEPTEMBER 17

Won't be long now. Jimmy Carter, Colin Powell, and Sam Nunn are/were here today. There is hope at least that this thing will end without fighting. The shooting, though, has been going on for a couple of nights, some of it machine-gun fire. It's hard to say what the shooters were hoping to accomplish with their firing. They were probably just spooked—shooting at anything that moved or appeared to move. It's a little unnerving to hear shooting so close by, but I'm beginning to get used to it. It's kind of funny, actually, the thought of some Haitian irregular trying to shoot down a U.S. air force plane with his World War II vintage M-1 rifle.

I stopped today at the Baptist Mission of Rev. and Mrs. Turnbull, Americans by birth but Haitian residents for the past 46 years. Here are some of the things he told me, the best-known foreign missionary in all of Haiti:

- 250,000 people will die when the U.S. troops land.
- Aristide's followers will rise up and kill all the evangelical ministers they can get their hands on.
- The army will slaughter Aristide's people.
- Aristide worships a demon.
- Carter and friends have already left the country in failure (not true).
- Bill Clinton is the anti-Christ.

Turnbull was a pathetic example of a particularly troubling brand of missionary mentality—a paranoid, half-crazy do-gooder ensconced in his own personal fiefdom. The Baptist Mission itself was well put together and clean, though.

SEPTEMBER 18

Haitian TV is showing a movie, *Vietnam Nightmare*, interspersed with live broadcasts from the square in front of the presidential palace (what does one call the palace where a ruling junta resides?) where an anti-U.S. demonstration is going on. A not-too-subtle political statement.

I can barely follow what the announcer is saying.

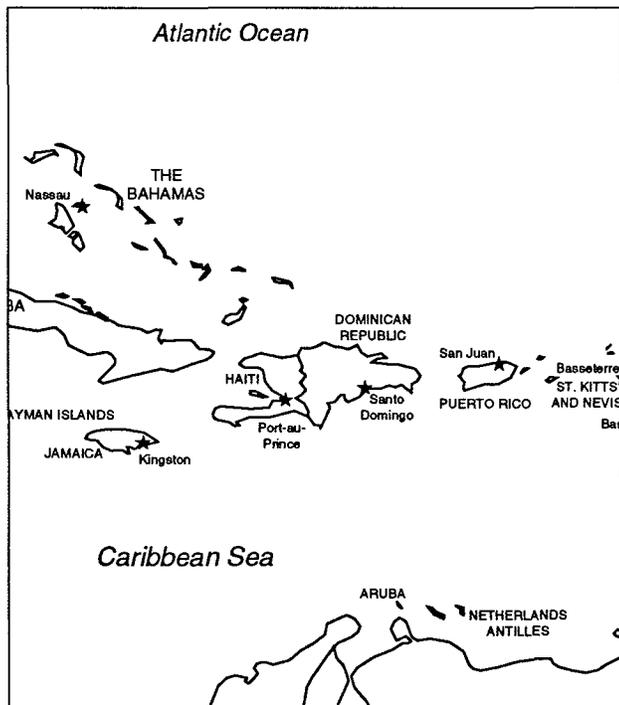
Creole is a little like French, but not quite close enough. Something about “Swing” (the U.S. ambassador) and “quitter” (French verb to leave). That would mesh with the rumor that Swing is being expelled from the country as an undesirable foreign national. It’s absurd really. Here we sit just a couple of miles from the action, almost totally ignorant of what’s going on, while thousands of miles away in Honolulu, my parents can watch it all live on CNN.

I’ve been living on Haitian-made cookies, “Shabisco” brand. They taste like a cross between graham crackers and cardboard. Now, Haitian TV is showing a crude music video. I couldn’t make out the words to the song except for “Cleentone” and “mourir” (to die). The video is a montage of pictures from previous U.S. military interventions, looped Haitian crowd scenes, and clips of Clinton.

No invasion. Cedras has agreed to leave. The troops land tomorrow under much better conditions than we’d expected. The planes were already on their way.

SEPTEMBER 19

Thanks to the ambiguity of the political situation, I get most of the day off. No one is certain what’s going to happen as the Americans land and take control. Some think there will be violence. So far, there’s been no evidence of that. Port-au-Prince is more or less shut down. The market stalls are empty. Foot traffic is sparse. Everyone seems to be taking a



wait and see approach.

Surprisingly enough, we were able to get all the way down in front of the airport, one of the places where the troops are helicoptering in. The sky was full of choppers ferrying soldiers in from the ships off-shore. There was a crowd of Haitians, thousands of them, on one side of the street in front of the airport. The atmosphere was positively carnival. On the other side of the street, facing the crowd, were 50 or so soldiers armed to the teeth in full camouflage battle gear. All the while the helicopters kept landing. Every so often, the crowd would charge over toward the fence to see what was going on on the runways. People crawled all over each other to get a better view. The sight of dozens of helicopters flying low in formation is truly spectacular.

Thé vendors—sugar cane mostly—were doing land-office business. The soldiers were dug in along the airport’s perimeter fence, sometimes only feet from the crowd. It was as if they were attractions in a zoo. The Haitians would come right up to the fence and point and laugh. Meanwhile the soldiers were deadly serious, weapons ready, scanning the crowd for any threat, thinking “Beirut.”

I’ve driven by two Haitian military posts today. In both cases, men were sitting out in front, not in uniform, but armed, ready to blend in and disappear. I wonder what they must think of all this.

SEPTEMBER 27

Our Cap-Haitien warehouse was *déchouké* (looted, liberated, literally uprooted). They even took the pallets. Some of our feeding centers have even been hit. Johan Van Bignoot, the ADRA country director, says our warehouse here in Port-au-Prince might get hit tonight.

We got a call tonight over the radio that something might be going down at the warehouse. Armed with a radio, flashlight, and mace, Van Bignoot and I drove up there to take a look. It was a bit unsettling. Do I really want to take that kind of risk for ADRA? Is it worth any danger to protect a warehouse from what is euphemistically called “popular distribution” or “auto-distribution.” During the day, Haiti is confusing and aggravating. At night it becomes menacing. I am not a paranoid person, but I cannot help getting the creeps driving down dark, narrow streets at night. You feel alone until the glare of the headlights reveals that the streets are actually crowded with people, many just standing around, acting like they’re waiting for something to happen. As very few good things happen in Haiti, that can be scary.

OCTOBER 11

Generals Cedras and Biamby, along with the hated police chief Michel François, should be leaving Haiti soon. I've heard that there are thousands of people out cleaning up the streets for Aristide's return on Saturday. People go around crowing like roosters—the Lavalas' (Aristide's party) mascot. We are apprehensive about the weekend. In Haiti happy people are as likely to loot as angry ones. Any overabundance of emotion leads to déchoukage.

OCTOBER 13

Last night our warehouse was broken into. They were professionals. They smashed a hole in the perimeter wall and the warehouse wall with an old truck axle, battering-ram style. Unfortunately for them, they bumped into a big stack of soy-fortified bulgur. They were still able to get away with 10 tons of stuff—mostly vegetable oil. They know how to go for the most valuable food. Our guards—Haitian soldiers for hire—fired on (or more likely over) the thieves with their M-1 rifle. The looters fired back. I think the guards decided to quit. Their gun jammed and they can't get a replacement or reinforcements. The U.S. has taken away the army's weapons, and the people have looted their police stations. Tonight at 1 a.m. we are supposed to get looted again. The U.S. army doesn't seem much interested in helping protect us. As one Captain Mckorcle told me, with no hint of irony, "the U.S. army isn't in the security business." And to think, just a month ago I was in Colorado worried about my brother's bike being stolen out of our garage.

OCTOBER 14

Tonight Port-au-Prince is in the streets. The city is one gigantic, raucous party. Aristide comes back tomorrow. His picture is everywhere: hanging from cords strung between trees, painted on walls, screened on t-shirts. The last few days have seen a massive, haphazard urban beautification project. People have been cleaning the streets and dredging the gutters. The roads are lined with conch shells and rock gardens in the shape of hearts. The people have spelled out messages in fluorescent rocks to their beloved Aristide. The whole thing is gaudy and very temporary. The trees planted alongside the road are not trees that will take root—only branches that will turn brown in a matter of days. One wonders if the euphoria Haiti feels today will suffer the same

fate. But for now Haiti is in the streets getting drunk and dancing lewdly. It's a party. Parties aren't reality. That comes after the long weekend. Haiti is reveling in the moment, in the return of an exiled president who has never proven himself to be much of a statesman. Haiti is happy because something momentous is happening. It is the happening that matters now.

OCTOBER 15

Today ranks among the strangest of my life. Overnight, the warehouse was looted once again. They were still at it when we got to the office. The looters were climbing in and out of the hole they'd knocked in the warehouse, scurrying back and forth like rodents. Our presence didn't faze them much. They would stop and look at us, then retreat back through the hole in the perimeter wall. They stood there just off our property watching us, waiting for us to turn our backs so they could resume their plundering. They weren't much frightened of us, only a bit inconvenienced by our presence. They really acted as if they were entitled to what they were stealing. A blind man pled with us to give him a sack of food because he hadn't had a chance to take anything like the others. Our workers filled in the breach with pallets and 50 kilo sacks of bulgur. The looters pushed against the makeshift barricade as those inside worked on reinforcing it. At one point our two Haitian military guards fired shots in the air (apparently they had found bullets somewhere). That scared the looters off for a minute.

The U.S. military showed up at noon and took it upon themselves to try and repossess the stolen food. They had two Humvees full of stuff they'd confiscated waiting when we got back from lunch. They then acted like it was our responsibility to go out and find our food and take it back. Two of us rode with three soldiers in a Humvee to where they'd found stolen vegetable oil not 300 yards from our compound. People were squatting in abandoned buildings. It was a pathetic scene, families living separated from one another only by sheets hung from lines stretched between the walls. The U.S. soldiers burst into the dwellings and started overturning bundles of clothing. Not surprisingly, almost every one revealed a carton of USAID vegetable oil. The Haitian-American soldier who was with us ordered the people to load the stuff into the Humvee. They did it with surprisingly little complaint. They gave us looks that said, "we'll be back for it tonight."

I went with one soldier into an unsearched building. First, he yelled for the woman inside to get

out. She did. It felt like a scene from a Vietnam war movie—searching for Vietcong weapons. The soldier started overturning mattresses and clothing piles with his M-16. He was about to flip over one mattress when I spotted a baby, a newborn lying asleep on the bed. Apparently the mother had been in such a hurry to get out that she had left it behind. I yelled at him to stop. “Good call,” he said.

The next 11 months in Haiti were not as eventful as the first month covered in my journal excerpts. The food kept moving out to the people who needed it, in spite of bandits on the roads, pirates on the seas, and roads that tore our delivery trucks apart. ADRA distributed in the neighborhood of 18,000 metric tons of U.S. Government-donated food during the year I was in Haiti. That translates to several hundred thousand people receiving food from ADRA on a regular basis.

As I read through my journal for that month, I had to resist the temptation to edit my reactions. Mostly, it was a case of “if I only knew then what I know now.” Though it took several months, I did manage to get

over the initial shock of Haiti. Over time, my perspective became more positive. I started to see that there was more to Haiti than filth, stench, heat, humidity, and indescribably mind-numbing poverty. It took me months of complaint and frustration before I began to see the beauty of Haiti—the fundamental gentleness of the people, the richness and complexity of Haitian culture. In reality, Haiti was not the violent, intimidating place I had been led to expect by too many zombie movies and news reports about machete-wielding mobs. The crowds milling about on the streets of Port-au-Prince at night were socializing and bartering with street vendors, not waiting to burn and loot. Voodoo was far less about zombies and sticking pins into dolls and far more about people trying to make sense of depressing realities and searching for a measure of control over their lives.

Will Haiti ever pull itself out of the abyss of poverty? Is there any hope for Haiti’s future, beyond mere survival? I don’t know. What I do know is that my time in Haiti touched me deeply, and that I pray that some day a small piece of good fortune will fall Haiti’s way.



The Savage Poetry Of *Judges*

The oldest parts of the Bible—the focus of the second quarter's Sabbath school lesson—are poetry about violence.

by Beverly G. Beem, Douglas R. Clark, and Jerry A. Gladson

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord strengthened King Eglon of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord. In alliance with the Ammonites and the Amalekites, he went and defeated Israel; and they took possession of the city of palms. So the Israelites served King Eglon of Moab eighteen years.

But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent tribute by him to King Eglon of Moab.

Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length; and he fastened it on his right thigh under his clothes. Then he presented the tribute to King Eglon of Moab.

Now Eglon was a very fat man. When Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent the people who carried the tribute on their way. But he himself turned back at the sculptured stones near Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

So the king said, "Silence!" and all his attendants went out from his presence.

Ehud came to him, while he was sitting alone in his cool roof chamber, and said, "I have a message from God for you." So he rose from his seat.

Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into Eglon's belly; the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out of his belly; and the dirt came out. Then Ehud went out into the vestibule, and closed the doors of the roof chamber on him, and locked them.

After he had gone, the servants came. When they saw that the doors of the roof chamber were locked, they thought, "He must be relieving himself in the cool chamber." So they waited until they were embarrassed.

When he still did not open the doors of the roof chamber, they took the key and opened them. There was their lord lying dead on the floor.

Ehud escaped while they delayed, and passed

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beyond the sculptured stones, and escaped to Seirab. When he arrived he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites went down with him from the hill country, having him at their head.

He said to them, "Follow after me; for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand."

So they went down after him, and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites, and allowed no one to cross over. At that time they killed about ten thousand of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; no one escaped.

So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest eighty years.

—Judges 3:12-30 (NRSV)

EHUD, THE LEFT-HANDED SON OF THE RIGHT hand, takes his homemade dagger and slays Eglon, the fatted calf of Moab. The

Israelite audience would have recognized the pun and laughed. The murder is committed in the king's own palace. The murderer escapes while his courtiers wait outside the locked door trying to figure out why the king is taking so long to open the door. Linger over the royal chamber pot, they surmise. The Israelite hearers would have recognized the irony and laughed. The 20th-century reader, too, sees in this ancient story a first-rate cloak-and-dagger murder mystery. While we, too, can laugh at the twists and turns of this tale of intrigue and derring-do, we recognize the craft of a master storyteller.

In a study of biblical narrative technique, Erich Auerbach compares Hebrew story-telling style with that of Homer. Homeric style, he says, puts everything in the foreground, com-

The Story of Hebrew Storytelling

Judges is a unique anthology of narratives and poetry set in the period of earliest Israel. Since narrative literature constitutes a good deal of the material in the Old Testament, including most of the stories found in the book of Judges, a note or two about stories in general might prove helpful, especially stories in the Hebrew Bible. Whereas legal texts intend to give structure to life, wisdom amasses observations about life and tries to make sense of it, psalms celebrate or lament life, narrative literature attempts to recreate and convey the essence of life. In the process, hearers and later readers engage the stories and are engaged by them. Creative literary features both edify and entertain.

In recent years, closer literary readings of the Bible have moved biblical studies into a new era. During the past few decades, vigorous proposals have forced traditional scholarship to reconsider its philosophical, theoretical, and methodological underpinnings.

Fundamental to the new literary analysis is a recognition of the Bible as literature. Some are more stringent than others in drawing a line between literary and historical or theological aspects of the Bible. All those who approach the Bible as literature focus on literary structures, forms, features, agendas.

To start elsewhere is to treat these narratives as though they were something other than literary.

For Ryken and Longman, this means two things: the form of the story itself conveys meaning, and biblical stories are self-consciously artistic.

This implies that we cannot grasp the truth of story or poem, for example, without first interacting with the story qualities or poetic images. . . . The literary critic's preoccupation with the forms of biblical literature is more than an aesthetic delight in craftsmanship, though it is not less than that. It is also part of a concern to understand the truth of the text at a deeper level than a propositional summary extracted from the text (p. 17f).

The very notion of the literary nature of the text has stimulated creative rethinking and reformulation of priorities in the study of biblical literature. Within the milieu of literary approaches to the Bible, a *narrative analysis* includes several related categories or subcategories: *rhetorical criticism*, with its concern for surface structure; *aesthetic criticism*, with its focus upon artistic features; *structuralism*, which examines deep linguistics structures and symbols; and *deconstruction*, which places meaning entirely on the side of the reader.

pletely describing time, place, character, motives, and backgrounds of the story. Biblical style, on the other hand, depicts nothing except what is needed for the action. All else is left in obscurity. Details so abundant in Homeric stories are here left to the imagination. So, in biblical narrative when the storyteller bothers to record a particular detail of setting or character or description, chances are it is a significant one to an understanding of the story. Our task as readers is to find out what this significance is.

Reading the Book of Judges

This book includes some of the most exciting stories in the Bible. Deborah and

Attention to the literary features of the biblical text brings with it reassessments of author, text, and reader. One thus excavates these ancient narratives to uncover points of view—for example, an author, a narrator, and an implied narrator. In similar fashion, one searches for a narratee, implied narratee, and real reader among the diverse strata of a story. In addition, characterization, plot, rhetorical features, all call for analysis.

With Ryken and Longman, we sense that, “Underlying the range of current critical approaches . . . is a shared conviction that literature is the result of conscious composition, careful patterning, and an awareness of literary conventions prevalent at the time of writing and subsequently” (p. 18). The Hebrew language lends itself to creative, energetic, and engaging storytelling—verbal roots of most vocabulary, ensuring action; an economy of words, allowing the imagination much more space in which to create scenes and providing a foundation for double-meanings; character and plot development; an extremely wide range of rhetorical devices, fostering humor, irony, paronomasia, etc. Reading the Bible as literature leads modern readers into meaningful, enjoyable, and redemptive experiences with biblical narrative.

Barak, Jael and Sisera, Jephthah and his daughter, Samson and Delilah. It is hard to imagine a finer anthology of the narrative art. But what makes them a book? What unifies them and connects them? Of all the stories floating around the campfires of ancient Israel, why would the final editor select these to preserve for all time?

As readers move from the story of Achsah in the first chapter to the story of the concubine in the final episode, they are following the disintegration of a nation. Judges begins in victory as Israel enters the promised land and settles it; it ends in dissolution, as family preys on family, tribe attacks tribe. There is no order, no law, no social structure, no sign of God. The final verse is a haunting refrain that explains the reason for this chaos: “In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.”

How did it happen? How could a book that begins with such hopefulness end with such despair? Part of the answer is embedded in the narrative framework. In the second chapter, the narrator charts the pattern holding these narratives together. It’s a six-stage process. Israel forgets God and goes after other gods. God responds by abandoning them to their enemies. Israel languishes in oppression. The tribes then cry to God, not necessarily in repentance, but in suffering. God hears their cries and raises up a judge to deliver Israel. Then Israel has rest and serves God all the days of the judge. But when the judge dies, the cycle begins all over again.

