The Changing Landscape of Adventist Higher Education in North America

Ministry of Healing v.3.0: Why Adventists Should Fight for Universal Health Care

How Then Shall We Pray?

Ellen White’s Writings as Religious Classics
SPECTRUM is a journal established to encourage Seventh-day Adventist participation in the discussion of contemporary issues from a Christian viewpoint, to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject, to evaluate the merits of diverse views, and to foster Christian intellectual and cultural growth. Although effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and discriminating judgment, the statements of fact are the responsibility of contributors, and the views individual authors express are not necessarily those of the editorial staff as a whole or as individuals.

SPECTRUM is published by Adventist Forum, a nonsubsidized, nonprofit organization for which gifts are deductible in the report of income for purposes of taxation. The publishing of SPECTRUM depends on subscriptions, gifts from individuals, and the voluntary efforts of the contributors. SPECTRUM can be accessed on the World Wide Web at <www.spectrummagazine.org>.

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ISSN: 0890-0264

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How Do We Know What We Know?  ➢ BY BONNIE DWYER

ne of my favorite authors, Barbara Brown Taylor, suggests, “Sometimes we do not know what we know until it comes to us through the soles of our feet, the embrace of a tender lover, or the kindness of a stranger. Touching the truth with our minds alone is not enough,” she writes in her latest book, *An Altar in the World*. “We are made to touch it with our bodies.”

Growing up in the Adventist school system from first grade through college, I have sometimes thought, was my bodily way of absorbing Adventism. Starting in Worthington, Ohio, where I came to know the Adventist food culture, moving to Takoma Park, Maryland, and learning about the administrative world through the families of my friends, and ending at La Sierra University, then a part of Loma Linda University, I thought I understood the whole of Adventism. It did not seem problematic to me that my geography of faith existed only within the confines of the United States. I didn’t know that I needed to move outside of my world to truly know what I know.

Looking back at my experience as a freshman college student excited about attending La Sierra, precisely because it had just become a part of Loma Linda, I also sometimes fool myself into thinking I understand all the merger talk and consideration of consolidation among Adventist colleges. But mergers and consolidations, in particular, are stories with so many sides and views it is difficult truly to capture the story.

With the help of a grant from the Peterson Family Foundation, Alita Byrd set about the impossible task of telling the current story of Adventist higher education in North America. She interviewed college presidents, deans, and board chairs. She wrote and rewrote as the story changed. We have continued updating until the very last minute as we went to press. In the world of print journalism, that is days and possibly weeks before you read it, however. Whatever the current state of a particular college, our hope is that reading this story will help you know the whole story in a new way.

In our section on the Bible, we are pleased to share a chapter from Gottfried Oosterwal’s new book on the Lord’s Prayer, in which he shares how he learned many things about the prayer studying with the people of Bora Bora. Given the constant presence of prayer already in their life, he was quite surprised when they asked him to teach them to pray. I highly recommend his book to you, as well as Barbara Taylor Brown’s. Brown’s remarkable book, mentioned in the first paragraph above, is all about doing, about the practices of Christianity. But her list of the do’s is quite different from the traditional practices. Taylor includes walking, getting lost, saying No, carrying water, and feeling pain. The practice of saying No is the title for her chapter on Sabbath.

Revisiting what we think we know with new eyes can be truly exciting.

Bonnie Dwyer is editor of Spectrum magazine.
On a recent weekend, I was in College Place. This town, in the state of Washington, is the home of “the university,” as Adventist locals say. The school that was a college when I attended and later worked there is now Walla Walla University, and I had dropped from the pale blue sky into the nearby airport so I could talk about... my book.

In just a few weeks, my new (if not long-awaited) exploration of The Promise of Peace was to come off the press. People gathered for an Adventist Forum retreat were putting up with me as we looked over three of the chapters. I was trying to say why we should dare to live the Advent hope. One of the chapters we considered begins like this: ‘The church is the beloved community, and the beloved community is... a mess.” But by the time that chapter ends, it feels like a love song. That’s because, to me, nothing on earth matters more than the company of the committed.

At the retreat, I tried to explain. Not even hypocrisy, I argued, is a knockdown argument against the beauty of Christian fellowship. Borrowing John Howard Yoder, I put forth a case that the “people of God is the new world on its way.” The church is a good thing—it’s a revolution in the making. Can you buy this?

Not easily. If you’re reading Spectrum, you will likely know all too many of Adventism’s warts, the flaws that make the mess everyone is aware of. Besides that, you’re getting used to atheism screeds in the book stores—with their unfriendliness to churches in general—and also to increasingly snide references in the establishment press. (As I was returning home to Ohio, I saw that a New York Times writer had described something she didn’t like as “cloyingly churchy.”)

These days, you have to be as brash as a boxer to stand tall for the church.

As for those warts, the first Christians knew them, too. Paul had been to Corinth, where the congregation was rife with lawsuits, sexual scandal, and quarrels over doctrine, idols, and food. The author of 1 Peter felt compelled to say, in chapter 4, that it was time for “judgment to begin with the household of God.” Matthew took it for granted that forgiveness (which only matters in the face of injury) is a key skill for people who belong to the church.

So the beloved community has been a mess for a long, long time.

But there is more to the story, and a good way to see it is to look deeper into Matthew.

This is the Gospel where Jesus calls his followers salt and light. They are, in other words, indispensable to human health and vision—the indispensable minority, the vanguard of a new humanity. So when injury happens, you offer forgiveness, but you don’t do so without thinking. The mission matters too much.

Matthew 18 puts forgiveness at the forefront, but the chapter also envisions a people watching over—and also correcting—one another. And this is where another skill comes in: deliberate and thoughtful conversation. When offense is given, or offense taken, you talk the problem through. And wherever two or three do this together, the risen Christ is there to bless the goings-on. All the while, the point is to find new agreement, and so to advance understanding, mend the rupture, renew the community.

Early on, and in this spirit, the Sabbath School became, for Adventists, an occasion of serious conversation. That is the intent today. In Sabbath School, you read and discuss the Bible so that you can grow, and so that God’s true colors can shine through the life you lead together.

But the Sabbath School seems (in my limited perspective) to be a weakened institution now, with participants getting both older and fewer. If this is so, and if for serious conversation nothing replaces it, the result is going to be disaster. (Just make a list of great organizations where no one ever...
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- Ivan Blazen, Ph.D. January/09
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  California Proposition #8: Why the Division among SDAs?

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New York’s Best-Kept Secret

Highlights of our Spring Schedule

5/2
Terry Anderson: How to Read the Bible III

5/9
Dr Ginger Harwood: Adventists as Peacemakers

5/16
Ed Samuel: Rethinking Daniel

5/30
Lester Wright: Healing and Curing

6/6
Terry Anderson: How to Read the Bible IV

6/13
Alexander Carpenter: Adventists and Calif Prop 8 in 2008

6/20
Lester Wright: God is Extravagant, but How Efficient is He?

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Charles Scriven chairs the Adventist Forum board of directors.
Awaiting Revitalization, Studying Ellen White, and Reading *Spectrum*

**Women's Ordination**

Thank you, *Spectrum*, and your good editors for keeping the issue of women's ordination in the forefront (winter 2009). The articles by Loren Siebold and Eddy Johnson were much appreciated. Currently, the alternative to ordination offered by our church is that of commissioning. This form of recognition for women pastors is merely a rerun of the old separate-but-equal position that no longer holds water in other venues.

In 1995, the board at Forest Lake, Florida, Seventh-day Adventist Church voted unanimously to join its sister churches at Silgo, Walla Walla, and Loma Linda and add our church's blessing to God's call of Barbara McCoy to the gospel ministry. The church administration at that time chose to delay the service and then allowed a rumor to spread that she had turned down ordination. What she had done, in fact, was to say No to a commissioning service.

It has grieved my heart deeply to watch the ordination services of young men who have cut their teeth, so to speak, at Forest Lake Church. These young pastors have been unselfishly coached and mentored by Pastor McCoy, yet she must stand there with her hands at her side, unable even to join in their blessing.

Although I have felt sadness at our church's collective lack of will to act on Barbara McCoy's obvious calling and successful ministry, I was both angered and appalled at the galling actions of a noted evangelist last fall here at Forest Lake Church. Near the close of his highly publicized campaign, he actually had the nerve to ask Pastor McCoy and our newer female pastor, Sabine Vatel, not to baptize their candidates at his meetings.

Following the baptismal service, this evangelist had the pastors and their new members join him on stage. There he introduced all the new members, identifying their home churches and introducing their pastors. That is, with the exception of Diane. There she stood, on stage, on camera, by the side of her young man as he was introduced and she was totally ignored—openly and blatantly!

Look no further, Loren Seibold. If there ever was a glaring example of abuse of positional or institutional power, to say nothing of overt lack of common courtesy, this was it. With seeming impunity, this noted evangelist disrespected not only Pastor Halverson, her work, and her ministry, but also all the women in our church.

In his article, “Why Women Shouldn’t be Ordained,” Seibold opines that the problem rests not in the men but in the system. He suggests that if women were to be ordained the possibility exists that they, too, could become part of the system. Women would, like men, be caught up in a reality where promoting the goals and programs of the institutional machinery would take place in the baptismal font, as our church services are broadcast and streamed live worldwide each week.

Even more egregious were his overt actions toward another local pastor. Diane Halverson, like Barbara and Sabine, had withdrawn her list of potential baptismal candidates after a similar visit from this noted evangelist.

Like Barbara and Sabine, she had chosen to wait and baptize them at her home church in Apopka—with the exception of one young man. He had already informed relatives who would be unable to attend personally to watch the live broadcast. So on a Sabbath afternoon near the close of the campaign, Diane accompanied him into the baptismal waters along with the male pastors from other surrounding churches.

In his article, “Why Men Shouldn’t be Ordained,” Seibold opines that the problem rests not in the men but in the system. He suggests that if women were to be ordained the possibility exists that they, too, could become part of the system. Women would, like men, be caught up in a reality where promoting the goals and programs of the institutional machinery would take place.
preference over creative and innovative ministry.

I agree that our church's institutional system is antiquated and that the members of the club have abused their ordinational authority. However, I favor an idea put forth some years ago by Jack Provonsha. He spoke of the existence of a small but significant amount or number that when added to the whole makes change almost instantaneously.

I believe that once women are admitted to the inner sanctum of the system, their “transformational leadership” style, described so well by Eddy Johnson in the same issue of Spectrum, will become the means for a revitalized, invigorated Advent movement.

DONNA J. HAERICH
ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

The Study of Ellen White

BENJAMIN McARTHUR'S INTERESTING and perceptive article (spring 2008) has just recently fallen into my hands. Since I figure as a supporting player in the article, may I offer a few belated remarks?

McArthur suggests that my investigation of Ellen White's historical sources was the result of a direct comment to me by Don McAdams. That is not how I remember it. Certainly during that period there were endless informal, stimulating conversions within a group of younger faculty members at Andrews University, and I owed a great intellectual debt to Don and others (especially friends like Roy Branson, Ron Numbers, and Don Rhoads) for those wonderful exchanges.

But the specific notion of studying Ellen White's literary indebtedness in one sample chapter of The Great Controversy came to me quite suddenly one evening at home. The next morning, as I left my office between classes to walk over to the James White Library in pursuit of that goal, I ran into Don McAdams in the hallway and told him what I was about to do. “Wonderful,” said Don. “What a good idea. Somebody should have done that long ago.”

As I gradually began to discover the full extent of Mrs. White's dependence upon nineteenth-century Protestant historians, Don was characteristically supportive and encouraged me to write something for Spectrum about my findings—which I might not have thought of doing without his suggestion. And, as McArthur shows, after that article appeared, Don continued this investigation on a much more ambitious scale and disseminated his conclusions to more influential audience than my Spectrum piece by itself could have reached.

But, to the best of my recollection, the initial impulse to study this question came from my own meditations on Ellen White's peculiar role in the Church and not from a recommendation by Don.

I must also plead not guilty to the charge in McArthur's article that my contribution to Spectrum was exceptionally tactless and aggressive. Only in the context of such a troubled period of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's history would it have struck some readers that way. I flatter myself that it was a fair-minded examination of a body of evidence that had been ignored by other Adventist scholars in the past, and I made a strenuous effort to be cautious and conciliatory in my conclusions.

It is true that by the time I left Andrews in June 1971, I was very distressed by the shrill response my article had produced on the campus and in Takoma Park. But to read my unhappy state of mind as it was then back into an article written a couple years earlier would be chronologically inaccurate.

In fact, McArthur's otherwise excellent article has the effect of trivializing the issue by focusing so much on my personal reaction. I left Andrews (and the Adventist Church) not because I was in a grumpy mood, but because I had reached an intellectual impasse: given Ellen White's own remarkable claims of divine inspiration, I came to realize that it would be virtually impossible to engage in a subtle reinterpretation of her role in the Church.

I had once cherished the illusion that it might be possible for Adventists to view her as most Lutherans regarded Martin Luther—as a revered (though fallible) founder of the Church whose opinions were treated with sometimes cautious respect—rather than as a prophetess who claimed to receive messages directly from God in supernatural visions. Gradually, I came to the conclusion that her own pronouncements made such a revisionist reading of her writings untenable.

Obviously, I do not expect Adventists who remained loyal to the Church to accept my views, but at least there should be broad agreement that this was (and is) a genuine theological dilemma. It cannot be explained away by

Continued on page 64...
Oakwood University President’s Lucrative Hobby | AN INTERVIEW BY ALITA BYRD

Delbert Baker, president of Oakwood University, is also a marathoner. He recently ran the Antarctic Ice Marathon just a few hundred miles from the South Pole, finishing the grueling race in six hours and fifty-three minutes. The race raised thousands of dollars for Oakwood University scholarships. Spectrum asked him about his running and other goals.

Alita Byrd: In December, you ran the Antarctic Marathon at the South Pole. What was it like running on snow and ice in below-freezing temperatures?

Delbert Baker: Hands down, the Antarctic Marathon was the most difficult task I have ever done. It was a combination of exertion, elevation, and the dryness of the cold.

Maybe I should have run the North Pole first, because the South Pole is the coldest race.

We flew from Punta Arenas, Chile, to the marathon location at Patriot Hills camp in the interior. Everything was delayed because of the weather, but then at 8 p.m. on Saturday night they said: “This is the window, you’ve got to run now.” We didn’t even have time to acclimatize to the three-thousand-foot elevation.

It was lunar-like. It was miles and miles of ice and snow and cold in twenty-four hours of daylight. There were sixteen of us running the marathon, and three others running a one-hundred kilometre race. We stayed in tents.

They had carved out a path of snow and ice to run on. The first five miles were the most difficult. It was hard to get used to running in the cold. My mouth gear kept freezing up. It was 20 degrees below zero and it felt almost like suffocating. The tendency is to panic. It flips you out.

You just have to take control of your mind and focus. I prayed a lot, then kind of zoned out and got into the flow. You just have to run smarter. I paced myself and finished.

Q: You were snowed in for some time after the marathon. What happened?

A: We were supposed to fly out two days after the race. But because of bad weather we were stranded there for twelve days.

We ended up spending Christmas at the camp. I was bitterly disappointed not to be home with my family for Christmas. On December 26, they fasted and prayed that we would be able to get out safely. And that was the day the plane got through.

There were all kinds of different people at the Patriot Hills camp. There were skiers there, and people getting ready to climb Antarctica’s highest peak, Vinson Massif. There were scientists and explorers—maybe fifty-some people altogether.

While I was there, a group of people found out I was a minister and asked me to do a Christmas worship service. We had a Buddhist, an atheist, Anglican, Methodist, you name it. A lot of people wept. So even though I wasn’t home for Christmas, God used the experience for the good.

Q: Why do you run?

A: So far, I have run thirty-eight marathons in
I don’t simply run for the sake of running. I run with a purpose. In fact, several purposes.

To facilitate health is one reason. The model I use is the Creation Health model put out by Florida Hospital. Florida Hospital sponsors my races in the United States.

The other reason I run is for scholarships. I have been president of Oakwood for thirteen years. My wife said to me, “You know, people might want to sponsor you in some races.”

Florida Hospital said, “You are using our model, so we are interested in sponsoring you. We will pay all of your expenses.”

And finally, I like the adventure. Running 26.2 miles is a symbol for life. I like challenges. I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya, too. Anything we do in life is a challenge, and taking on these big challenges reminds me of that.

Q: So how does the fundraising work?

A: The program we have at Oakwood is called Running for Scholarships. That is split into two fundraising programs. Fifty States for Students is a program where individuals can donate a certain amount per mile run. That goes along with my goal to run marathons in all fifty U.S. states. So far we have raised about 110 thousand dollars.

Seven Continents for Students goes with my plan to run a marathon on each of the seven continents. That is a fundraising program for organizations. We invited all of our Oakwood vendors in and asked them to sponsor me for ten thousand dollars each. We have raised eighty thousand dollars so far.

The money that is donated never goes to expenses. We have separate sponsors who cover expenses.

Every dime of the donations goes toward student scholarships, and toward our goal of building an endowment of five hundred thousand dollars. The interest from the endowment fund goes to scholarships.

Q: How did you start running?

A: I ran my first marathon in 1988, when I was the editor of Message magazine.

It all started when I was planning to go somewhere for the weekend with a friend of mine. Then he told me he couldn’t go because he was going to be running a marathon that weekend.

“A marathon?” I asked. “What’s that exactly?”

He told me it was 26.2 miles. I had never even run five miles.

He suggested that I come along and run five or six miles, just to get a taste of the race.

So I did. It was the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C., and there were eleven or twelve thousand people running. It was a huge race.

I got there and got all geared up. My goal was to run half of the marathon—13.1 miles. At the halfway mark, my family was there, cheering me on. My kid said: “Dad, you’re going great! If you ran 13.1 miles, you can run the whole thing!”

That was not part of my plan, and I was not prepared to run a marathon, but I couldn’t quit there, in front of my family, so I kept on running. It took me about six hours and thirty minutes, but I finished.

And from there, I just kept running. Now, as I’ve said, my goal is to run all fifty states and seven continents.

Q: Those are big goals. But you have come a long way already. When do you plan to complete all these races?

A: My next race is in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Then Virginia Beach. The North Pole race is in April, and the Australia Marathon (my last continent) is in July. I should finish all the continents and the Grand Slam (the North Pole in the Arctic) this year.

Q: How much do you train?

A: I work out every morning, and I run five to eight miles a day. In any given week, I do about thirty miles. I don’t do long runs,
because I do so many marathons. I ran marathons in thirteen states last year. This year I will probably do six or eight states. That's more than a marathon every eight weeks.

