



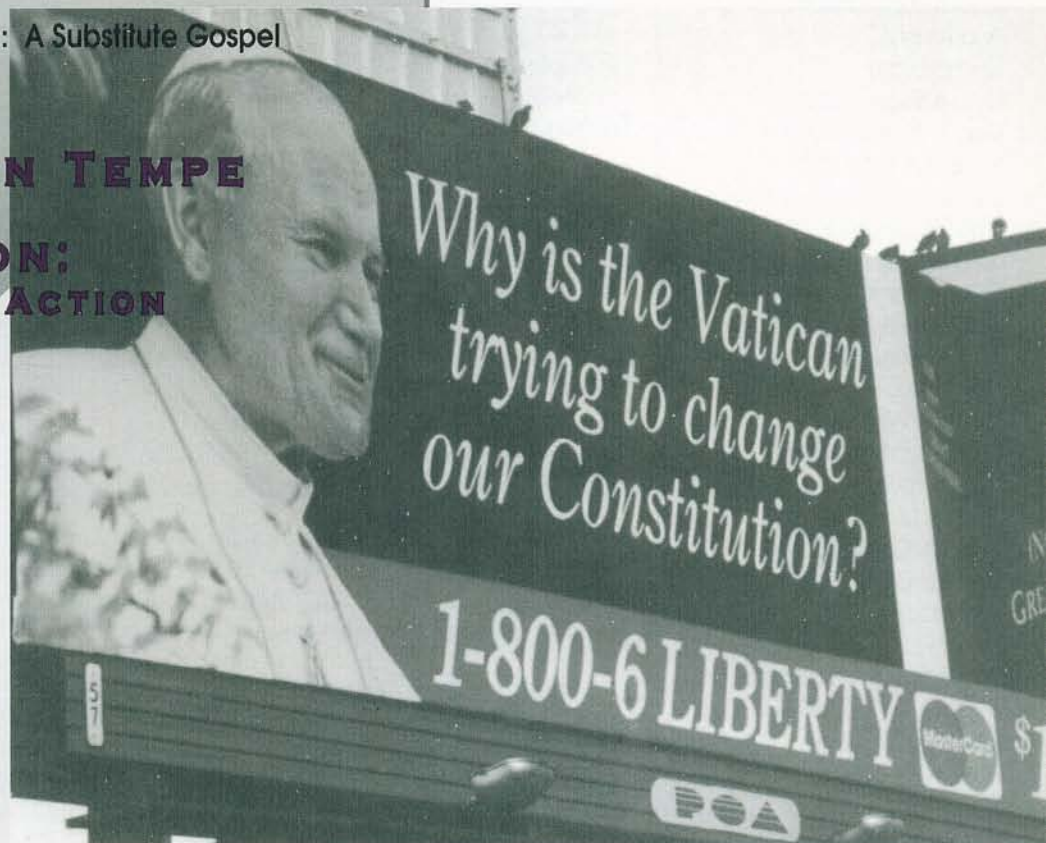
# ADVENTIST TODAY

## CONTROVERSY OVER *The Great Controversy*

- Orlando Media Campaign
- *The Great Controversy* Vindicated
- Anti-Catholicism: A Substitute Gospel

## TEMPEST IN TEMPE

## ORDINATION: REGIONAL ACTION



BILLBOARD EVANGELISM IN ORLANDO

**THE ADVENTIST CHURCH** is being yanked into the late 20th century—a time of confusing contrasts. For example, across the country and in Adventism both theological sophistication and religious fundamentalism are simultaneously blossoming. The cover story of this issue of *Adventist Today* is the Orlando billboard evangelistic campaign, a signal manifestation of Adventist fundamentalism.

“Fundamentalism” is named after a Protestant movement in the early 20th century that emphasized the literal interpretation of the Bible as fundamental for Christian life. Although fundamentalism is often seen as a derogatory term, it can be merely descriptive; David Mould, the lay evangelist behind the Orlando campaign, in emphasizing a literal interpretation of *The Great Controversy*, is an unabashed Adventist fundamentalist (see Mould interview, p. 7).

Why are the official church and the large Florida (Adventist) Hospital doing their best to distance themselves from the Mould campaign? It appears that there is no articulated, substantive difference with Mould among national church leaders (see Dale interview, p. 9). Yet few Adventist pastors—or administrators—preach sermons which quote Ellen White’s pointed statements on the Catholic Church’s end-time activity. Most members are aware of this fact and many are gratified that this is the case; others are deeply troubled by the silence.

So what is the church to make of David Mould and his assertive campaign based on a literal reading of *The Great Controversy*?

The institutional church, even more conscious of its image after Waco, is embarrassed by the Orlando phenomenon, and it is apprehensive about Mould’s promised national campaign. The church’s thinkers are of two minds. Clifford Goldstein, a relatively recent convert who is a gifted writer for *Liberty Magazine*, appears to share Mould’s basic interpretative principles (see p. 10). On the other hand, Frank Knittel, a life-long Adventist who is now a professor and pastor, believes that *The Great Controversy* must be viewed as a dated, 19th century work (see p. 11).

Readers will decide the appropriateness of the Orlando campaign for themselves. The main story is written by journalist-pastor Jim Coffin, a Florida Conference minister in Orlando, who interviewed Mould at length. Concluding this special section, Paul Landa, a professor of church history at La Sierra University, lays out the extent of 19th century anti-Catholic sentiment (p. 12).