The book is actually about the leadership of Israel. It begins after the death of Joshua. But Israel is not leaderless. It asks direction of God, and God is there to give it. “Who shall go up?” asks Israel in chapter 1. God answers, “Judah shall go up.” Who is the leader of Israel? God is. And we see in the parade of judges, across the stage, leaders raised up by God to deliver Israel. They are charismatic leaders. Chosen by God. Empowered by

God. But as the cycle works itself through over and over again, the presence of God becomes less apparent. Finally, he says in the story of Jephthah, "I will deliver you no more" (chap. 10:13). Even then, he delivers Israel one more time. But his presence is less apparent in the last part of the book. Where is he when the Levite is carving up the body of his concubine and calling Israel to war? A new form of leadership is needed. The system of judges that began with the glory of Deborah and Ehud ends with the ambiguity of Jephthah and Samson. The final editor remembers the glories of the old days, even as he calls for the stability that a king would bring.

The narrator chooses the medium of story to explore the nature of leadership in Israel. In the framework passages, surrounding the stories the narrator comments on their significance. But these passages are only transitional. The heart of the book lies in the stories. To understand them, the reader must watch the choice of detail, notice recurring themes and images, and keep track of variations in the plot.

When God raises leaders in Israel, he chooses the unlikeliest heroes. Instead of the mighty generals one might expect from God, he chooses a left-handed assassin, a woman judging Israel under a palm tree, the youngest of the smallest tribe, and the bastard son living on the outskirts of the community. Unlikely heroes, indeed. But the deliverer of Israel is God, and he works through whomever he will.

These unlikely heroes fight with the unlikeliest weapons. Ehud strikes down a king with an unexpected, shortened sword, hidden under his cloak. Jael fells a general with a tent-peg. Shamgar kills 600 Philistines with an oxgoad. Gideon fights with pitchers and lanterns. A certain woman topples Abimelech with a millstone. These

are all instruments of peace, common household tools, turned to purposes of war.

Stories of war are ordinarily men's stories. The appearance of a woman would not be expected. But in these stories, women play significant roles. Achsah receives a great dowry of the dry Negev and asks for wells, the prerogatives of chiefs, and thus ensures the prosperity of her family. Deborah, the woman of flame, conveys the words of God to the resistant Barak. The victory will be in the hands of a woman, she tells him. Surprisingly enough, the woman is not Deborah, but Jael who offers milk in a lordly dish. Abimelech destroys the fields of Shechem and burns 1,000 people taking refuge in a tower. When he attempts to do the same thing at Thebez, "a certain woman" drops a millstone on his head and delivers her city. And Abimelech calls his armor-bearer to run him through lest people say that he was killed by a woman. The narrator says, "When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they all went home" (chap. 9:55, NRSV).

The stories of the judges are the stories of people working more or less closely with God, with one another, and with their families. They are people living in a particular time and place and involved in the ordinary activities of daily life. The stories take place in palaces, in homes, in tents, in fields. Battles are won by unlikely people wielding unlikelier weapons. Israel is settling the land promised to them by God. But it is a sad story. The cycle of apostasy and deliverance works itself out, over and over again, until the formula breaks. Something new is needed. The charismatic leadership God used in this settlement period is giving way to a new form of leadership. But the time has not yet come. The book ends with Israel in chaos, ready for a new form of leadership to move them into the next stage of history. The stories of unlikely heroes will give way to stories of kings and prophets.

The Contours of Hebrew Poetry

To appreciate the poetical character of many of the books of the Old Testament, especially the Deborah account in Judges 5, it is necessary to have some awareness of Hebrew poetry. It is based on a line and its parts. Usually, the line consists of two balanced parts, known as *cola*, marked off with the equivalent of our semicolon. When two lines are joined, is called a *bicolon*; when three, a *tricolon*, and so on:¹

"Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain" (Isaiah 40:4).²

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever" (Psalm 111:10).

Further enhancing the poetical form is a balancing of lines, most frequently in the style of a couplet. Two whole lines appear side by side. This is known technically as the *parallelismus membrorum*, or *parallelism of members*.

"The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever"
(Isaiah 40:7, 8).

Such balancing is likely intended as a seconding, a restating or echoing in some form of the initial line. In the example above, line B restates and extends what is meant by the "breath of God"—namely, the prophetic word of God contrasted with the transitory existence of the people.

Such balancing of lines enjoys many variations. In one form, known as *synonymous parallelism*, the second line restates or echoes the first:

"Lord, when you went forth from Seir,
when you marched from the region of Edom . . ." (Judges 5:4).

In a contrasting couplet, known as an *antithetic parallelism*, the second line contrasts with the first:

"So perish all your enemies, O Lord!
But may your friends be like the sun as it rises in its might" (Judges 5:31).

The succeeding lines may not only echo or restate, but advance the thought of the first line. This is *synthetic parallelism*. Although the distinction between it and synonymous parallelism may at times be blurred, the synthetic variety often extends beyond two lines:

"The torrent Kishon swept them away,
the onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon.
March on, my soul, with might!"
(Judges 5:21).

The *chiasm*, or *inverted parallelism*, is more complicated, because its basic pattern resembles the Greek letter *chi* Χ:

(A) "Most blessed of women be Jael,
(B) the wife of Heber the Kenite,
(A´) of tent-dwelling women most blessed"
(Judges 5:24).

(A) "Have mercy on me, O God,
(B) according to your steadfast love;
(B´) according to your abundant mercies
(A´) blot out my transgressions and cleanse me
from my sin"
(Psalm 51:1, Hebrews).

Line A is parallel to A´ at the end of the couplet, while B is parallel to its adjoining member B´. The whole couplet is thus inverted in the shape of Χ. Larger units or even entire books also use chiastic structure.³

Parallelism may be translated into any language. Hebrew poetry also makes use of internal phonetic patterns, such as alliteration and assonance. But the general feature of parallelism, once grasped, is of inestimable value in understanding Hebrew poetry. One line helps interpret another. Like other speakers and writers in the ancient world, all the prophets and poets of Israel use parallelism.

As with English poetry, Hebrew poetry apparently has some sort of meter. Since Hebrew was originally written without vowels, precluding a precise knowledge of its pronunciation and accentuation, we may never fully clarify the Hebrew metric system (or even if a systematic one existed).⁴ Some insist on counting only the accents, others consider just the syllables,⁵ but we really do not know. The lack of certainty in the area of meter, however, does not limit our enjoyment of the beauty of Hebrew poetry.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Aloysius Fitzgerald, "Hebrew Poetry," *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, pp. 201-208.

2. This quotation, and those that follow, from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

3. Kenneth Strand finds a chiasmic structure governing the entirety of Revelation, a book whose structure has long puzzled scholars (*Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, With Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis* [Rev. ed.; Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1976]). An appendix in his study offers a chiasmic arrangement of Zechariah (p. 85).

4. Robert Alter goes so far as to assert that because there is so little evidence for the counting of stresses in a line of Hebrew poetry, "the term *meter* should probably be abandoned for biblical verse" (*The Art of Biblical Poetry* [New York: Basic Books, 1985], p. 9).

5. F. M. Cross, "Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Verse: The Prosody of Lamentations 1:1-22," *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth*, D. N. Freedman, C. L. Meyers, and M. O'Connor, eds. (ASOR Special Vol. ser. 1; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983); D. N. Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980).



Welcoming the Third Millennium

Well-known and emerging Adventist leaders explore the contours of 21st-century Adventism.

by Gary Chartier

“ADVENTISM ON THE EVE OF THE 21st Century” drew approximately 200 people to the Fifth National Conference of the Association of Adventist Forums. Organized by the San Diego chapter, under the leadership of its president, Jim Kaatz, the conference met March 14-17, 1996, at San Diego’s Bahia Hotel.

What made the conference distinctive were the specific proposals by speakers like Fritz Guy and Frank Knittel; the personal vulnerability and openness of others, including Herold Weiss and Smuts van Rooyen; an ongoing discussion regarding the value and viability of church institutions; and the signs of generational tension within the forum, mirroring the one that exists within the Seventh-day Adventist community of faith as a whole.

A highlight of the weekend took place after a Saturday night Mexican buffet aboard the *Bahia Belle*, a faux Mississippi riverboat. An

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unannounced but long-awaited roast of *Spectrum* editor Roy Branson, included, among others, AAF Advisory Council chair Nancy Bailey, La Sierra University president Lawrence T. Geraty, and satire-meisters Richard Rice and Jonathan Butler. The next day, Branson was fax-roasted by his cousin, former AAF officer and University of Wisconsin historian, Ronald L. Numbers. (*Editor’s Note: Transcripts are available, but only to AAF members who include Spectrum generously in their wills.*)

Keynote speaker Fritz Guy, University Professor of Theology and Philosophy at La Sierra University, offered four proposals for the Adventist future: reformulation of theology, renewal of spiritual fire, engagement with the needs of the world, and redefinition of church organization. He pointed delicately to the need for change in Adventist doctrine, specifically a new understanding of the significance of earth history, and an appreciation of God’s saving love that is more comprehensive than Adventists have often been inclined to endorse (see “Four Ways Into the Next Millennium,” pp. 25-32).

More allusive and less systematic than Guy,

Herold Weiss advocated theological reformulation on the basis of contemporary Adventist experience. Weiss, a former Andrews University New Testament scholar who currently teaches at Saint Mary's College (South Bend, Indiana), maintained that theology should be seen as reflection on conduct and worship. A theology "from below" need not exhibit the systematic coherence and deductive rigor of a theology that begins with a clearly formulated doctrinal tradition as its ground. Thus, for instance, conflicting biblical statements on divorce can be accepted and held in tension with each other; there is no need to resolve the differences in an overarching unity.

Weiss suggested that theological conflict within Adventism was driven by the divergence between two visions. For an "apocalyptic" vision, salvation comes in escape from the world; for a "sapiential" vision, salvation is found through faithfulness within the world.

Frank Knittel delivered an especially memorable broadside directed at Adventist education on all levels. He is a product of Adventist schools, who is convinced that they prepared him better for graduate school than non-Adventist schools prepared his colleagues. Knittel declared that the current woes of Adventist education—declining enrollment, increasing costs, limited academic resources—necessitate drastic action. There are too many academies, he maintained; a reduction in the number could make secondary education more affordable. Also, the church in North America has eight or nine too many colleges, unless each Adventist college quickly develops an endowment of, say, \$200 million. Limits on the availability of library resources, educational enrichment programs, computers, and other goods and services could be most adequately addressed if there were far fewer Adventist educational institutions on all levels.

Responding to Knittel, former Pacific Union College president John Cassell called for a

central church decision-making authority, empowered to make system-wide decisions about Adventist education.

Knittel's and Cassell's dissatisfaction with existing institutional arrangements reflected a dominant conference theme—the ambivalence of institutions. Sensitive to the pain and injustice institutions can cause, Fritz Guy characterized them as valuable but deeply flawed.

Sunday morning, following Knittel's presentation, Susan Sickler, a member of the Columbia Union executive committee, and Larry Downing, pastor of the Anaheim, California, Adventist church, explored the place of institutions in the life of the church. Downing emphasized the loyalty to particular institutions that employees can develop. Also, church leaders, by concerning themselves with institutions' external missions, were behaving like parents who spend all of their time outside their homes, caring for people other than their own children.

The same theme played out in the dialogue between presenter Caleb Rosado and respondent David Larson. Rosado, a sociologist at the Humboldt campus of the California State University, argued strongly for pluralism, for a range of cultural, liturgical, and theological possibilities within the framework of the world church. Rosado criticized the pervasive "Americanness" of global Adventism, and objected to institutional attempts to reduce pluralism. While agreeing with Rosado that Adventism is diverse, as Christianity has always been, and that persuasion is more powerful than coercion in achieving change, Larson, director of Loma Linda University's Center for Christian Bioethics, asked whether pluralism was an essential part of the created order, or a consequence and corrective of human waywardness. Reacting to what he perceived as an anti-institutional tendency on the part of more than one speaker at the conference, Larson maintained that "organized religion is not an oxymoron."

Ronald Lawson, professor of urban studies at Queens College, City University of New York, explored international Adventism based on his hundreds of interviews of members around the world. The culture of Adventist institutions increasingly reflects the values of national societies (see "World Adventism Is Becoming Worldly," pp. 42-55).

The issue of institutions came briefly to the fore again on Sabbath morning. For Charles Teel, articulating "A Future for Adventist Mission," mission matters in part precisely because of its effects on the institution of the church. Teel, a sociologist of religion and Christian ethicist at La Sierra University, stressed that Adventism, inspired by the memories of those like Ana and Fernando Stahl, should seek to redeem institutions as well as individuals. He emphasized that individuals are always individuals-in-community. Respondent Gary Chartier argued, emphasizing the social and institutional character of religion.

The destructive character of some institutional decisions and the ineptitude of others has obviously bred a deep-seated skepticism within the church. From one perspective, the anti-institutional sentiments expressed at the conference might have been predicted. This was a progressive gathering, responding to the challenges posed by a conservative community. On the other hand, institutional settings have often provided secure settings in which independent thinking and loyalty to the church could develop in tandem. The conference mirrored an ambivalence about institutional Adventism experienced throughout the North American church.

Change is difficult, even for an avowedly and self-consciously progressive organization. It is thus, no doubt, appropriate that the Sabbath sermon, by Smuts van Rooyen, pastor of the Riverside church in California, and the response by Steve Daily, chaplain of La Sierra University, underscored the difficulty of change.

Van Rooyen identified love, faith, and hope as crucial elements in coming to terms with change that is inevitable. Daily urged a move beyond coping to conquering, maintaining that we must experience God in the present tense rather than contenting ourselves with living in the past.

The conference highlighted another way in which the forum mirrors the church. As an organization concerned with the reform of Adventism and the creation of progressive community within the church, the forum depends for its ongoing vitality on a core group of Adventists investing in the future of Adventism.

Though Roy Branson had been commissioned to speak on the topic, "Ethics and Adventism: Past, Present, and Future," he chose, instead, to assemble a panel of young Adventists working in ethics and in systematic and pastoral theology and invite them to consider the church's future. After sketching the development of Adventist work in ethics, Branson turned the discussion over to his younger colleagues in theology.

Anne Freed, a former member of the Pacific Union College religion faculty now completing a Ph.D. in philosophical theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, focused most directly on the needs of the church. She urged a greater appreciation for the church as a community shaped by the story of Jesus, a community that ought to embody a distinctive style of life that will prove inherently attractive to the church's children. Siroj Sorajjakool, a doctoral student in pastoral theology at the School of Theology at Claremont, drew on his experience with ADRA in Thailand to highlight the genuine, painful needs the church can ignore if it remains focused on other-worldly concerns (see "In Search Of A God Who Eats Rice," pp. 32-38).

Similar issues surfaced in the remarks of Michael Zbaraschak—studying the philoso-

phy of religion and theology at Claremont Graduate School—and Gary Chartier, who stressed, respectively, the church's need to work for justice and peace, and the value of feminism and feminist analysis in relation to power dynamics, religious experience, marriage, sexual orientation, and various sorts of dualism.

On Sabbath afternoon, other younger thought leaders—on a panel chaired by Larry Geraty—were invited to address the future of the church explicitly as young people. University of North Carolina history graduate Spencer Downing (son of Arlene and Larry Downing, and thus linked with an earlier generation of forum members), predicted something so fundamental as a redefinition of what it means to be Adventist.

Sheryll Prinz-Macmillan, newly ordained pastor of the Loma Linda Victoria church, urged that Adventist principles and ideals be repackaged. As an example, she suggested that vegetarianism, often supported because of its individual health benefits, has the capacity, given the economic and environmental consequences of meat-eating, to make a positive difference in the life of a hungry world.

La Sierra University graduate student and soon-to-be academy teacher Joelle Reed observed that too many young people remain linked with Adventism because of adherence to unthinking routine.

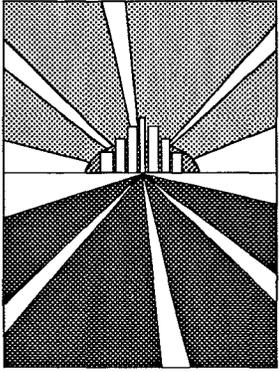
Adam Rose, AAF special projects director and a second-year Harvard Law student, observed that people leave the church because their needs are unmet. He noted that members of the so-called "Generation X" don't simply assume Adventist or Christian convictions that many members of earlier generations did. They also lack the cultural ties to Adventism that previous generations experienced. While some Adventist rules—often a source of young people's discontent—are misguided, Rose said, there is nothing wrong with rules. What is problematic is that the rules are unintelligible

to people to whom their significance has never been explained.

The "youth panel" was evidence that, just as a group of graduate and professional students in the 1960s felt that inattention to their voices made it necessary to establish the Association of Adventist Forums, similar concerns were inspiring some younger leaders of AAF in attendance at the San Diego conference. During the Saturday night cruise aboard the *Bahia Belle*, informal conversation led to plans for a "Gen X" forum conference to occur before the next regular national conference, perhaps in 1997 or 1998. During the Sunday lunch that marked the conclusion of the conference, attorney Brent Geraty, vice president of the Association of Adventist Forums and a participant in discussions among the younger forum members, announced plans for the youth convocation. Directly and repeatedly, Geraty emphasized that the planned conference would be aimed specifically at young people.

The San Diego conference was clear that the church must simultaneously revise its theology, affirm and reorganize its institutions, care for people, and embrace diversity. It is also important to ask how these concerns inform the life of the forum. The church can serve as an outpost of grace in a chaotic and violent world, proving most effective when it seeks to be the church. So, also, the forum can attempt to leaven the church by transforming doctrine and institutional polity. Most importantly, AAF can embody the kind of life for the third millennium that it commends to the church as a whole.

Tape recordings of AAF National Conference presentations are available from Sigma Audio/Video Associates; Box 51; Loma Linda, CA 92354 (see advertisement on the mailing wrap).



Four Ways Into the Next Millennium

The dean of Adventism's systematic theologians proposes four ways members can revitalize their church.

by Fritz Guy

INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT "ADVENTISM" IN general, or about the "church," I'm going to talk about *us*. How do North American Adventists need to change? Renewal, of course, is always a gift of grace. It is the work of the Spirit. But there are some things we can do to be ready for it. I suggest four ways *we* need to change.¹

Revitalize Our Theology

My first proposal is that we *revitalize our theology*. In order to do this, we need to recover the idea of "present truth"—truth that is not closed but open, not changeless but dynamic. A creed or a doctrinal statement is never the last word, but at most a progress report.

Fritz Guy, a graduate of the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University, received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Guy, the first president of La Sierra University, has served as associate dean of the seminary. He is currently professor of theology at La Sierra University. This essay is adapted from his keynote address to the national AAF conference in San Diego, March 1996.

To rethink our theology most constructively, we need to revise our approach to Scripture. We study it and dissect it, but we need to learn to *listen* to it, and we need to hear its different voices. We need to listen to it as a whole.