**Q:** What's your best time?

**A:** I'm not out there winning marathons! My best time is three hours and fifty-eight minutes, but my average is four hours and fifteen minutes. It's respectable.

**Q:** Running isn't necessarily a young person's sport, but your running schedule is extremely energetic. I have to ask: How old are you?

**A:** Fifty-six.

**Q:** Does your running inspire the students?

**A:** On campus, the students are very interested in it. We have what we call the Presidential Running Club—a group that wants to run marathons with me. I meet with the students once a month.

**Q:** You have been president of Oakwood since 1996. What accomplishments are you proudest of? What have been your biggest challenges?

**A:** I have a great administrative team that has contributed to every accomplishment.

Oakwood now has its highest enrollments ever. We have a headcount of 1,865, and our full time equivalent is more than 1,700. Last year, I told the students that my goal was to reach 1,800 students, and that whenever we reached the goal, I would jump into the pool. Well, this year we all went over to the pool after classes one day, and I dived in from the diving board wearing my three-piece suit.

But other than enrollment, I would say there have been three significant accomplishments in the last decade or so.

First, the overall improvement of the campus and infrastructure. We have a new mens' dorm, business and technology building, and student housing complex. We have started a cemetery, and this is a true service for the Huntsville community.

We have an aging campus (Oakwood was started in 1896), so we have had to do some massive renovation to our school.

Every year for the last seven years, we have won beautification awards for our campus.

The second area of accomplishment has been our move to graduate programs, and changing our name to university. We are moving into a whole new arena.

Third, we have had great success in fundraising. We have brought in more than thirty-five million dollars during the time I have been here.

Of course, we have challenges as well. One challenge is getting more scholarships for students. Anyone can come to Oakwood, and we have diversity programs to encourage this. Our students are about 85 percent people of color. We have a very ethnic mix in our adult education program.

We keep our tuition low—last year, we had the lowest tuition of all the North American Division schools. We should still be in the bottom three. But this means we need more scholarships to offer students.

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Delbert Baker graduated from Oakwood College in 1975, then went on to earn a Master's of Divinity from Andrews University. Later he earned a Ph.D. in communications from Howard University. He worked as a pastor until he became editor of Message. He then served as special assistant to the president and director of diversity at Loma Linda University. He was named president of Oakwood in 1996.

A writer from Dublin, Ireland, Alita Byrd serves on Spectrum's Editorial Board.

This interview first appeared on Spectrum's Web site <www.spectrummagazine.org>.
Recently, I was in Washington, D.C., with almost three hundred other faith leaders from the PICO National Network speaking to members of Congress about several issues, including stemming the tide of preventable home foreclosures and comprehensive health care reform. (For more about my experience there, including some video, please visit my blog at www.ryanjbell.net.

For more than three years, my congregation has been working with our friends at LA Voice, the Los Angeles affiliate of the PICO National Network. PICO is a faith-based community organization with 53 affiliates in 17 states in 150 towns and cities, representing 1 million families across the United States. Last month, we achieved a major victory for our national work when on February 4 President Barack Obama signed the new S-CHIP expansion into law.

Now, because of the stories we are hearing from our local communities around the country and because the president has set his sights on health reform this year, PICO is moving ahead to work on comprehensive health care reform. For us, this means three basic things: (1) health care must be affordable for all Americans, (2) the plan must cover everyone, and (3) it must be financially sustainable for the country.

For the past two years, I have been involved in health care reform as a religious leader. I have done this mostly because I think it's the right thing to do. When I see, in my own congregation and community, hardworking people who cannot afford health insurance, it makes me angry. It upsets me that in the United States access to quality health care is a privilege afforded only to the rich and well-connected. As a matter of moral concern, this must stop.

But I am also interested in this issue because of my specific faith tradition. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a rich history of health and healing ministry. One of Ellen White's most popular books, which I read in college, is Ministry of Healing. The first way this "ministry of healing" has manifested itself is in a strong "health message." Because we are children of God, created in God's image, and because we believe our bodies are temples for the Holy Spirit, we strive to be as healthy as we can be. This is what I call Ministry of Healing 1.0. Every individual can practice its principles as a manifestation of their spirituality.

However, our ministry of healing has not stopped there. Beginning in 1866, the Seventh-day Adventist Church opened its first health care facility, known as the Western Health Reform Institute, which later became Battle Creek Sanitarium. Today, under the auspices of Adventist Health System, the Church operates thirty-six hospitals with more than six thousand beds, just in the United States. Early in the Church's history, the leaders decided that teaching people about health wasn't enough. Following Jesus' example, we needed to care for people who got sick. This is Ministry of Healing 2.0.

Today, there is a new frontier in our ministry of healing—universal access to medical care for all Americans. This is Ministry of Healing 3.0. As a clergy leader in the PICO National Network, I was troubled to read the list of faith
groups convened in the Religious Round Table on Health Care. On that list were the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Sojourners, and others. Seventh-day Adventists were not on the list. I was not surprised by this, but I was troubled. Of all groups, Adventists should be at the top, with our history of health ministry and our international network of health care institutions.

So these days I've taken to asking people a question: What good is our health message, and what good is a network of world-class hospitals and clinics, if one-third of the people in the United States can't access those services when they're in their greatest need? And what good is all this if people can't stay on top of their health by seeing a doctor regularly? This is a grave injustice and one that Adventists should take the lead in solving.

If you'd like to learn more about the PICO National Network and our efforts to move health care reform through Congress this year, please visit www.piconetwork.org. If you want to talk about how you can get involved, please contact me at rjbell@hollywoodsda.org.

There are four things that need to be fixed for the U.S.A. system to begin delivering value-per-dollar on a par with other countries.

1. The legal system needs to be changed around malpractice. Anyone who thinks the current malpractice system in the U.S.A. works for anyone other than the lawyers should read the chapter in Better: A Surgeon’s Notes on Performance, by Atul Gawande. He shows it doesn’t work even for most of the patients who are damaged by malpractice.

2. Money spent on medical treatment needs to be prioritized against what else can be done with the money. The hospitals and the medical supply companies will figure out a way of spending ever dollar you allocate to them on doing something for the good of the patient. That does not mean it is the best thing to do with the money.

3. The money that is spent on medical treatment needs to be spent much more carefully. I am repeatedly involved in five-hundred-dollar ambulance rides for people who would be adequately served with a twenty-five dollar cab ride or a ten-cent aspirin.

4. The costs of medical supplies needs to be drastically cut. Lots of research money is being spent on drugs/machines/procedures that will make a profit, not ones that will make a real difference. Medicare and other insurers need to start using their size to negotiate good deals.

Should the churches get involved? In my experience, they usually make situations worse by bringing in irrational ideas that are not grounded in a proper cost-benefit analysis.

One only has to look at the disaster the “aid” programs to Africa cause, and especially such utter disasters as the Catholic Church’s anti-contraception campaign....

Bevin, Nationally Registered Paramedic
March 18, 2009

Unfortunately, people (including churches) do not step up enough to cover “another’s behalf.” That’s just the way life works.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which has been around for sixty years, contains thirty articles on rights for all human beings. Among these rights are (Article 4) Freedom from Slavery; (Article 7) Right to Equality before the Law; (Article 18) Freedom of Belief and Religion; and (Article 21) Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections.

Here is Article 25: “(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

Yes, we each have our views. The above view, however, was ratified by the countries of this world (including the United States—and the U.S.S.R.). This promise the United States has not kept.

We may argue against these rights, but for heaven’s sake (literally), why would we do that? Why not work for the general welfare of good health, particularly for children, as we work for their general education? (And please don’t demean Christianity with “Jesus was a capitalist” rot.)

The United States can do far better. And in the far better country of the new earth, God himself will ratify the premise behind every article.

Chris Blake March 18, 2009
Ryan Bell deserves a lot of credit for pointing out that Christians, of all people, should put compassion above the dogmas of social Darwinism. Every European country provides health care to its citizens. These countries are not doing it because they are richer than the United States but because compassion means more to them than it does to us.

It is indeed striking to see a secularized Europe show more concern for people in need than those of us who live in a nation marinated in religion and churches. Of what use, I ask, is a profession of faith if it leaves people so hard of heart that they simply shrug at the fate of almost fifty million of their countrymen without adequate health care?

In this country, we banish Darwinism from biology, where it belongs, only to reintroduce it in Congress as if it were a divine mandate for running a country. It’s a strange world in which compassion means more to European atheists than to a lot of people of faith in this country.

Ryan, keep up the work. “Faith without works is dead.” More power to James.

Aage Rendalen March 18, 2009

Ryan wrote: “It upsets me that in these United States access to quality health care is a privilege afforded only to the rich and well-connected. As a matter of moral concern, this must stop.”

As a pastor, do you consider yourself “rich and well-connected?” I’m guessing not. Do you receive quality health care? I’m guessing Yes.

This is the state of many people (in fact, most that I know). They aren’t “rich and well-connected,” yet they are receiving quality health care. Before I went to college, while I was working in an entry-level job at Blue Shield of California, I had great health insurance. Such is the case with many people I know who aren’t college educated or wealthy. They are employed by a variety of employers and have access to health care.

When I was unemployed and broke my collar bone while playing football, I received quality health care and afterward applied for Medi-Cal (Medicaid in most states) and all the bills were paid...in fact, I never even received any bills at my home.

Yes, people should have access to healthcare, and they do. There are laws that now prohibit emergency room staff from asking about insurance prior to receiving treatment. So everyone receives treatment...the nurses and doctors have no idea what kind of insurance their patients have, or if they have any at all.

One final thought on this issue:

Is it a Christian concept to force others to do good deeds? Does God advocate the Robin Hood method of stealing from the rich to give to the poor? Should Christians support the government forcefully taking money from people to pay for the health care of the less fortunate?

In Christ’s love,

Spectrum March 20, 2009

I lived in the United States for fifteen years, and am now back in my home country. Australia. My constant fear while living in California, Michigan, and Massachusetts was what would happen if I were to get very ill—how would my husband and I afford to pay for the costs over and above insurance reimbursements (yes, we did have health insurance)? Even with health insurance, we lacked access to regular affordable health care.

For example, I was unable to have regular mammograms (available to me free here in Australia, now that I am over fifty). Attending an emergency room in the United States with my son on a couple of occasions for a broken limb (or two), I was distressed to see large numbers of people who were there simply to see a doctor about the flu, as they were unable to access care in the usual way.

My mother-in-law, who lives in the United States, does not seem to avail herself of regular medical care (she has various needs, including diabetes). I can’t imagine that scenario here in Australia. I believe most U.S. citizens don’t have a clue as to how disadvantaged they are.

Angela Saunders March 23, 2009

Ryan Bell pastors the Hollywood, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church.
How Then Shall We Pray? | BY GOTTFREID OOSTERWALD

This article is taken from The Lord’s Prayer Through Primitive Eyes (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2009), and reprinted with permission.

The apostle Paul told the believers in the ancient city of Rome that “we do not know how to pray as we ought” (Romans 8:26). But then he immediately assured them that we don’t need to worry about exactly what we should say or how to formulate our thoughts and praises and confessions and petitions because “the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26, 27).

We hear something similar from Jesus Himself. When He walked the earth, it was customary for people to stand in public places at the three main hours of prayer and surrounded by many others, lift their arms into the air with the palms of their hands raised heavenward to show their piety and devotion. Onlookers may have been impressed by these people’s spirituality, but Jesus branded it hypocrisy. It’s not the words that count or the formulas or forms, but our attitude—our spirit and state of mind. “When you pray,” He tells us, “you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and to pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:5, 6).

Jesus also counsels us not to “heap up empty phrases” or use a stream of words (verses 7, 8). In His prayer then, He’s not intending to give us a formula or a standard prayer for every occasion nor a routine recitation of a holy text or a pious liturgy required for communal worship. He has designed His prayer as a model—given in outline form as the rabbis in His time all did—for every believer on how to enter into the presence of God as their Father in an attitude of trust and humble dependence upon Him. The Lord’s Prayer is an invitation from God for us to participate in His rule and reign of love here and now, as well as in the world to come. It represents a continuous dialogue between God and His people—a celebration of our salvation and our relationship with Him as our Father.

This is not to say that right words and the form in which they are uttered are unimportant. Why else would Jesus have given us specific words and put those words in a specific form? Both are, like prayer itself, a gift from God, who has guarded this prayer till this day simply because He is anxious for us to be and remain part of His kingdom. He “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). The Lord’s Prayer is like a protective shield around us, a lifeline, a tie that binds us to God. He has given it to us as a comforter and a source of strength. It is a refuge and a promise that—like all other gifts and calls from God—are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

The Disciples’ Request
Luke tells us in his Gospel that one day Jesus “was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1).

Why the request? These disciples were believers—followers of Christ. They knew how to pray. They were Jewish men who from childhood on had learned to pray
three times each day: at 9:00 a.m., noon, and 3:00 p.m. They prayed from memory the Shema, in which believers pledged to give their love and wholehearted devotion to the one and only God and to meditate upon His law, and in which they rehearsed the blessings for obeying and the curses for disobeying God's commandments. They also prayed the Shemoneh 'esreh, the “eighteen”—a liturgical prayer that originally consisted of eighteen short prayers appealing to God for His mercy and favor. Many of them also knew the Psalms by heart and prayed them together with prayers of thanksgiving before meals and for special occasions.

They also prayed a host of ritual and communal prayers, one of the most important of which was the Kaddish, the proclamation of the sanctity of God. At the time of Jesus, this prayer was recited in response to the readings and explanation of a biblical text, the Haggadah. It started with the words: “Glorified and hallowed be His great name in the world which He created according to His will, and may His kingdom come in your lifetime and in your days...speedily and soon.” This prayer—though spoken mostly at memorial services and in a much longer form—is still highly honored in Judaism and deeply anchored in Israel’s soul.

Yes, the disciples knew how to pray, and they did pray. Why, then, did they say they wanted to learn how to pray?

We can deduce two main reasons for their request from the text itself. The first is the way Jesus Himself prayed. The text says that one day when Jesus was praying, one of His disciples requested, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). The disciples became aware of the enormous differences between their way of praying and the way Jesus prayed.

We know that Jesus often was alone when He prayed—away from people but also from the worldly noises that surround us everywhere. Away also from the sacred places of prayer and from the rituals associated with them. For Jesus, prayer was spontaneous, not tied to any time, place, or ritual order. It was always new and fresh, not bound by tradition.

Prayer was—and is—the most intimate way of relating to God. One stands before Him totally “naked” and alone. Jesus said that when we pray, we should go into our little “room” with the doors closed (Matthew 6:6)—meaning that we should separate ourselves from the environment that normally stimulates and shapes our thoughts and activities. We should remove ourselves from our daily worries and obligations, interests and desires. This doesn’t require a special place as much as it does a particular mind-set and attitude. For the disciples, as for many believers after them, praying was mostly routine, an honored duty, a ritual. It was mostly limited to certain times and places or special occasions. Their hearts and wills were not in it. After many years of repetitive practice, they hardly thought of what they were saying. Their prayers had become mere utterances of words, mechanical, something Jesus warned against in His sermon on the mount, in which He described it variously as “vain repetitions,” “empty phrases,” and “meaningless words” (Matthew 6:7, 8, KJV, RSV, TEV).

**Beyond Routine Praying**

As all of us who have not given up praying altogether know, routine praying can easily deteriorate into a thoughtless, soulless, mechanical, and routine uttering of words. And then we are surprised when it remains so ineffective! That’s what perhaps impressed the disciples the most in Jesus’ praying—its effectiveness. He prayed, and He was able to multiply five loaves of bread and two fish into a meal that satisfied five thousand men, plus women and children. He prayed, and the sick were healed, the wind and the waves calmed down, and water changed into wine (Matthew 14; John 2). He prayed, and even the devil fled from Him (Matthew 4:1-11). He prayed, and He was enabled to accomplish God’s will for all of us, so that the whole world might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (Matthew 26:36-46; 1 Timothy 2:4).

It is important to stress here that in all these events, Jesus acted as a human being, as one of us (Philippians 2:5-7). He had no powers that His followers may not also have through praying like He did! In teaching His disciples how to pray, Jesus offered them a way out of the often thoughtless, heartless, mechanical, and powerless forms of prayer. He offered them in thematic form a radically new approach that starts with God—His glory and His will—instead of being rooted in our needs and interests, thoughts and wishes. It’s a form of praying that, with a feeling of utter dependence on God and a deep sense of humility, asks for His will to be accomplished. Such an approach centers more on
listening than on speaking and is oriented more toward God’s program and His intentions than toward ours. After all, our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8). Jesus Himself promises us that if we pray like this, He will grant us anything we pray for and empower us to do whatever He did on earth—and even greater things (John 14:12–14).

The second reason why the disciples requested Jesus to teach them how to pray, according to Luke, is expressed in the words in the same way “as John [the Baptist] taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1). In the days of Jesus’ ministry on earth, there were literally hundreds of teachers who, with their followers, wandered around the country proclaiming their particular message. Many of these teachers had a Messianic bent. Others were calling for a revival of the teachings of the prophets, while not a few were promoting movements of protest against the social conditions of the country or the occupation by the Romans. Jesus and John the Baptist were only two of them; other teachers represented the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the “Children of God.” To make clear what their particular message and mission were and to distinguish their teachings from those of the others, each of these gurus had designed a special prayer that embodied their mission and summarized their particular message. That’s why John the Baptist had prepared a special prayer for his disciples. Jesus’ disciples wanted a prayer that would summarize their message and mission and distinguish them from all the other groups, sects, and cults.

And what a prayer they received! A summary of the gospel it is indeed. It also defines clearly Christ’s mission and therefore ours. But it is so much more: it is a shield against the powers of evil surrounding us everywhere; a power to live by; an instrument of God’s grace; and a source of happiness, peace, and righteousness. Martin Luther once described it as “an iron wall” that surrounds us everywhere and keeps us safe from the attacks of enemies and temptations—even doubt and unbelief. The Lord’s Prayer tells us that we are what we pray. What a wonderful thought to live by! To all who pray this prayer with Christ, it gives their true identity: it tells the world who and what we really are as individual persons and as a community of faith.