The second section in this issue of *Adventist Today* features litigation between the Arizona Conference and Adventist Health System/West (AHS/W) over ownership of proceeds from the sale of the Tempe Community Hospital. Editor Ray Cottrell has worked closely with President Frank Dupper’s office at AHS/W and with President Herman Bauman in Arizona to bring together this small cluster of articles. Each president has read the other’s essay.

In a shorter section, Larry Christoffel, associate pastor at the Campus Hill Church in Loma Linda, outlines recent developments concerning women’s ordination in the Southeastern California Conference. Gary Patterson, assistant to the president for the North American Division, responds to Pastor Christoffel’s article.

We are gratified with readers’ responses to the first issue of *Adventist Today*. At the printing of this second issue we have over 1200 subscribers. We have received over 60 letters to the editor on topics ranging from abortion to David Koresh to the introduction of *Adventist Today*—the latter topic getting the largest number of comments (90% favorable and 10% unfavorable). Some of these are included in this issue (p. 21, 22).

Keep the letters coming!

Jim Walters

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# Media Campaign Heats Up Orlando

By James Coffin

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A GROUP OF ADVENTIST LAY people began a media blitz last November in the Orlando, Florida, area that resulted in widespread charges of religious bigotry and left the Florida Conference scrambling to shore up its public image.

The ads raised questions about the Catholic Church and urged people to buy a new edition of *The Great Controversy* containing 450 historic and current-events photos. The advertisers spent \$80,000 on billboard space, \$25,000 on newspaper ads, \$35,000 on radio spots and \$100,000 on TV time to capture the public's attention. The ads certainly achieved that goal.

Before pointing the finger at the Catholic Church, the campaign sought to grab public attention through teasers placed on 42 billboards around Orlando. Each billboard asked one of these questions: "When church and state unite, what do you lose?" or "How secure is our Constitution?"

The teasers "succeeded gloriously," says campaign prime-mover David Mould, director of Laymen for Religious Liberty, the organization behind the venture. "Talk shows spent hours discussing what it meant. It did exactly what we wanted it to do."

From the teasers, the campaign moved on to higher stakes—such as prominent billboards featuring a picture of the pope and asking the question, "Why is the Vatican trying to change our Constitu-

tion?" Readers were invited to phone 1-800-6-LIBERTY to order *The Great Controversy* (for \$19.95) which would answer the question.

## Non-Adventist Reaction

The reaction to the Vatican ads was immediate. The Orlando *Sentinel* of December 10 carried two strongly worded letters.

Norbert M. Dorsey, Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese of Orlando, wrote, in part: "In recent days, an obviously well-financed barrage of anti-Catholic sentiment has been expressed on billboards, TV and radio commercials, and handout booklets in the tri-county area of Orlando and beyond. Through them, an outrageous implication is made concerning the leader of our church and a plot for changes in the Constitution, to limit religious conscience and to legislate morality. This is hurtful and insulting not only to our Catholic people, but also to our neighbors of good will."

## A religious-radio talk-show host called the ad campaign "the worst case of religious intolerance I have ever seen."

The letter continued: "The centerpiece of these present insults is a book that was first published in the last century. In our opinion, it is a hodgepodge of theology and history, woven together by prejudice, half-truths, superstitions and old lies. A newer booklet offers modern adaptations of those same false alarms and hatreds."

In another letter, George L. Crossley, Jr., a religious-radio talk-show host, called the ad campaign "the worst case of religious intolerance I have ever seen." Crossley noted in his letter that "the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists ends up having to defend itself, even though it in no way sponsored or endorsed this

fringe group's activities."

During radio talk shows, feelings often ran high against the ad campaign. One woman who identified herself as a Catholic said she had questions about going ahead with a scheduled surgery at Florida Hospital. If the Adventists held such views about Catholics, she wasn't sure she wanted to undergo anesthesia at an Adventist institution.

## Adventist Reaction

Florida Hospital administrators were concerned about the negative potential for the hospital's image and patronage. At this point it is difficult to say just what the impact has been. The hospital will have a much better idea when it completes its annual survey of community attitudes in November and compares it to past survey results.

"I think what it did largely for Adventism was to take us back to the days when we were fighting the cult image," says Des Cummings, Jr., a Florida Hospital vice president. Cummings says one of the real problems the Adventist church faces in its end-time preaching is that too many Adventists "deliver the prophecies of Daniel without realizing that Daniel was very much involved in his community. I think we haven't learned to live like Daniel."

Most Adventist churches in the area received calls from irate members who also wanted something done to stop the ad campaign. The Orlando Adventist ministers' fellowship meetings regularly discussed the ads, David Mould and the negative reaction of the public.

The ads' sponsors took responsibility for the campaign. While many Adventists might favor greater discretion in when,



**James Coffin**, associate pastor of the Markham Woods Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Orlando suburb of Longwood, is former news editor of the *Adventist Review*.

where and how it is said, most would admit that Mould was merely teaching traditional Adventist dogma. Those who objected could do little except distance themselves as much as possible from the campaign. Some Adventists expressed delight that "for the first time somebody in the church is standing up to be counted."