For Scripture is not a bag of individual pieces, but a mosaic. Scripture is not an encyclopedia of facts, but the compelling story of God's interaction with human existence—in the history of Israel, and then in the story of Jesus. Scripture is not a stockpile of hand grenades to hurl at our theological opponents, but a battery of floodlights to illuminate the meaning of our existence; not a recipe book, but a casebook.² To be Christian is to see the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah as the heart and center of all divine revelation—to grasp Scripture in the light of the Christ event.

In rethinking our theology, we need to get clear, once and for all, about the gospel. We need, in other words, a re-imagining of God—of who God is, and what God wants.³ We need to see God, not as omnipotent Sovereign, but

as infinite Lover—not as a disinterested Judge pronouncing a sentence, but as a concerned and passionate Parent welcoming a child home. We need to see God’s power, not as coercion and control, but as attraction and persuasion. We need to see salvation, not as a reward, but as a gift. We need to see God’s will for us, not as obedience to divine authority, but as our fulfillment, our happiness.⁴ For us, the Ten Commandments are not a demand, but a guide toward human flourishing. Sanctification and spiritual growth in Christ is not so much the process of pleasing God as it is living out our highest and best possibilities.

Once we are clear about the gospel, we need to determine what parts of our heritage will be particularly meaningful in the 21st century.

The Sabbath, for example, is not so much a religious duty as a spiritual experience, not so much holy “busyness” as stillness before God—not our surrender of time, but a gift that comes to us as unearned and unproduced as God’s love for us. Living in the Advent hope is not painting scenarios of last-day events, but having confidence in a future that will fulfill everything we now experience as truly good. The wholeness of human personhood leads to an experience that is “more than the sum of its parts,” and warrants both nurturing and enjoying our bodily, intellectual, and aesthetic experience. A sense of mission leads to a desire to contribute to the fulfillment of the Creator’s intention for all kinds of beings, especially human beings, created in God’s own image.

We also need to think about some new things. I will mention only three.⁵ When we have recognized (by ordination) that the ministry of women is spiritually equal to that of men, we need to ask whether our practice of ordination—of specially identifying and designating some persons as “ministers” and “setting them apart”—is itself a distortion of the meaning of the gospel and of ministry in Christ’s name. We also need to ask whether

our concern for “wholeness” and for our whole world should not impel us into environmental activism. If, as Jack Provonsha used to say, the sky is God’s sky, the trees are God’s tress, and the rivers are God’s rivers, shouldn’t we truly care about them—about their health and preservation for the continuing glory of God? And we need to ask whether the gospel of God’s universal and unconditional love, which inspires our concern and respect for all of humanity, should not also inspire a hope for the salvation of every person in our lives. If God can, does, and will save *us*, is there anyone whose salvation we cannot hope for? Imagining—and hoping for—the salvation of everyone we know would radically change the ways we feel about them and relate to them.

Renew Our Life in the Spirit

We need to get serious about the discipline of *contemplative prayer*. Here is a place where our heritage is profoundly ambiguous. On the one hand, Adventists can recite many one-liners about spiritual formation: for example, “It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ”;⁶ “When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God.”⁷

On the other hand, contemplation is not a very noticeable part of our existence. We Adventists are children of our American activist culture, where production, achievement, and accomplishment are our gods, and increased efficiency is our creed. We are much better at *doing*—proclaiming, building, establishing, administering, publishing, educating, caring for the sick—than we are at *being*. We tend to think of prayer as a means of doing, of getting what we want.

For this, we have the extraordinary resource

of Sabbath time—time that is intended for being;⁸ time to experience and enjoy our uniqueness and our relatedness to all of reality, to realize how much we are loved, how much our lives are blessed.

We need, also, to become worshipping as well as witnessing and working Adventists. The recent attraction of some Adventists toward Anglican,⁹ Presbyterian,¹⁰ and charismatic¹¹ styles of worship may be evidence of a spiritual inadequacy in the typical Adventist services. The issue here is not classical versus rock music, or organs versus guitars; the issue is observation versus participation, entertainment versus engagement. Whether a particular congregation enhances liturgy, preaching, or experience in worship, we all need to encounter, and respond to, the presence of God.

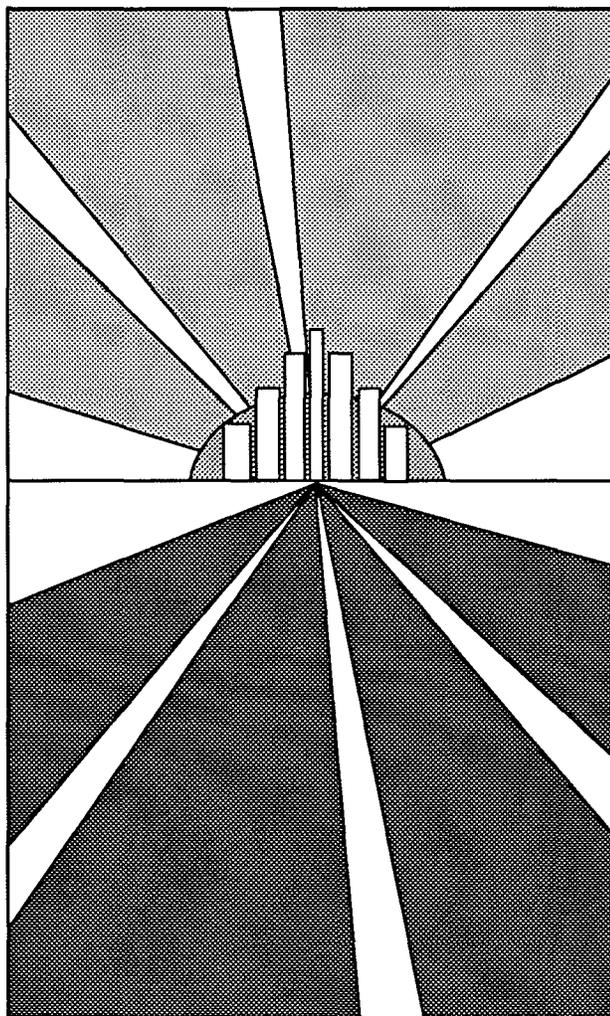
We need to get serious about the discipline of simplicity. We need to reject preoccupation with consumer goods and entertainment. We need to use our personal resources more generously and compassionately. Unfortunately, we are not immune to the lure of affluence that is the chief god of our culture. The American national pastime is not baseball, but conspicuous consumption.¹² Right next to consumerism ranks entertainment. Neil Postman was right: we are engaged in “amusing ourselves to death.”¹³ We treat a presidential election in exactly the same way we treated the Simpson trial—as if it were an entertaining sporting event. We aren’t much interested in the various issues involved; what we want to know is who’s ahead, who’s winning.

Revision Our Role in the World

We need to build bridges rather than walls. We need to see our role not as being a holy elite—a group of people whose lives are good enough to justify God to the universe, so that Jesus can come and take us to heaven—but as helping, healing members of

our communities. We need to shift our emphasis from separation to participation, from fear of contamination to a desire to be helpful, from withdrawal to involvement. We need to see our life in the world not as danger to our virtue but as opportunity to serve, not as a dreary pilgrimage but as an enjoyment of grace.

Our spiritual dangers come not from other Christians, other religions, or outright atheists, but from our own self-centeredness, whether it is expressed in arrogance or fearfulness. Martin Luther spoke of human sinfulness as the condition of being *incurvatus in se*, turned in on oneself. This is a condition that can hardly be avoided if a community thinks of its mission as achieving holiness, if it lives in fear of “the world.” We claim, among other things, to have a mission to “every nation, kindred,



tongue, and people.”¹⁴ We need to remember that “the claims we make, make claims on us.”¹⁵ “Every tongue” ought to include not only the languages like Mandarin and Swahili, but also the languages of science, secularism, and pop culture. “Every people” surely ought to include not only Europeans and Latin Americans, but also homeless people, handicapped people, and homosexual people.

We can assist the vulnerable in our world. Active involvement in Amnesty International ought to come naturally to people who claim to have a world mission. Habitats for Humanity ought to benefit from the participation of Adventists who believe in caring for “the whole person.”

We can promote public health publicly. Roy Branson and the Washington Institute have shown what can happen when we get our act together to oppose government support of tobacco growers, the marketing of tobacco products to children and teenagers, and the general dishonesty of the whole tobacco industry.

We can cooperate with other religious organizations. The Adventist congregations in Greater Atlanta are joining with members of 29 other denominations in prayer, witness, and service during the 1996 Olympic Games.¹⁶

We can get involved with community-based groups that improve the appearance of highways and neighborhoods, raise money for medical care and research, or respond to the special needs of persons with AIDS. We can influence public opinion by engaging in public discourse—letters to editors, calls to talk shows, speeches at city council meetings. We can run for public office. We can contribute to scholarship and to the arts.

Redefine the Function of Church Organization

We need to think of the church itself, not as an organizational structure, but as a community of faith, a spiritual family. The idea of “organized religion” is almost an oxymoron. Religion is necessarily (although not exclusively) internal, spiritual, and personal, while organizations are inevitably external, formal, and official. Religion is free, open, and spontaneous, while organizations are controlled, planned, and programmed. Religion is transcendent and related to God, while organizations are mundane and related to human functionaries.

Yet organization of some kind is essential to the survival of a religious vision. So we must expect tensions in the very existence of the church—tensions that are never completely overcome. But we can be aware of

them and live with them creatively, rather than in frustration and irritation.

Some Adventists have suggested eliminating the union conferences in our North American Division. This may or may not be a good idea, but there is a far more basic problem—the assumption that church officials know more about everything than anyone else (except, of course, higher church officials). Thus a conference is assumed to know more about God’s will for a congregation than the congregation itself does. And a union conference is assumed to know more than a local conference, and a General Conference division is assumed to know more than a union conference, and of course the General Conference itself is assumed to know more than one of its divisions.

Instead of seeing the church as an army and ourselves as soldiers, we need to see the church as an extended family of which we are the adult members.

But the assumption that the wisdom and judgment of church officials is inevitably superior to the wisdom and judgment of anyone else is decisively disproved by all church history, including our own. Besides the traumatic developments I mentioned earlier, we have the continuing official defense of discrimination against women. We need to recognize the denomination, not as the infallible voice of God, but as a very human bureaucracy. The function of church organization is not control, but communication and coordination.

Instead of seeing the church as an *army* and ourselves as soldiers, we need to see the church as an extended family of which we are the adult members. As adults, we know that it doesn't do much good to complain about the imperfections of our parents. We accept their limitations even as we appreciate their strengths. But we also know that there are some things we can do, and that we need to get about doing them.¹⁷

We can urge broader representation in decision-making. We could insist that in all constituencies and on all executive committees there be increased representation of lay members, especially younger adults. We could argue that healthcare and educational institutions are denominational stakeholders, with the right to play formal roles in church decision-making, rather than simply being objects of such decision-making. We could guarantee these institutions significant representation on the executive committees of the related church organizations.¹⁸

Decision-making needs to spread out, away from organizational centers, for at least two reasons. In the first place, people will be more likely to support plans and decisions which they themselves have helped to make. In the second place, in many cases the plans will be more workable and the decisions will be better-informed.

We can recognize that initiative resides not

in the denomination as a whole but in local congregations. "Congregationalism" is the nightmare of many church officials, but their fear is too late. For better or for worse, the congregationalist horse is already out of the Adventist barn. Congregations are developing their own mission statements, and deciding who they will accept as their pastors. While church officials are refusing to ordain women in ministry, congregations are ordaining them.

For better or for worse, conferences are becoming weaker. On the one hand, congregations are exercising more independence, and on the other hand, the General Conference is increasing its power over the local conference.¹⁹ Caught in this squeeze, conference officials have less and less influence, and less and less room to act. The one restraint on the increasing centralization of church authority is the vigor and initiative of local congregations.

Will Adventism survive in North America? Yes, of course. One of the virtues of organizations, including religious organizations, is their ability to exist after they are spiritually dead. Thus we might, ironically, achieve a sort of organizational survival of the body after the death of the soul.

Is Adventist spiritual renewal possible in North America?

Yes, of course. We must never underestimate the possibilities of grace. But when grace comes, it will be evident in spiritual developments, more or less comparable to those I have proposed.

Is it possible to facilitate developments like these?

Yes, of course. They will be the result of initiatives at the grass-roots level. Rethinking our theology begins in dialogue, with people talking to each other face-to-face, by telephone, by letter, by e-mail; and this kind of conversation can lead to group discussions in

dozens of places. Publications like *Spectrum* and *Adventist Today* are obvious means of broadening the discussion, and it might even be possible for these two publications to get together to produce a monthly electronic magazine. Revisioning our role in the world depends on action by both individuals and

congregations. Redefining the function of our church organization begins with the grassroots and expands to involve conference constituencies and executive committees.

Will genuine spiritual renewal actually occur?

I live in hope. I am an Adventist.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The material that follows has been substantially enriched by conversations with a large number of friends and colleagues. In particular I am grateful for the contributions of Ivan Blazen, Gary Chartier, Merikay McLeod, and Margo Pitrone. I have also benefited from the comments of Brian Bull, William Hughes, Bernard Taylor, and Gerald Winslow on an earlier version for the ideas offered here.

2. See Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publ. Assn., 1991), pp. 98-109.

3. For this language I am indebted to Margo Pitrone.

4. Compare Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1948), vol. 3, p. 374: "Through the study of the Scriptures we obtain a correct knowledge of how to live so as to enjoy the greatest amount of unalloyed happiness."

5. Other subjects that could be listed here include the meaning of human sexuality in the light of the Adventist understanding of human wholeness, the nature of God's activity in nature and human existence, and the relation of Christianity to other world religions.

6. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1898), p. 83.

7. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1903), p. 58; "Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him" (_____, *Steps to Christ* [New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1892], p. 93); "It is secret communion with God that sustains the soul life" (_____, *Education* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1903], p. 258). These and many others were part of our Adventist psyches, our minds and hearts, long before Richard Foster told us about "the celebration of discipline" (*Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978]), or Gerald May explained the difference between willingness and willfulness (*Will and Spirit: A Contemplative Psychology* [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982], pp. 1-21).

8. See Fritz Guy, "A Time for Being: Or, Why Karl

Marx Should Have Gone to Sabbath School," *Insight* 14:5 (February 1, 1983), pp. 11, 12.

9. See, for example, David and LaVonne Neff, in *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail: Why Evangelicals are Attracted to the Liturgical Church*, Robert E. Webber, ed. (Waco, Texas: Word, 1985), pp. 149-161.

10. A Sabbath liturgy, based in part on the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*, has been conducted regularly at the La Sierra University Church in Riverside, California, since January 1994.

11. Examples include a "celebration" style of worship in congregations in Arizona, California, Oregon, New York, and Washington.

12. In an election year it has been politically useful to complain about television's obsession with sex and violence. So we have a new law requiring a "v-chip" that will enable parents to screen out programs with objectionable content. But it is not politically useful—indeed, it would be regarded as fundamentally un-American—to complain about the consumerism that is the whole point of commercial television. So we will never see a politician arguing for a "c-chip" that will enable parents—and everyone else—to screen out commercials. For politicians know the source of the money that finances their re-election campaigns.

13. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking, 1985).

14. Revelation 14:6 (KJV).

15. Sunny Merik, "The Claims We Make Make Claims on Us," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, forthcoming.

16. E-mail news release, Adventist News Network via SDANews, March 8, 1996.

17. We need to recognize our individual responsibility, both spiritually and theologically. Ellen White certainly recognized this. "Allow no one to be brains for you," she wrote, "allow no one to do your thinking, your investigating, and your praying" (Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* [Nashville: Southern, 1923], p. 307). The Society of Friends (the community of Quakers) recognizes that the will of the

group does not supersede the conscience of the individual.

Paul Tillich reflected on the polarity of individualization and participation, noting on the one hand that each individual person has a unique dignity, and on the other hand that personhood requires interaction with other persons and with a community (Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951-63], vol. 1, pp. 174-178). But this polarity is, like all polarities, unstable, so that participation tends to become domination and subordination. Once this happens, it takes a major effort to re-establish the appropriate polarity—because, as Reinhold Niebuhr noted, people in power

tend not to give up power voluntarily. So it is easier and less messy just to let those in power retain their power. But our collective spiritual renewal requires that we accept—and demand—individual responsibility.

18. I am indebted to Gary Chartier for these suggestions.

19. See, for example, the new General Conference Working Policy, "GC B 09 Discontinuation of Conferences, Missions, Unions, and Unions of Churches by Dissolution and/or Expulsion," *1995 Annual Council of General Conference Committee: General Actions* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists).



In Search of a God Who Eats Rice

In Thailand and many Asian countries, truth is not defined in terms of objective, coherent logic systems. Truth is what works.

by Siroj Sorajakool

The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer.

—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 72

Religion is the involvement in the matters relating to the marginal people. . . .

—Kosuke Koyama, "Apostle James in Thailand," *Waterbuffalo Theology*, p. 169

IN THIS ARTICLE I ATTEMPT TO RAISE QUESTIONS that I find pertinent to me in particular, and to Asian theologians in general. I do not have solutions to the questions raised, only suggestions. In Thailand there is a saying: "Mistake is my teacher. A lot of mistakes make

me a professor." It is my conviction that the courage to err is necessary if we are to pursue this venture of defining Adventist theology.¹ It is also my intention to point out that, from an Asian perspective, the future of Adventist theology is reflected in a revised version of Carl Junior's advertisement: "If it does not get you engaged, it does not belong in your faith."

Theology is a study of God. But the question is, "How can we ever study God?" By attempting to study God we have placed God as an object of thought. If we can know God, the God we know is no longer God.² Taoism has a saying that "the Way that can be named is not the eternal Way."³ This can perhaps be translated into our context: "The God that can be studied is not an eternal God."⁴ We cannot study God because God refuses to be studied. *God refuses to be captured by human reasoning and logic.*⁵ God refuses to be captured by human language. This, to me, is crucial in attempting to understand the future of Adventist theology.

When we ponder questions such as "What is the future of Adventist theology?" or "What is

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the direction of Adventist theology?" the words *future* and *direction* imply movement, and movement in turn suggests that our theology is fluid (to a certain extent). Theology as an attempt to understand God is fluid because we are finite. We are finite because we are finite,⁶ period. And because we are finite, there will always be movement in theology. This is so in view of the fact that finiteness implies contingency. We are historical beings, and we will always be affected by the contingency of our lives. As such, our theology can never remain purely objective. To reflect on God within the room filled with a nice aroma of vegetarian rib-bone steak is very different from thinking about God while waiting in a line for rationed food at a Thai-Cambodian refugee camp.