**One Prayer—Three Versions**

In the Bible, the Lord’s Prayer comes to us in two versions: one is given by Luke (chapter 11:2–4), the other by Matthew (chapter 6:9–13). A third version developed later and has given the Lord’s Prayer the form we are most familiar with, one that is prayed around the world among Christians of all persuasions in more than two thousand languages and dialects, including that of the Bora-Bora, Berrik, and Nadjabaidja in the isolated interior of West New Guinea.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Matthew placed the Lord’s Prayer right in the middle of Jesus’ sermon on the mount (Matthew 5–7). Literally and symbolically, the Lord’s Prayer constitutes the very heart and center of Jesus’ inaugural address and therefore the very core of His message and mission. However, though the Lord’s Prayer is prayed around the world and has been for some two thousand years now, few have recognized that it is the very center of a radically new ethic, a whole new social order, a new form of relationship between individuals and nations—indeed, a new world order. And those who have drawn this conclusion have commonly considered this call for a new order and ethic more as an ideal to hope for than a reality to be implemented.

However, from the beginning of His ministry, Jesus clearly announced that people who pray this prayer with Him should thereby also live up to the principles enunciated in His sermon on the mount: to be the salt of the

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**Matthew 6:9–13**

“*Our Father who art in heaven,*
Hallowed be thy name.
*Thy kingdom come,*
*Thy will be done,*
On earth as it is in heaven.
*Give us this day our daily bread;*
And forgive us our debts,
*As we also have forgiven our debtors;*
And lead us not into temptation,
*But deliver us from evil*” (emphasis added).

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earth and the light of the world; to act as peacemakers and champions for social justice; to love one’s enemies; to show compassion to the poor and feed the hungry; to always speak the truth; to be faithful to one’s marriage partner; and to refrain from judging anyone, which means that we should treat them the way we want them to treat us. There are no racists or sexists among those who pray the Lord’s Prayer with Jesus in the meaning and spirit in which He taught it!

Many a government has forbidden believers to pray this prayer because of its revolutionary character and “subversive” nature, for this prayer does, indeed, have the power to change entire cultures and societies, and bring down governments and economic systems. And this prayer has inspired many a theologian to challenge traditional views of mission and notions of what it means to be the church in the world today.

Though the versions of the Lord’s Prayer that Luke and Matthew gave have essentially the same structure and form, convey the same basic message, and share the same purpose and goal, the two do differ in a number of significant ways. These differences demand close study and attention because both these versions come to us as gifts from God Himself and because each of them emphasizes a particular message. Let’s look at the texts side by side.

Obviously, Luke’s version is shorter, as is the term of address he uses, “Father,” while Matthew speaks of “our Father who art in heaven.” Luke totally omits the petition, “Thy will be done / On earth as it is in heaven,” as well as the petition, “but deliver us from evil.” Where Matthew uses the words this day, Luke writes each day, and where Matthew uses the term debts, Luke uses the term sins. And finally, the version according to Matthew reads, “As we also have forgiven our debtors,” while Luke has us pray, “for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us.” There is no question about the fact that it is Jesus Himself who has given us this prayer. Neither should we doubt the fact that Matthew and Luke were both inspired by the Holy Spirit to hand the Lord’s Prayer down to us the way they have. The question then arises as to how these two versions developed in the context of the early church’s mission and ministry.

Both versions developed in the decade of the eighties of the first century A.D., some fifty years after Christ was crucified, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. By that time, the message of the gospel had been spread all over the Mediterranean and had given rise to hundreds of house churches. Some of these developed among Jewish believers; others arose in the social, cultural, and religious context of the Greco-Roman world. As historical evidence shows, all of these newly developed churches attached immense value to the Lord’s Prayer as a confessional statement of belief, a means of teaching the gospel and building the believers in the faith, and as a source of comfort and strength in the often hostile environment in which they existed. It was an essential part of the Didache, or “The Lord’s Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations”—the oldest Christian document other than the books of the New Testament, dating from the end of the first century A.D. In it, the believers are urged “after Jewish fashion” to pray the Lord’s Prayer three times a day.

The Third Version

The version given in the Didache is basically that of Matthew, but it adds a doxology that reads, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever” (Didache 8:2). Our present version came about as a result of Martin Luther’s Bible translation (1521–1522). Luther had found this doxology, which we all know now by heart, in a relatively late Greek manuscript of the Gospel
of Matthew, and he considered it part of the original text. After his death, a number of Lutheran catechisms added these words to the Lord’s Prayer based on the Didache but also because they were believed to be part of the original manuscript of the Gospel according to Matthew. Today, this doxology has become an essential part of the Lord’s Prayer in all Christian churches, an ecumenical prayer of the truest kind.

Bible scholars believe that the two versions given in the New Testament developed side by side in the different contexts in which the churches found themselves: the one by Matthew connected with the Jewish-Christian communities in what is now the country of Syria, and the one given by Luke among the believers of Greek-Roman background. Some are of the opinion that both versions developed in their respective environments as part of these churches’ worship, liturgy, and mission and that Matthew and Luke then wrote their respective versions as they learned it from the believers for whom they labored. Others, however—and they constitute the majority at the moment—believe that Matthew and Luke, as shepherds of their respective flocks and apostles of the gospel, adapted the Lord’s Prayer to the particular religious and cultural circumstances under which they labored. Each version, then, is the result of a conscious and Spirit-guided attempt to relate the gospel to the needs and level of understanding of certain peoples in the context of their particular culture.

Matthew relates the gospel to people steeped in Jewish liturgies, beliefs, and traditions. His version of the Lord’s Prayer shows remarkable similarities with the Kaddish—the announcements of the holiness of God. Identifying the Holy God, who is so wholly other from us humans, with “Father,” as Luke does, would be unthinkable and considered blasphemy of the worst kind. After all, the Bible tells us that for that very reason “the Jews sought all the more to kill him [Jesus], because he not only broke the Sabbath but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18). Matthew, therefore, needed to add to “Father” the well-known Jewish notion of heaven, a status totally different from our human condition and existence. For those he sought to win, the closeness of God to humankind expressed in the term “Father” needed to be complemented by the proper distance implied in the term “who art in heaven.”

In their own way, however, both Matthew’s and Luke’s versions teach us how we should relate to God and to each other. For if God is the Father of us all, and we pray to Him as our Father, that makes all of us brothers and sisters, members of one family under God. That applies in both Matthew and Luke to believers and also to those who do not know Christ. God is indeed the Father of all humans by creation and redemption. So, praying “our Father” affirms with the apostle Paul that “he made from one every nation [and race and people]” (Acts 17:26). It also means that we thereby pledge to live up to God’s ideal for His children, that we will consider people of all nations, races, religions, and cultures our brothers and sisters, that we will honor and respect them as such, and that we will share with them the wonderful message that God is our Father.

Similarly, we learn from both versions in different ways what it means to be forgiven and to forgive others. We learn to regard “debts” as “sins.” We learn what it means to petition God for His will to be accomplished “on earth as it is in heaven” and to be “delivered from evil.”

Matthew places the Lord’s Prayer in the contexts of Jewish liturgy, worship, and sensibilities. Luke, on the other hand, starts from the perspective of the separation of us humans from God as a result of sin and of how God in His grace has bridged that gap. The challenge given by the differing perspectives of these two biblical books is obvious: for mission to be effective, we must continually shape the gospel to the needs, interests, and sensibilities of those to whom we wish to communicate it. The gospel as summarized in the Lord’s Prayer must take on a totally different form when shared with Muslims than when shared with people of the Jewish faith or with those for whom prayer is meaningless or irrelevant.

For Further Reflection

1. How important are the forms and structures of our prayers compared to our attitudes and state of mind, our beliefs and relationships? How does the Bible describe those attitudes, beliefs, and relationships?

2. When Jesus prayed, things happened: the winds and the waves calmed down, water became wine, the paralyzed could walk, the deaf could hear, the mute could talk, and thousands of hungry people were fed. What would we have to learn from Jesus’ prayer life?
ELLEN WHITE

REDUX
Prophets and Trust: A Reply to the Biblical Research Institute | BY DAVID R. LARSON

The April newsletter from the Biblical Research Institute at the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, features interesting articles. Karel Nowak, director of Religious Liberty and Communication for the denomination's Euro-Africa Division, reports on recent European attempts to legislate one day a week for rest, probably Sunday. Angel Manuel Rodriguez, director of the BRI, reflects on whether in thinking about ourselves as "the remnant" we Adventists yield to the temptations of exclusivism and triumphalism. Alberto Timm, who serves as rector of the Latin American Adventist Theological Seminary, explores the roles of experience and Scripture in Christian living.

Ekkehardt Mueller, associate director of the BRI, investigates what Scripture says about the universe as God's creation. He also reviews Armageddon at the Door (Hagarstown, Maryland: Review and Herald, 2008), by Jon Paulien, dean of the School of Religion at Loma Linda University. Another associate director of the BRI, Kwabena Donkor, reviews Challenges to the Remnant (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2008), by Marvin Moore, editor of Signs of the Times magazine. It is worthwhile to compare Donkor's comments to David Pendleton's recent online review of Moore's book at <www.spectrummagazine.org>.

I am particularly interested in the editorial by Gerhard Pfandl, also an associate director of the BRI. Titled "Testing the Prophets," it challenges the suggestion of scholars such as Wayne Grudem in The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians (New York: University Press of America, 1982) that in 1 Corinthians 14:29, Paul teaches "we can evaluate the messages [of prophets] and decide what to accept and what to reject." In the New International Version, which Pfandl quotes, this verse says: "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said."

On the basis of the meaning of the word judge (Greek diakrino), as it is used here and elsewhere in the New Testament, Pfandl agrees with E. E. Wright in Strange Fire? (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1966): "The discrimination believers are to make is not just between truth and falsehood in a prophecy [as some people claim], but between true and false prophets. Any error denoted a false prophet."

If this sentence is representative of his thinking as a whole, it seems to me that Wright might not mean that we should refrain from evaluating what prophets say. His point seems to have been that we should make these judgments but that we should not limit our assessments to this. We should also distinguish between genuine prophets and false ones as such. Perhaps, therefore, Pfandl speaks more for himself than Wright when he suggests, "Once a prophet is recognized as from the Lord, however, fallible human reason should not sit in judgment on the messages God gives. We must seek to understand it and apply it to our lives."

My view is that it is dangerous to establish that someone is a genuine prophet and from then on accept everything he or she says as true. One reason for this is that genuine prophets sometimes lose their way and we have no way of knowing this has happened apart from noticing that he or she no longer speaks or acts truthfully.

More generally, when I think about these issues I find it necessary to make one distinction that many don't and not to make another that many do. The distinction that I do not make is the one between passages that are exegetical, historical, or theological, on the one hand, and those that are devotional, pastoral, or homiletical, on the other. This is because the texts I read do not tell me what passages to read which way.

Let's consider the poems in Scripture's prophetic litera-
tecture, for example. Should I think of them as devotional? Or should I hold that they are theological? Or should I say that some are this and others are that, or that I can draw this line within a single poem as well as between them?

My problem is that these poems don’t help me sort them this way. Neither do the parables of Jesus or the letters of Paul or the apocalyptic visions in Scripture’s last book. And neither do the writings of Ellen White. I can’t think of many that texts that do.

The distinction I do make is the one between absolute and presumptive authority. Absolute authority is that which we must never question, challenge, or disobey. We must always believe what it says without qualification and do what it commands without reservation.

Presumptive authority, on the other hand, is that which deserves the benefit of the doubt. We should accept and obey it unless we have good reasons not to. This is the kind of authority that children give their parents, students give their teachers, and citizens give their leaders. But these authorities do not always get everything exactly right and when they don’t we should not follow.

No human person or production deserves absolute authority. Only God merits it. All authority that passes through human lives is more or less presumptive. The “more or less” is important because some individuals and groups have earned more of our confidence than others. But no human being other than Jesus Christ himself warrants all of our trust.

The irony is that God does not insist on absolute authority, on unthinking belief and unquestioning obedience. Instead, again and again throughout Scripture, people argue with God and God takes their objections seriously. The Master of the Universe never tells thoughtful people to sit down and shut up. Why should we let anyone else do this? The answer is straightforward: We shouldn’t.

We usually assert our authority when we are trying to get people to believe or do things that don’t make sense to them. This is appropriate when we are dealing with those who cannot think for themselves because they are too young, old, ill, agitated, or uninformed. Otherwise, it is not acceptable. Let’s say it again: Always think for yourself; never think by yourself! ■

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Ellen White’s Writings as Religious Classics: A New Approach to an Old Problem | BY RICHARD RICE

Beyond the desert of criticism, we wish to be called again.

I can’t imagine my life without Ellen White. I was born in Loma Linda, California, in the hilltop sanitarium she urged John Burden to buy in 1905. I attended church schools of the sort she encouraged Adventists to establish. I grew up hearing her quoted by ministers and teachers. She was often brought into family conversation. A sentence that began, “According to Sister White,” gave weight to any argument and often brought discussion to a close.

In my early teens, possessed of intense religious devotion, I read Early Writings and Steps to Christ as if they were written just for me. She was a major resource in my college religion courses. After graduate school, I joined the faculty of the institution she helped to get started, and I’ve been here ever since. Now my office is just a few hundred yards from the place I was born.

Yet the Ellen White among us now is not the one I grew up with. Adventists today do not quote her with the same frequency and finality they used to. Hers is not the last word in matters of theology or church policy. The world we live in now is not the world she lived in, of course. But that’s only part of the story. Over the past thirty years or so, her image has undergone a radical makeover.

Beginning in the early 1970s, Ellen White’s writings were subjected to intense scrutiny. Careful investigation discovered that the extent of her literary indebtedness surpassed all previous estimates. She borrowed freely and extensively, and she employed not only the words in her sources, but also many of their ideas.

We also learned that her literary assistants were by no means mere compilers or copyeditors. They played a highly influential role in the formation of her writings.

And then there were ethical questions that arose from Ellen White’s brusque denial of dependence on the work of others. To top it all off, we learned that the Church knew about all this years ago.

Two thousand nine is a milestone of sorts for Adventists. It’s been ninety years since the 1919 Bible Conference, and thirty years since material from it was published for the first time in this journal, fully sixty years after the events it recorded. What these minutes brought to light was the fact that the issues surrounding Ellen White that attracted so much attention in the 1970s and 1980s were not new at all. Influential people within the Church had wrestled with them decades before and for some reason never gave them a public airing.

The cumulative effect of these developments exploded the traditional concept of Ellen White. She was obviously not a passive conduit for supernaturally imparted information to God’s chosen people. Instead, we see a woman with a mind of her own, freely using the words and ideas of other writers, and not only taking credit for them herself, but also attributing their ultimate origin to God.

We see a person who was a child of her times, like
Adventism. In spite of the fact that Adventists officially had grown up who may have heard of her, used to be, so to speak. She is no longer widely read or untenable in light of historical studies, but downright impossible to attribute her work to others. Therefore, White's messages were indeed original...so original it is

Ellen White's relation to her times, of course, in revisiting the past, and the assumption behind this approach—namely, that prophetic inspiration entails originality—deserves theological attention. But I don't think this line of thought will prove to be particularly helpful.

Whether or not it gives us new answers to the old question, it is the question itself that is part of the problem. People today are not much interested in attempts to prove that Ellen White is a prophet, or attempts to prove much else for that matter. Our postmodern times call for something different.

I suggest that we set aside the familiar questions of intellectual indebtedness and literary dependence and approach Ellen White in a new way entirely.

The situation Adventists face with Ellen White is not unlike what Christians at large face in relation to the Bible. The historical study of the biblical documents presents a picture drastically different from the familiar view that the biblical authors derived their messages more or less directly from God and speak with equal authority to every age on every issue they refer to.

Critical scholarship shows that there is historical development on every level of inquiry about the Bible. We know that biblical translations have a history. That's obvious. We also know that the text on which the translations are based has a history. After all, the biblical manuscripts available to us now are all copies, or copies of copies, to be more precise. Then, too, the collection of documents that form our Bible has a history: it took centuries for the New Testament canon to reach its final form.

Finally, the documents themselves have a history. Many of them were based on previous documents. This is manifestly clear in the case of Matthew and Luke, less clear in the case of other books of the Bible. If the situation Adventists face with respect to Ellen White's writings is similar to the one Christians in general face in relation to the Bible, then there are approaches to the Bible that may be helpful to us in thinking about Ellen White.

It will be helpful, I believe, for us to look at three developments in recent Christian thought. One concerns the different ways the Bible functions in Christian theology and Christian community. Another examines the role that narrative plays in forming Christian identity. A third
explores the distinctive impact of written texts, especially classic religious texts, on human experience.

The Bible and the Church
In the *Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*, David Kelsey examines the way various theologians use the Bible and concludes that *scripture* and *authority* are essentially functional terms. They express the role the Bible plays in the Christian community. If a text is construed as "scripture," this means that it functions in certain ways or does certain things when used in certain ways in the common life of the church. The most important function of Scripture is to establish and preserve the community's identity and to shape and transform persons' identities within the community.

Similarly, the concept of *authority* refers not to some inherent property within the text, but to the way a text is used. When someone says that Scripture is "authoritative," she is not describing some quality within the text, so much as committing herself to a certain way of using the text. According to Kelsey, then, we can distinguish between "authority" and "inspiration." "Inspiration" is a property of texts, whereas "authority" is a "relational term." To say a set of writings is "inspired by God" tells us nothing about how it is to be construed (211).

Kelsey's insights suggest that we separate the issue of Ellen White's prophetic authority from the question of her inspiration. We could construe her writings prophetically without thereby committing ourselves to a particular explanation of their origin.

Charles M. Wood comes to similar conclusions regarding biblical authority in the *Formation of Christian Understanding*. What understanding of the Bible, Wood asks, is appropriate to our use of it as Christian Scripture? Like Kelsey, he notes that the Bible can be read in a variety of ways. And the modern critical study of the Bible is vastly different from its use as Christian canon (10). Although it is possible to approach the Bible as we would any other book, Wood acknowledges, "not every understanding of it is a Christian understanding" (26). The principal aim of a Christian understanding is the knowledge of God (23, 30).

The "knowledge of God," of course, is not by any means a simple idea, but it expresses the primary aim of Christians as they interpret the Bible—to be reminded of "who God is and thus who we are, what God's bearing toward us is and what that means for our common life as God's creatures." Scripture serves this reminding function by disclosing God to us and giving us the concepts we need to hear and apprehend that disclosure (38).

The crucial question is whether Scripture can serve this function for contemporary Christians in view of what we now know about the text (38). As Wood notes, there are two important elements in the traditional understanding of the Bible. One is the notion that the Bible is the Word of God, that to read the Bible with the proper frame of mind is to be addressed by God. The other is the idea that the text is a "literal sense," a meaning available to a properly attentive reader (39-40). Though variously interpreted in Christian history, these two concepts have helped the users of Scripture to read and hear it in ways that furthered their realization of the knowledge of God (40).