Paul Dixon, an Adventist pastor in Portland, Maine, attacked fund-raising material from Laymen for Religious Liberty by writing an "open letter," which the Florida Conference circulated to its pastors. In part the letter states:

Your recent circular celebrating your success in posting billboards around the city of Orlando was shocking and disappointing. You discuss your campaign in terms of a bombing raid by 'B-52s,' but the only thing I can compare it to is 'rape.' You have forced your beliefs upon the public with no preparation, no sensitivity, and showing no respect for others. As 'rape' is an evil counterfeit for sex, so you have violated the public's right to intelligently examine truth. You have taken a right that is personal, beautiful and meaningful, the discovery of truth, and made it disgusting, even repulsive.

Radio talk-show host Crossley was correct in saying that the Florida Conference found itself on the defensive. In fact, it had to defend itself on more than one front. On the one hand, *The Great Controversy* is the benchmark of historic Adventist eschatology. It was written by a person Adventists believe was divinely inspired. Thus, for the conference to distance itself from the teachings of the book risked a backlash from many of its own members. Mould maintains that "Ellen White is an embarrassment to the leadership of the church." And certainly the conference wanted to ensure that as few as possible would be able to make such accusations on the basis of the church's response.

On the other hand, to say nothing would leave the church looking alarmingly bigoted in the eyes of non-Adventist onlookers. Trying to find the middle ground, Florida Conference President Obed Graham wrote a letter to the *Sentinel*, which

appeared on December 11, headed "Un-Christian Approach." He said, in full:

The advertising campaigns that contend the Catholic Church wishes to change the U.S. Constitution and the organization sponsoring them, Laymen for Religious Liberty from DeLand, Florida are neither approved by, financed by, nor sponsored by the

**One minister likened the billboard campaign to rape in that it violated a right, the discovery of truth, that is personal, beautiful and meaningful and made it disgusting, even repulsive.**

Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, nor are we aware that any affiliated organization has done so.

We believe the authorized edition of *The Great Controversy* series, which traces the history of good and evil, from Satan's fall and the Garden of Eden to the end of time, is worthy of careful and prayerful study, in particular by students of biblical prophecy. However, we also believe it is neither the Christian approach nor the intent of the author to focus out of context on portions of the series, of which the book *The Great Controversy* is a part, so as to create an adversarial relationship between Christians of different persuasions. We believe the Bible should be taught from a positive, loving perspective, and not used to attack and criticize those whose

religious convictions may differ.

David Mould also wrote to the *Sentinel*. In part, he said: "I truly regret any pain these ads have caused anyone, but truth is often painful... It is not our wish to offend, but rather to draw attention to the fragility of our Constitution as well as the historic and ongoing pronouncements of some who were clearly bent on destroying it.

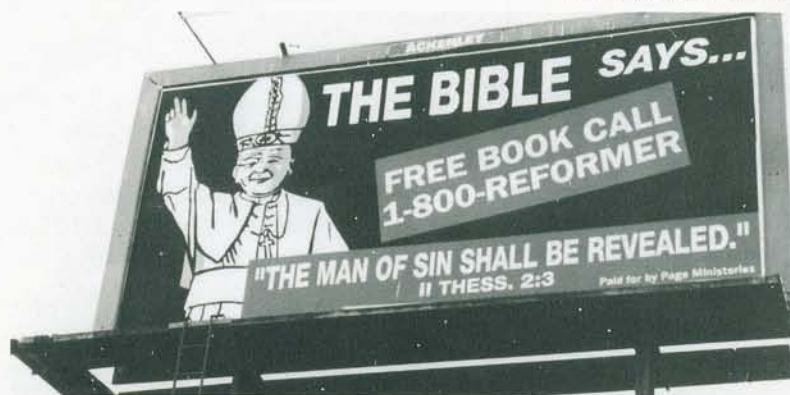
"The charges of bigotry are ludicrous. Is it bigotry to draw your attention to the apocalyptic warnings of Vatican insider and

Jesuit author Malachi Martin, who declares that there are only three real competitors for world dominion today, and that the pope fully intends winning this battle?"

In addition to Graham's letter to the *Sentinel* editor, the Florida Conference sent explanatory/disclaimer letters to numerous area talk-show hosts, media managers and editors. It also purchased space for a 4-inch-by-3-inch display ad that ran for seven consecutive days in varied sections of the *Sentinel*.

The ad stated in large bold type: "The following notice is given by the Administration of Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Winter Park, Florida." Then followed in smaller bold type: "This is to advise that the Laymen for Religious Liberty of DeLand is an independent organization which has no official

*Continued on the next page*



**ANTI-CATHOLIC BILLBOARD**—A splinter group of Seventh-day Adventists has mounted an anti-Catholic billboard campaign in Oregon. Four billboards in the Portland area feature a man dressed in papal garb who bears a strong resemblance to Pope John Paul II.  
—Caption and picture copyrighted by Catholic News Service/Ed Langlois. Used by Permission.

## Media Campaign—continued

connection with the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, The Adventist Health Care System, or with the world work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

6 Independent Adventist evangelist Kenneth Cox, who early in 1993 conducted an evangelistic series at the Winter Springs Adventist church, appeared on Crossley's TV program in an attempt to conciliate. His attempts to distance himself and the church from what many see as anti-Catholic sentiments in *The Great Controversy* impressed some Adventists and appalled others.

"He did an excellent job," said one pastor close to the situation. In contrast, one retired pastor who watched the program said he was "amazed—no, horrified" at the way Cox sought to downplay Adventism's historic understandings of the role other denominations, especially Catholics, will play in end-time events.