In *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer argues that we do not employ our rationality as a means to arrive at an objective end. Rather, we start from the end and use rational capacity to justify our means. We will what we want, and justify our wants using our reasoning. We boast of our intellect when in actuality we are governed by our will and desire. We think that we are led by our intellect when in actuality we are driven by our feelings—"by instincts of whose operation they are half the time unconscious." "Men," says Schopenhauer, "are only apparently drawn from in front; in reality they are pushed from behind."⁷

Although I do not subscribe to his metaphysical application of this "will" (the external reality is the construction of the "will"),⁸ his perception of human will as a means toward an end is real in our day-to-day lives.⁹ We come into the world as contingent historical beings. We act contingently, based on the contingency of the historicity of our beings. Most of our learning that impacts us in our everyday life is derived from our experiences. It dictates our directions. It decides for us what we ordinarily do in our everyday encounters. It informs our sense of morality and prioritizes our values.

While teaching comparative religions to my Buddhist students in Bangkok, I once asked, "Do you believe in *Ganapati* (the elephant god of the Hindu religion)?" They replied in the negative. I asked about *Kali* (the goddess of vengeance with eight arms) and the response was negative. I asked if they believed that Jesus walked on water, and they shook their heads, grinning from ear to ear. Then I asked if they believed that when Lord Buddha was born, he walked eight steps, and they unanimously responded in the affirmative. We like to think of ourselves as rational beings, when in reality we mostly function from experiences registered within our unconscious mind. In life we may be able to deny ideas and logic but not our personal experiences. In India, while people were facing suffering, *Gotama* (Buddha) suggested *anatta* or non-being as a solution to the problem of suffering. If to be is to suffer, then not to be is not to suffer. When Buddhism spread to Thailand, the people were not suffering. An inscription in 1283 by King Ramkhamhaeng reads: "This land of Thai is good. In the waters are fish; in the fields is rice. . . . Coconut groves abound in this land. Jackfruit abounds in this land. Mango trees abound in this land. . . . Whoever wants to play, plays. Whoever wants to laugh, laughs. Whoever wants to sing, sings."¹⁰ Therefore Buddhism in Thailand is not a striving for non-being but a better life in the new life cycle.

As an Asian I strongly believe that theology is not a quest for an objective knowledge of God (because the God that can be named is not an eternal God) but a quest for God from the full awareness of the historical nature of our beings. Theology is to study God with a full awareness of our biases and prejudices, of the contingency of our beings. D. Z. Phillips, in his article on *Philosophy, Theology, and the Reality of God*, writes ". . . theology is personal, since it is based on one's own experience of God. Where the connection between theol-

ogy and experience is missing, there is a danger of theology becoming an academic game."¹¹

Methods of Theological Construction: Thai Perspective

Clifton Maberly, director of the Buddhist Center for Global Mission in Thailand, asked me these questions: "If a *farang* [white Caucasian] man and a Thai woman were to approach a door, who would step in first?" I said that no one would have entered the door since both expect the other to precede. "If a *farang* lady and a Thai man were to approach a door, what would happen?" Both would get stuck at the door, I replied, since both expect the other to defer. This is a cultural issue where there is no right and wrong. But the question is, In constructing theology, are we allowed to be as fluid? It is my belief that we all come with our baggage even in our theological thinking. Further, I believe the understanding of God is meaningful only when it is rooted in our historical and cultural ways of being.¹²

In Thailand we do things very differently from America. North Americans say that "time flies," or "my watch is running." Thais use the expression "time walks," or "my watch is walking." This is so because in the Buddhist world view there are endless rounds of reincarnation, so why not take your time? Many foreigners who have visited Thailand are usually impressed with the Thai smile, not realizing that it has many meanings. It could mean "how wonderful," "I really don't want to do it," "I don't really care," or it could mean "I don't like it, but I don't want to hurt your feelings." We see things differently and we do things differently.

Lots of evangelists who went to Thailand loved to start their meetings with Daniel and the 2300-day prophecy. Many Thais were

attracted to the meetings because, to them, prediction was an important subject. They wanted to know who they were going to marry, how many children they were going to have, how rich or poor they would become, how long they were going to live, and what lotto number they should buy. Hence Daniel's prophecy was very intriguing to them because of all the numbers and the calculations. They saw the evangelist as another *farang* fortune-teller. I had a chance to visit an old folks' home (a close approximation to retirement homes) a couple of years back. While I was there an old lady asked to look at my palm. She studied my palm and asked, "Are you married?" I said yes. She looked at my palm and pointed out a line to me. "See this line? . . . You are married." Then she asked, "What is your occupation?" I told her that I was a teacher. She looked at my palm again and pointed out another line and said, "See this, this is a career line, and you are a teacher." This is a classic case of interpolation.

To bring in logical arguments that work in North America is not going to work for the Thai people.¹³ Theology has to take root in the local soil. For it to do so requires an understanding of the way people think and function. In Thailand, systems of logic or reason or even an attempt to construct a theology is not going to make lots of difference in people's hearts. John Lee, president of AHSA, once said, "If you were to rub the skin of most Thai Adventists, you would see Buddhists on the inside. If you were to rub further, you would see animists." In Thailand and many Asian countries, truth is not defined in terms of objective, coherent logical systems. Truth is what works. It is common to see people go and pray to *Kuan Im* (Goddess of Mercy), *Kali* (Goddess of Vengeance), Christ, and Buddha at the same time. To them, if one of the gods cannot answer their prayers, at least the other should be able to. From a probability point of

view, it is practical. If you pray to one god, your chance of getting an answer to your prayer is less than if you were to pray to all the gods.

In my personal opinion, the way to do theology in Asia is to actually “do.” It is doing because many of us in Asia feel we do not have the luxury of time to reflect, nor are we convinced by logical, coherent, and systematic presentations. Regardless of various convincing rational arguments, Mr. Ng still gets up early in the morning, prepares chicken rice, and pushes his cart to Prakanong for his living. Supadtra still takes her children to school and complains about the parking space. Wanisa still helps her daughter with her homework. Mr. Ng apparently does not realize that the chicken rice he prepares is there only because he and his customers perceive it (as in Berkeley). Supadtra does not realize that her children are spirits that form part of the Absolute Spirit moving continually in dialectic manner toward a greater synthesis (as in Hegel). Wanisa does not realize that she “is” before she helps and that her act of “help” defines her essence (as in existentialism). Life goes on because we are biased thinkers. We are prejudiced, and our prejudice has to do with that which works. And what works is the God we can feel, sense, touch, see, and smell. God can be felt, sensed, touched, seen, and smelled only when we act. To do theology in Asia is to “do” theology.

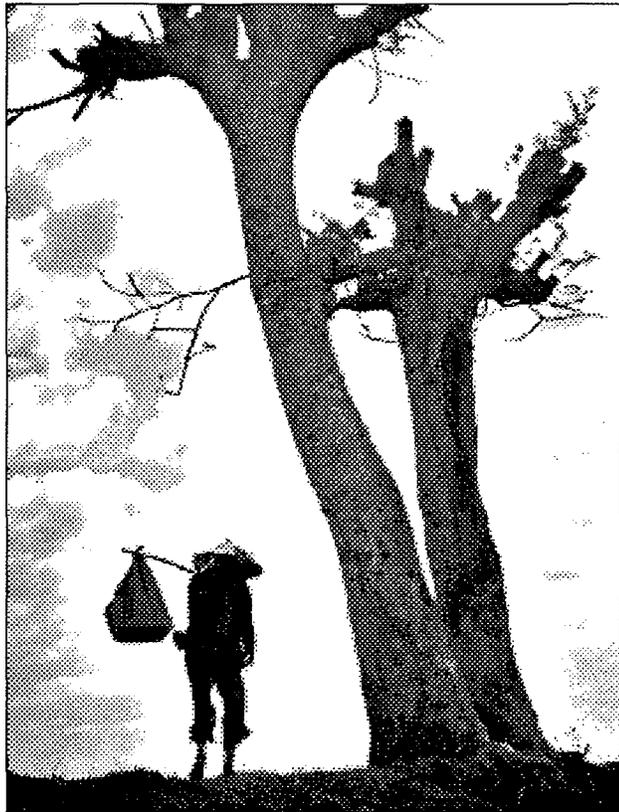
What is the future of Adventist theology in Asia? Whatever form it takes, which I cannot predict with absolute certainty, one thing it probably will not be is a sophisticated academic system or conceptualization. Reflecting on the teachings of Jesus, C. S. Song writes: “It is a theology that tears itself free from the conceptual games of traditional theology. And it is a theology that speaks out of life and speaks back into it—life not as a mere word or sound, but life that is lived in tribulation and expectation, in despair and hope, in anxiety and in a longing for peace.”¹⁴

In many Asian countries we do not have time to think of desserts because we are still struggling to fill our stomachs with rice.¹⁵ We are looking for a God who eats rice; a God who will prevent droughts and send the monsoon rains. We need a God who acts in concrete ways.

Because we are finite beings,¹⁶ our theology reflects movement. And movement, from Asian perspective, means to be moved to the point where we cannot help but reach out and touch others in concrete ways.¹⁷ It takes a God who eats rice to understand what it means to go without rice.

One day I took 15 seminary students to do development work in a tribal village. There was a little girl by the name of Ju who kept peeking through the crack of the wall the whole period we were there. On the last day she said to one of my students, “Why are you so happy? Why are you always smiling and laughing? What is so happy about life?”

Following my student’s reply, Ju sighed and



whispered, "I wish I could die. I hate my mom. She wants to sell me off."¹⁸

Ju does not care if God is a man or a woman. She does not care if the Bible was verbally

inspired or conceptually inspired. She does not care whether we are saved by grace or by works. Ju wonders if there is a God. If there is, where is he/she?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Luther taught us to sin boldly. In *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Bonhoeffer writes: "It depends on a God who demands responsible action in a bold venture of faith, and who promises forgiveness and consolation to the man who becomes a sinner in that venture" (D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers From Prison*, Eberhard Bethge, ed. [New York: Macmillan Publ. Co., Inc., 1971], p. 6).

2. History of philosophy and theology is filled with humans' attempts to construct God, to come to a full understanding of God. A good example is found in Heidegger's *Dasien*. *Dasien* (as being there in the world) recognizes its being toward death. The recognition of the contingent nature of its being creates a sense of guilt within. Through guilt, *Dasien* seeks to authenticate itself through conscience. The way to authenticate itself through constructing the knowledge of God through the voice of conscience. (D. Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology* [New York: Harper and Row, 1961], pp. 51-57). In his book *Creation and Fall*, after analyzing the implication of existentialist philosophy, Bonhoeffer points out that human beings construct the knowledge of God in order that they may know how to act toward God since God is the source of security. To know God is to know what God likes and dislikes and hence there is a way to behave toward God. But, concludes Bonhoeffer, to be aware of the knowledge of good and evil already implies human beings' falling away from God. Such a construct of God is human beings' seeking to define their own path of being for God. (D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: Temptation* [New York: Macmillan, 1959], p. 90).

3. Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, R. B. Blakney, trans. (New York: New American Library, 1955), p. 53.

4. From an Asian perspective, Western theology reflects the desire to obtain absolute knowledge of God based on Cartesian dichotomy (the subject-object dichotomy that leads to the Western empirical, scientific, and analytical approaches to knowledge). Cartesian dichotomy, to Bernstein, is characterized by anxiety. In describing Cartesian anxiety, Bernstein refers to both the search for objective knowledge which, to Descartes, is the only solid ground for knowing, and the journey of finite being in search for a power outside that is big enough to contain finitude. Finitude causes anxiety,

and the way to cope with this anxiety is to find a God outside of the self. It is a quest for some fixed point, some stable rock upon which we can secure our lives against the precariousness of finite beings (R. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1983], pp. 16-18).

5. We have in the past struggled with the issue of righteousness by faith seeking to arrive at a logical conclusion regarding the faith versus works contradiction. At the core of it we realize that we can not do away with faith and neither can we delineate works. Both stand in tension. But we face the difficulty because in logic there is no both/and. In logic it is either/or. We pull this into the discussion over the nature of Christ and face the question of "the sinful or sinless nature of Christ" or "example versus redemption." This is the question of logic. This is humans' attempt to capture God. In *Christology*, after reviewing history of the development of Christological concepts, Bonhoeffer believes that ultimately the Christological question is not "How" as in 'How are you possible?' but 'Who?' "When the Counter-Logos appears in history, no longer as an idea, but as 'Word' becomes flesh, there is no longer any possibility of assimilating him into the existing order of the human logos. The only real question which now remains is: 'Who are you? Speak for yourself!'" (D. Bonhoeffer, *Christology* [London: Collins, 1966], p. 30).

6. Finitude comes with its feeling of insecurity. Perhaps it is the anxiety of being finite that drives and propels us in search of a solid ground upon which we may stand, knowing that the only solid ground is infinity. We reach out to God as a solid rock upon which we stand. But the problem is, we do not seem to be content with just standing. We fear that if we do not know the rock, the ground of our beings, that ground may not hold. We invest our effort into knowing this ground to assure ourselves that the rock is solid. The tune "On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand" comes with historical-critical evaluation, archeological affirmation, and philosophical validation. The problem is, finite being wants to stand on solid ground and at the same time wants to know with absolute certainty that this ground is solid (infinity). But the ground cannot remain solid if it could be certified by finite knowledge. The

infinite cannot retain its essence when its essence can be fully grasped by finite being.

7. W. Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1961), p. 313.

8. Schopenhauer suggests that through the "will" to know, the brain is built and through the "will" to grasp, a hand is formed just as "the will to eat develops the digestive tract." He concludes, "The action of the body is nothing but the act of the will objectified" (ibid., p. 314).

9. There is a growing awareness of the need to recognize that our thinking and actions are not as objective and unbiased as we would like to see in ourselves. In the opening sentences of his book *Manana*, Gonzalez writes: "What follows is not an unbiased theological treatise. It does not even seek to be unbiased. On the contrary, the author is convinced that every theological perspective, no matter how seemingly objective, betrays a bias of which the theologian is not usually aware" (J. L. Gonzalez, *Manana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990], p. 21). In the same manner Gadamer suggests that a true hermeneutic needs to start from the recognition of our prejudices and fore-meanings (H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* [New York: Continuum, 1989], p. 269. See also Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy, and Critique* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980], pp. 118-122).

10. J. P. Fieg, *Thais and North Americans: Interact 3*, George W. Renwick, ed. (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1980), p. 9.

11. D. Z. Phillips, *Wittgenstein and Religion: Swansea Studies in Philosophy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 6. A somewhat similar concept is expressed by Paul Tillich when he makes the distinction between philosophers and theologians. The philosophers seek to cognitively grasp reality by detaching themselves from reality itself so as to maintain objectivity. The theologians, on the other hand, seek an understanding of reality through existential participation in the reality itself (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pp. 22, 23).

12. To come without baggage is not only impossible, it is to deny our humanity which, when pursued, leads to all types of abstraction unreal to our everyday life.

13. Sermons I have heard during the 30-some years of my life have been mostly doctrinal sermons. They have been about the state of the dead, tithe, righteousness by faith, Sabbath, last-day events, Sunday law, the nature of Christ, the Great Controversy, the remnant church, health, and on and on. Not much was said about the everyday life of Thai people who have to struggle to get onto the jam-packed bus that crawls at 10 kilometers an hour along Sukumvit Road to get to

work or the exhausting bargaining with vendors along the street for a reasonable price for a bunch of long beans. It has been strongly impressed on me that Adventism is a cognitive thing; that the mind is a very essential organ in the process of becoming an Adventist. If we are not able to cognitively grasp and describe the 27 fundamental beliefs, it is difficult to become a member of the church. There is an ongoing push for us to read for ourselves and to study for ourselves for otherwise, we may not pass the test during the final chapter of the history of the earth.

14. C. S. Song, *Theology From the Womb of Asia* (New York: Orbis Books, 1986), p. 45.

15. Or as Martin Weber said in his book *Wrestling With Reality*, "Let's not be so engrossed in discussions about soybeans and wedding rings that we forget about equal rights for women, environmental stewardship, and helping the homeless" (Martin Weber, *Wrestling with Reality* [Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1993], p. 11).

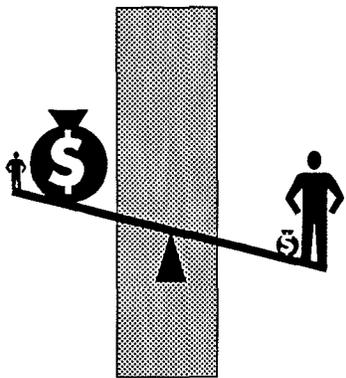
16. According to Richard Rice, theology is a "human enterprise" and therefore its task is never complete. In being humans, theologians are as "susceptible to bias as any other human undertaking" ("Why I Am a Seventh-day Adventist," *Spectrum* 24:1 [July 1994], p. 45).

17. In the West, we also witness a movement toward *praxis*. In practical philosophy Gadamer argues that understanding, interpretation, and application are internally related, in that every act of understanding involves interpretation, and all interpretation involves application. Hannah Arendt defines *praxis* as "the highest form of human activity, manifested in speech and deed and rooted in the human condition of plurality" (*Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, pp. 38-44). In discussing practical philosophy, Don Browning points out that if we take this (practical philosophy) seriously, all theological studies "must be recognized as practical and historical through and through." And hence all theology becomes practical theology (*Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], p. 36).

18. Eight hundred thousand prostitutes in Thailand are below the age of 16, while an additional 200,000 are under the age of 12. These girls are sold and locked up for two years. They can be called on for sex 24 hours a day. The usual working time starts from 10 a.m. to 4 a.m. Each girl receives \$1.20 a day for meals. Each is forced to accept a minimum of one or two customers per day and a maximum of 26 customers per day. Examinations done on 1,000 children rescued by social welfare showed that 20 percent were HIV positive. According to police reports, the Center for the Protection of Children's Rights reported that on June 4, 1991, 17 young tribal girls between 11-17 years of age were

rescued from a brothel in Phuket. One of the girls was forced to entertain customers while she was seven months pregnant. On April 3, 1991, 20 policemen raided a tea house, arrested the managers, and rescued 100 girls, of which 10 were below the age of 16. Twenty of the girls reported being tricked and coerced into prostitution. Seventeen out of 20 were tested and

reported HIV positive. On November 30, 1991, the police raided one of the prostitute houses at Rayong Province. During this operation, 12 girls were rescued. Most of the girls had been physically abused with plastic pipes and raped before being forced into prostitution. Blood tests showed that 11 out of the 12 were HIV positive.



Congregationalism— Our SDA Future?

The power of the General Conference will shrink to a small, coordinating body. The Holy Spirit will hold us together.

by Susan Sickler

CONGREGATIONALISM—THE MOST OBSCENE WORD in the Seventh-day Adventist administrative vocabulary. The tone of voice with which it is uttered is the same as one would use to announce a major outbreak of the Eboli virus. It is widely accepted that if congregationalism is not the end of the world, it is, at the very least, the end of the church.