As a result of historical and literary studies of the Bible, however, both components of this conventional approach to Scripture are in serious difficulty. We now know that the biblical texts have a human history (43). There are not only many historical layers and numerous literary forms in the biblical writings, but a bewildering variety of viewpoints as well (44-45). So there is no way for us to go behind "this great modern transforma-
tion" and retreat to the past (47). Nevertheless, Wood believes, “Christian understanding can still be nourished by the literal sense of Scripture, hearing in it the Word of God” (48).

Traditional interpreters of the Bible regarded it as the Word of God on the basis of two important assumptions: God was directly involved in the production of its individual writings, and divine authorship imparted unity to the biblical materials. Accordingly, they approached the Bible as the cohesive embodiment of God’s Word.

These assumptions are not available to informed people today. We can no longer affirm the essential simplicity and coherence of Scripture, and the issue of divine authorship has become increasingly problematic. But this does not mean that the Bible cannot serve as our religious authority. Christians can still approach the Bible as the Word of God, Wood argues, if they make what the traditional interpreters assumed matters of conscious, deliberate choice.

In other words, "where they assumed that the words of the scriptural text may be explicated coherently as the Word of God, we may decide to take them so" (67). Doing so, however, is not the conclusion of a historical investigation. “Inspiration,” Wood argues, “is not a historical category. Whether a text is able to function as the Word of God cannot be established or denied through a study of its human genesis.” It is a “hermeneutical decision” (67).

Wood defends his position by examining the nature of authorship. A person may become the author of words another has written or spoken if she does not merely cite or quote them, but appropriates them as her own utterances (68). For example, a committee discussing a motion is bound neither to the words nor the intentions of the member who makes it. It appropriates motions in its own way.

Members have been known to vote against motions they have made because they did not approve of various amendments or even because they have been persuaded by arguments against them. But it is the committee that decides whether the motion shall be enacted, not the will of the individual member.

Similarly, Christians may decide to regard God, and not particular human agents, as the “author” of Scripture as a whole. We may read Scripture as if it were a whole, and as if the author of the whole were God (70). This does not by any means, Wood insists, obscure the difference between critical and pre-critical understandings of the Bible. But it allows the Bible to exercise an authoritative function in the Christian community today, as it has throughout history.

Kelsey and Wood share a functional approach to the Bible. To view the Bible as “scripture” (Kelsey) or as “word of God” (Wood) is to commit oneself to use the Bible a certain way. It is not to make specific historical claims about the origin or content of the biblical materials.

Furthermore, it involves a certain conception of the objective to which this use is directed. For Kelsey, it contributes to the shaping of Christian existence. For Wood, it leads to the knowledge of God. Such an approach assigns, or accepts, a certain role for the Bible in the ongoing life of the Christian community. Although it neither ignores nor thwarts critical investigation of the biblical documents, it construes the nature of biblical authority in a way that is not vulnerable to the consequences of such investigation.

A similar approach to Ellen White’s writings would lead us to separate the prophetic status of these writings from a specific theory of their production. We can use the writings prophetically—that is to say, we can allow them to function with authority in the Adventist community, without committing ourselves to a specific view of the way they came into existence. To quote Wood, “A canon is a canon only in use, and it must be construed in a certain way before it can be used.”

Narrative Theology
There is another development in contemporary Christian thought that has implications for our understanding of Ellen White. “Narrative theology” examines the role of biblical narratives in the formation of personal identity, both in the lives of individual Christians and Christian communities. In the Promise of Narrative Theology, George W. Stroup presents “a narrative interpretation of the doctrine of revelation and the nature of Christian identity.”

Stroup argues that the identity of individual persons and groups exhibits a narrative structure. He describes a distinctly Christian identity as the result of a “collision” between the narratives of the Christian community and an individual’s “personal identity narrative” (198).

Memory plays an obvious role in the construction of
personal identity. When asked to “tell people about ourselves,” we typically respond by recounting certain events in our past. But we are selective in the events we mention. Parts of the past are more important than others. Your curriculum vita, for example, might include the names of your children, but it won’t include a list of the automobiles you own.

To construct our personal identity, we select only certain events from our past and use them to interpret the significance of the whole. Personal identity, therefore, is essentially “a hermeneutical concept,” “an exercise in interpretation” (104–105).

Something else plays an important role in our identity. We not only remember the past, and remember it selectively, but we also interpret it within a tradition, or a horizon, which provides various “symbols, myths and categories.” Our identity is constituted in part by our social relationships, by our location in a particular community; it is never a private reality (109–10).

According to Stroup, the kind of narrative people use to construct a personal identity out of their past contains both “chronicle” and “interpretation” (112–13). “A chronicle is simply the sum of those events and experiences which constitute an individual’s personal history.” My chronicle contains everything that has happened to me, including things I don’t remember (such as my birth), and it contains only what has happened to me. The events and facts that make up the bedrock, or raw data, of my identity cannot be altered (115).

Chronicle also includes the social world in which an individual participates. A person’s past is never purely private; it always contains the social and cultural features of a particular community (115).

Although chronicle is essential to a person’s identity, it is also deficient. A chronicle lacks selectivity and movement. It has no “plot.” To become history, it needs to be interpreted. You don’t get to know someone just by finding out about her past. To know the person, you need to find out what the past means to her. We need to know what “form or shape or pattern” she culls from the chronicle and projects over the whole” (115).

The role of interpretation is just as important in a community’s identity. Unlike a crowd, for example, a community is a group of people who have a common past, a common future, and a common narrative, and they view certain events as decisive for understanding the present. Consequently, the community’s common narrative is “the glue that binds its members together.” To be a true participant in a community is to share in that community’s narratives, to recite the same stories as the other members of the community, and to allow one’s identity to be shaped by them (132–33).

The Bible is essential to the Christian community because it contains the principal narratives that shape its identity. Though not everything in the Bible is narrative, strictly speaking, narratives form “the core of Scripture [and] serve as the common denominator for the whole of Scripture,” and the other material tells us how to interpret and apply them (136). The essential narratives of the Old Testament include God’s activity in the history of Israel. Those of the New Testament describe God’s activity in the life of Jesus and in the early life of the Christian community.

The narrative of the Christian community includes more than the texts we call Scripture. It also includes the interpretation of these texts by previous Christians and, most visibly, the application of the biblical narratives to the present situation of the Christian community. “The identity narrative of the Christian community is the story it tells at any given moment in order to explain...
its beliefs and its behavior in the world” (166).

Stroup describes Christian faith as the outgrowth of a collision between the narrative identity of an individual and the narrative identity of the Christian community (170). In confession, an individual enacts the community’s faith (191). The faith of the believing community, and narratives that represent its core, become “the prism” through which she refracts and reconstructs her history and her personal identity (194). “To confess Christian faith is to say in effect, ‘I understand who I am in the light of and by means of the faith narratives of the Christian tradition” (201).

Narrative theology contributes to our quest for a visionary perspective on Ellen White’s writings by broadening our understanding of both the nature and the function of authoritative religious texts. Its emphasis on narrative as the primary language of faith reminds us that revelation contains more than propositional statements or factual claims. Religious truth is fundamentally personal, rather than propositional. It expresses identity; it arises from faith. This is clear in the case of the Bible (compare John 20:31), and it is evident in Ellen White’s writings as well.

In the Conflict of the Ages series, Ellen White expresses the meaning of Christian faith in general and of Seventh-day Adventism in particular, not through a series of doctrinal statements or theological arguments, but through the medium of an extended narrative. Her theological motif is that of story.

She tells a story large enough and dramatic enough to encompass and invite our participation across a wide diversity of individual backgrounds. Her books beckon us to make that story our own personal story, or more accurately, to incorporate our individual stories into the framework of that comprehensive, cosmic narrative.

The concerns of narrative theology also remind us that the primary purpose of religious literature is not to communicate information and thereby secure intellectual assent. Rather, its purpose is to shape character, to motivate, inspire, awaken, rebuke, and warn. It calls us to an awareness of our situation in the world before God. It summons us to action.

Here, too, we see a resemblance to Ellen G. White’s writings. Her Testimonies for the Church contain numerous appeals to individuals, and through these to the Adventist community as a whole, to manifest in concrete forms of life and action their spiritual identity. Her writings give specific shape to Adventist existence.

Narrative theology also illuminates another aspect of Ellen White’s writings. Her story is an important part of our story. For one thing, her spiritual odyssey from Methodism, through Millerism, to the founding of Seventh-day Adventism epitomizes the experience of the Adventist community-at-large in its quest for an identity distinct from, yet related to, both nominal Christianity and apocalyptic enthusiasm.

Her own biography helps Seventh-day Adventists situ-ate themselves in the landscape of Christian history. In addition, her prophetic experiences contribute to a sense of Adventist identity. They confirm the belief that Seventh-day Adventists are a people whom God is leading. The fact she was a prophet in itself, quite apart from the content of her messages, played an important part, especially in the early years, in establishing the spiritual confidence of those who survived the Great Disappointment.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Another resource for renewing our appreciation for Ellen White comes from the work of Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy. In a nutshell, hermeneutic phenomenology examines the experience of interpretation, or, shall we say, the experience of the interpreter. The Bible is filled with symbols, and some biblical interpreters, like Rudolf Bultmann, seek to eliminate the symbolic or mythical expressions of Scripture in order to retrieve the conceptual content behind them.

For Ricoeur, however, such expressions are not obstacles to understanding a text; they are the indispensable vehicles of its meaning. “Symbolic, metaphorical, mythological language,” he insists in the Symbolism of Evil, “gives us the capacity to bring experiences of a certain kind to awareness, thereby creating the basis for reflective reasoning” (8).

We must abandon the prevalent notion that we have an independent vantage point from which to evaluate a text. For Ricoeur, this is backwards. We don’t bring self understanding to the text, he argues, we receive self understanding from the text. “In the coming to understand of signs inscribed in texts,” he says, “the meaning rules and gives me a self” (9).

Ricoeur also insists that written texts have a unique quality. When a discourse assumes written form, he
argues, it begins a new career. The meanings of written discourse are no longer bound, if they ever were, to the intentions of authors or the apprehensions of first readers. Consequently, to understand a text is not to understand the author's intention or to grasp it in the way its original hearers or readers did. "What has to be appropriated is the meaning of the text itself...the direction of thought opened up by the text" (16).

These revisionary concepts do not mean that Ricoeur advocates a simpleminded approach that ignores the historicity of both ancient text and modern reader. What they express is a desire to grasp the text's own meaning for us, not to impose other concerns on the text. If one of the motives of the nineteenth-century historical critical scholars was to free the Bible from dogmatic ecclesiastical interpretations, Ricoeur seeks to free the Bible from culture-bound subjectivizing interpretations by asking us to listen carefully to what biblical discourse testifies (23).

The referential function of ordinary language is to describe familiar objects of perception, and the referential function of scientific discourse defines objects by its methods of observation and measurement. But the reference of revelatory discourse is "poetic" in nature. It projects "ahead of itself" a world in which the reader is invited to dwell, thus finding a more authentic situation in being (25).

The Gospel parables illustrate this revelatory function. In the strangeness of its plot, a biblical parable institutes a shock that redescribes reality, and it makes available for us a new way of seeing and being. The Kingdom of God is like "what happens" in the story, and what happens, despite its everyday setting and circumstances, is "odd," indeed "extravagant." This metaphorical process opens an otherwise matter-of-fact situation to a new range of interpretations and to the possibility of new commitments.

David Tracy makes extensive use of Ricoeur's reflections on the nature and function of religious texts. The notion of the "classic," in particular the "religious classic," plays an important role in The Analogical Imagination, his account of theological method. According to Tracy, the task of theology is one of hermeneutics. It seeks to make available to the thinking public the classics of Christian faith, principally those in the Bible.

It is difficult to define a classic, but we can describe what it takes to recognize one. Recall a book, say, that had a powerful impact when you read it years ago. What happens when you read the same book now? If that distinctive quality of disclosure is gone, then the book's time is past—you have recalled a period piece but not a classic.

But if the reading is equally powerful, the book may be a classic. You will feel called to converse anew with its singular claim to your attention. A true classic will exercise this transformative power on readers far removed from the time and place of its production.

Classics thus speak with power to people of their own time and to people of all time. They inspire, and survive, continual interpretation and reinterpretation. We sense that understanding and responding to them are matters of great importance. Yet we can never state their meaning definitively, once and for all.

Tracy outlines several steps in the interpretation of the classic, beginning with the recognition of a classic. In the presence of a classic, I do not experience myself as a subject in control of an object. Instead, I find myself caught up with the work of art in a way that transcends my everyday self-consciousness and my usual desires for control. When I interpret a classic, I find that instead of exerting control over the text, the text exerts influence.
A Functional Approach to Ellen White’s Writings

Applying this principle to Ellen White’s writings would lead to some significant changes. For many years, we have been preoccupied with the origin of these writings. Traditionalists want to preserve the notion that God was directly involved in their production. They search Ellen White’s life and writings for evidence of “supernatural inspiration.”

Others insist that the development of Ellen White’s writings was much more complicated. They insist that we examine the use Ellen White made of other writings, the work of her literary assistants, and the cultural and religious context of her life—all of which will help us “understand” the texts. But notice, to “understand” here means to “explain”—to account for the production of the material we find in her writings. Both groups assume that to interpret these writings is to develop a theory as to how they came into existence.

Ricoeur and Tracy suggest a different concept of interpretation. Instead of the process that produced the texts, they argue, we should concentrate on the content of the texts—the thought world that the texts present, or the possible mode of being in the world that they suggest.

Along with content, Ricoeur and Tracy also emphasize the impact of texts on their readers, particularly texts with the status of religious classics. For Seventh-
But the Bible is the church’s book, and no attempt to understand it can overlook this fact. Indeed, as Christians we experience the Bible as one book, not as sixty-six independent documents, each with a complicated textual history. We grasp the parts by virtue of their function within the whole.

We cannot ignore the results of historical-critical study of the Bible, nor should we want to. But neither can we ignore the concerns that it typically sets aside. In their distinctive ways, each of the approaches to the Bible we have examined attends to these concerns.

These revisionary approaches to the Bible suggest new ways to approach the Ellen White writings. For one thing, they recast the question of their prophetic status. They require us to turn from questions of origin to questions of function. From this perspective, the central issue is not, How did these writings come into existence? even though this question is legitimate and important.

The crucial question is, How do these writings function? What is there impact on our experience? Do they confront us with God’s claims on our lives? Do they persistently move us, alternately unsettle and reassure us? Do they do this over a long period? Do they have this effect on other people, too?

If they do such things—with sufficient power, over time, and for a significant group of people—then they are prophetic. They bear the Word of the Lord to the community. This is more compelling evidence of their prophetic status than accounts of their origin could ever be.

In view of the ebb and flow of critical questions surrounding Ellen White’s writings over the past forty years or so, this approach has a good deal to recommend it. It allows them to function prophetically without pretending that the problems raised from the 1970s onward don’t exist. At the same time, it focuses attention on the writings themselves, rather than on various theories as to how they came to be. In the final analysis, this is probably what Ellen White herself wanted most, namely, to have her writings read and responded to.

It is also noteworthy that our functional approach emphasizes the role of the Ellen White writings in the Seventh-day Adventist community. It views Ellen White more as our prophet than as a prophet. But traditionally this is just what Adventists wanted to claim for her, and certainly all that she claimed for herself. We share the Bible with all other Christians, but we regard the Ellen White writings as specifically for us.

To etch the contours of this “functional” approach to Ellen White’s writings, we need to indicate what it does not represent, as well as note a couple of questions it leaves unanswered.

First of all, this approach does not dismiss or solve the important questions scholars have raised about the origin of Ellen White writings during the past three or four decades. It leaves such questions open. After all, further critical inquiry may contribute to the very appreciation of the texts that this proposal calls for. Such inquiry may, for example, help us to locate a “genuine prophetic core” in Ellen White’s writings, just as biblical criticism has identified relatively early strata in New Testament literature.

Historical critical inquiry may also help us to identify a distinctive Ellen White motif or perspective. The history of New Testament criticism reflects changing attitudes toward the writers of the canonical Gospels. In the heyday of form criticism, the evangelists seemed to be little more than compilers of material developed by others. But in light of redaction criticism, we see each evangelist as a theologian in his own right.
Again, further critical inquiry may help us to appreciate the different kinds of texts we find in Ellen White’s writings. They obviously contain devotional or homiletical material, doctrinal or theological material, and material of a practical nature. What are the distinctive features of each? More important, how are these different literary forms related? Of particular interest would be something in the nature of “form criticism” of the Testimonies—for early Adventists the primary manifestation of the prophetic gift.12

A second important question that this proposal seeks neither to dismiss nor dissolve is that of divine influence or intervention in Ellen White’s ministry. This will always be connected to the question of her prophetic status. To the biblical prophets, it seems, the origin of their message was at least as important as their content. Our approach here has been to “bracket” this particular question, but it is certainly not unimportant or inconsequential.

The flurry of concern over Ellen White that began in the 1970s has largely subsided, but in its wake a generation of Adventists has grown up that knows little about her. Can we recover the reverential picture of Ellen White that I and others of my generation grew up with? Not, I’m afraid, if we depend on arguments old or new for her originality. But there are other ways to rekindle an appreciation for her ministry and renew an interest in reading what she wrote. Perhaps the perspective presented here will help us do so.

Notes and References


4. David H. Kelsey, The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 89–91. A Kelsey survey of theological methods discloses a variety of answers to two further questions related to the Bible’s authority. First, just what is it in Scripture that is authoritative? Second, precisely how should this aspect of Scripture be brought to bear on theological proposals so as to “authorize” them? The answers theologians give to the first question range from “patterns in logical interrelationships among doctrine or concepts” to “patterns among religious symbols used in a particular religious tradition” and “patterns recurring in a stretch of world history” (102–103). Although Scripture figures prominently in the formulation of theological positions, the precise role it plays can vary greatly from one theologian to another (compare chapters 6 and 7). Scripture may provide the data from which theological conclusions are drawn, it may provide the warrants that justify the inference from certain data to a certain conclusion, and it may provide the backing that assures us that the warrants are reliable.