The Florida Conference circulated a compendium of Ellen White quotes that urge restraint when addressing theological differences with other denominations. But Mould and his colleagues at Laymen for Religious Liberty defend their actions on the basis of Ellen White's writings as well.

Mould does concede that in part the conference has

been right. He calls his campaign "fundamentally flawed." "I'm agreeing that to single out Catholicism was ill-advised," he says. "We should have also shown the inroads of Catholicism into the judiciary, and evangelical Protestantism's inroads into the Republican Party. Of course, hindsight is always 20/20."

About one week before the Orlando ad campaign got under way, Mould met with Fred Wilson, a vice president of the Florida Conference, alerting him to what was about to happen. "I wasn't seeking his advice," Mould says, "I was telling him what we were doing. And I will continue to do that."

However, Mould's organization will probably wait until the day before the launch of its national campaign, which he says is definitely coming, before alerting church leaders to what's about to transpire. Mould says that he wants to ensure that they're unable to adversely affect the campaign before it gets off the ground.

Mould refuses to divulge how many copies of *The Great Controversy* have been sold as a result of the campaign (although he says they have printed 130,000 to date and are negotiating to print 2 million more); and when and how the nationwide ad campaign will be launched. □

## David Mould on David Koresh & End-Time Events

By James Coffin

"I think—but I cannot prove—that David Koresh has negatively impacted Sabbathkeepers at a time that will in retrospect be seen to have been most critical for our church," says David Mould, director of Laymen for Religious Liberty and the moving force behind a controversial media campaign conducted recently in Orlando, Florida, to promote the sale of a new edition of *The Great Controversy*.

In a recent interview, Mould identified at least four major converging trends that have great eschatological significance for Adventists.

First, he says President Clinton's "agenda is going to push the country so far into the camp of liberalism" that it creates "moral outrage," all but guaranteeing a Republican victory in 1996. He suspects that Clinton, who was trained at Jesuit-run Georgetown University, is but a patsy for a larger movement.

Second, he laments the "Catholicization of the Supreme Court." The number of justices who are Catholic, Catholic-trained and Catholic-supportive should be of major concern to Adventists, he feels. In addition, the wall of separation between church and state seems to be crumbling rapidly.

Third, he sees militant evangelicals taking over the Republican Party. Mould cites public comments by leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Tim LaHaye to the effect that the only hope for religious revival in America is legislative reform and victory is not a matter of *if* but *when*.

Fourth, he believes Ross Perot will succeed in his quest for a constitutional convention to pass a balanced-budget amendment. And should such a convention be called, the entire Constitution is up for review.

"These forces all coming together at a constitutional convention will all be impacted by David Koresh," Mould says. "It will be seen that Koresh was the most damaging thing to our religious liberty.... If a Constitutional Convention is held, I expect the Bill of Rights to be fundamentally rewritten.

"I firmly believe that the religious liberty we have enjoyed will be with us for only a matter of months, not years—and I'm not a date-setter." In part, this explains Mould's sense of urgency and his willingness to take a stand that leaves both him and the Seventh-day Adventist Church labeled as religious bigots. □

# David Mould Defends Campaign

## An Interview

**JAMES WALTERS FOR ADVENTIST Today:** Would you describe yourself as a theologian or a businessman?

David Mould: Neither. I am a lay evangelist.

Evangelist means “preacher of the gospel.” Your gospel seems to be anti-Catholicism.

The counterfeit righteousness is embodied in Roman Catholicism and apostate Protestantism. It is that aspect of the gospel which has been most neglected and therefore we have seen it as our duty to bring it out from under the bushel.

**Your Orlando campaign isn't pushing common Christian answers to the world's gaping needs. In light of that, how would you deal with critics who believe that your effort is sectarian and negative?**

Meeting the world's “gaping needs” isn't the purpose of the campaign. The purpose of the campaign was to educate the people in Orlando as to some of the true issues in the great controversy. Our campaign was fundamentally flawed in that it targeted Catholicism; it should have been broader at the outset and included the evangelical movement. But I felt that the rapidity with which Catholicism was moving to take over the judiciary, in the light of Catholicism's boasts about an impending new world order with herself at the head, that certainly that issue, Catholicism's claimed dominion, and the methods she would use to bring that about, had to be brought to light.

**Do you plan to have an Orlando-type campaign in the city of Denver this summer when the pope visits?**

At one time, we perhaps may have thought about doing that. However, I suspect that a lot of Adventist groups will be represented there, and I would rather

not contribute to what I suspect is going to be confusion.

**Can you say a word about what your upcoming national campaign will do?**

No. That's a closely held secret.

**Would it be fair to say that you take *The Great Controversy* to be a literal description of exactly how earthly history will end?**

Yes.

**A related question. Do you think that the historical context of the writer is relevant in doing sound interpretation of that prophet's writings?**

Yes, largely because the imagery used by the writer will be imagery familiar to that writer.

**Do you think that the church or you, yourself, as an evangelist, sufficiently study Ellen White in her historical context?**

I believe Ellen White's interpretation of the three angels' messages given in the book of Revelation, one hundred percent.