To understand this panic, it is necessary to look at the power structure of the Adventist Church. After my five years of wandering in the structural wilderness of two General Conference Governance Commissions, two concepts stand out. First, the power structure is actually very fragile. That is why administrators are so paranoid about anything that threatens it. Second, the General Conference rests on just two things: (1) the consent of the governed, and (2) the freely given North American Division tithe dollar.

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If we feel that we have created an administrative monster, we must remember it is definitely *our* monster. Without our financial support it would cease to exist. The likelihood of the rest of the world church giving generously to support a large, centralized structure is not great. Many members outside North America resent what they feel to be colonial aspects of Adventism. Ironically, many of those members in the North American Division pleading for streamlining of the structure have been the very same people paying the bills to keep the current structure in place. We give the structure its power, then complain that it has power.

I would suggest that the church changes in only three ways. Most dramatically and most expensively, someone files a lawsuit and wins—as in the Pacific Press case. Second, policies ignored long enough by enough people quietly disappear. They may remain on the books, but no one attempts to enforce them; in fact, they no longer exist. The last, and by far the most common way, that change comes is that we cannot meet a payroll.

Church authority means vastly different things in different parts of the world. If you are a high church official, come from a Catholic tradition, or live in a dictatorship, you tend to have a high view of church authority. If you come from a country with generations of democracy or with a Protestant tradition, your view of church authority will be much lower. Currently, the votes in the General Conference Committee or Session come from areas with a high view of church authority; the money comes from areas with a low view of church authority. This is a surefire recipe for gridlock.

Of course, in a volunteer organization such as a church, the only real authority is moral authority. For many years now, the trend in all organizations has been away from institutional authority and toward personal authority. This is why what happened in Utrecht was so devastating to church authority. North Americans grew up with Uncle Arthur assuring them that the most important value in life was to stand for the right though the heavens fall. His readers always trusted God to take care of the consequences. At the Utrecht General Conference Session, we listened to many of our leaders, whom we knew were deeply convicted that ordaining women was the morally right thing to do, tell us no. When it came to deciding between doing what we all believed to be morally right and keeping the church together, church officials chose unity as the highest good. So much for the idea that if we do what is morally right we can trust God to take care of the consequences. Any

organization that values loyalty more than it values integrity will soon find that it has neither.

Is the megatrend toward congregationalism in the North American Division a spiritual problem, or is it what one high church official is fond of calling "collective selfishness"? I believe congregationalism is not a spirituality issue. Congregationalism arises for a variety of reasons.

By far the strongest influence is history. Loren Mead, in his excellent book, *The Once*

And Future Church (The Alban Institute, 1991), divides the history of the Christian church into three periods.

In the Apostolic period, just after Christ's ascension, church members told everyone about Jesus. They had close-knit local congregations, with only a loose association of churches to coordinate the mission of the individual members and apostles.

Loren says that, in the longest historical

period, the heyday of institutional religion, people saw mission as something that was done far away from the local church, by professionals hired by church institutions. The role of the local church was to provide money and personnel for the mission fields.

The third model, says Loren, returns us to the Apostolic period. The church is once again local, something in which every member participates. This third model needs fewer institutions and redeploys financial emphasis to the local church level for "the equipping of the saints" for mission, and for the nurture of new members.

So, is this the end of the church as we know it? I don't think so. The trend toward congregationalism will be tempered; the structure will shrink enormously, and the power of the General Conference will dwindle. The Holy Spirit, surely, has ways of holding us together that are cheaper and more effective than any we have discovered so far.

I suggest that the Adventist Church has gone through all of those paradigms in its 150-year history. Early Adventist pioneers told their friends and neighbors about the Second Coming. Then Adventists sent professionals to operate foreign missions. Now, in the third stage, we are refocusing on our friends and neighbors. But it costs money to have attractive churches with the variety of programs that meet the needs of people.

Another major reason for congregationalism in North America is the attempt of all healthy organizations to find balance. High church officials are actually producing just what they fear most.

An additional reason for congregationalism is cultural diversity. Some members find it stressful to associate with members from a different culture. They tend to withdraw into a group where they feel more comfortable. Sometimes this has a racial component.

Congregationalism also arises from American Adventists suffering compassion fatigue. We feel that we give and give and give into the black hole of Adventism's world problems, but there seems to be no end, no progress, and no gratitude. In many cases, there is outright resentment. More and more American Adventists declare that they no longer need that grief in their lives. Furthermore, the changing demographics of the membership in the North American Division means that fewer people have less financial resources to pay the bills for increasing needs. The North American Division is far more of a financial mission field than it used to be.

Finally, congregationalism has increased in North America because more members have begun to give up on the system. They see it as something that causes problems,

rather than solving them. The younger generation in particular sees very little use for much of the structure, and has very little interest in funding it.

It is not local churches that are going congregational, but individuals. This is far harder to combat. Individuals are redirecting their tithe funds to local church and school needs. They believe that tithing is a moral issue, but distribution of those tithe dollars is open to prayerful individual interpretation.

For the church to pressure pastors to fight the trend toward congregationalism is probably useless. Many pastors are sick and tired of never having enough money to carry out their dreams for local mission. Off the record, many pastors are not inclined to look a gift horse in the mouth. Besides, tracking just who pays a "faithful tithe" would require all members to submit their IRS forms, which would meet with mass rebellion. Scattered attempts to get pastors to submit such documentation has already caused serious conflict.

So, is this the end of the church as we know it? I don't think so. The trend toward congregationalism, like all other trends, will be tempered. Members in the North American Division will never go to the extreme of a truly congregational structure. Underneath all their frustrations, they do have a world view. In the years to come, the structure will shrink enormously, and the power of the General Conference will dwindle. There will simply be little money to pass on, so fewer employees needed to distribute it. Those who think that this will automatically destroy the church may be in for a surprise. Unity is far more a spiritual quality than an administrative policy. The Holy Spirit, surely, has ways of holding us together that are far cheaper and more effective than anything we have discovered so far.



World Adventism Is Becoming Worldly

Adventists are conforming to their own societies while becoming increasingly different from one another.

by Ronald Lawson

IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD, ADVENTISM IS growing so rapidly that it is still largely a first-generation religion. However, in these countries, contrary to what might be expected, Adventism is typically not stridently sectarian in tone and marked by high tension with society and government.¹ Adults in the developing world are attracted to Adventism by perceived opportunities for upward mobility. They frequently compromise key church standards, and leave the church in higher percentages than in the United States. Adventists in many of these countries have risen to political prominence. When tensions with the state arise, prominent members ease them with considerable success. In the developing world, tension between Adventists and their environment is rarely sharp. The significance

of this worldwide accommodation of Adventism to society deserves both a historical and sociological analysis.

Adventism began in the U.S. and is now active in 208 of the 236 countries recognized by the U.N.² This means that it was imported to 207 of these countries, beginning with the first foreign missionary sent to Switzerland in 1874.³ Adventists were received rather differently in different regions. In countries where Christianity was religiously dominant, such as most of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, and South Africa, they were stigmatized as heretical and sectarian because they were small and different. Their growth in these parts has been relatively slow, with the result that Adventism there is now made up of mostly second-generation members. They have experienced less upward mobility than their American counterparts, because of the paucity, lower quality, and frequent lack of accreditation of their church-run educational institutions. In Europe and white countries of the British Commonwealth, Adventism is still usually regarded as a sect—although its situ-

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ation may not be markedly different from the groups that are regarded as churches and denominations:

In some European countries those religious institutions which once boasted the name and the reality of Churches are, with secularization, faced with being reduced to the status of sects; that is, of being reduced to relatively small, heterodox groups who believe and practice things which are alien to the majority. They differ from sects, however, in lacking the intensity of commitment.⁴

In many countries of the developing world, Adventism has often differed markedly from this description. Missionaries were sent by what was seen in the U.S. as a small, schismatic sect, and the Adventist penetration often brought complaints from the "historic churches"—that their doctrine was heretical, that they were sheep-stealers.⁵ However, the local people did not distinguish between the various church missions, seeing them "as part of the process of Western cultural importations, rather than as special brands of them."⁶ Adventism found an explicitly religiously pluralistic context, where it had no need to set itself over against an indigenous established church or religious orthodoxy.

From the outset, Adventism outside America was often less separated. Unlike Adventists in America, who typically avoided friendly, cooperative contact with other religious bodies, missionaries frequently joined ecumenical

"mission councils" and "councils of churches." These ecumenical bodies negotiated issues with colonial authorities that were important to Adventist missions, including responsibility for such things as which mission bodies should be admitted to the country.⁷ Adventism shaped its proselytizing strategies around institutions—initially grade schools and clinics, then hospitals and high schools, and finally colleges and universities. The focus on institutions fostered the process of bureaucratization:

On the missionary field, the Adventists are not seen as a fringe religious movement, as they are usually regarded in western countries. . . . Their impressive record of medical and educational provision has gained for them some approval of governments.⁸

Adventism typically grew more quickly once it reached beyond Europe, a situation that has accelerated over time. Adventist growth has skyrocketed in the developing world (see Table 1). Even though there has been an

TABLE 1

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEMBERSHIP GROWTH
SELECTED COUNTRIES—1960-1994**

COUNTRY	YEAR ENTERED	MEMBERSHIP DEC. 1960	MEMBERSHIP DEC. 1994	34-YEAR INCREASE	1993-'94 INCREASE
KENYA	1906	33,493	369,426	1103.0%	9.5%
ZAMBIA	1905	9,644	229,107	2375.6%	11.1%
ZAIRE	1921	8,656	277,904	3210.5%	3.6%
GHANA	1894	7,695	171,268	2225.7%	5.0%
BRAZIL	1894	59,759	707,922	1184.6%	6.4%
PERU	1898	19,293	415,721	2154.8%	2.1%
MEXICO	1893	25,003	409,827	1639.1%	2.9%
JAMAICA	1893	31,093	165,762	533.1%	4.2%
INDONESIA	1900	18,721	147,377	787.2%	4.6%
PHILIPPINES	1906	72,519	627,595	865.4%	5.7%
PAPUA-NEW GUINEA	1908	13,504	152,485	1129.2%	6.7%
U.S.A.	-----	317,036	775,349	244.6%	1.8%
WORLD TOTAL	-----	1,245,125	8,382,558	673.2%	5.3%

Sources: General Conference, 1961, 1995

Adventist presence in many of these countries for a century, the membership is still made up predominantly of converts. This situation, together with the fact that missionaries were typically more conservative than their fellow members in the homeland, would lead us to expect that Adventism in developing countries would exhibit a higher tension with society than it does in the United States.

Actually, Adventism in these parts increasingly follows a trajectory similar to that taken in the United States. Already, international Adventism is far less sectarian than American Adventism was when it had a similar proportion of first-generation converts among its membership. Several factors have contributed to this situation.

Desire for Upward Mobility

Adventists have experienced widespread upward mobility, and new members are attracted to Adventism because it is seen as offering such opportunities. In spite of the fact that converts to Adventism are typically poor and that their teachers are usually conservative Adventists who emphasize that the world will soon end, one of the ingredients in the attraction of many of the converts to Adventism is the prospect of upward mobility. In the highlands of New Guinea, for example, where a veritable people movement is pouring into Adventism, the newcomers say that they are joining because God is blessing this church, and the evidence for this is that Adventists get rich! The tradition of measuring wealth in terms of how many pigs a person owns continues to some extent, even though this wealth is highly expendable, given the cultural demand that a "wealthy" person throw parties for his extended kin. The Adventist prohibition against keeping pigs (since they are regarded as unclean) and participation in parties (because of their association with alco-

hol and spirit worship) has had the effect of freeing members from their cultural obligations to kin and of fostering individualism, and has thus prepared them ideally for the emerging capitalist economy. Even though the bulk of the Adventist membership in Papua New Guinea is in the highlands, almost all the ministers there have to be recruited from coastal areas: The highlands youth prefer to go into business.⁹

Converts have also been drawn to Adventism because its system of parochial education offers members opportunities for advancement. Adventist education was developed first in the U.S., where its prime purpose was to be a means of training workers for the church: clergy, hospital personnel, teachers, accountants, secretaries. However, over the decades the proportion of U.S. graduates following secular careers has multiplied, with the result that Adventism's educational institutions have become the major source of upward mobility for American members.

Adventist missionaries made education the keystone to their evangelization, and therefore gave highest priority to developing schools: "for [Latin American] peasants who desired a school for their children, an Adventist teacher complete with salary was a powerful inducement; in exchange, he organized them into a congregation."¹⁰ Schools taught literacy, which was essential if the people were to read the Bible and study Adventist doctrine: "Elementary literacy was part of the prerequisites for baptism";¹¹ they were also the means of preparing workers for the church. However, the people quickly realized that education was the key to upward mobility in rapidly changing societies, so that missionaries in Africa, for example, soon complained that their graduates frequently took the higher-paying secular jobs that were available. For example, one wrote that this was "largely a waste of training effort and money. . . . We are not training teachers at Malamulo, Solusi, and Kamagambo

to provide the government and other agencies with educated help."¹²

This trend continued as the Adventist Church added the higher layers to its educational system. Educational administrators now bemoan the fact that the majority of students enroll in programs, such as computer science and accounting, where there are few opportunities for church employment, rather than preparing to serve the rapidly expanding church. A striking confirmation of this pattern occurred in the early 1980s at the Adventist University of Eastern Africa, in Kenya, which had been founded in 1978. Students there, complaining that having the church's name on their degrees would limit their employment opportunities, staged demonstrations and strikes that eventually forced the university

council to change the institution's name to the "University of Eastern Africa Baraton."¹³

The patterns of upward mobility resulting from church-provided education vary from one country to another because of differing economic conditions. In India, for example, where graduates from universities often find it impossible to secure positions that utilize their qualifications, virtually all who graduate from the Adventists' Spicer College are offered church employment. Many of these graduates have used their qualifications and church contacts as a means of securing entry to the U.S.: More than half of the college's graduates in recent years have migrated.¹⁴

Adventist educational institutions are less likely to offer avenues for widespread upward mobility where they lack government accreditation, where their programs are severely

Jehovah's Witnesses Separate From Society

Other religious sects functioning in the developing world have related to society very differently from Adventists. Interestingly, they arrive at different ends through parallel means. For example, ties between international headquarters and national groups have been strong. The Jehovah's Witnesses of Africa, like their Adventist counterparts, are connected to a centralized global organization, the Watch Tower Society (WTS). In the U.S., this organization has overseen the shaping of Witnesses into an "established sect." This connection also played a powerful role in shaping the course taken by the Witnesses in Africa. For example, it was the WTS in America that decided Witnesses should "eschew all association and co-operation with other missionary bodies." They consequently stood aloof from the mission councils in Africa, refused to build schools even though Africans requested them, developed the policy that adherents should not recognize

secular authority, and prohibited singing national anthems, saluting flags, voting, and entering the armed forces.¹ Such decisions kept Witnesses separate from society, and protected their peculiarities or differences. Assimeng's study of Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa finds that, since they refused to build and operate schools, they did not provide their followers with a means for upward mobility.² In some countries in particular, such as Zambia and Malawi, "its relationship with political authorities . . . has been characterized by acute strain."³

However, as with Adventists, there were also local factors at work. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses could not have foreseen that its baptismal ritual would be seen as magical in Central Africa, a factor which helped their growth there.⁴ Most important, it was not responsible for the fact that its missionaries were excluded for decades from Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), so that their faith

was spread by poorly trained Africans, converted while itinerant workers in South Africa. Ironically, the preaching of these men, over whom the Witnesses could have little control, led the movement to be regarded as a manifestation of early nationalist stirrings for self-determination. That reputation heightened tensions between Jehovah's Witnesses and colonial administrators.

1. Max Assimeng, *Saints and Social Structures* (Legon, Ghana: Ghana Publ. Corp., 1986), pp. 53, 218; _____, "Sectarian Allegiance and Political Authority: the Watch Tower Society in Zambia, 1907-1935" (*Journal of Modern African Studies*, 8:1 [April 1970]), p. 100.

2. _____, *Saints and Social Structures*, pp. 53-113.

3. _____, "Sectarian Allegiance and Political Authority," p. 112.

4. _____, *Saints and Social Structures*, p. 251.

5. _____, "Sectarian Allegiance and Political Authority," p. 112.

limited, or where almost all church members are too poor to go away from home for education. These conditions apply, variously, in much of Europe and parts of Latin America and Asia. For example, interviewees in southern Mexico frequently explained that the peasant members had no chance of traveling to the college in the north, or of affording tuition and board at the academy in the south; however, they credited the church's emphasis on tithing and a simple, healthy life-style with encouraging them to steward their resources and to complete more frequently the available grades at the local public schools, so that their houses were typically better than average and they had the confidence to engage in evangelism.¹⁵

The widespread concern for, and experience of, upward mobility among Adventist members in the developing world leaves them with an experience that is closer to that of American Adventists than the predominance of converts and the emphasis on sectarian teachings among the missionaries would lead us to expect.

Decreased Integration of New Members Into Adventism

Beginning in the early 1980s, Adventist leaders placed much greater emphasis on growth, promoted evangelism as a major proselytizing strategy, and pressured pastors and evangelists with high goals for new converts. As a result, the growth rate for the world membership increased from 69.9 percent during the decade 1970-1980 to 92.4 percent during 1982-1992.¹⁶ The bulk of this increase occurred in developing countries. In Africa, would-be converts had previously been required to be a member of a baptismal class for two years before being admitted. Now, they are typically baptized at the end of a three-week evangelistic campaign. Although the period of classes previously required in other

parts of the world was not usually as long as in Africa, the typical length of study before baptism has also been sharply reduced there. Moreover, post-baptismal nurture often disappeared, as pastors were forced to turn their attention to attracting the next wave of prospective recruits.¹⁷

Weakened Member Commitment

Given the role of opportunities for personal advancement in attracting converts in the developing world and the pattern of reduced socialization of converts flowing from the competition for growth statistics, it is not surprising that the apostasy rate is high. The official statistics show an apostasy rate that was equal to 26.3 percent of conversions in the developing world during 1994. However, interview data suggest that this is a serious undercount. This is because the system of record-keeping, which was designed in the U.S., often proves too complex for those who must report from churches where the standard of education is lower, especially when pastors who can show notable growth are rewarded and they can be penalized when it is considered low: The one thing they can be relied on to report accurately is the number of baptisms.

There is no doubt that the apostasy rate is a serious problem, which I illustrate with but one of many examples. I had the opportunity to meet together with all the church pastors in the city of Kinshasa, capital of Zaire, where campaigns by visiting Afro-American evangelists during the previous three years had resulted in 1,500 baptisms. When I asked them how many of those converts were still attending Adventist churches, they consulted with one another before presenting me with the total: 50, a mere 3.3 percent.