6. Ibid., 93. Ellen White’s writings do not, on any Adventist account, constitute an addition to the biblical canon.


8. The White Lie...


10. There is a striking diversity among Adventist biblical scholars toward historical-critical method. According to the contributors to Volume 5 of the SDA Bible Commentary (1956 edition), “There is a legitimate, as well as a destructive, higher criticism” (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1956), 5:188. But forty-four years later, writing in the Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Richard M. Davidson emphatically rejects all critical study of the Bible. He insists that any attempt to go behind the biblical text as we have it and reconstruct its history makes the human interpreter, or human reason, the final determiner of truth (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2000), 95–96.


12. Among the rules of the Methodist “Band-Societies” that John Wesley drew up in 1738 to guide people in small groups as they met weekly for spiritual improvement was a willingness to answer this question affirmatively, “Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home?” (See “The Works of John Wesley,” Vol. 9: The Methodist Societies History, Nature and Design, ed., Rupert E. Davies [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989], 77–78.) Perhaps Ellen White’s Testimonies for the Church represent an application of this “Methodist” concern for people’s personal spiritual condition.

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Searching for Ellen White | NANCY HOYT LECOURT INTERVIEWS

HISTORIAN FREDERICK HOYT

Lecourt: I’m going to ask you some questions about your personal journey with Ellen White. Let’s start with you as a young man. You had just received your doctorate in history from Claremont Graduate School. Some wise men from the East came and said, “Historians, use your talents for the church.”

So you said to yourself, “I’m going to go research early Adventist history.” You applied for a grant and they turned you down....

Hoyt: The grant was from a peer review committee, a group here on campus. We were part of Loma Linda University at the time.

I wanted to do some investigative work, just to find out what materials were available for early Adventism. This was a perfectly reasonable survey of the literature. I asked for a very modest amount of money; I think it was three hundred dollars. I waited and got the results: “We are sorry, but we had to turn down your request.”

Three hundred dollars? Come on, that’s small change for a trip to Maine. I went home, and my wife saw that something was wrong. She said, “What happened?”

I said, “They turned me down.”

She said, “That was a good proposal, wasn’t it?”

Of course it was.

She said, “I’ll pay for it—we’ll go there on a vacation. If they don’t have enough good sense to approve your proposals, I’ll pay for it.”

So we went and I found nothing usable.

The major historical society in Maine is housed in the town house of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It’s impressive. I belonged to it, thinking that I might someday use it. So I had my membership card, we got to Portland, Maine, and I walked down to the end of the room, where a big heavy oak filing cabinet stood with filing cards.

I had my list, starting with William Miller, the Millerites, James White, Ellen Harmon, and Ellen White. So I pulled it open. There was nothing really at all on the Millerites or William Miller.

So I said, “James, here I come.” Nothing; lots of Whites, no James or Ellen.

So I said to the librarian, “I’m interested in this phenomenon....”

She said, “Oh, sir, we’re not interested in the lunatic fringe.”

Lunatic fringe? My church? Oh, my goodness! So I went around to other places. I got nothing that first trip.

Lecourt: But you went back. There were no computers. You decided you were going to scan the newspapers yourself.

Hoyt: So I went back. This is what I had to do. There are good colleges there—Bates College, the University of Maine—great libraries, particularly the Hamilton Library at the University of Maine, the Maine Historical Society, Portland Public Library, and Bangor Public Library. But nobody had what you would call a finding aid about Ellen White or the Millerites.

Librarians weren’t interested in the “lunatic fringe”—my church—so this is what I had to do. I had to start going through the material making my own finding aid. That meant every newspaper, every religious periodical, every book that might have material on Ellen or James or other people who I’d discovered were important between Ellen’s birth in 1827 and her marriage to James in 1846.
Almost every village in Maine has a little weekly newspaper. I didn’t know what I was saying when I said, “I’m gonna look at those papers,” because there was no index. I learned how to scan a newspaper rapidly. I’ll tell you it was eye fatiguing—but the only way to do it was to read the headlines closely.

Lecourt: You found yourself going down some odd roads. You would see, for example, the name James White, but you had to figure out if it was our James White or not, right?

Hoyt: When I saw James White in the headline—horse thief, fraud, and so forth—I didn’t know whether or not it was our James White. I had to check him out. Sometimes if you neglect a person you dismiss from the initial evidence, you really miss something important. And I would have missed my best stories about Ellen had I not pursued them all.

Lecourt: So you’re hunting for Ellen, here. What did you find?

Hoyt: White is a very common name, so is Harmon. And Gould is common; that was the maiden name of Ellen’s mother. So I had to check them all out.

I learned to look at big newspapers from other states, like the New York Herald, because they gave me leads to local papers. So I saw a headline in the Herald that said, “Fortune Teller Named Ellen White Arrested for Fraud,” and I said a quick prayer, “Dear Lord, say it isn’t so. Do I have to pursue this?”

Now, God didn’t speak to me, but I heard the voice of my graduate advisor at Claremont: “Pursue every lead.”

So I said, “Okay, I’ll pursue this one.”

Was there a middle name? So I began to check, and then I remembered a marvelous student of mine. She later went to Harvard Law School and established a practice in New York. So I called her up and asked for her help.

She said that New York City never destroys a record. So about a week later I got a letter from her. It said that she sent her legal assistant down to the archives in the Bronx—or the tombs or someplace—and they dug way down beneath the water level and found the police blotter records for 1847 and 1848. And these gave me the middle name. I’ve forgotten, but it was Gertrude or something like that.

So I said, “Praise the Lord; I’m off the hook here.”

Lecourt: The next chapter in this history leads you to someone who does turn out to be our Ellen White, right? That’s the goings-on in Beethoven Hall, and, finally, the Israel Dammon trial. Tell us about Beethoven Hall.

Hoyt: Yes, this is my first triumph as a historian, I know my own standards of research and writing and I had to live up to them, and I was not finding material. Historians are not supposed to make up stuff.

Lecourt: That’s called fiction, and some people do it.

Hoyt: Yes, some people do.

I had this problem. I kept looking, going through all these newspapers. And I’m confessing, Ellen Gould Harmon White was not big copy; she was not big news.

So I was happy to find a little reference to Beethoven Hall. The Millerites held wild meetings there, and I knew that Ellen White went to meetings there—she mentions it in Early Writings or somewhere.

I thought I had a connection. I found it in a second- or third-level newspaper, in an article written by M. W. Whittier, the brother of John Greenleaf Whittier, the great Quaker poet. The poet’s brother had visited Beethoven Hall.

Well, Whittier mentions Sister White. Little Ellen was about fifteen or sixteen, and I read quickly. “There was a regular who came to these meetings. She always sat on the front row”—that’s where Ellen herself claimed she sat. According to Whittier, she told about her “supposed visions,” and she was really vindictive.

She would say, “I had a vision and you people who don’t believe what the Millerites are preaching”—this was before October 22—“you’re going to hell. And you’re going to burn eternally. And I’m not going to have any sympathy for you. None at all. You deserve what you’ll find—the shut door.”

I said, “Oh, my goodness.”

Whittier wrote that she had a loud shrieking voice and exalted in an eternally burning hell for her friends.

“Ahh, wait a minute,” I said. “This is not very Christian; this is not very nice of this young lady.”

As I kept reading, my secret wish was, “Lord, no names please, I can skip her if he doesn’t identify her.

And Whittier never did, so I escaped that time.
Lecourt: Go ahead and tell us about your discovery of Israel Dammon.

Hoyt: Okay, I continued with my research. Look, much of this stuff is on microfilm, so I could read it at home. With the originals, you can’t turn the pages without having them disintegrate.

One evening, I was reading microfilmed newspapers up in my office on campus. Now, the old-fashioned microfilm reader was this big thing. I turned the crank and a headline came up, “Wild Millerite Meetings Up in Atkinson,” with a subhead that read, “Young Lady Has Vision.”

I said, “Oh, wait a minute, wait a minute.” I turned the crank, “Young Lady is from Portland.” I turned the crank a little more—“She was flat out on the floor.”

I said, “Oh, no, Lord, not this.”

Now, my wife, Vivian, was at home. I picked up the phone and said, “I’m looking at microfilm.”

She said, “Yes, I know, every evening, microfilm.”

I said, “I’ve come across something and I need wifely advice.”

She said, “What now?”

I said, “I’ve read a news report that I think you, as my faithful wife, should tell me to cease looking at, put in a little box, take back to Gary Shearer at interlibrary loan, and tell him to send back. Don’t look any further.”

She said, “What’s the problem?” So I told her. And then she zinged me; she said, “Fred, I thought you were a historian.”

I said, “What does that have to do with it?” She was a nurse—a good nurse—but not a historian.

She said, “You always told me with great pride you were trained as a historian and that historians, like other professionals, always tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth. And they never fail to follow a lead.”

I said, “You’ve got me, you’ve got me.”

This was about two years after Ron Numbers demonstrated what happens to you when you find the wrong thing. So I said, “Do you like me bringing home a paycheck every month?”

She said, “Let’s compromise. Come home and we’ll talk about it.”

And we did. Afterward, she made a suggestion. “You

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And that’s what we did.

**Lecourt:** According to Spectrum, you sat on the article for four years. People can go there to read more about your discovery.

**Okay, we’re moving on. We need to finish up quickly. Please tell us a little bit about the Mowana.**

**Hoyt:** I happen to have a naval background—and I’m fascinated with things related to the sea and maritime affairs. So when I read that Ellen came back from Australia on a New Zealand line ship named the S.S. _Mowana_, I said, “Oh, a ship—maybe I can supply something.”

I knew how to find where the ship was built, who owned it. I even got a picture of it.

**Lecourt:** Okay, tell us about the vision she had onboard.

**Hoyt:** Yes, she tells the story and it transfixes me. I’ll do the best I can.

She said, “One night, I heard soft music. I saw pink clouds, and a voice spoke to me. It said, ‘Ellen, this is Christ, your Lord.’ And I was startled. But I said ‘Yes, Lord.’ I listened and said, ‘What do you have to say to me?’”

“It replied: ‘I am your savior, your Lord, I am going to watch over you. You have nothing to worry about coming back to the States. I’ll help you find a place. Everything will work out fine.’”

Then there was soft music, and she said, “I’m having a vision”—but then she said, “No, I was conscious; it wasn’t a vision; it wasn’t a dream. Christ returned aboard the _Mowana_—just for me, to comfort me and to validate my mission.”

Then she turned to the brother (the General Conference president) and said, “And, brother, that has happened to me more than one hundred times.”

Now what do I do with this? But it’s in Arthur White’s definitive biography and he gives details about two similar incidents, in Saratoga, New York, when she had a health visit, and in Mountain View, California.

**Lecourt:** So we’re back at Mountain View, and we’re with a different Ellen now, one whose spirituality has taken quite a trip from the young girl who preached hellfire to this wonderful vision of Jesus.

We need to end, but I want to ask you one last question. I want you to tell us, can you shed any light on the story of Ellen holding up that big Bible?

**Hoyt:** Oh, my. This is the real zinger. You have all heard about or seen the big Bible? That was a real Adventist education. Elder Arthur White would come down to Mountain View from P.U.C. and lug that enormous Bible. And I’m telling you, the boys were just blown away. They couldn’t hold it—a good Bible story.

This historian said I’m going to use the rules of legal evidence to check that story out. He looked around and said, “Didn’t anybody ever ask Sister White, ‘Did you have a vision and hold out that Bible for eighteen minutes?’”

So he went to her and asked her the question.

She looked at him and said, “Brother, how would I know? I was in vision.”

**Lecourt:** So there it is. Thank you; we love your stories.

**Hoyt:** Let me make one last statement. I am convinced that Ellen White is the most important person in Adventist history, in my church. No competition whatsoever.

But we have not dealt fairly with her, including me. The biggest wrong to Ellen White is the fact the men have been doing all the writing. Yes, that’s true isn’t it? That’s what we need most of all—a woman to write an academic, scholarly biography.

It’s a marvelous story—what she did with that background—which the women can tell us about.

**Lecourt:** You said it all. Thank you, Uncle Fred.

The August 1987 issue of _Spectrum_ magazine reported Hoyt’s findings, which deal with the trail of Millerite preacher Israel Dammon. The issue can be viewed online at <http://spectrummagazine.org/spectrum/issue/vol_17_no_5_august_1987>.

Prior to his retirement, Frederick Hoyt chaired the Department of History and Political Science at La Sierra University. His niece, Nancy Lecourt, is currently academic dean of Pacific Union College. She holds a doctorate in English. This interview took place in March 2009 on the La Sierra University campus, where the History Department Reading Room is being named after Hoyt.
ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION
The Changing Landscape of Adventist Higher Education in North America | BY ALITA BYRD

Last September, the board of Atlantic Union College approached Loma Linda University and asked for help. The New England institution was struggling with a plummeting enrollment, and its financial situation was dire.

The Atlantic Union proposed a relationship between its shrinking college and the thriving medical training center in California, which quickly moved to talks of a merger. Atlantic Union College told its sister institution that it would not make it through the year without help.

Richard Hart, president of Loma Linda University, was willing to talk. “We were waiting for the North American Division system to step in, but we saw that was not going to happen,” Hart says. “So Loma Linda stepped in to discuss the issue bilaterally, and we tried to work out a plan.”

Hart’s concern is twofold: he wants to do what he can to help find solutions for colleges that are in trouble, as well as preserve the feeder system that provides Loma Linda University with so many of its students.

For Atlantic Union College—an institution fighting rumors of closure for years—a linkup with mega Adventist health university Loma Linda would have been a lifesaver. It also made academic sense—although geographically the two schools are on opposite sides of the country, more than half of A.U.C.’s students are science and nursing majors, studying to go into health care. An affiliation with Loma Linda would have brought stability, which would boost enrollment, which would, in turn, increase income.

Negotiations proceeded. In December, Loma Linda University’s board and the Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center board both voted to explore the affiliation in a serious way. They asked A.U.C. for a detailed proposal that they could examine.

“Everyone thought that was a very promising beginning,” says Atlantic Union College president Norman Wendth. “We were all extremely optimistic. We were told that was the difficult vote to get, and the rest was just details.”

As A.U.C. prepared a more detailed proposal, there was lots of back-and-forth between the institutions. Finally, the proposal was submitted, and the Loma Linda University board passed it.

But the second board that had to pass the proposal—the Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center board—turned it down. Concerns were voiced that keeping weaker institutions afloat could jeopardize stronger ones. Finances were a major issue. Loma Linda knew that A.U.C. would need a big infusion of capital to make it through the year. The Atlantic Union had promised to stand good for whatever investment Loma Linda University made in Atlantic Union College. This meant that if the deal fell apart at some point, the union would pay Loma Linda back for the investments it had made and make sure it got its money back. But the board said that Loma Linda needed further security.

So A.U.C.’s board came up with what it believed was a creative and secure solution to the request.

At a final teleconference meeting of the Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center board on January 27, members voted not to proceed, and the talks were dead.

“Loma Linda would have been a great partner,” Wendth says. “I am sorry that it didn’t work out.”

The reasons for voting down the affiliation were not uniform, says Hart. There were a variety of concerns. It was clear that the vote would be a difficult and contested issue.

“Personally, I felt it was a gamble Loma Linda University should have been willing to take,” says Hart. “But collective-
Adventist higher education has spread across the United States, and as colleges have upped their status to universities, there have always been weaker institutions that need help staying solvent.

Many of Adventist higher education’s challenges are not new. But as Adventist colleges seek to attract and retain students, keep in the black, and stay ahead of the curve in academics, it is clear that some new models of operation and some creative thinking will have to come into play.

The enrollment at some institutions (including the newest Adventist third-level institution, Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences) has been on a steady upward trajectory, while others have been in decline for years.

As colleges seek to prepare students for a very different world than graduates encountered in the 1870s, while retaining their distinctive Adventist stamp and mission, they must find new ways of doing things.

As evidenced by the recent talks between Loma Linda and Atlantic Union College, collaboration between institutions may be a key to staying in the game in the future.

“Even though it didn’t work, it has inspired some other campuses to start talks with each other,” says Wendth.

The talks have shown that there are creative possibilities for colleges that want to become more efficient

**New Models of Collaboration**

Adventist colleges have struggled with financial problems since Battle Creek College was started in 1874. Even as Adventist higher education has spread across the United States, and as colleges have upped their status to universities, there have always been weaker institutions that need help staying solvent.

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The talks have shown that there are creative possibilities for colleges that want to become more efficient.
and more successful—or just stay afloat.

"Long term, we will be forced to look at more collaboration, mergers, and new models that we previously thought might not work," says Dick Osborn, president of Pacific Union College. "Single, stand-alone institutions will have an increasingly difficult time over the next four to five years. We will be forced to consider options that were never seriously discussed in the past."

The recession will not help matters. "We need all the universities to say: 'If we are going to survive, we have got to work together,'" says Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union and chair of the board at Columbia Union College. "I think with the downturn we will all be forced into identifying how to do things better."

It’s not just a reactive response that is needed, but a proactive one. "I feel strongly that we need to find areas to collaborate and cooperate," says Larry Blackmer, vice president for education for the North American Division. "The economy will help to make that happen. Too many times we operate by attrition rather than strategically. We need to be strategic in the future."

The Next Collaboration?

As options are explored and discussed, Pacific Union College and La Sierra University, in California, may be the next to form a close relationship.

"I think P.U.C. and La Sierra need to get serious about collaboration conversations," says Osborn at P.U.C. "Five years ago we had a committee discussing different possibilities, which resulted in major savings for both libraries. The current economy will make us take a much more serious look at ways of working together."

A close relationship between the two is logical. They are both in the Pacific Union, and so both share the same board chair—no other union runs two tertiary institutions, with the same chair of each board.

"I would love to see La Sierra and PUC collaborate much more closely," says Nancy Lecourt, P.U.C.’s vice president for academic administration. "The two institutions complement each other in so many ways. We have nursing, they have graduate programs. We are rural, they are urban. We have aviation and environmental studies; they have psychobiology and biomathematics. Since both are owned and operated by the same entity I see many possibilities for collaboration."

She points out that the two institutions already share an automated library system—a collaboration that both institutions find to be mutually beneficial. She envisions that curricula could be coordinated, so that students from one campus could spend a term on the other campus, taking advantage of the faculty specialties and local field trip possibilities in each location. Art students, for example, would be able to see great art and architecture in both the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas. Combining administrative functions like finance and payroll, IT and marketing, might also provide efficiencies.
Randal Wisbey, president of La Sierra, confirms that some kind of collaboration could be in the cards. He recently attended a meeting of board chairs with Osborn, and the two talked about ways their schools might work more closely together.