**A literal understanding of *The Great Controversy* perhaps could preclude the need for understanding context and the history of the time, isn't that true?**

I do not think that my belief precludes an understanding of the era in which Ellen White lived. I recognize that there were strong anti-Catholic sentiments in this country at that time, but I do not believe that those sentiments affected her balance or the truth of the message that she brought.

**Do you believe in verbal inspiration of a prophetic figure?**

No, but I believe God directed Ellen White's choice of sources. For example, we know that D'Aubigne and others wrote much of the history from which

she quoted. Her choice of sources, I believe, was inspired.

In chapters 40 to 48 of his book, the prophet Ezekiel foretold the restoration of Israel's temple and land. That never came to pass, but few Christians disbelieve in the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel because his clear words never were literally fulfilled. If what Ellen White foretold in *The Great Controversy* never came to pass — a hypothetical question — would she therefore, in your view, be a false prophet?

Well, neither were Jonah's words literally fulfilled, but that didn't make Jonah a false prophet. There were conditions attached to the prophecy that Jonah gave. Your question is akin to asking me if the events foretold in Matthew 24 didn't come to pass, would that make Jesus a false prophet? There are some prophecies that are conditional, and there are some that are fixed in concrete. Jesus Christ shall return, period. Ellen White's eschatology is not conditional. I don't believe Matthew 24 has any chance of not being fulfilled, nor do I believe that Revelation 14 or 17 have any chance of not being fulfilled; I don't see them in the realm of conditional prophecies.

**You are taking in hundreds of thousands of dollars. How can donors be assured of accountability? Will there be an independent audit that's publicly available?**

Oh yes. In fact, we did one for “Jesus Behind Bars” [see p. 8] which the General Conference reviewed years ago. And their report was that we were better than 90 percent of the churches they audited, and the audit was done by the firm of Koivu, Ruta and Felsing. I think we'll be dealing with Koivu and Ruta, a reputable CPA firm in Orlando. □

# "I Will Not Be Quiet"

## Profile of David Mould

By James Coffin

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David Mould was born in Jamaica in 1950 and came to the United States in 1968. He earned a degree in sociology, graduating cum laude. He did graduate work at the Columbia University School of Sociology.

In 1972 Mould was baptized into Seventh-day Adventism. Initially Ellen White's prophetic gift was an obstacle to him, but after two years of intense Bible study, he read and was convinced by Rene Noorbergen's book *Prophet of Destiny*.

Returning to Jamaica, Mould worked as a prison parole officer, using the opportunity to open up nearly all of Jamaica's prisons to Adventist outreach. "I simply used my official capacity to meet my larger call," he says.

As he describes it, his success was also his downfall. Tensions with the conference developed when he arranged for an Adventist-conducted prison baptism to be broadcast on radio Jamaica-wide. He says the church's leaders were displeased because they did not have enough control over his activities.

Mould was forbidden to recruit in Adventist churches for volunteers. And he feels the conference instigated his loss of employment with the prison system. As a result of this experience, he made two resolutions: "I decided that I would serve the church, but would never be employed by the church; and I determined never again to work for man—where any man could fire me."

"I wanted to serve and I wanted to preach," Mould says. Thus, with his sociological expertise and his prison-ministry background, he started Jesus Behind Bars (JBB) in 1979. The work of JBB was received well by the Adventist public, and it experienced a major boost when General Conference president Neal C. Wilson publicly endorsed it.

However, Mould's attention was increasingly turning toward what he calls the "criminal silence" on the part of the church concerning world events that he saw as a definite fulfillment of prophecy. "How in the name of God can we remain so quiet in the light of these fulfilling prophecies?" became his battle cry.

Mould was disturbed by an article in the *Adventist Review* (September 17, 1981) stating that the church would be among the top 50 Fortune 500 companies if churches were included. Mould hadn't before realized just how much money the church handled and how much was kept in reserve.

Coupling what he saw as the availability of funding and

the urgent need to warn the world of what was happening, he took up a new theme: "Why don't we take some of our vast holdings, buy prime time and let some of our brighter lights address the nation?"

He shared his vision during a meeting in California with Charles Bradford, then president of the North American Division, and the presidents of the regional conferences. They assured him that his ideas were being passed on to a committee—which is the quickest way to do nothing in the Adventist Church," Mould says.



David Mould

"In effect they said to me, 'Continue with your silly dream as much as you want, but we'll have nothing to do with it,'" Mould says. "All this talk about being prepared for Jesus' soon coming was really a lot of baloney. They didn't actually believe it."

"I'm not going to wait for the church leaders to make inroads into the public mind," Mould says, "so I founded Laymen for Religious Liberty in 1989. Others may go down without firing a shot, but I will not be quiet."

To Mould, the church's lack of response to the events transpiring around us is reminiscent of Britain's refusal to listen to Winston Churchill's warnings about what was happening in Germany in the 1930s. Frustrated by what he saw as a total lack of interest in warning the world and the church, Mould became more and more outspoken in his denunciations of Adventist leaders.

"We were really supportive of his prison ministry," says one donor. "But his letters have begun to be so hateful toward the church administration that we don't feel comfortable supporting his programs anymore." Not all donors share that view. In fact, Mould says he can cite hundreds of letters from supporters expressing appreciation for the position he has taken—"those who understand that not all exposure is necessarily motivated by hate."