There is a cultural factor in Africa that amplifies and helps explain the seriousness of

“the apostasy problem” there. Africans often do not share the Western understanding that commitment to one faith precludes adherence to others: “In Africa, it is very rarely the case that a person is exclusively a member of only one religious movement at any particular time, and very few movements succeeded in imposing the exclusivity principle.”¹⁸ Indeed, many Africans see advantages in identifying with several religious groups. Consequently, some persons who respond to the call of an Adventist evangelist to be baptized, and who thereby become members of the Adventist Church, may the next month respond similarly to an

invitation from a Pentecostal preacher. During the early days of Adventist missions in Africa, it was the practice to insist that converts and those preparing for baptism withdraw from their villages and form a new Adventist village that was built around the church and church school.¹⁹ This had the effect of strengthening ties to the church. However, that practice is now a thing of the past: in Kenya it was ended by government legislation in the late 1940s.²⁰ The long period of training in baptismal classes was also designed to cement commitment; however, as noted above, this has also been abandoned.

Pentecostals Are Indigenous and Apolitical

The trajectory taken by Pentecostals is different organizationally from both Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. They do not have a single, centralized global organization. Instead, several umbrella organizations, each itself usually a collection of independent groups, leads to a great deal of local independence. Pentecostals became seen as “truly indigenous,” often embracing the indigenous religion and culture's preoccupation with the miraculous, such as the African concern to rid communities of misfortune frequently manifested in witch-hunting cults.¹

Assimeng found that

Their concern with salvation and the advent tends, in day-to-day practice, often to be eclipsed by their distinctive teachings of Holy Ghost power, spirit blessings and physical manifestations—particularly glossolalia. These charismata—and especially the “gift” of divine healing—have been popularly embraced in Africa where traditional religion was itself strongly thaumaturgical, instrumental and expressive.²

In Nigeria, where the impact of Pentecostalism was greatest, it adopted a number of indigenous characteristics: For example, it seemed to confirm from Scripture the traditional witchcraft theories of disease.³ Similarly, in Mexico “many rural pastors are former shamans who, in effect, continue to divine and cure under the new religion, as a more effective source of power and legitimation. In Haiti . . . pentecostal healing tends to validate belief in voodoo. . . .”⁴ That is, it has been embraced mainly by the poor. Martin concludes that it “became truly indigenous. . . .”⁵

Pentecostals exhibit some tension with the environment. In Latin America this is, in part, because their membership is predominantly poor, and there is little evidence that it has fostered much upward mobility among its adherents, although some analysts expect this pattern to change with time.⁶ There have been occasions when Pentecostal churches have offered some legitimacy to national security states in return for recognition. The case of Chile's Pinochet is a striking example, as it was for Adventists.⁷

In general, however, Pentecos-

tals tend to be apolitical, to view the machinery and the process of politics as corrupt and hateful, and, when they vote, to be moved by anti-Catholicism as their prime consideration.⁸

There has been no attempt in Latin America, as of yet, for Pentecostals to follow the example of some of their fellows and funders in the United States who have become active in the “Christian Right.” Their growth and non-threatening politics are reducing antagonisms toward them; this process is likely to be hastened if the predictions of upward mobility are realized to any notable extent.

1. David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 231; Max Assimeng, *Saints and Social Structures* (Legon, Ghana: Ghana Publ. Corp., 1986), pp. 137-143.

2. Assimeng, *Saints and Social Structures*, p. xiii.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

4. David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 113.

5. Martin, p. 231.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 231; Stoll, p. 116.

7. Stoll, p. 316; Martin, p. 241.

8. Martin, pp. 236, 265.

Given the evidence of widespread limited commitment among Adventist members—with poor socialization, multiple memberships, high apostasy rates, and focus on opportunities for career advancement—it is not surprising that many members have proved willing to compromise the standards of their faith rather than face difficulties. For example, although Adventist leaders had taken a strong position against armed participation in war, when such options proved unavailable in most of Latin America, members there, beginning in the 1890s, chose to serve with arms. When conscripted, Adventists carried guns rather than face the penalties regularly heaped on such objectors as Jehovah's Witnesses.²¹

However, the major test for Adventists has usually been observance of the (Saturday) Sabbath. American Adventists who have refused to work when scheduled on that day have fought the issue all the way to the Supreme Court, which has issued decisions protecting their right to observe their holy day. In Africa, groups of Adventist students at both church- and state-run colleges and universities stated that the core of Adventist doctrine as preached there was the Sabbath. Nevertheless, when Adventist families, in the former French and Belgian colonies (for example, Zaire, Rwanda, the Cameroun, the Ivory Coast) and increasingly in such former English colonies as Nigeria and Ghana, were faced with

the problem of classes and exams being scheduled on Sabbath, most of the Adventists parents sent their children to attend those classes and examinations.²² Adventists in many other countries, ranging from Korea to Eastern Europe, have frequently made similar choices. Indeed, in Korea and India, so many members spend Saturday mornings at their jobs that churches have arranged special worship services for them on Saturday afternoon. Even in the U.S., fewer members have in recent years been choosing to make an issue of being called to work on the Sabbath.²³

Emerging Political Presence

The rapid growth of Adventism in parts of the developing world, together with the upward mobility that members have often experienced there, has transformed Adventists into a political presence in some countries. This is especially the case in Jamaica and in Papua New Guinea and other island groups in the South Pacific, where several Adventists have served as members of cabinet. In Micronesia, the president of Palau is a church member. In Uganda, an Adventist served as prime minister, then vice-president. These developments took the leaders at church headquarters in the United States by surprise, for American Adventists have rarely walked the corridors of political power.²⁴ Nevertheless, in 1986 denominational officials held a series of seminars for church members involved in politics.²⁵

A similar process has occurred at a more local level in other countries where the Adventist presence is more geographically concentrated. This is the situation among the Aymara of Peru, in the highlands around Lake Titicaca. Here Adventists brought education and literacy, and so many conversions followed that they became the largest Protestant group in the country. However, their education was not politically and economically



relevant while the old, Catholic-dominated social system remained intact. When population growth outran available land, forcing the Aymara to shift from subsistence agriculture to wage labor on the coast, Adventists seized the opportunity: Since they were better educated, they were able to find better jobs during the time spent on the coast, and consequently gained more possessions. Moreover, when local government was reorganized and secularized, and thus opened to non-Catholics, only they were educationally ready for these changes. A small group of Adventists subsequently emerged "as the power elite in the community."²⁶

Relations With Governments And Other Missions

In other parts of the developing world, such as Latin America, the Philippines, South Korea, Kenya, and Ghana, Adventists have moved, often successfully, to reduce political tensions with authoritarian regimes.

Adventist missionaries typically joined the ecumenical organizations representing mission bodies in Africa, but in Latin America, they initially stood aloof from other Protestant missions. Adventists dismissed other fundamentalists as apostate. In turn, because of their strong focus on Adventist doctrinal and behavioral peculiarities, Adventists were seen as legalistic, even heretical. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, they came to desire acceptance as evangelical Christians, and largely succeeded.²⁷

Reducing Church-State Separation: A Case Study in Accommodation

Policies that have evolved in Adventism's home base in America have often been

embraced by the leaders of the international church and then fostered elsewhere. This increasingly centralized and hierarchical organization has reduced tension between the church and its environment. This is illustrated from the area of church-state relations.

During its early decades the Adventist Church in the U.S. was in "considerable tension with society," including the state. Adventism's interpretation of the biblical Book of Revelation led it to expect persecution, before the imminent appearance of Christ, from an alliance formed between other churches and the federal government. When church members were arrested in several states for working on Sunday, this was interpreted as evidence that the predicted attack was being readied. The arrests were seen as challenging the freedom of Adventists to observe the Sabbath on Saturday, and therefore as a religious/political issue.²⁸ In the midst of these tensions, Adventists were forced by the American Civil War to grapple with the issue of military service, and took the political risk of declaring themselves to be conscientious objectors. While this position placed them among a small deviant minority, and subjected them to scorn and questions concerning their loyalty, it did not result in legal punishments, since they were able to take advantage of the loopholes in the military draft designed for the Quakers.²⁹

In the years after the Civil War, Adventism began to grow more rapidly and it set about building educational institutions: It was putting down a stake in the society. At the same time, it began to see the time until the Second Coming of Christ as lengthening, and the threat from the U.S. government as less immediate: the tension with the state was beginning to relax. Consequently, when the National Reform Association launched a campaign in the 1880s to extend the Sunday sacredness "blue laws" already in effect in some states to the national level, Adventists, rather than rejoicing because all they had prophesied was

about to be fulfilled, abandoned their usual political stance and set out vigorously to combat the initiative.³⁰ Their defense of religious liberty in the U.S. as the best way of fending off the persecution that they had predicted for themselves continued into the 20th century. Initially their outlook was conspiratorial, as they nervously anticipated threats to their liberty that could be fitted within the narrow confines of their eschatology.

Adventists were greatly relieved when, after they had helped to defeat all of the nearly 150 Sunday observance bills introduced into Congress between 1888 and 1933, such initiatives largely disappeared.³¹ During World War II, Supreme Court decisions addressing Jehovah's Witness issues strengthened religious liberty. Roosevelt included freedom of religion as one of his four basic freedoms. The editor of the *Review and Herald* commented at that time that what Adventists had prophesied clearly lay farther in the future.³²

Seventh-day Adventists, worldwide, showed accommodation to society by warming to military service. During the American Civil War, Adventists bought their way out of serving in the Union Army. In World War I they were officially "noncombatants," but during World War II said they were "conscientious cooperators," and during the Vietnam War said they would not pass judgment on those who bore arms.³³ By the time of the Gulf War in 1991, the office of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries estimated the total number of military personnel listing themselves as Seventh-day Adventists as 6,000-8,000, and that 2,000 of these had participated in the war.³⁴ A

similar pattern of Adventist involvement with military took place in Argentina, imperial and Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union.

As time passed, Adventists found it increasingly difficult to define precisely the wall of separation that they were committed to defending. Between 1944 and 1972 there was considerable conflict and debate within Adventism. Religious liberty staff opposed school and hospital administrators over what to accept in government aid. Adventists began by approving vaccinations for school children. Then, in 1949, they agreed to accept war surplus and capital funds. The ensuing debate

over the funding of church schools was especially bitter. A compromise was not reached until 1972. The background of this decision was enrollment decline and financial distress among Adventist schools. Church leaders finally admitted that quality affordable education had be-

come increasingly difficult to achieve without government help. The compromise allowed Adventist educational institutions to accept a broad range of government aid—for new buildings, equipment, salaries, and other operating costs—as long as the independence of the schools and their purpose of inculcating religious principles were maintained.³⁵

In the early 1980s, when church leaders discovered that it was possible for the Adventist Church to obtain vast sums in government aid, mostly from USAID, they transformed the church's disaster relief agency into the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). These denominational leaders saw ADRA as a new "entering wedge" that could penetrate regions where there was little Adventist presence and conventional missionar-

The research reported here is part of a large study that included 3,000 in-depth interviews of Seventh-day Adventists in 54 countries in all 11 divisions of the world Adventist church.

ies were often unwelcome. In earlier years, Adventist hospitals had played this role. However, the source and restrictions placed on the use of most of its funds in many ways transformed ADRA into an arm of American foreign policy. For example, during the Contra War in Nicaragua, ADRA distributed a great deal of aid in Honduras but nothing in Nicaragua.³⁶

The switch in the American church's policy toward participation in the military and the federal government inspired the transformation of Adventist relations with the governments of other countries. This policy proved to be especially effective with authoritarian governments, whether they were right-wing military regimes in Latin America, Asia, or

Methods of Research

The research reported here is part of a large study of Adventism, which has included more than 3,000 in-depth interviews with church administrators, teachers, hospital administrators and medical personnel, pastors, students, and leading laypersons in 54 countries in all 11 divisions of the world church. The countries were chosen to represent the diversity of the international church, paying greater attention to those where it is more established and/or experiencing rapid growth. Local itineraries were designed with the help of people who knew the various regions well.

The U.S. was researched first, since this was where Adventism originated and is the location of the General Conference, its world headquarters. I conducted interviews at all eight union headquarters and many local conferences, the 12 universities and colleges, several academies (high schools), the major hospitals, both publishing houses, the media center, and at a great variety of urban, suburban, and rural churches, representing all major racial groupings. Canada was also covered, although less intensively. The research itinerary also included several weeks at the General Conference. Before venturing overseas, I returned to Andrews University and the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Michigan to ask international students there about issues in their countries.

I followed a similar research plan in the other 52 countries, completing interviews at headquarters, seminaries, schools and other institutions, and among pastors, leading laypersons, and Adventist students at secular universities. In general, interviewees were chosen to fit key categories. At regional headquarters, I interviewed the president, the other officers, and some of the departmental leaders (depending on who was there and my interest in the department). At colleges, I typically interviewed the president, academic dean, many of the teachers (covering a broad range of departments, but with a bias toward teachers of religion), deans of students and counselors, and student leaders. I also met with diverse groups of students. At hospitals, I interviewed administrators and medical staff. I set out to interview a variety of pastors representing different kinds of congregations, and also a selection of leading laypersons. I used the quinquennial General Conference Sessions in 1985 and 1990, when delegates assembled from all regions of the church, as opportunities to interview significant people who had been absent during my visits or not on my routes and to ask previous interviewees additional questions.

With promises of confidentiality to interviewees, I received

extraordinary cooperation throughout the world church. Even when interviewees were initially reserved or suspicious, these problems were almost always quickly overcome.

I chose not to tape interviews. I took very detailed notes (through using my own system of shorthand, interviews were recorded almost verbatim), initially with pen and pad and later, as laptop computers became available, on disk. The typical interview was between two and three hours in length, with some notably longer.

I prepared an interview schedule of core questions for each category of interviewee (church administrator, college teacher, etc.). These covered such areas as personal background; information concerning the unit they represented; changes and issues there as well as their perceptions of changes and issues more broadly within the church.

Data concerning earlier decades were culled largely from secondary sources. Much of the data concerning more recent decades comes from my interviews; the paper also draws extensively on periodical articles to explore more recent pronouncements, practices, and attitudes.

In order to keep the confidentiality of interviewees, as promised, the convention adopted by the study is to refrain from citing their names when they are quoted, except when they are major figures in the church.

Africa, or communist states in Eastern Europe. Under such relationships the Adventist Church was accorded favors in return for being useful to the regime, such as through lending it legitimacy.

For example, when General Pinochet was invited to visit the Adventist college in Chile, which was greatly disadvantaged by not having accreditation, he was greeted in a welcoming ceremony before television cameras during which the college president offered a prayer in which he thanked God for sending Pinochet to save the nation. This occurred at a time when Pinochet was under considerable attack from the Catholic cardinal for his human-rights violations. As a result of this, the college received accreditation and Adventists became known in Chile as "friends of Pinochet."

Similarly, although the Adventist Church in Poland was small—with a membership then of less than 5,000 in a population of 38 million—it came to be greatly favored under the communist regime.

In a situation where publishing was tightly controlled by the state, works by the Adventist prophet, Ellen White, published during the last seven years of communist rule exceeded everything in copies but the Bible and the works of Lenin! These were freely distributed, and Adventist magazines were the only religious publications sold regularly at the state-operated magazine kiosks. These favors were afforded Polish Adventists at least partly because they were willing to publish anti-Catholic articles, especially when the Pope, the citizen the regime feared most, was about to make a visit to his homeland. Also, the book by Ellen White that was most widely distrib-

uted—*The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*—was full of what the political leaders saw as anti-Catholic propaganda.³⁷

Similar policies were actively encouraged and pursued by the leaders of the world church. For example, Neal Wilson, then president of the General Conference, proved willing to intervene in both the U.S.S.R. and Hungary, where schismatic Adventist groups, discontented with the Adventist history of close relations and compromises with the state, were an irritant to political leaders. In both cases, Wilson gave his blessing to the compromising church. He announced the principle that the official branch of the world church was that recognized by the state.

During subsequent visits to the Soviet Union, Wilson cemented a close relationship with Konstantin Kharchev, chair of the U.S.S.R. Council on Religious Affairs. These contacts ultimately resulted in approval from the council for the creation of an Adventist seminary outside Moscow. That is, the Adventist

churches in all these countries were encouraged to follow the path pioneered in the U.S. of actively seeking to win the favor of the state and thus to reduce tension with it.³⁸

Over the past century, then, a policy of pursuing reduced tension with governments emerged and eventually flourished within Adventism. This policy was developed in the U.S., where the General Conference was directly involved in the evolution of the relationship with the American military and the accompanying dramatic changes in the official church position on military service. Once the relationship with the federal government had been transformed, this became the model for other

The research reported here suggests that increasing accommodation of Adventism to whatever society it finds itself within, worldwide, will create an Adventism that is increasingly diverse.

countries within the world church to pursue.³⁹

In some cases local leaders, now aware of the model, may have taken the initiatives themselves. For example, the product of the interaction between Adventist norms and the familial and cultural systems of the New Guinea highlanders was not foreseen. Adventism, by promoting the economic prosperity of many members, raised the status of the church in society. Moreover, some of the actions by the General Conference had unintended consequences: Leaders were caught by surprise when rapid growth in some countries raised Adventists to political prominence. It was not the purpose of those who decided to build schools in order to train church workers that this would result in upward mobility among members. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that in recent decades the leadership of the world church has made reducing tension between their church and its environment a priority. It became highly concerned with public image, acceptance, and gaining respect.⁴⁰

The central administration of Adventism and the administrations in developing nations have both, over time, considerably reduced tensions between themselves and their surrounding sociocultural environments. Weber's "Protestant Ethic" applies extremely well to the Adventist experience, whether it be in America, New Guinea, Kenya, or Peru. In spite of the traditional Adventist expectation of both persecution and apocalypse, Adventist culture places a high value on success, whether defined as numerical growth, widespread upward mobility among its members, or the flowering of exchange relationships with governments. Of course, all of these are linked.

However, this analysis must end with a cautionary note, for the data presented

here suggest that Adventism in the developing world is experiencing such rapid change and consequent insecurity that its future direction must be regarded as unsure. The high growth rate seems to be a product of dramatic social changes, such as decolonization. The sudden realization of a need to Westernize, and the desire to develop skills relevant to the emerging societies. One cannot help but ask whether this is a phase that will inevitably wane.

Moreover, Adventism's rapid growth among the poor all over the world is spreading its resources, which are drawn primarily from the U.S., very thin. Total tithe and offerings per capita in the world church, measured in 1950 U.S. dollars, had fallen by 1994 to only 37.2 percent of what it was in 1950 (see Table 2).

As a result, although Adventists have recently developed educational institutions of stature in some countries, such as their universities in Zimbabwe and Kenya, overall their schools in the developing world are falling behind: They have no hope of accommodating the numbers of potential students from among the vast array of young converts, and their quality is suffering in comparison with their rivals. The state of Adventist hospitals is often worse still. It seems inevitable, then, that these institutions will decline as vehicles for upward mobility. The switch to public evangelism as a major strategy is not just an attempt to increase the growth-rate, but also a recog-

TABLE 2
**TOTAL TITHE AND OFFERINGS PER CAPITA
1950-1994**

YEAR	CURRENT U.S. DOLLARS	CONSTANT DOLLARS (1950 U.S.)	DECLINE IN CONSTANT DOLLARS (FROM 1950)
1950	73.60	73.60	-----
1960	83.66	68.00	92.4%
1970	112.69	69.86	94.9%
1980	202.19	59.07	80.3%
1990	180.70	33.29	45.2%
1994	168.66	27.39	37.2%

Source: Extracted from Yost (1995), p. 29.

dition of the decline of the traditional, institution-based approach.