“Several years ago, representatives from both schools began to give focused attention on how we might strategically work more closely together, and we are interested in renewing this conversation,” Wisbey says.

Of course, such a move would not be the first serious collaboration for La Sierra. From 1967 to 1990, it was part of Loma Linda University. But the merger never really gelled. “Differences in governance styles, salaries, and faculty expectations regarding teaching and research complicated the efforts of many thoughtful persons to galvanize the two campuses into one university,” a 1992 Spectrum article summarized. An effort to consolidate the two campuses was strongly opposed by many at La Sierra, and eventually the merger was decided to be unworkable and the two institutions split into separate entities again. The specter of this failed merger made it difficult for other universities to talk about mergers in the years immediately following.

But now, perhaps, the time is ripe.

**Merging the Schools**

Between 1874 and 1905, ten Adventist colleges were opened—an average of one every three years. Over the next decades, more were started until there were fourteen separate Adventist colleges in North America, plus correspondence school Griggs University.

Saying that there are too many Adventist colleges in North America has become a common refrain. As modern transportation has changed the way society works, we have become much more mobile, and even schools across the country are within reach for potential students.

If schools were more concentrated, they could take advantage of economies of scale to pool their resources and students and offer better education more cheaply.

For many years, there has been a school of thought that merging all of the Adventist colleges in North America into two big schools (generally suggested as Loma Linda University and Andrews University) would be the best thing for injecting sustainability into Adventist higher education.

Frank Knittel, an English professor at La Sierra University and former president of Southern, argued for such a model in the January 1997 edition of Spectrum. “Prompt action must be taken, or our colleges—possibly our unions in North America, even the General Conference—could be forced into involuntary bankruptcy,” he wrote.

Twelve years later, the higher education landscape looks much the same, despite Knittel’s ominous warning, with some weak schools struggling, but still operating, and some of the bigger schools growing even stronger.

Many proponents of mergers to create mega universities have changed their minds, and some who still see it as an attractive option nevertheless believe it to be impossible to achieve.

“If we were starting over and creating our Adventist university system from blank paper, there is no way we would create fourteen campuses,” says Osborn. “The North American church only has a million members. But this is what we have. And we are each independently owned. The Church can’t come along and shut people down.”

Alayne Thorpe, vice president for education at Griggs University, did not attend Adventist schools herself. Thorpe has worked in Adventist education for more than twenty years, but when she first started, she says she was immediately skeptical of the
fourteen-campus model. “Too many schools; too many duplicated programs, processes and infrastructure; too few qualified teachers and administrators; too few students.” She says the answer seemed obvious to her then: merge all the health programs into Loma Linda and all the other majors into Andrews.

“For someone coming from a large public university who viewed the size and qualifications of the faculties at our smaller institutions with a cynical eye, this solution seemed the most obvious one,” Thorpe says. “It would mean that we could concentrate resources on just two universities and build two institutions of excellence.”

Although she still sees the wisdom of this plan, or “dream scenario,” she now sees that the current reality is much more complex than this solution accounts for.

It would displace and take jobs from thousands of faculty and staff around the country, and alienate thousands of loyal alumni, she says. “It would also greatly alter the Adventist ‘map’ in North America, where Adventist communities have grown around their union college. Churches, K-12 schools, bookstores, and other Adventist industries that depend on the union college/university would be harmed.”

This Adventist “map” is what we have grown used to. “Local schools serve as cultural bulkheads to the wider community,” says Charles Scriven, president of Kettering College of Medical Arts and former president of Columbia Union College. “The Midwest would be impoverished with no Union College. Southern is critical, as is Oakwood. The Northwest without Walla Walla would be radically different.”

And of course there is the fact that each institution is independently owned and regionally accredited, within a structure that does not promote collaboration. Each college has its own board, and “few boards seem willing to vote their institutions out of existence,” Thorpe says.

Some believe that centralization of universities in this way, limiting the choices for potential students, would mean that more young people would decide against attending an Adventist school.

With a variety of diverse campuses, however, students can choose the one that best suits their needs—not only academic, but also social and spiritual.

“In my experience, each Adventist campus is unique,” says David Smith, president of Union College. “I can’t think of any two that are even remotely alike.... And there are real advantages to having a choice in the kind of Adventist school that will serve you as a parent or student best.”

Although most—especially college presidents—are rooting for the status quo, there are some more unusual opinions out there about how to fix the higher education landscape. Lisa Beardsley, associate director in the General Conference’s Department of Education, believes there should actually be more colleges—not fewer.

“We need more diversity,” says Beardsley. “Why don’t we have a film and media school in the Los Angeles area near the film industry? We need more special-purpose schools like Florida Hospital College and Kettering. We need community colleges that offer affordable education to those who are career-oriented and only want or can afford a two-year degree. And we need more schools with capped enrollment. We have not been disciplined and selective enough.”

Models for Collaboration
As institutions look for ways to work together, it is becoming more and more clear that there are all different levels of affiliations and relationships, and all kinds of options for creatively complementing one another. Yes, mergers could be one way to become more efficient, but even a merger between two schools doesn’t necessarily mean one campus would have to close.

Though the talks between Loma Linda University
and Atlantic Union College failed, they show that new types of collaboration are possible and closer than ever.

Donald G. King, president of the Atlantic Union Conference and chair of A.U.C.'s board, likes the idea of having fewer individual colleges, but more strategically located campuses.

"One solution [to decreasing enrollments] is to have fewer colleges and universities and more campuses as opposed to closing existing ones," says King. "This approach may involve affiliations, mergers, or federations. There needs to be more 'out-of-the-box' thinking in this arena for the future of Adventist education. Pooling of resources and overhead expenses could go a far way to reduce academic programmatic duplication and competition. Quite frankly, we have an antiquated system that once served us well, but this is a new century!"

In the past, thinking tended to be more black and white. Is a school falling apart financially? Then it will probably have to close. Are two schools talking about working together? Then that means a merger.

Now discussions are more nuanced, and players are considering many levels of cooperation.

**Model One: Merger Between Two Institutions**

Mergers between two like-minded colleges is one possible model for the future.

The idea of two schools folding into one and maintaining the old campuses as satellite campuses of a new single institution (one of the possibilities for P.U.C. and La Sierra) has been gaining traction.

By merging two institutions that focus on similar degrees, duplication is avoided and overall efficiency
gained. By merging two institutions that focus on different degrees, students get the benefit of larger course offerings under one institutional umbrella. And merging a strong institution with a weak one could keep the weaker one alive.

Dick Osborn sees the merging of two fairly strong campuses—so that they share their boards and put their services and majors together—as workable. “I don’t see mergers happening on a division-wide basis, however,” he says, “I see it being initiated on a local level.”

Mergers are a distinct possibility for the future, but there are pitfalls to such a plan. “I would be open to considering a merger, but then it is like the merger of Delta Airlines and Northwest Airlines,” says Gordon Bietz, president of Southern Adventist University. “Would the new airline be called Delta or Northwest? That is the political issue—no college and no constituency and no alumni want to lose the identity of their school.”

Dave Weigley says that merging two weak institutions makes no sense. He says that he has often heard people talk about merging A.U.C. with C.U.C. “But we are both weaker sisters financially,” says Weigley. “It wouldn’t help either of us to merge our debt.”

Eric Anderson, president of Southwestern Adventist University, says: “I would think merging would tend to kill both institutions.”

**Model Two: Specialization**

Another model that colleges can follow is to cooperate by focusing on their own specialties and building up those programs, rather than competing with similar programs at sister institutions. The colleges already keep one eye on what the others are doing when they decide on their curriculum. In an informal way, many of them choose not to compete in certain areas. For instance, Southwestern emphasizes its psychology program rather than social work—partly because Union College offers a social work program.

“I’d like to see the development of a system within our colleges where we don’t duplicate services as much and develop areas of specialty,” says Larry Blackmer, vice president for education (K-24) for the North American Division. “We can give specific institutions a competitive niche, rather than closing them down.”

But there are limits to how closely colleges will respect their sisters’ decisions to specialize in certain areas. And since it is an informal arrangement at best, with colleges free to decide their own curricula, they can always add a program that was previously another’s “specialty.”

There is no central coordinating body that keeps schools concentrating on their own “specialty” for the good of the group as a whole.

“If you think [adding a new program] will help you, who will tell you not to do it?” Dick Osborn asks. Andrews University started an engineering program, and Walla Walla University complained that its numbers went down. Southern decided to start a master’s in religion, breaking Andrews’ traditional monopoly on postgraduate religious training. The Church didn’t want Southern to start the program, but Southern did it anyway.

Centrally controlled specialization didn’t work thirty years ago when the Church’s Board of Higher Education tried to enforce it, and it doesn’t seem to be a possibility today unless done on a voluntary collaborative basis, Osborn says.

**Model Three: Transform Some Schools into Junior Colleges**

Another possible model could be to transform some of the campuses into junior colleges—feeder schools that would offer general courses preparing students to go on to one of the senior colleges to complete the more specialty courses in their majors.

David Greenlaw, president of the Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences, believes this is an idea whose time has come. “Students would be charged only
half the price they would pay to go to a place with many different departments and degrees,” he says. “It would be an Adventist community college and would give lots of students the chance to get an associate degree before going on to Andrews or another school.”

But again, who would make the decision to “downgrade” one of the colleges to a junior college? The colleges themselves are anxious to retain their status—in fact, many are “upgrading” to universities—and there is no central authority to decide who should stop offering full degrees.

Southwestern Adventist University was originally a junior college, but because of “local loyalties” it transformed itself into a college (and later a university) so the union would not have to send its young people away, according to its president, Eric Anderson, even though Union College was only five hundred miles away—closer than some places in Texas.

“It made all the difference for our union to have its own senior college,” Anderson says. “It was threatening to have all of our potential church leaders going away to another school and maybe never coming back.”

Adventist colleges see themselves as serving their own local unions and community—it is hard for them to

Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities Promotes Collegiality

The Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities, a grassroots organization of college presidents, financial officers, and academic deans, has unquestionably helped to shift the attitude of college presidents from one of competition to cooperation.

Pacific Union College president Richard Osborn was a driving force behind the group that was started in 2002, and he served as its first president. He still works as executive director for the group—a voluntary position. The group holds an annual two-day meeting, where the membership swaps ideas, plans ways to work together more closely, and socializes.

At the annual meeting, the three different officer groups first meet with their peers for a day, then the full membership meets the next day.

“It’s a strictly voluntary group whose purpose is to seek ways to collaborate,” says David Smith of Union College, the current president who is finishing his two-year term.

The presidency of the group rotates among the college presidents—each one taking a turn.

“This group of presidents likes each other and gets along socially,” says Osborn. “There is a high level of respect for each other.”

The AACU also plans “mission conferences” every year or two and invites church leaders to attend. In addition, it plans social retreats that spouses also attend, and the presidents also get together at North American Division year-end meetings. The level of interaction between presidents is quite high, with get-togethers of one kind or another three or four times a year.

“We now have a level of collegiality among college presidents that is truly remarkable,” says Smith. “There is a growing unity among our organizations that was not the case just a few years ago.”

The aura of collegiality that surrounds AACU get-togethers means the presidents are more willing to team up on plans and programs.

The biggest success of the group so far has been its joint marketing initiative, which began about three years ago. Each college contributes to the overall costs. A Web site has been created where potential students can find information about any of the universities, links to their Web sites, detailed information about how to get financial aid, and a form for applying online.

The marketing effort is targeted at Adventist students who attend public high schools, making them aware of all the options in Adventist higher education.

“This joint marketing initiative would have been impossible to imag-
see the bigger picture.

"Each college/university really faces a challenge in seeing beyond its own borders and the pain such a change would bring," says Alayne Thorpe at Griggs. Such a proposal would mean "drastic reorganization and reductions at the local level."

Osborn sees the two-year model not saving as much money as people think it would because funding would still be required to run the infrastructure, including the facilities and grounds.

**Model Four: Smaller Schools Become Satellite Campuses**

A fourth possible model could be one where smaller schools pair up with the bigger ones and become satellite campuses. They could use technology to link the records, libraries, and finances of the institutions. This is a model used by some state systems and employed by high schools, Thorpe notes. Each campus would provide and receive courses from the others, and distance education technology would help them to share the courses.

"However, the challenges remain reorganization, accreditation, and reduction in staff," Thorpe says.

**Model Five: Cooperation Through Technology**

The most likely models of collaboration in the near future are models that involve cooperation between two or three campuses that would create more efficiency and save costs without any of the schools involved required to relinquish any independence.

This kind of cooperation would focus more on combining administrative and back-office functions than academic ones.

Technology makes this kind of cooperation possible. For instance, two colleges could combine their financial aid offices and payroll offices, with staff on each campus accessing the same information through a shared network.

As we have seen, P.U.C. and La Sierra have already merged their library catalogs online.

Although merging some administrative functions could be complex, it is a much less drastic adjustment than the full merger of institutions and would not
require a great deal of upheaval.

J. Mailen Kootsey advocated this “third way” in a Spectrum article from 2000. Technology makes it possible to link campuses and services to achieve both the multi-campus and consolidated models, he said. He called it “the distributed university”—or “having our cake and eating it, too!”

Collaboration Today

The fifteen schools are already collaborating in some areas.

The most successful collaboration so far is a joint marketing and recruitment system, with a common Web site that caters to potential students. (See box on Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities)

Nancy Lecourt at P.U.C. has created a master list of study tours that different schools run and posted it online. Students from any of the different schools can visit the site and check out upcoming study tours all over the world. “Study tours are expensive, and the different universities need more students to go,” says Lecourt. “This is a way to help all the study tours get more people.”

An association of the deans of the schools of education has been formed to aid in collaboration on teacher education programs. Started by the North American Division, this group assists teacher educators, but it also allows the union more input into the curriculum and thus more of a hand in shaping teachers that are trained in the Adventist system.

Ten of the schools have also agreed on a common computer software package, or a learning management system. The package can be used to enhance classes taught by the different colleges—or house entire online classes. The idea is that the sharing of classes between institutions can be easier with the common software.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education can play a big role in helping universities cooperate. With distance education technology, each campus can extend its resources and academic offerings by borrowing expertise from its sister institutions.

Griggs University, the Church’s online and correspondence institution, has been involved in coordinating cross-campus online learning efforts. Union directors have voted that Griggs be the resource center for distance education in North America.

But there are other bodies also working to promote distance education.

The Adventist Digital Education Consortium, made up of representatives of thirteen of the North American colleges, has become the center of distance education coordination efforts. The consortium has been working on various ideas for making classes at one university available online to students at the others, and this academic year it launched a cross-registration program.

Students from any of the thirteen member colleges can log onto the ADEC Web site (www.sdaedu.org) and find information about classes offered through distance education at sister colleges. The offering is fairly limited so far—only Andrews, Southern, La Sierra, and Griggs have made distance education classes available.

The NAD is also trying to help coordinate different distance-learning initiatives. Blackmer at the division office has brought together several different groups promoting distance learning among the Adventist colleges and is working to build the Adventist Virtual University (working title) as an online meeting place for all different education communities.

“English teachers, biology professors, academic deans, can all have their own space,” says Blackmer. “They will be able to share resources, videos, wikis, blogs, and lesson plans.... There will also be a student area—basically an Adventist Facebook. And an Adventist Craigslist for textbooks.”

The site is being designed as an education portal for the world church and is not confined to North America.
Collaboration with Other Entities

Collaboration is certainly the buzzword of the moment, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that Adventist colleges have to partner with other Adventist colleges. There are other Adventist institutions that are interested in working with schools. Kettering College of Medical Arts and Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences, for instance, are not traditional Adventist tertiary institutions. They are both owned by health care systems, and they produce graduates needed by Adventist hospitals.

Other schools, seeing the success of Florida and Kettering, are looking to forge new links with health care systems. The new talks between Atlantic Union College and Adventist Healthcare could turn into a win-win situation for both.

Adventist Healthcare has also been in talks with Columbia Union College—another East Coast school that has struggled with financial difficulties—for some time. Although C.U.C. has decided it does not want to become another Florida Hospital College or Kettering, focusing almost exclusively on health sciences, it has decided to create an Allied Health School as one of its three academic “schools,” and collaborate closely with Adventist Healthcare in that way.

“It will be collaboration—not a merger or takeover,” says Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president. “A plan is being worked out now on just how we will be aligned with Adventist Healthcare…. This is going back to our roots in some ways. Columbia Union College started as a medical arts school, and we saw the need now to be more aggressive in educating health professionals.”

Columbia Union College is also in talks with Loma Linda University about collaboration, probably including sharing software and systems, and possibly basing some Loma Linda programs on the C.U.C. campus.

Drivers of Collaboration

As college presidents look ahead, they have a growing sense of urgency. They want to make plans to evolve and not wait to be overtaken by events. Many feel that they must put plans in place for collaboration and cooperation to ensure their own survival.

There are several key drivers behind the new push for collaboration.
FINANCES

Finances have always been a major force behind the way that schools evolve.

Some would argue, probably rightly, that this should not be the case (“Financial solutions will follow vision, not the other way around,” according to Donald King), but it is reality.

Money has been an issue for the majority of the higher education institutions throughout their history. But now, with the United States deep in a recession, investments disappearing as markets plummet, and credit harder to secure, there could be additional challenges ahead.

“The current economic conditions have exacerbated what were already challenging times,” says Dick Osborn at P.U.C. “The financial situation will force us to make decisions...The fear for all of us (except maybe the health care institutions) is that while we may have higher applications, will fears about the economy result in a lower yield than is typical? Many American independent institutions are planning budget cuts and budgeting for fewer students. In my role as chair of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, a seventy-seven-member association of institutions ranging in size from Stanford to U.S.C. and P.U.C., we are all concerned about next year, with even greater concerns about the following year.”

With the credit crunch, it will be harder for students to get private loans. And with uncertainty when it comes to employment, more students might be hesitant about getting into debt.

At some institutions, such as Southern, students can apply for loans from the college. The size of the fund available depends on the amount that former students have repaid into the fund. If those in debt to the fund begin defaulting on payments, there will be less money available for current students.

However, federal aid for education is being increased. Students will be able to borrow more through the low-interest Stafford loan program and “the federal Pell grant is to be increased at the highest level in history,” says Osborn. “Other programs that are part of the government’s economic stimulus plan will also help students. So the federal news is good. More money is available.”

DEMOGRAPHICS

Adventist colleges must track the population changes in North America and the Adventist Church. “The strength of Adventist higher education will always mirror the strength of the Church,” says Bietz at Southern. “Demographers indicate that the Church in North America is aging, which may indicate that it will become more and more difficult to attract enough Adventist young people to keep fourteen NAD colleges operational.”