Michael Delaney, an Adventist layman who worked as a telemarketer and singing evangelist for Mould for about three years, says that Mould's organization "is basically an information center rather than a gospel ministry. I believe that Christ and Him crucified should always be brought into the picture, and everything else should stream from that. And it just doesn't happen in his ministry. I told him that what he was doing was just creating a lot of hostility and driving people from the truth rather than drawing them to it."

Continued on page 18



# Leadership Listens to Options

## Interview with Robert Dale

**JAMES WALTERS FOR ADVENTIST**

**Today:** What is your professional relationship to David Mould?

**Robert Dale:** One of my assignments is to deal with independent ministries, and that's why I have a special interest in David Mould and his activities.

**Has there been any significant contact between church leadership and David Mould?**

Yes, over a number of years. When he was conducting his work of "Jesus Behind Bars" [see p. 8], there was quite a bit of support from the church leaders, but since then that support has deteriorated.

**Why is that?**

Because David Mould has wanted to develop his own program without any relationship to the church or any guidance, so that he would meet the standards that were felt important.

**What is the church's major problem with Mould's advertising of *The Great Controversy*?**

Well, it has been the feeling that *The Great Controversy* was written for a specific purpose and was to be disseminated in a specific way, primarily that there should be personal contact. But just to send it in a mass mailing could have a negative impact. If it is distributed through personal contacts, then individuals are able to understand better what is being said and they can discuss it.

**So the criticism is more of tactics than any substantive disagreement with Mould and what he's about.**

There certainly is no substantive disagreement with the book *The Great Controversy*. Obviously the church believes in that book and supports what it states, but we need to follow the ways that that book needs to be distributed. That's what our appeal has been.

**Where did that instruction originate, regarding its distribution by personal means rather than mass means?**

I was discussing this with the leadership in the E. G. White Estate and some of our historians and scholars, and their understanding of the writings of Ellen White indicates that *The Great Controversy* should be distributed in more of a personal manner.

**Do you think that our church is sufficiently examining the issue of how a book like *The Great Controversy*, with some of its quite controversial passages, is to be interpreted today?**

I think that question is certainly appropriate because we could ask it about many things, obviously. It depends, I suppose, on who you are, as to whether you think it's being looked at sufficiently. In my opinion, the book is open, people know what's there—our scholars, pastors, and membership.

I know that some of our scholars are discussing the relationship between what is found within the book *The Great Controversy* and what's happening in the world today. In my opinion, there is discussion, and it is adequate, and moving along in a very legitimate fashion.

**David Mould obviously takes certain passages in *The Great Controversy* very literally, but not all Adventist religion scholars might agree with a literalist reading of all that's in *The Great Controversy*. In your opinion, is church leadership open to the diversity of voices among our trained theologians, in this regard?**

I do believe that the church leadership

is willing to listen to different opinions. We always have heard many different opinions, on many different topics. As individuals study, they need to be able to express what they have learned. Now, that does not mean that we should change all our beliefs and ideas overnight. We have to then enter into prayer and Bible study, talking back and forth. That is the way this church was founded — by small groups beginning to study, finding out what the Bible said.

This church stays alive because truth grows. That doesn't mean that truth changes in God's mind. God is the ultimate truth. But we obviously are weak mortals and so we need to talk openly about things, and then, if we feel there needs to be clarification on a point, that's what needs to be brought to a General Conference session. We need to be careful in trying to force a particular concept on somebody else, until the church, in session, has agreed.

**And it's only as there can be this open and free discussion among the diversity of responsible voices that there is any possibility of any new understanding emerging in the church?**

That's right.

**And it seems that the new preface to the fundamental beliefs that was added at a GC session several years ago allows that open inquiry.**

Open discussion — the Adventist Church has never been and should never be a closed church. We're searching for truth, I believe. Now that does not mean that then I all of a sudden throw away all of our fundamental beliefs. There are certain core beliefs that we understand are certain — the Sabbath, the sanctuary message, the second coming of Christ, state of the dead, and so forth. There are about six or eight major points. We cannot controvert these. But we can grow in our understanding of basic core beliefs. □



**Robert Dale**, vice-president for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, carries the portfolio for independent church organizations.

# Anti-Catholicism: A Substitute Gospel

By Frank Knittel

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**THE ORLANDO BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN HAS** plunged the Seventh-day Adventist church into a precarious state which may very well collapse our denominational structure. The church is at a most crucial crossroads, perhaps the most critical in all its history. The issue has created unprecedented discussion, anger, confusion, and grist for the mills of many Orlando talk shows and newspaper editorials. Most Orlando residents believe that the campaign maligns Catholics.

Based on what is written in *The Great Controversy*, Adventists have been conditioned to believe that the Sabbath is the first and foremost truth of the Scriptures. This has been presented as the last great test before the end of time, and that test is seen as precipitated by actions of the papacy. If that is Adventist belief, then the church must preach it. And the church has: public evangelistic crusades have been traditionally built around the beasts of Daniel and Revelation.

Thus the stage was set for some troubling declarations by the initiators of the Orlando billboards. That group asserts that the church cannot denounce what they are doing in Orlando and then at the same time support its own traditional eschatology. The group solemnly intones that the denomination cannot distance itself from something that it emphatically declares is a vital truth and try to water down the message in order to save embarrassment. And finally it is declared, if the church is going to be embarrassed by what it preaches, it needs to stop proclaiming the traditional message. This is the platform of the billboard group.