But once it is realized in communities that Adventism no longer offers the same opportunities for upward mobility, will it continue to attract converts at the same rate? Will it be able to continue to avoid major schism? Church leaders focused the recent quinquennial ses-

sion of the General Conference so closely on the theme of unity that they left no doubt that they greatly fear disunity.⁴¹ Their fears are well-founded. The research reported here suggests that increasing accommodation of Adventism to whatever society it finds itself within, worldwide, will create an Adventism that is increasingly diverse.

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1. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge argued in *The Future of Religion* that the best indicator of sectarianism is tension between a religious group and its socio-cultural environment ([Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985] p. 23).

2. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *98th Annual Statistical Report—1960* (Takoma Park, Md.: Office of Archives and Statistics, 1961), p. 42.

3. R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1979), p. 145.

4. Bryan R. Wilson, "Religion in Secular Society," from Roland Robertson, ed., *Sociology of Religion* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969 [1966]), p. 154.

5. Bryan R. Wilson, "A Typology of Sects," from Robertson, ed., (1963), p. 378; Max Assimeng, *Saints and Social Structures* (Legon, Ghana: Ghana Publ. Corp., 1986), p. 223

6. Assimeng, *Saints and Social Structures*, p. 53.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-225.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

9. From interviews.

10. Stoll, p. 103.

11. Nehemiah M. Nyaundi, *Religion and Social Change: A Sociological Study of Seventh-day Adventism in Kenya* (Lund, Sweden: University of Lund Press, 1993), p. 108.

12. T. R. Flaiz, "Medical Missionary Objectives," *Ministry* 23:5 (May 1950), p. 30.

13. From interviews.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. Derived from General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *130th Annual Statistical Report—1992* (Silver Spring, Md.: Office of Archives and Statistics, 1992).

17. Bryan Wilson, the Oxford University sociologist of religion, reports an important factor in his book, *Patterns of Sectarianism* (London: Heinemann, 1967), that is significant to this explanation. He found that those sects which he defines as "revolutionist" tend to move much more slowly from sect toward denomination than those he defines as "conversionist" sects. This

is because the "revolutionists" demand that converts have considerable knowledge before they are admitted, while the "conversionists" add new members rapidly without a great deal of prior training and socialization. In terms of this analysis, Adventism in the developing world has shifted sharply toward becoming a "conversionist sect" over the past decade or so: the grounding of converts in the sectarian teachings and separating life-style of Adventism is now often much weaker than it was in earlier decades. According to Wilson, such a change is likely to reduce sectarianism and foster denomination-like characteristics.

18. Assimeng, *Saints and Social Structures*, p. 16.

19. Nyaundi, pp. 93, 94, 108-117.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

21. From interviews.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. From interviews. There are currently three Adventist members of Congress, which is the highest such number to date.

25. The author participated in the seminar held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

26. Ted Lewellen, "Deviant Religion and Cultural Evolution," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 18:3 (September 1979), p. 245; Martin, pp. 224, 225; and from interviews.

27. Stoll, p. 103

28. Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), p. 48; Jonathan M. Butler, "Adventism and the American Experience," in Edwin S. Gaustad, ed., *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-19th-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 173-177.

29. Peter Brock, "When Seventh-day Adventists First Faced War: the Problem of the Civil War," *Adventist Heritage* 1:1 (1973), p. 23; Ron Graybill, "This Perplexing War: Why Adventists Avoided Military Service in the Civil War," *Insight* (October 10, 1978), pp. 4-8.

30. Butler, pp. 196-198.

31. Douglas Morgan, "Adventism, Apocalyptic, and the Cause of Liberty," *Church History* (June 1994), p. 246.

32. Editorial, *Review and Herald* (July 22, 1943).

33. George R. Knight, "Adventism and Military Service: Individual Conscience in Ethical Tension" (paper read at a conference on Pacifism in American Religious Tradition, 1992), p. 17; and from a statement "The Relationship of Seventh-day Adventists to Civil Government and War" (minutes of Annual Council, General Conference, 1972).

34. From interviews. More details of this transformation are available in Ronald Lawson, "Onward Christian Soldiers? Seventh-day Adventists and the Issue of Military Service" (*Review of Religious Research*, 37:3 [March 1996], pp. 193-218; _____, "Why No to Women but Yes to Killing?" (*Spectrum*, 24:4 [March 1995], pp. 43-57).

35. Douglas Morgan, "The Remnant and the Republic," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Chicago Divinity School, 1992); Eric Syme, *A History of SDA Church-State Relations in the United States* (Mountain View, Calif.:

Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1973), pp. 120-143.

36. From interviews.

37. Ibid.

38. Neal C. Wilson and Alfred Lohne, "A Letter to Soviet Adventists," *Spectrum* 11:4 (1981) [1979], p. 46; Sidney Reiners, *Betrayal in Budapest* (Grand Rapids, Minn.: Christians in Crisis, n.d.); and from interviews.

39. For further examples, details, and a much fuller development of this line of reasoning, see Ronald Lawson, "Church and State at Home and Abroad: The Evolution of Seventh-day Adventist Relations with Governments" (forthcoming, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LXIV/2 [1996], pp. 57-89).

40. Ronald Lawson, "Seventh-day Adventists Respond to Branch Davidian Notoriety: Patterns of Diversity Within a Sect Reducing Tension With Society," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 34:3 (September 1995), pp. 323-341.

41. This took place in the Netherlands in June-July, 1995.



Oakwood College draws 10 percent of all black American Adventists to its 100th Anniversary Celebration. Atlantic Union College determines that 400 full-time students will keep the college open.

25,000 Descend on Oakwood for The Mother of Alumni Weekends

by Henry Felder

My wife, Clara, and I arrived at the Von Braun Civic Center auditorium at 7:45 a.m. on Sabbath morning, April 6, 1996—the earliest I had ever arrived for church. The doors opened at 8:00 a.m. Soon, all 10,000 seats of the auditorium were filled. Before the Sabbath morning services concluded—seven hours after the doors opened—more than 20,000 people had inhabited every conceivable part of the center's main hall, concert hall, exhibition halls, and walkways. According to the Visitors and Convention Bureau, more than 25,000 people—10 percent of the black Adventist membership in North America—gathered in Huntsville, Alabama, for the alumni reunion of the 100th anniversary of Oakwood College.

Probably the most elaborate alumni meeting ever hosted by an Adventist college, the celebration was described by Alfred McClure, president of the North American Division and chair of the Oakwood College board, as the largest gathering of Seventh-day Adventists in North America. Wave after wave of speakers and musicians brought the consummate greetings, sang or

played the ultimate songs, prayed the definitive prayers, and collected an all-time offering. The gathering, which seemed to last for eons, culminated in a powerful sermon on the dangers of materialism by Walter Pearson, associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association.

The weekend officially started Thursday night at the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) banquet. More than 1,700 persons listened to the musical group *Take 6* and heard William H. Gray III (former member, U.S. House of Representatives and now president of the UNCF) expound on the continued need for black colleges. Friday was devoted to lectures for medical personnel, campus tours, book signings, and spending thousands shopping at the local mall.

Friday night, more than 6,000 people thrilled to the message of Capt. Barry Black, chief chaplain for the U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet. Sunday's events, on the Oakwood campus, included an exhibit area providing a cornucopia of books by and about blacks, CDs and other forms of music, and the ever-present t-shirts. It was a casual time—a time for greeting friends and catching up on changes in jobs, spouses, and locations. "What type of work are you doing?" or "Where are you living now?" were far better openings than "Who's your spouse this year?"

Henry Felder, dean of the School of Business and Management at La Sierra University, received his Ph.D. in economics from Stanford University. He is a graduate of Oakwood College and has served on its Board of Trustees.

For me, the time at Oakwood this spring was filled with nostalgia of a type seldom understood by today's collegians. In the early '60s, when I attended and graduated from Oakwood, Huntsville was a relatively benign Southern city whose federal government presence at the sophisticated Marshall Space Flight Center¹ helped take some of the edge off the raw elements of "Southern hospitality" toward blacks. In those days it would have been inconceivable that every hotel room in Huntsville and the surrounding 30 miles would have been reserved months in advance for an Oakwood College event. Until my senior year, blacks could not stay in the downtown hotels, nor attend the local white Adventist church. The modern civil-rights movement was in its nascent stage and the ugliness surrounding Selma and Birmingham, Alabama, had not reached the Oakwood campus.

This spring, I wandered the campus, peeked into a few classrooms, and reminisced over the time when I was the skinny kid trying to master chemistry and mathematics, and court Clara, all at the same time. Then there was a brief reunion with two roommates not seen for more than 30 years, one of whom, as director of space medicine for the Air Force, makes sure astronauts remain healthy.

Even after dozens of trips back to Oakwood and attendance at many alumni gatherings, this one was special for me. The sense of how far Oakwood has come in achieving its status as a major player in the education of Adventist youth was present throughout the weekend. The Oakwood Centennial Homecoming marked the coming-out celebration of a black Adventist community that was ready to "strut its stuff."

How do we explain the development of Oakwood from 16 students at its opening on November

16, 1896, to an alumni reunion that brought 10 percent of the entire black Adventist membership in North America back to the campus for a single weekend celebration? Oakwood College has always been the crown jewel of the black Adventist community. Founded near the turn of the century to provide religious and industrial training to black Adventists of the South,² Oakwood moved to an academic focus with the student revolt of 1931. The student action directly led to the demise of industrial and vocational training, the appointment of the first black president of Oakwood, and, ultimately, full accreditation as a four-year college in 1958.³ The religious emphasis is a strong reason for the great sense of mission that continues to be one of the hallmarks of Oakwood graduates. The vast majority of black Adventist ministers received some or all of their training at Oakwood. Great preachers and evangelists such as C. E. Mosley, E. E. Cleveland, C. D. Brooks, and Charles Bradford, all were products of Oakwood. Under these preachers, blacks in the Adventist Church grew, as of 1994, from less than 10 percent of the North American Division to 25 percent.⁴

Oakwood has provided a nurturing environment and a sense of family for countless students who went through the "Oakwood Experience"—a sense of family and caring that was perhaps most responsible for 25,000 people returning this year to Huntsville. The "Mecca" that has married its children, produced its prestigious pastors, helped spread the gospel to all parts of the world, and spawned thousands of professionals in all occupations and industries has a strong attraction for today's black youth. With more than 1,600 students, Oakwood is now one of the largest of the Adventist colleges. According to G. Ralph Thompson, secretary of the

General Conference, Oakwood is also one of the most financially sound. The danger of materialism, of which Walter Pearson spoke, was relevant because it was finally possible. With tithes and offerings in excess of \$100 million in 1994,⁵ and church membership in excess of 25 percent of the North American Division total,⁶ black Adventists have indeed come a long way.

In addition to celebrating with alumni and friends, I went to Oakwood to recruit for the M.B.A. program at La Sierra University. The "Oakwood Experience" has helped shape my life, but there are other experiences that beckon to black Adventist youth. The need for diversity in their college careers, location, and their own tastes have moved many black Adventist youth to choose other Adventist colleges and universities in North America. However, as I seek more black students for La Sierra, I will always remember that magical centennial alumni weekend at Oakwood.

1. Von Braun Complex is named after Wernher von Braun, the German rocket scientist who, in 1945, brought his talents and rocket team to play for the winning side of the 1940s cataclysm.

2. Garland Millet, "Spiritual Life at Oakwood," *Adventist Heritage* 17:1 (March 1996), pp. 14-17. This issue of *Adventist Heritage* is a special Oakwood edition containing numerous articles about the history and status of Oakwood. You will want to read the history of Ellen White's visions for Oakwood and the role her son, J. E. White, played in its early development.

3. Zeola B. Allston and C. J. Barnes, "The Student Strike of 1931," *Adventist Heritage*, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

4. Author's summary of data from the *Annual Statistical Report of the General Conference*. See, for example, the statistical reports for the years 1965 and 1994.

5. Black Adventists in the North American Division now provide ap-

proximately 11 percent of the \$804 million title collected in the entire Adventist Church.

6. Data compiled from the 132nd

Annual Statistical Report of the General Conference, and from unpublished tables from the Office of Human Relations of the North American Division.

Atlantic Union College Survives With 400 Students, \$9 Million Debt

As of May 31, James Londis' tenure as president of Atlantic Union College ended, but the college remains open for business. It owes at least \$6.5 million to the Atlantic Union and \$2 million to the Southern New England and New York conferences. The school is operating under a budget that has reduced salaries of faculty by 17 percent during the summer of 1996. If the financial equivalent of 400 full-time students enrolls in the fall, AUC can add a few classes, retain its faculty and staff, and pay them retroactively for their reduced summer wages.

N. Clifford Sorenson, the former president of Walla Walla and Columbia Union colleges, and chair of Management and Professional Studies at AUC, is president *pro tem*. His administration reports that applications for the next year are up from this time in 1995.

Meanwhile, a search committee continues its work to find a new president. Its task may have been

complicated by the inability of the Atlantic Union constituency to establish a quorum on June 2, and the need for the union constituency to reconvene in November to elect or re-elect a president of the union, who also serves as chair of the Atlantic Union College board.

January 1994—Londis Becomes President

James Londis points to several reasons for the decline in enrollment (see Figure 1). Servicing what Alfred McClure, North American Division president, later described as a "monstrously" large debt—about \$4 million when Londis became president in January of 1994—kept the school from investing in adequate recruitment, including a professional enrollment management director. The debt made it difficult to continue offering scholarships to high-performing students, and nearly impossible to continue the high cost of maintaining the

historic buildings that distinguish Atlantic Union College among Adventist colleges (see Figure 2).

Life-style issues, such as the appearance of some jewelry, were another impediment to maintaining support from pastors and parents. At a time when most other Adventist colleges in North America were coming to terms with changes in student life-styles, AUC was increasingly urged to tighten up standards and police them more strictly.

Finally, many parents worried about exposing their children to students from various cultures. More than two-thirds of college-age students in the Atlantic Union attend college at other Adventist schools—schools that are culturally homogeneous. Twenty-eight percent of these students attend Oakwood (almost exclusively African-American students); 22 percent attend Andrews (primarily students from Northern New England and upstate New York); and 13 percent attend Southern (primarily Latin American students) (see Figure 3).

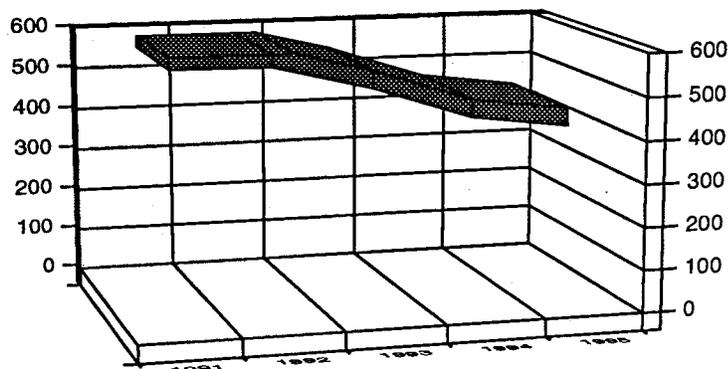
First Semester 1995—Vice-Presidents Resign

During the first semester of last school year (1995-1996), disagreements surfaced among college administrators. Some differences related to Adventist education in general, some more specifically to the new academic program AUC adopted in 1994, particularly how to teach the interdisciplinary "faith and learning" classes. For these and other reasons, three vice-presidents resigned during the first semester: Carol Allen, academic affairs; David Rawson, financial administration; and Ciro Sepulveda, student services. The three established Academic Paradigms Online, a firm specializing in electronic distance learning.

By December 1, 1995, Londis had found replacements for the

Figure 1

1991-1995 Enrollment—Financial Full-Time Equivalents



departing vice-presidents. By the end of the month, meetings with Andrews officials led to an agreement signed by administrators of both schools to continue discussions about the possibility of a merger. It was agreed that a proposal to merge the schools would be taken to both college boards, and then to the constituencies of each school.

At the end of the first semester of the 1995-1996 school year, Atlantic Union College was more than \$6 million in debt, and it was rumored that it would be able to meet its payroll only through March 1996. College officers secured \$2 million from the New York and Southern New England conference revolving funds to meet the school's payroll and finance general operations.

February 18, 1996— Board Approves Merger

The college board met February 18 and voted unanimously to recommend merger with Andrews University. Some faculty and students, committed to multiculturalism, expressed concern that AUC would become homogenized into a mid-American campus with a mid-American world view. An "Alternative Committee" gained energy, with Development Director Lisa Wheeler, 1970 AUC alumnus Will Kitching, and other college-related persons, redrafting college fundraising plans. They asked to present an "alternative proposal" to the upcoming college constituency meeting.

March 10—College Constituency Meeting

At the March 10 meeting of the Atlantic Union College constituency, many lay members urged that AUC remain independent. One woman demanded that Andrews president Niels-Erik Andreassen re-

main at his podium, while she proceeded to grill him. Other constituents wept. Alfred McClure, president of the North American Division, and James Londis, president of AUC, spoke pointedly of the need to continue discussions with Andrews. Toward the end of the 10 and one-half hour meeting, Stennett Brooks, president of the Northeastern Conference, the union's regional conference, representing a majority of the union's members, rose to speak. He stated, among other things, his fear that minority representation would be blamed for the failure of the college if the future of the school was not ensured one way or another. He then counseled the assembly to consider attorney Glenn Coe's early motion to study both independence and merger with Andrews. After Brooks' speech, the union constituency voted two-to-one to adopt parallel tracks.