Dick Osborn notes that the traditional Adventist membership is changing to a lower income demographic, as the greatest membership growth in most unions is
among first-generation immigrants. This could mean that more students could be eligible for state and federal education grants, but it could also mean that fewer students would be willing to pay for Adventist education.\(^3\)

**ENROLLMENT CHALLENGES**

Projections from the NAD Office of Education show decreases in twelfth-grade graduates, which in the past have meant fewer applicants to colleges. The projections show about a hundred fewer applicants each year, dropping to 2,842 in 2012.\(^6\)

Of course, enrollment numbers are a very different story at different institutions. The health sciences colleges (Florida, Kettering, Loma Linda) are all growing. Andrews University and Southern University are going from strength to strength. Oakwood has reached a high mark for enrollment this year. Then there are others, including Atlantic Union College, Columbia Union College, Canadian University College, and Pacific Union College, which have been struggling with dropping numbers and very tight budgets.

**New Sources of Competition**

Data shows that more and more Adventist young people are choosing to study in non-Adventist institutions. (See interview with Ron Pickell, page 57).

Although we are not aware of any comprehensive study that definitely shows the number of Adventist young people attending secular institutions instead of Adventist colleges, the range generally quoted is between 50 and 70 percent.\(^7\)

Research done at Pacific Union College indicates that the majority of its students who do not return go to community college instead.

“We spend so much time thinking about the rivalry among Adventist schools, but the real rival is secular education,” says Anderson at Southwestern.

With non-Adventist schools becoming the most worrying competitors, it is easier for Adventist institutions to close ranks and fight to retain Adventist students—no matter which campus they choose to attend.

“There is a recognition by all of us that young people in North America are going to college—but not our schools,” says Smith at Union. “Our schools would be full and running over if even half of these young people were in our schools. We are trying to at least make them aware of their options.”

Others agree that the real problem is not declining numbers of Adventists—it is that Adventists no longer support Adventist education the way they once did.

“If we had all the students in the union at C.U.C., we would be swamped,” says Weigley.

**Shrinking Faculty Pool**

Some schools are feeling the pinch when it comes to finding qualified Adventist teaching faculty.\(^8\) Fewer Adventist young people are getting doctorates and seeking jobs at Adventist institutions, where they are generally likely to earn much less than they would at a secular institution.

“There will be significant numbers of retirements over the next years clustered at some institutions,” says
Smith. “How these positions will be filled is a difficult question.”

**Geographical Constraints**

Many of the Adventist colleges were built in rural, isolated areas in line with the thinking that Adventist young people should be removed from worldly temptations and educated in an area of natural purity.

Schools in more urban environments were often shunned by parents seeking to send their sons and daughters to a completely Adventist home-away-from-home.

But that attitude is changing. “Students find rural campuses in the middle of nowhere less attractive than they used to,” says Osborn.

Union’s Smith concurs. “In the current economy, the most jeopardized schools are small and residential in rural settings,” he says. “Our biggest challenge [at Union] is our location, right smack in the middle of the country. We have to create awareness. People say: ’Where is Lincoln, Nebraska?’”

Meanwhile, schools like Columbia Union College on the doorstep of the nation’s capital are taking advantage of their locations. “As the union becomes more urbanized, going to school in the city is not such a big deal anymore,” says Dave Weigley.

Link-ups between rural and urban campuses could prove to offer students the best of both. Back to the California example: with a merged P.U.C. and La Sierra, students could take advantage of the best of the countryside as well as the positives of the city.

**Attitude Shift**

As the drivers of collaboration become more acute, more collaboration is almost a certainty. But what makes greater cooperation really possible is the overall change in attitude in the last several years.

“When I became the president of Union College ten and one-half years ago, the attitude [among college presidents] was ‘You do your thing, we’ll do ours,’” says David Smith. “There was territorialism and a sense of competition… There was no effort to work toward a goal that would benefit everyone.”

Now there is more communication between campuses (see box on pages 44-45). Wendth illustrates the new attitude. “We can be world class if we’ll collaborate with each other,” he said at the close of this year’s AACU meeting.

**Notes and References**

1. This article refers to colleges and universities interchangeably for convenience sake. In the context of the article, either word refers to Adventist higher education institutions in North America.


6. Ibid.


**Alita Byrd** studied at Newbold College in the United Kingdom, and graduated from Columbia Union College. A sixth-generation Adventist, her extended family members have studied and taught and served as administrators at Atlantic Union College, Union College, Canadian Union College, Southwestern University, Pacific Union College, Southern Adventist University, Walla Walla University, La Sierra University, Loma Linda University, and Andrews University.
I f undergraduate years were meant for exploration, I certainly have not wasted them: I've begun every school year at a new college (including one abroad). However, for my senior year I've decided to return to Pacific Union College, where I began as a freshman.

I've spent these three years roaming from school to school, searching for what was most important to me. For most of my life, I assumed I would be happiest by pursuing my academic ambitions above all else. This assumption made me restless. It led me to spend my junior year at Aquinas College, a Catholic school in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I arrived with the intention of studying political science and Arabic, two subjects I had always dreamed of learning but had not been offered at P.U.C. Here I not only discovered that neither subject particularly captured me, I also finally realized the importance of Adventist community in my life.

Campus discussions at this Catholic school, like at any Adventist school, often dealt with questions of church community. The topics ranged from mundane to theological: what sort of events should be allowed on campus; whether students should be allowed certain lifestyles on campus; whether women should be ordained; what the future of the church is. But in all these discussions, I was only an observer. Though I was very warmly welcomed there, since I am not Catholic, I can never fully be a part of that community. I grew to miss being part of a school whose past and future are tied to my own.

At an Adventist college, I am a legitimate member of the community. The Adventist Church is my church, the community mine. I missed being part of the disparate discussions on campus over the direction of the Church. The Church is not perfect, but I love it just the same. I came realize that I have a stake in its future. I have a responsibility to the community that has nurtured and loved me.

I also miss an education that makes claims to fundamental truths. We in Adventism have something special: our schools do not just teach skills and ideas, they also make truth claims about the nature of a life well lived. At its best, a discussion in an Adventist college classroom does not deal only with academics, but also with concepts that have a profound impact on the way students live their lives. An education that encompasses not only the intellectual, but also the spiritual and the metaphysical, and where such ideas are taken seriously, is something rare and precious.

My time spent outside Adventist education has revealed to me both what it can uniquely offer and where it can improve. It is my church, my community, and I look forward to returning and contributing what I can to make it better.

Jonathan Pichot will be a senior at Pacific Union College this fall.
Confronting Church Structure Challenges | BY ALITA BYRD

The biggest challenge to greater cooperation between universities is the overall tertiary structure. In 1901, the General Conference decided to relinquish all direct control over the colleges that had been springing up around the country, and handed their ownership to the newly formed unions.

Except for the few General Conference-sponsored schools (Loma Linda, Andrews, Oakwood, Griggs), the schools are almost completely independent from each other.

This obviously makes cooperation more of a challenge. They each have their own board—headed by the local Adventist union—to govern them. This means that instead of being educators, decision makers are often church leaders with a different agenda than just quality education.

“I don’t believe that under the current configuration church leaders are ready to surrender their positions on these boards,” says Richard Winn, associate director at the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and a former teacher at several Adventist colleges. “They represent institutions that are contributing financially to the colleges and hiring graduates,” he says. “They have a vested interest in making sure their college remains doctrinally pure and true to its Adventist mission.”

Each school is also answerable to its local accrediting agency. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges is the agency that oversees Loma Linda, La Sierra, and Pacific Union College.

The accrediting agencies are often cited as the reason why greater collaboration between institutions is not possible. Many of the colleges and their boards believe that accrediting agencies insist on independence and would frown on mergers or central control.

But Richard Winn at WASC and Tom Benberg at the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools say the agencies are willing to look at all different models.

The agencies that accredit Loma Linda University and Atlantic Union College were supportive of a close relationship that may have meant merging control; there is clearly room for new scenarios.

A History of Failed Attempts at Centralized Control

Though it was the General Conference that decided to cede control of the colleges to the unions, thus decentralizing higher education in North America, tension over control has remained. Should the General Conference have some level of control? What about the North American Division? Or should the unions, with their presidents sitting as board chairs, continue to wield the power?

“On the threshold of the twenty-first century, higher education in the North American Division could look back on nearly a hundred years of failed attempts by church leaders to a centrally controlled system,” Floyd Greenleaf wrote in a recent Journal of Adventist Education
The General Conference has been most concerned about maintaining a strong hand in determining how religion and theology are taught, and it has succeeded in this area to a large extent. But in most clashes, the unions have won the battles and General Conference authority has steadily weakened.

During the baby boomer 1960s, church commissions on higher education attempted to control the growth of the colleges, but the institutions resisted attempts of more centralized control and concentrated on building their own programs and their enrollments.

The Board of Education, created by the General Conference in 1971, was supposed to oversee the colleges and force cooperation. The board was to keep schools from duplicating graduate programs and make them get permission before adding new degrees. Such a master plan would increase efficiency among the schools.

But the board was treated as largely irrelevant by the colleges and disbanded in the 1990s.

The Adventist Accrediting Association is the closest thing the General Conference has to a controlling body at the moment. The association visits schools to evaluate conformity to academic quality, but it is mainly there to evaluate evidence that each Adventist school is "comprehensively achieving success in the spiritual domain and that it is truly 'Adventist.'"

The North American Division and the General Conference are both hesitant to become more closely involved in higher education in North America because they feel they are not wanted. With the current structure, there is no real place for them even though direction from a central entity could arguably bring more efficiency to the system.

In general, the schools are fiercely independent. "The General Conference would not be well enough informed about local issues to take greater control of campuses," Anderson at Southwestern says.

He tells the story of a visit to Texas by the head of the General Conference's Board of Education years ago. When the man told Southwestern that he had it in his power to shut the school down, a member of the audience shouted: "Remember the Alamo!"

Delbert Baker, president of Oakwood University, says it is appropriate that the Church ensures its schools keep their vision. "My president, colleagues, and I recognize that the Church is why we are who we are," he says. "Ellen G. White started Oakwood. We are not confused about that."

But he says an attempt at any more central control than the little already there would mean that the schools would be suffocated. He believes schools can maintain their fidelity to the Adventist mission without mandates and central controls.

"Central control doesn't work," Charles Scriven at Kettering College of Medical Arts says. "It has been tried and tried."

As Adventist schools grow outside North America, General Conference personnel now spend their time elsewhere. Since 1990, thirty new Adventist higher education institutions have been opened—twenty-nine of which are outside North America. There are now a total of 107 Adventist colleges and universities around the world, serving almost 113,000 students. That means that about 86 percent of tertiary students are outside North America.

Only Loma Linda University and Andrews University are among the nine schools worldwide with enrollments above three thousand. The others are the Adventist University of the Philippines, Babcock University, Bolivia Adventist University, Brazil Adventist College (three campuses combined), Northern Caribbean University, Sahmyook University, and Solusi University.

Lisa Beardsley, an associate director in the General Conference's Department of Education, has clearly been frustrated in her attempts to work
with colleges in North America.

“I can’t even facilitate communication,” says Beardsley. “The last three years have been very awkward. In other divisions [beyond North America] there is much more of a team effort. They respect the General Conference as a valuable partner and the expertise and external reviewers it brings.”

“We have limited resources, and I work with five divisions. I have more than enough to do. I am not going to shoehorn myself in where I am not wanted. I invest my efforts where the growth is—and that is not in the U.S.”

Beardsley is the official General Conference liaison to the AACU, but she hasn’t attended the annual meetings for the past several years because they have been scheduled during the General Conference’s annual travel moratorium. (General Conference employees are prohibited from traveling during certain times of the year so that the General Conference can hold internal meetings.)

But if the General Conference does not take a leadership role in North American higher education, it may make sense that the North American Division becomes the central body that concentrates on the North American schools as a group.

Larry Blackmer is the vice president for education (K–24) for the North American Division. His office has the greatest responsibility for the schools from the Church’s perspective.

Yet many people in Adventist higher education feel that Blackmer has basically stepped out of the higher education picture altogether, choosing instead to concentrate the division’s efforts on K–12.

“My predecessor spent most of his time attending college board meetings,” says Blackmer. “When I became vice president for education in North America, I did not see that as time-effective, so I made the decision to selectively choose areas within higher education where I could concentrate my efforts—areas where we could build collaboration across the colleges.”

Blackmer says he understands and supports the independence of institutions, and he sees his mission as trying to find areas of cooperation within independence—to help the whole education system in North America to become more collaborative and integrated.

He sees his role as more supportive than prescriptive. “There is no appetite for central control,” Blackmer says.

And without a heavier central hand, it is difficult to see how collaboration can be as effective and efficient as it could be.

Money is a big issue when it comes to control of the colleges. Under the current model, not only do the unions control the colleges, they also support them financially. No money comes from the division or from the General Conference to the union-owned schools.

“We don’t get one penny of money from the North American Division,” says Osborn. “While the division used to put significant money into higher education through personnel and data analysis, those services no longer exist.”

Money equals power.

“If someone wanted to put real money in—millions of dollars—that they would have a lot of influence,” says Anderson. “But you can’t have influence and expect to be able to just make pronouncements with no money backing them up.”
The Future Landscape of Adventist Higher Education

As Adventist education moves forward in the twenty-first century after 135 years in existence, closer collaboration between institutions is becoming a reality, with many—particularly the weaker schools—actively hunting for ways to work together.

But most believe it won’t all be plain sailing. “There is a real chance that in ten to twenty years there will be fewer Adventist colleges,” says Gordon Bietz. “The weak colleges may be forced to close because of economic problems…. The actual model that will probably happen is the strong will survive and the weak will not.”

Charles Scriven agrees. He says he sees the Adventist higher education landscape remaining somewhat similar to what it is now in the next decade or two, but with some shake-outs. “I tend to root for everyone, but I doubt we can all be successful,” he says.

His comment was made in February. However, the events of recent months have brought the institutions closer together to understanding that everyone gains by talking and working together.

Notes and References


3. The handbook of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges states as one of its criteria for review: “Even when supported by or affiliated with political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.”

One guideline is that: “The institution has no history of interference in substantive decisions or educational functions by political, religious, corporate, or other external bodies outside the institution’s own governance arrangements.”

What an institution’s own governance arrangement is or the nature of “appropriate autonomy” is not mandated.

Richard Winn, associate director at WASC, says that using accrediting agencies as a reason to stay away from collaboration is a “bogus argument.”

“If schools meet the standards, we are willing to work with all kinds of configurations,” Winn says. “There are lots of mergers going on in the current economic climate. Geographical boundaries are becoming less and less important. The rigid boundaries of the old days are now much more permeable.”

There is no question that Adventist institutions must keep their invaluable accreditations. But they don’t necessarily need to stay exactly the same, with exactly the same governance structure, to remain within the guidelines.

Tom Benberg, vice president and chief of staff for the commission on colleges at the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, put it this way: “The general principal is that if a church body or legislature or governor elects or appoints a governing board for an institution, those board members should be substantially free to hold the interest and well-being of that institution in their trust from wherever they are located.”

Benberg says that colleges should not automatically assume their accreditors won’t let them make governance changes, because each case may be examined on its own merits.

“We try to let institutions do what they think is best for their students and faculty within a framework,” says Benburg. “When an institution wants to change, there is a change process they can engage in.”


5. Greenleaf, “Who’s in Charge?”

6. Ibid.


Two Out of Three: *Adventists on non-Adventist College Campuses*

LEIGH JOHNSEN INTERVIEWS RON PICKELL, COORDINATOR OF ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has long taken pride in its educational system. According to the General Conference Department of Education, the Church had 5,715 elementary, 1,578 secondary, and 107 post-secondary schools throughout the world at the end of December 2007. In the United States, it had fourteen colleges or universities in 2008, with approximately twenty thousand students.¹

What often gets overlooked is another statistic: the number of Adventist college-aged students in North America who attend non-Adventist colleges or universities. According to a recent issue of the *Adventist Review*, research dating from 1997 suggests that those who do not attend one of the Church’s colleges or universities outnumber those who do approximately two to one.²

A number of initiatives exist at the General Conference and North American Division levels to maintain contact with these students. One of these is Adventist Christian Fellowship, a campus outreach ministry with chapters throughout the United States and Canada. Ron Pickell, coordinator of ACF and pastor of the Berkeley, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church, recently took time out of his busy schedule to discuss his program in an interview with Spectrum’s associate editor.

Leigh Johnsen: How did you become involved with campus ministry?

Ron Pickell: While a student at Southern Missionary College, I helped launch an alternative Friday evening worship service that grew to more than one hundred students sharing testimonies in a dynamic worship experience. In my senior year, I was elected student spiritual leader and worked with the college chaplain in campus ministry programming.

My experience in college taught me the importance of college faith and about spiritual hunger in students. After college, my dream was to minister on a secular campus. I wanted to see how the gospel and our Adventist message would connect with unchurched/non-Adventist students.

During seminary, I spent my last quarter off campus in a public campus ministry program in Southern California. Time spent with College and Career Fellowship sharing my faith on Southern California beaches and local community campuses gave me a passion for campus outreach.

Following seminary, I pastored in a three-church district for two years before moving on to be chaplain and director of Advent House Seventh-day Adventist Student Center at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I remained in that position for sixteen years and helped establish the ministry at UTK.

In 2001, I came to pastor the Berkeley Seventh-day Adventist church and direct the Adventist Christian Fellowship group at the University of California, Berkeley.

Q: How did Adventist Christian Fellowship start?

A: Ever since the General Conference campus ministry organization, AMiCUS, was formed in 1990, I had hoped for a similar North American Division campus ministry organization to care for the unique public campus ministry focus in the NAD.

Ministry on non-Adventist campuses has sometimes been seen as a threat to the long-term mission of our fourteen NAD Adventist colleges. In light of this, I felt that AMiCUS would never be able to provide support for the public campus ministry needed in the North American Division.

Adventist Christian Fellowship was organized in the fall of 2005, fifteen years after AMiCUS began. The Church was finally beginning to open its eyes to the enormous percentage of Adventist students who attend non-Adventist colleges in North America and felt it was time to give some direction and oversight to this vast and important mission field.
My experience studying at non-Adventist institutions for the past five and one-half years has affected both my view of Adventism and my Adventist identity. While my institutional context has affected my view of Adventism, it is also true, I believe, that the content of the fields I study has had an even greater impact.