So how do we react to all this? I cannot divine what official position our corporate church leadership will take. Most of us would probably hope that billboard money will run out and that the commotion will end. That is an optimistic wish, and we can be assured that the issue will arise again—if not in Orlando, then somewhere else.

I would offer some hopeful postures that we can take to the Orlando campaign.

First, I submit that the first and greatest truth of the Scriptures is Jesus and Him crucified. If we want to lease billboards, let us put that kind of message on them, not a

picture of the pope flanked by the cover of a book other than the Bible.

Second, we must understand that nowhere in *The Great Controversy* does the author ever declare that everything in that book was revealed to her personally. Significant portions of the volume were extracted from popular historical and theological writers of the time. A Scottish minister first penned the memorable statement on page 588 of *The Great Controversy*, asserting that at the time of the end, apostate Protestantism would grasp the hand of spiritualism, and the two of them would reach across the abyss and join with the papacy in the persecution of God's people. That concept did not originate in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Moreover, that which Ellen White wrote about the Catholic Church was a position commonly held by most Protestant churches in North America in the 19th century. In the 19th century there was a very strong anti-Catholic bias among Protestants, especially in America. Little or nothing of what Ellen White said about the papacy is unique to her volume. She agreed with the prevailing beliefs.

Third, evidence indicates that some rather massive passages in *The Great Controversy* were selected by editors from articles Ellen White previously wrote and were not chosen by White before the book was published.

Fourth, we must not base any spiritual warning to the world on evidence which we feel is found in any book other than the Bible. White gave Adventism her interpretation of the Scriptures, and her view is not infallible.

Our message to the world, as Paul declared for himself, is Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and a detailed accounting of the prophecies and an exposition of the Sabbath is secondary. Whatever we wish to believe about prophecy is our own right and responsibility, but whatever we believe should be based totally upon what we derive from our own study of the Bible and not upon anything written by anyone since the canon of the Scriptures was established. We have almost destroyed ourselves by our passionate disinclination to search for ourselves, and we wear out the pages of the Ellen White *Index* when we should instead be studying the Bible.

That is what is wrong with the billboards in Orlando. They are diabolic in that they propose to the world that the writings of a person in the last hundred and thirty years are the scripture for the hour, that an interpretation offered by a person is a proper substitute for perusal of the Bible. They leap ahead of God. □



**Frank Knittel**, former president of Southern College, is now professor of English at La Sierra University and co-pastor of the Riverside Community Seventh-day Adventist Church. This piece is excerpted from a sermon he preached on April 6, 1993.

# The Great Controversy Vindicated

By Clifford Goldstein

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ELLEN WHITE'S *THE GREAT CONTROVERSY* HAS epitomized the Adventist mission, message, and purpose unlike any work outside of Scripture itself. Yet today the book is an embarrassment. Look at this reference:

God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare....She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated [GC, 581].

Who believes like this anymore? Her words sound like right-wing nineteenth-century fundamentalism. With few exceptions the only ones who hold these views are the ultra-right Protestant fringe, kooks who believe that blacks have the mark of Cain and Jews are children of the devil. Rampant anti-Catholicism hasn't been part of Protestantism for decades. Words like *Romanists*, *papists*, and *poper* went out with the Edsel. Today, even the Ku Klux Klan, founded partially on anti-Catholicism, accepts Catholics as members, which means that Adventists print a book that sounds more bigoted than David Duke in his glory days as a Grand Dragon.

When Roman Catholics make up the largest percentage of senators and congressmen in Washington, D.C.; when Catholics are accepted in every aspect of American society; and when the pope is an honored guest at the White House—is this the time for Adventists to distribute a book saying that “every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today. The doctrines devised in the darkest ages are still held....Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High” [GC, 571]?

At a time when John Paul II, one of the world's most respected men, has stated that “no human authority has the right to interfere with a person's conscience” and that “a serious threat is posed by intolerance, which manifests itself in the denial of freedom of conscience to others,” Adventists sell, by the millions, a book warning that the Roman Church is a “most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty” [GC, 566].

When *The Great Controversy* is displayed before the world, especially when the choice quotes are taken out of context, Adventists will look like bigots and buffoons. We've always



Clifford Goldstein is associate editor of *Liberty*. He converted to Adventism in 1980 after which he studied at Southern College, Wildwood, and John Hopkins University. This article is an excerpt from his recent book *Day of the Dragon* by Pacific Press. Used by permission.

warned about the shaking, and most think it will be over theology or persecution, but many Adventists will be embarrassed out of the message instead.

What's the point? Why do these statements in *The Great Controversy* seem so outdated, so out of touch with reality, and so far removed from modern thought?

*Because they have all come true!*

If the majority of Protestants still looked at the Catholic church as they did when Ellen White wrote *The Great Controversy*, the book would be wrong, its predictions false. But because almost nobody holds such views anymore, the book is proven right. The “embarrassment,” “bigotry,” and “obsolescence” of Ellen White's words, far from discrediting them, validate them instead. The trends that make the book seem so outlandish actually confirm every page!

Indeed, *The Great Controversy* is more pertinent, relevant, and crucial now than when scribbled out by the wrinkled right hand of Sister White more than a century ago. Despite attempts by some to dismiss *The Great Controversy* as nothing but Ellen White's “eschatological perspective of her time,” the political and religious trends of the past few years have reignited fire into its pages until they burn brighter now than at any time since A. T. Jones battled Sunday-law legislation in Congress.