On Monday, March 11, the day after the college's constituency meeting, Niels-Erik Andreassen faxed Jim Londis a letter putting the Andrews merger proposal "in abeyance." By default, the college was left with only one option: to find a way to relieve itself of debt, construct a balanced budget, and exist entirely on its own. By the end of the month, Londis announced his resignation from the presidency of

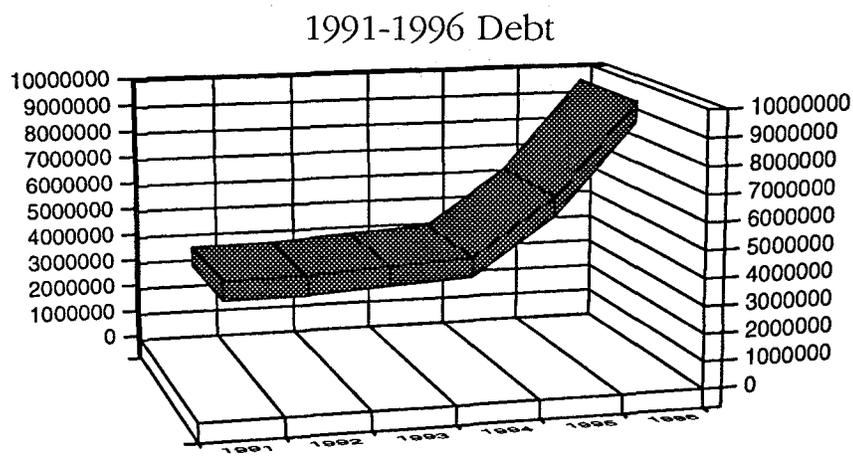
the college, effective May 31. Without his permission, Londis' letter of resignation to the board, citing as the basis of his decision lack of board support and a differing vision for the future of the college from that of some trustees, was released to the press.

Londis and college administrators continued to work on financial plans that would allow the institution to survive through the 1996-1997 school year. Forty staff members were informed that their employment would end May 31. A budget with a 17 percent reduction in salary for faculty and remaining staff was announced. The financial equivalent of 400 full-time students in the fall of 1996 would make possible retroactive payment of reduced summer wages and the normal operation of the college.

March 31—Atlantic Union Constituency Meeting

A special Atlantic Union Conference constituency was convened March 31. The Londis administration presented the revised budget. Alfred McClure and Richard Osborn, from the North American Division, counseled delegates to remember that "with ownership comes responsibility." Some con-

Figure 2



ferences spoke about the need for good stewardship, and questioned making further investments in the college. Others cited God's punishment for not operating the college according to His will—they suggested repentance as the first step in the recovery of the college.

McClure suggested that whatever shortfalls might come from operating the college during the next school year, local conferences within the union should take financial responsibility, proportionately to the size of their membership. But a motion to that effect was soundly voted down, with the Northeastern Conference delegates voting almost as a block against the motion. The conference has subsequently refused to join other local conferences in lending money to the college. The Northeastern Conference, with 60 percent of the

union's membership, is already \$5.1 million in arrears in tithe payments to the union, according to the official report of the General Conference auditing service. The delegates did vote to: (1) keep the college open, assuming the "risks and challenges" of doing so; (2) commit to raising \$1 million annually to compensate for the reduction in union subsidy that resulted from the union's taking responsibility for the \$9 million college debt; and (3) continue to explore affiliations with other Adventist schools.

June 2—Atlantic Union Constituency Meeting

Now, attention shifted to another, regularly scheduled Atlantic Union Conference constituency meeting, set for June 2, in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. All

the union officials were up for election or re-election, including the president of the Atlantic Union Conference, Theodore T. Jones, who serves as chair of the AUC board.

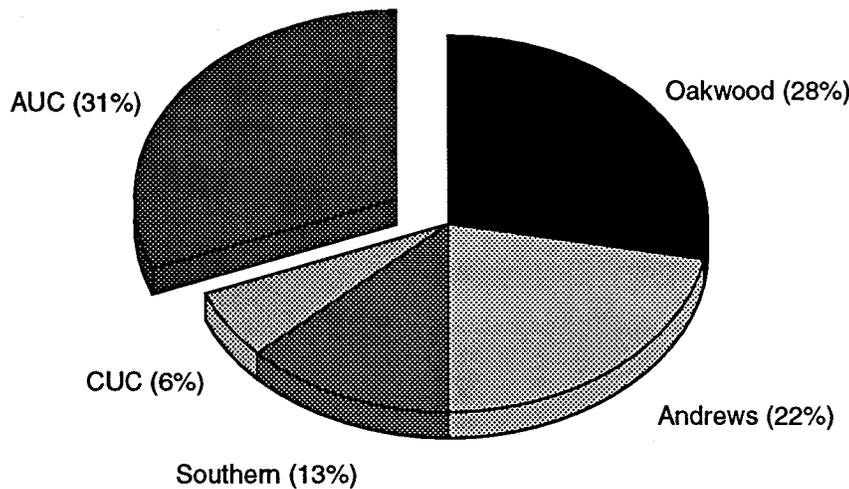
However, before the business meeting got under way, Glenn Coe, an attorney in Connecticut and parliamentarian for the union constituency session, pointed out the need to scrutinize the quorum. By Atlantic Union by-laws, a quorum requires half the delegates to be lay people, and half of those lay people to be women. Although most conferences were close to compliance and could have adjusted their delegations, of the 157 delegates from the Northeastern Conference, 110 were on the conference payroll. Northeastern officials suggested that the constitution be disregarded, the meeting convene, and then the constituency could change its constitution. After some discussion between the parliamentarian and incumbent union officers, it was determined that the June 2 union constituency was simply not constituted in a way that could conduct business.

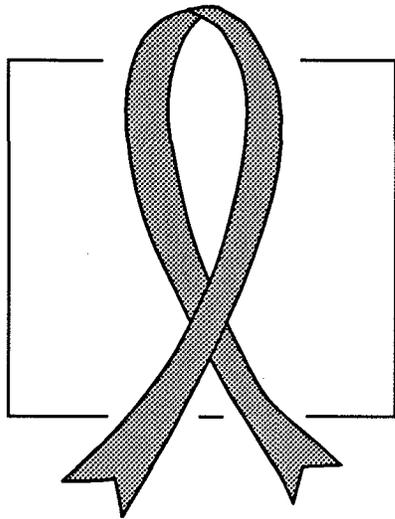
With this decision, Stennett Brooks announced his delegation's refusal to participate under present by-laws. It had been a mistake to vote for that kind of delegate representation in 1991, and now, "as Malcolm X said, 'the chickens have come home to roost.'" The June 2 Atlantic Union Conference constituency meeting dissolved without carrying out any business.

Another meeting of the Atlantic Union constituency has been scheduled for the early part of November.

Figure 3

Atlantic Union Students at AUC and Other SDA Schools





Two views from and about Africa and whether Adventists have a greater responsibility to the sixth commandment (thou shalt not kill) or the seventh (thou shalt not commit adultery); and, could Uncle Arthur's God abandon missionaries?

AIDS, Adventists, and Africa— Only Abstinence Is Foolproof

I have followed Gilbert Burnham's article and the responses to it (*Spectrum*, Vol. 24, No. 2). In the middle of all these, some facts about issues surrounding the "storm" are either unknown or left out. Let me deal with the issues for the sake of our brethren who are not in the full picture.

Drs. Muganda and Kibuuka's responses are the sentiments of most African professionals within the Eastern Africa Division. I well recall the outraged sentiments of a division-wide meeting in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, this past November.

It is noteworthy that *Spectrum* readers know that condoms are not 100 percent protective. Here Dr. Burnham and Dr. Hopp in her response are telling the truth. Some latex material making condoms have "pores" or "channels" 5 microns in diameter. HIV measures 0.1 microns! Furthermore, 17 percent of the partners using condoms for protection among married couples in which one partner was HIV infected still caught the virus within 18 months. That is one out of six!

A U.S. Food and Drug Adminis-

tration (FDA) study duplicated the stresses of sexual intercourse to test whether the viruses would leak through the pores of a stretched latex condom. The study says that "men who do not use condoms are at least 10,000 times more exposed to HIV transmission than are those who do."

This study was cited by Caroline Blair, a UNICED AIDS project officer in Kenya, objecting to an essay of mine in *The Nation*. But she gave only one-half the story. The other side of the coin she did not quote. That same study she quoted showed that "between 14 and 29 of the 89 condoms tested leaked a significant amount of test particles." It went on to say that researchers concluded that leakage of ejaculate was real and therefore "the use of latex condoms can substantially reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of HIV transmission." This study has been published in at least three places. If leakage in 29 out of 89 condoms occurred, that is 33 percent of the time! And the leakage was ejaculate. The HIV particles are 1/25th the width of sperm in an ejaculate.

Given these findings on HIV size

and leakage, what rational, informed scientist would place his or her trust 100 percent in such flimsy armor and risk his or her very life?

Furthermore, is it likely that young people in moments of unbridled passion will stop to remember the 13 steps a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publication recommends, including:

- Store properly.
- Pay attention to expiration date on condoms with spermicide.
- Use a water-based lubricant. Petroleum products (e.g. jelly) must be avoided.
- Be cautious about vending machines, since extreme temperatures reduce efficacy.
- Don't keep condoms in wallet or pocket for more than a few hours at a time; increased temperature will occur.
- Don't open package with teeth, sharp nails, or scissors.
- Check to see if condom is gummy or sticks to itself.
- Check tip for brittleness, tears, holes, etc.

In other words, our AIDS prevention efforts should not give false security in an attempt to reduce risk of transmission through condom use. The balance between abstinence and condom use as an AIDS prevention message is quite delicate.

AIDS education programs have certainly increased the sex knowledge quotient among our youth. But none of them have shown any significant and consistent decrease in sexual activity, pregnancy rates, or sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

The so-called "safe sex" solution to AIDS prevention is a disaster in the making. Condoms are not the solution; values are! The only common sense solution is *abstinence before marriage* ("no contact, no contract"), then *marriage with mutual fidelity for life to an uninfected partner* ("zero grazing"). If there is

any other solution, I have not come across it.

Programs that encourage teens to postpone sex until they are older (both in Africa and the United States) have been very successful. Primary school pupils in such programs showed consistently higher differences in lowered sexual involvement, with resulting lowered risk of transmitting AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, measurable right through high school.

There is a consensus: AIDS is one disease you don't want to get. It has hit Africa hard! Condoms are 70-85 percent effective. There is USAID money to supply free condoms all over Africa. It is easy to dish condoms out, rather than a good painstaking program to provide abstinence.

Students need to get a strong, clear message: saving themselves

AIDS, Adventists, and Africa— Condoms Combat Suicide, Murder

The AIDS crisis has pushed questions of sexual ethics to the top of the Christian agenda. A lively, and sometimes rancorous, debate has developed over the role of condoms in Seventh-day Adventist anti-AIDS campaigns. Some of the debate has been published in *Spectrum*.

The magnitude of the HIV/AIDS crisis is such that Adventists must stop fighting each other over condoms. Fellow Christians are perishing from AIDS while we argue. Non-Christians are going to Christless graves because the gospel did not reach them in time. Time, energy, and material resources must be used wisely and effectively because each human life, both here and hereafter, is at stake.

Some church officials seek both

until marriage is the only 100 percent sure way to be protected from disease and pregnancy. Let's teach them about contraception, but be honest about the high failure rates. Let's teach them skills to help them save sex until marriage. If, after such education, they insist on having sexual intercourse, let us provide counseling and contraceptive education on an individual basis.

Africa needs help. But we want to be treated with dignity. We want programs of partnership with mutual respect as we articulate our problems and what we perceive as solutions. We shall also dialogue and listen. We are good at listening—maybe too much to our detriment. It is time for us to talk. We speak in love truthfully.

Paul Wangai, Jr.
Director

Health/Temperance Department
Eastern Africa Division

to withhold information about condoms and condemn condoms in anti-AIDS campaigns. The message the church needs from its leaders is: "People are dying! Let us work hard to educate for better lifestyles. Here is a syllabus, here is a plan, here are detailed strategies for different age groups, here is an appropriation." Instead, the dominant message from some official pipelines is: "Condoms are evil, and woe be to any Seventh-day Adventist found promoting them." The message seems more anti-condom than anti-AIDS.

In groups that traditionally speak of sex very guardedly, the discussion of condoms brings sex into public focus in a way that causes real discomfort. Many Christians feel that sex is discussed too openly in Western cultures. However, the

AIDS crisis forces the church to be more open on the subject than many third world cultures are accustomed to. The key is discussing sex in a totally Christian manner.

Contraception may be grudgingly accepted, in the face of overwhelming evidence, but still be viewed by some people with hostility—as an alien imposition. Contraception may be seen as transgressing the law of fertility. Contraception may be viewed as the woman's responsibility, with the condom placing unwelcome responsibility on the man who wishes to be free. Clearly, people who hold any of these views on contraception will need to do some careful thinking or else their focus on condoms will remain blurred.

From a medical perspective, condoms are far from foolproof, both as contraceptives and STD preventatives. Anyone who trusts a condom in an illicit sexual encounter is playing "Russian roulette." The risks of contracting AIDS, even with a condom, are so great that illicit sex has to be seen as a form of suicidal insanity.

Yet condoms provide a degree of protection that is significant from a public health perspective. Very few vaccination or drug therapies offer perfect success rates—but they do save lives. Studies of gay communities have proven that condoms decrease the rate of HIV infection.

Adventists operate medical institutions because of their wholistic philosophy. We seek to minister to the whole range of human needs. By saving human life, we hope to open up a pathway to the heart, making people receptive to the gospel. We do not treat malaria, tuberculosis, cancer, heart disease, or non-HIV STDs just to return the sufferer to his former life of sin. Neither do we justify immoral lifestyles by treating people who get

sick because of them. We have an open agenda of ministering to spiritual needs after fulfilling "felt needs."

Some Adventist hospitals currently fill the majority of their beds with AIDS victims. Should we care for AIDS patients after they have the disease but condemn a primary method of preventing AIDS when there is no cure? If we offered life-saving care only to those who meet Christian moral/ethical standards, our hospitals would be virtually empty because we live in a very wicked world.

With sexual predators and addicts the church has a dual task: first, it must address the issue of change for the individual himself. This often takes prolonged spiritual guidance and major re-education. Second, the church must consider its duty to protect the potential victims of these seriously warped individuals. Churches and schools are full of innocent potential victims of sexual predators. Tragically, some predators stalk their prey within those same churches and schools. For the victim there is often only one hope—the condom.

The condom is a morally neutral object, neither good nor bad, in itself. However, it can be put to very good use when it prevents illegitimate or unwanted pregnancy, disease transmission, suicide, or murder.* Do partners in illicit sex incur additional guilt when they use a condom? No. The sin is the illicit sex. Avoiding disease and death is not a sin. In the AIDS-era the condom can prevent an HIV-positive person from breaking the sixth commandment, not to kill, in addition to the seventh commandment, not to commit adultery. The condom can prevent suicide or murder—or both at the same time.

That the condom actually increases the volume of illicit sex is very doubtful. People living outside of Christ are likely to do what-

ever they want, condoms or no condoms.

As the church faces the AIDS crisis, it has several alternatives: First, it could say, "Do not commit fornication or adultery! Now that we have told you, our duty is done. Go ahead and reap the consequences if you won't listen." This option is the worst of those we are considering, because it does not save lives in the short term or offer life-style changing education for the long term.

Second, we could simply ignore condoms in our anti-AIDS programs, offering only sound Christian education on sexual morality. This strategy would be correct in offering education for the long-term, but it would offer no short-term AIDS prevention.

Finally, well-developed moral/ethical education (not moralistic exhortation) could be combined with information about decreasing the risk of HIV infection with condoms. Note that the emphasis is on morality education, with condoms playing a secondary role. Among the alternatives we have considered, this is clearly the "best we can do."

The apostle John wrote, "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1, RSV). John was clearly in touch with both the Gospel and the real world he lived in. He knew that Christ offers freedom from sin, but he also knew that Christians do not always accept that freedom as quickly as they should.

Paraphrasing the apostle's inspired words, and following his example, the church should say, "Children of God, you must not engage in illicit sex and these are the reasons why. . . . But if you are foolish enough to disregard God's will, for your own good and the

good of your illicit partners, please, by all means—use a condom! If you stay alive you may yet surrender fully to God's grace. But please don't delay! Come to Jesus now for forgiveness and a Christ-like character."

Adventists have "only just begun" pressing toward the mark of comprehensive family ministry. As we work toward that goal, the promo-

tion of condoms—as short-term, life-saving devices—is a moral responsibility and an ethical necessity.

John G. M. James

* Sex by an HIV-negative person with an HIV-positive person often amounts to suicide. Knowingly infecting another person with HIV is certainly murder.

Uncle Arthur's God and the Missionary Experience



The article by John Berez, "Uncle Arthur's God or Probability?" (*Spectrum*, Vol. 25, No. 3), was right on! I grew up in the mission field with Uncle Arthur's *Bedtime Stories* and the picture of the angel watching over two children crossing a broken, dangerous footbridge. I had full confidence in my guardian angel and did not hesitate to go anywhere day or night. I had no fear.

Then, when I was about eight or nine, my father came home with a sad story. Friends and fellow missionaries who were due for furlough in the U.S. were on their way over a mountainous road to the train station. In the mountains, the car broke down. They waited for someone to come along and help them, but as it was getting late and no one came, the father made the

difficult decision to leave his wife and two small children with the disabled car and walk ahead for help. When he returned with help, he found his wife and children murdered.

To say that this was a shock to me is to put it mildly! I was never again the same. Where were the angels? These were good missionaries. Where was God? Was he having some big meeting in heaven and all the angels had to attend? Wasn't he watching? My young mind was full of these questions. I never felt completely safe again.

When I became a mother, I read stories from the *Little Friend* to my children. I was not always happy with the stories. One evening I read them a story about Sammy, who went swimming in the river on Sabbath afternoon while Mom and Dad napped—or some similar story. When I finished the story, my eldest son, who was five at the time, said quietly, "You know what, Mom? Yesterday I ate that last piece of pie that was supposed to be for Daddy." I had thought my husband had eaten it. Then my son continued enthusiastically, "But I didn't get sick or anything!"

That did it. When all four children were in bed, I put our old typewriter on the kitchen table and typed my first story. I entitled it,

"Ruthie Prayed—But the Calf Died." The story was based on the experience of a friend's daughter. The next morning I mailed the story off, wondering if the editors would accept it. They did, and it was published June 2, 1960. Encouraged, I fired off as many other stories as I could, all based on experiences with my own children or those of friends. One month I cranked out five! Eventually each one was published.

Now as I read some of them over, I must admit some strayed over into the "miracle" mode. One Sabbath morning I had all four preschoolers bundled up and in the car ready to go to Sabbath school. Then I couldn't find the car keys. I became frustrated and they became more impatient. I went out to the car and explained that I could not find the car keys, so if we expected to get to church we had better pray. As soon as we said amen, the eldest said, "I can get them for you." We went into the house and he found them immediately. Was that a miracle? When I wrote the story I made it sound that way although I did not use that word.

Later when I misplaced something, I asked my son first if he knew where it was. He almost always did. It was amazing. I began to wonder if this was a "miracle." Perhaps he had a very retentive memory. If so, I trust he is finding it of help in his law practice.

Lillian L. McNeily
Kettering, Ohio

CORRECTION: The author identification for Keith Burton ("At God's Table, Women Sit Where They Are Told," *Spectrum*, Vol. 25, No. 3) was incomplete. Burton received his Ph.D. in New Testament studies and classical literature from Northwestern University. He directs the "Sabbath in Africa Project," chaired by C. E. Bradford.

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