The philosophers and theologians that I encounter and the questions that I engage in class discussions and writing projects have offered me a certain kind of space that I may not have gained at an Adventist institution. This space allows me to ask difficult questions and explore a range of answers without fearing that this expression of inquisitiveness itself will offend a theological status quo.

Although I appreciate the academic freedom that La Sierra University provided during my undergraduate studies, being at a non-Adventist institution has actually allowed me greater consciousness of my religious identity and upbringing. The common background of those in a classroom where the majority are Adventists would have reinforced the worldview and religious framework that I want to explore and, in another sense, would have sorted and ranked the set of questions for me to address.

Has my own faith been challenged? Yes, absolutely. Perhaps the most significant part of my experience at a non-Adventist institution has been my recognition of a cycle of deconstruction and reconstruction—that though I frequently bring my worldview and theological framework into question, or deconstruct the elements, I also engage a constant process of fitting pieces back together.

My first year at Claremont School of Theology was devastating because all I seemed to experience was deconstruction. In time, I gained more resources, support, and a patient courage to begin putting pieces back together, which led to a new understanding that the goal of reconstruction is not a systematic and perfectly polished theology. Rather, it is a reorientation that is less inherited, allows me to believe deeper, and enables me to live with complexity.

I challenge myself not to feel as though I am forsaking Adventism every time I realize that my beliefs are evolving in more complicated ways or moving away from what other Adventists might recognize. I try to minimize, though not evade, the question of whether there is a point when I stop being Adventist because I don’t find it helpful to measure constantly my beliefs against a yardstick that some think should go unquestioned.

If belonging to the Adventist community is strictly about a set of beliefs, then our community is in danger of dogmatism and irrelevance. Religious communities are held together by a number of elements, not just beliefs—similar values, which are different from beliefs, a common history, hope for a certain kind of future, networks of relationships, resonance in worship styles, and mutual feelings of social purpose. I cannot regard Adventism having an untouchable and absolute core that never changes. The singularity of the terms Adventism or Adventist illustrate something important about an elusive core maintained by official fundamental beliefs.

My hope for the Adventist community is that we begin to see each member more like variations on a theme instead of deviations from a norm.

Trisha Famisaran is working on a dual degree for an M.A. in philosophy and a Ph.D. in philosophy of religion and theology at Claremont Graduate University, since earning a B.A. from La Sierra University and an M.A. from Claremont School of Theology.
Q: What does ACF try to do?

A: Our stated goals are to:
• Build Christian fellowship chapters that honor God on public campuses and nurture the spiritual lives of students in North America.
• Engage students in the mission of the Church through relational evangelism and Christ-like student fellowships.
• Empower local ACF chapters, churches, and sponsors through pastoral support, professional training, and access to resources.

Adventist Christian Fellowship chapters are formed by local churches that see the needs of students, by students who form their own ACF groups for mutual support and outreach, and by local church members who reach out to students who attend their church. Adventist Christian Fellowship provides a network for students to fellowship with believers like themselves and their non-Adventist friends, and it helps students connect with local churches. It also connects students with other Adventist students on campuses across the NAD through acflink.org.

These connections give students a Christian community where they can grow in their faith while attending large secular college campuses.

Q: How is ACF funded?

A: Adventist Christian Fellowship chapters are funded through local churches and conferences. Residency opportunities in campus ministry centers like Advent House also bring in an ongoing stream of revenue. Funding for ACF/NAD comes through the Youth/Young Adult Department.

Q: How is the official Adventist Church involved in this ministry, and to what extent is it driven by students themselves and local congregations?

A: ACF/NAD is the officially recognized Adventist campus ministry organization voted by NADCOM under the oversight of a volunteer coordinator and overall direction of the Youth and Young Adult Department of the NAD. Debra Brill, North American Division vice president for church ministries chairs this committee.

Local chapters have strong student involvement and leadership. Of course, the personality and direction of each Adventist campus ministry group varies from campus to campus. All long-term successful ACF groups have strong local church and conference support and active student participation.

Q: Does ACF try to involve non-Adventist students?

A: Again, that depends on the specific campus group. Each group in which I have participated has actively recruited non-Adventist students through campus book tables and student friendship evangelism. The main focus of ACF is Adventist student nurture and campus outreach. Outreach and nurture go hand in hand, since we cannot share a faith that has not become our own and a faith we are unwilling to talk about is really no faith at all.
Q: Does anybody know how many local fellowships of Seventh-day Adventist college-aged students exist in North America and throughout the world?

A: We have close to seventy registered ACF groups on the acflink Web site, but I know of at least another thirty or so not yet registered. We estimate that about one hundred ACF groups exist. This number fluctuates as Adventist groups vary from year to year. This, of course, is only in the NAD. In other parts of the world, like Africa and South and Central America, we have college campuses with hundreds of Adventist students and very large Adventist campus fellowships. Many students are evangelized and brought to Christ and fellowship in the Adventist Church through these ministries year after year.

Q: One recent issue of the Adventist Review suggested that two out of every three Seventh-day Adventist college-aged students in North America choose not to attend an Adventist college or university, opting instead for education unaffiliated with the Church. Does anybody know how many of these students are involved with ACF?

A: Through the contacts we have through ACF, we estimate that we are in touch with about two thousand students.

Q: What kinds of interaction, if any, exist on a formal level between ACF and Adventist colleges and universities?

A: As the official ACF/NAD coordinator, I am included in the Association of Adventist Campus Chaplains and attend their meetings, which occur annually on rotating Adventist campuses. I also receive their e-mail and communications. Our church in Berkeley is also modeling some connections with Pacific Union College by participating in its theology externship program. Having a student extern connects us to many other P.U.C. programs and additional student involvement. This is a great model for other Adventist colleges located near active ACF groups.

Q: Does ACF cooperate with other non-Adventist campus ministries like Hillel and Westminster House?

A: Most full-time chaplains do. I have always served with the on-campus religious council at Berkeley, as well as with other unofficial campus ministry groups, like the more conservative para-church-based campus ministry associations. During my time at UTK, I chaired the campus ministry council for several years, and our center was the gathering place for weekly prayer among the nondenominational campus groups.

Campus ministry is a great venue for introducing other religious groups to Seventh-day Adventist student ministry.

Q: In your experience, are there any generalizations you can safely make about the kind of students involved with ACF fellowships?

A: A large number of Adventist public college students in North America are minority students—Asian, African American, Latino. At U.C. Berkeley, Adventist students are some of our brightest, since only the top 10 percent get accepted here. Also, since we are a world church, a number of our students are international.
Another important factor I have noticed over the years is that Adventist students who attend public high schools are often better prepared to thrive on public college campuses and will be somewhat more likely to leave college with their faith intact.

Generally, Adventist students want to keep in contact with their Seventh-day Adventist faith and culture and many have a desire to reach out to classmates. As John Washington, campus ministry leader of Maranatha—the ACF chapter in Tallahassee, Florida—has stated so well, “It is not a good idea for students to take four years off from serving the Lord just because they are in college.”

Adventist Christian Fellowship helps support a student’s personal mission.

Q: What kinds of activities take place each week within local Adventist Christian Fellowship chapters?

A: Students connect with each other in different ways throughout the week—they might eat lunch together, for example, or just hang out with each other. Often students will negotiate campus housing with one another after being on campus for a semester or two.

On Friday evenings, they come together in worship and Bible study/discussion—often beginning with a shared meal. Many feel comfortable inviting their non-Adventist friends to these meetings. On Saturdays, they attend church, especially when the content is relevant, friendly, and open to students. On Saturday evenings, students often hang out together to watch movies, play table games, or go out together.

In addition, small group Bible studies, where students share their spiritual journeys and pray for one another, take place in various places and at various times.

Q: What challenges and opportunities do you see in the future for ACF?

A: God has blessed us to be where we are today, with approximately one hundred ACF groups throughout the NAD, four full-time local conference campus ministry departmental positions, clearly defined regional representational leadership, and several full-time campus ministry positions.

We recently launched the Center for College Faith out of the Berkeley church to provide resources, training, networking, and mentoring for local ACF groups. Our first resource, just published, is The Word On Campus: A Guide to Ministry on the Public College, with a companion workbook, The Word in Action, and a training weekend for churches that want to launch an ACF group on a nearby campus. All of this material is available through AdventSource.

However, the needs are still great on the NAD level. Although ACF oversees and represents 70 percent of Adventist youth who attend college, it receives minuscule sums of funding. Our greatest challenge is awareness and support from the greater Adventist community.

In terms of funding available to ACF, we hardly exist as a recognized entity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Church leadership has not yet awakened to the retention and outreach opportunities through Adventist public campus ministries.

Loss of membership from the drain of Adventist youth and young adults is killing the North American Church.
By the Waters of Babylon? | By Samuel Sukaton

Colleges get a bad rap. From National Lampoon's Animal House in 1978 to Tom Wolfe's I Am Charlotte Simmons in 2004, the media's portrayals of collegians as liquor-soaked, sex-crazed maniacs are taken as gospel in America's imagination.

That impression isn't altogether wrong. You can run into sex, drugs, and radical lifestyles at pretty much any campus. That said, college doesn't subvert your faith. Here's why:

Most criticisms of secular colleges fall into one of three categories: the absence of church, lifestyle, and education.

Church is always an issue. Keeping the Sabbath is not only a special part of our testimony, it's a good way to force yourself to slow down and spend time dealing with what really matters. Being in a new place with no one watching presents the temptation to let things go by the wayside.

I'll admit I've had the most trouble with this one. The only way to handle this is to find out where the nearest church is and find out how to get there. If you have a car, use it. If not, most colleges offer discounts or deals on public transit passes. Using Facebook to find other Adventists at your school or in the area helps—you know you're not alone.

Next is the obvious one: lifestyle. You will see people drinking, smoking, and carrying on. There will be parties. There will be dancing and alcohol and sex at parties. And there will be things going on that you don't want to be a part of, but that may tempt you.

These things, however, can be dealt with. Nobody's asking you to abandon your faith. If anyone is, you can and should avoid them. Real friends will respect your refusals and start to hold you accountable when you slip up. "Campus liberalism" doesn't refer only to a political stance, but also to a cavalier attitude toward however somebody else chooses to live.

Although some people will be skeptical or openly hostile to your witnessing, the adversity is generally muted—college is about free expression, and most students aren't interested, but they are fair-minded. Many Christian groups have chaplains or student ministries on campus—although they might dispute theological differences with you, all are very focused on helping their members live healthy, happy, holy college lives.

Finally, there's the question of getting used to the work. Coming from a secular high school or community college is difficult. Switching from the closeness of an Adventist community or school to an enormous and sometimes uncaring college is even more disorienting. Will the education be up to par? Can you actually be an Adventist in a public university? Will it subvert your faith?

The answers: Yes, yes, and no, respectively. Secular schools are accredited by the same authorities that inspect Adventist colleges, so the quality of what you're getting is generally as good as La Sierra or P.U.C. The absence of overt religious support is an issue I treated earlier—there's always a church nearby, and you're not as alone as you think. Finally, education will not lead you away from your beliefs, provided you stay grounded—prayer, study, and staying in touch with your family and friends back home helps greatly.

In short, the experience of an Adventist in a non-Adventist college isn't enormously difficult. You'll make mistakes, just like everyone does. However, keep your studies in perspective by remembering God's love for you and your dedication to him. Build a support base at school and at home, and college isn't particularly oppressive.

In fact, you may do enormous good. Like my mother always says, "You are the salt of the earth—but what good is salt if left in a shaker?"

Samuel Sukaton is a second-year history major at UCLA and an intern for Spectrum.

Can you actually be an Adventist in a public university?
Will it subvert your faith?
...Yes, and no.
The greatest concentration of these young adults can be found on non-Adventist college campuses. Of course, this says nothing about 19 million missed evangelistic opportunities with non-Adventists on these campuses who remain completely outside mission efforts of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

These are our greatest challenges.

The Church needs to realize that the youth and young adult mission has shifted. With such a strong commitment to Adventist higher education and only one-third of our constituency now located on those campuses, we greatly need to refocus our mission if we want to have any influence over our own students, not to mention contemporary youth and young adult culture.

The Church really needs a full-time departmental position at the General Conference, or at least the NAD level, devoted to overseeing and advancing this growing mission field. It is far too vast and important a ministry for such little attention. Our efforts could be much better coordinated with even greater success if we would only give it the focus and support it needs.

We now have annual campus ministry retreats at the union and conference levels. We have training and equipping through programs like CAMPUS in the Michigan Conference, and through the Center for College Faith. Students can also get on-campus ministry training through the Michigan program. Last year, ACF sponsored receptions for students who attended graduate conferences in Chicago and Boston, as well as a graduate student retreat sponsored by the Loma Linda School of Religion.

All this is wonderful, but we should also sponsor annual NAD undergraduate and graduate campus ministry conferences, graduate student fellowships, and a network for Adventist professors who teach on non-Adventist colleges. We need a mission-sending agency for training and encouraging Adventist youth to spend a year on public campuses to learn how to share their faith and reach out to others. Finally, we need strong financial support for all these efforts.

I wish I could forget all the times I have heard church leaders express the belief that Adventist public college ministry is of little importance—that Adventist students who attend non-Adventist colleges just want to be left alone and are only avoiding the Church, or that non-Adventist college students are impossible to reach. My own experience tells me that relevant and authentic relationships with students over the years have proven both statements incorrect and misguided.

Research on spiritual trends points to a great hunger for religion and spiritual experiences among today's students. Adventist students show great appreciation for church members and ministries that actively reach out to them. It simply isn't true that because an Adventist young adult attends a large non-Adventist university they are ready to leave the Church and shed their faith. Most of our students at U.C. Berkeley are incredibly thankful for a local church and conference that continue to invest in them.

Q: Do you have any closing advice either for Adventist students who attend non-Adventist colleges and universities or congregations located close to non-Adventist colleges and universities?
1. Don’t be afraid of the campus. College is a wonderful time of personal and academic growth. It is a time to make new friends and expand your world. It is also a time to become aware of how big God is as you learn to experience him for yourself within the college environment.

2. Don’t just survive, but thrive on campus. There are many groups on campus to help you explore and deepen your faith. Look for a group that helps you connect with God—where you can develop healthy lifelong relationships. Adventist Christian Fellowship can be a great group for mutual support with like-minded believers. If no ACF group exists on your campus, now is a good time to help start one.

   It is also good to search for a local church that supports the spiritual and emotional challenges of college life. Church members can be a tremendous help when a student is a long way from home.

3. Guard and nourish your faith in God. The best advice is to look for friends who will encourage you in your faith and to stay committed to your own quiet time with God. Students continue to share personal stories of answered prayer for tests, papers, and personal issues related to campus life, and about how God has used them to be a positive influence on others.

   When students put their faith on the line, they learn that God is not only in church. They meet him on the campus, in their dorms, at their first party, in their relationships, and during test week. They soon discover that they are not bringing God to their campus. He is meeting them there with great experiences that will stretch their faith more than they could have imagined.

Notes and References


Additional information about Adventist Christian Fellowship can be found at <www.acflink.org>.
transforming the historical narrative of Andrews University in the late 1960s and early 1970s into a series of inconsequential anecdotes about one dissenter’s temperament.

WILLIAM S. PETERSON
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Kudos

I found the spring 2008 issue of Spectrum to be rich with compelling reading, from the first editorial through McDowell’s poem, which quite charmed me. I read “God Is Not” several times and will return to it again, finding “God is a cold wind” a challenging metaphor at first—would not “cool” have been the better descriptive word? Yet I finally agree with the poet and feel very warmed as he leads up to that final, insightful line.

I must also mention Kendra Haloviak’s “Sanctuary,” which I found deeply moving, especially her memory picture of “men—delegates to the meetings—walking around the lake shaking their heads, clearly upset, some even crying.” When I think of the consequences of Glacier View and the courage of the writer of the document under discussion, I feel great compassion and sorrow.

I must also mention Charles Scriven’s “Manifesto,” which I found sublime in insight and expression. Having done some in-depth study of Quakers, I delighted in the reference to Rufus Jones. I also enjoyed the references to Margaret Mead and Robert Frost. But the best lines, for me, were “So let’s shake our fists at the naysayers and dream slayers, and rise up in one accord to declare as trumpets do, that we are here,” not forgetting that wonderful conclusion: “The dance is better, and the dance is more fun.”

Thank you again for a great issue.

MARY(E) TRIM
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Intelligent Design

Your last blog on the issue of evolution/creation and intelligent design (summer 2008) is so long that even a superficial reading is quite a task. Here in Europe, such debates are quite curious. Evolution is taken for granted even among the majority of Christians. In the future, debating like this will hopefully be looked upon as irra-

tional and quite meaningless.

A few years ago, a book appeared that was intended for the American public, but since we have a few creationists in Norway, it was mentioned in our national radio program. The book is Tower of Babel: The Evidence Against the New Creationism, and the author is Robert T. Pennock, a Christian who belongs to the Society of Friends.

Much of Pennock’s book contains a refutation of Philip Johnson’s arguments intended to influence legislation so that Intelligent Design could be included in the science curriculum in public schools. Johnson is a lawyer and a clever debater, but he has no competence in science.

Still a Seventh-day Adventist, I believe that this superstition in our church is an important reason why our membership is declining in Europe and among educated people in North America. It is a large stumbling block for most people with today’s general education.

KRISTEN FALCH JAKOBSEN
RINGSTAD, NORWAY

BIBLE

3. From the beginning of Christianity, the Lord’s Prayer has played a prominent role in the church and in the lives of the believers—as a confession of faith and a statement of beliefs, a mandate and road map for mission, a mark of identity, a source of power, and as a unifying factor among the diverse groups of believers. What role, if any, has the Lord’s Prayer played in your communion of faith (denomination or congregation)—its theology and teachings, mission and ministry, worship and walk of life? How has it affected your personal life and pilgrimage?

4. What is the meaning and significance of the fact that in the Gospel according to Matthew, the Lord’s Prayer appears right in the middle of Jesus’ sermon on the mount, that revolutionary inaugural address in which Jesus expounded His message and His mission?

5. What is the role of the Holy Spirit when we pray? (See Romans 8.)

Gottfried Oosterwal is former professor of missions at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.
April 2008 – April 2009

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SPECTRUM ■ advisory council
A Successful Bargain

By Zita Kirsnauskaitė

I bargained with Woe,
I talked with Sadness,
I wrote a letter to Longing,
I invited Hope to be my guest,
we both deliberated,
took each other by the arm,
and we travel through life as friends.