If you have been reading, studying, seeking to understand the signs of the times, you should see how *The Great Controversy* has assumed unbelievable relevance. The collapse of Communism, the rise of the papacy, the New Right of the 1990's, the conservative thrust of the Supreme Court, the guises of modern spiritualism, the political merging of Catholics and Protestants—these are the pieces of a puzzle reproducing the prophetic picture warned about in *The Great Controversy*.

How do these trends reflect *The Great Controversy*? What do they mean?

Despite ample opportunity to prepare for the final crisis, many Adventists will be driven away by the coming *Great Controversy* embarrassment. For others, those with a “love of the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:10), that which pushes out the unfaithful will draw the faithful closer to the One whose Spirit inspired *The Great Controversy* and whose blood has sealed its every page.

*The Great Controversy* will, no doubt, unleash a storm of persecution against us. Why? Because the dragon makes war against those who, among other things, have the “testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 12:17). And, as worldwide trends confirm more and more every day, that “testimony” is, indeed, “the Spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). □

# American Anti-Catholicism

## History and Evaluation

by Paul J. Landa

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**ANTAGONISM TOWARDS ROMAN CATHOLICISM** and the Papacy is not a peculiarly Seventh-day Adventist trait. It lies deep in the American historical consciousness. The early settlers had been cradled in an England that looked upon Romanism as a perversion of the Christian religion, and even worse: it threatened the very existence of the English nation. "If the devil had studied a thousand years," declared King James I, "he could not have worked up more mischief than the pope."

In America antagonism toward Rome intensified beginning in the early part of the nineteenth century as waves of Roman Catholic immigrants from Ireland, Italy, Poland, and elsewhere landed on America's shores. As churches, parochial schools, convents, and other institutions were organized to serve this new Catholic minority, those who belonged to the Protestant majority came to feel profoundly threatened. Popery seemed poised to unleash an assault against the world's last bastion of freedom and democracy. A massive preemptive strike was clearly in order.

At public debates, Catholicism was denounced as "a bigoted, a persecuting, and a superstitious religion. There is no crime in the calendar of infamy of which it has not been guilty." Such a religion was fundamentally incompatible with the American spirit and with American institutions. According to the leaders of the "No-Popery Crusade," which included prominent clergymen Charles G. Finney and Lyman Beecher, it behooved every good Christian American to oppose the mighty romish machine, for the

future of democracy, Christianity, and western civilization itself ultimately rested upon its extinction.

Magazines with titles such as *The Downfall of Babylon* or *The Triumph of Truth over Popery, Priestcraft Exposed*, and *The American Protestant Vindicator . . . Against the Inroads of Popery* stirred the popular imagination with endless reports of Roman Catholic conspiracies against the nation. European rulers with papal support were supposedly conspiring to wrest control of the Mississippi Valley.

Even the assassination of President Lincoln in 1865 was

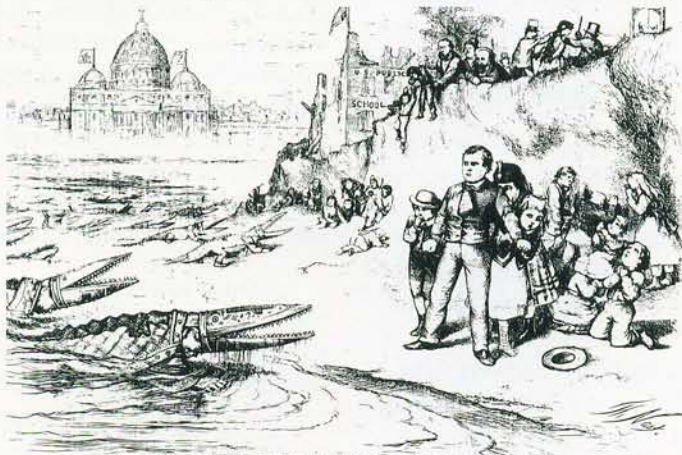
reported to have been part of a papal plot designed to keep America weak, divided and vulnerable to foreign intervention. The evidence: the pope was the only crowned head in Europe to recognize the Southern Confederacy. Lincoln's murder was planned in the house of a Mrs. Surrat—a Roman Catholic. Dr. Mudd

who set Booth's leg was a Roman Catholic. So was Garrett in whose barn Booth took refuge. And Booth himself was a Roman Catholic!

Then there were the numerous propagandist books. They ranged from erudite expositions on the prophetic books of the Bible (with telling predictions of papal malevolence symbolized by various beasts, numbers, horns, etc.), to the confessions of former priests and nuns to lurid tales of sexual orgies, prostitution, rapes, abortions, infanticides and other murders behind convent walls.

As might be expected, the impact of all this propaganda led to repression, mob violence and bloodshed. In 1829, an Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, was torched and the homes of prominent Irish Catholics were torn down. Catholics were denied the use of public cemeteries. Their children were whipped for refusing to read from the KJV Bible at school. Riots broke out in Philadelphia in 1844.

*Continued on page 18*



THE AMERICAN RIVER GANGES.  
A 19th century anti-catholic cartoon.

September 16, 1851



**Paul Landa**, professor of the history of Christianity at La Sierra University, specializes in Reformation studies.

# The Great Controversy

## Ambivalence Won't Wash Today

By James Walters

### THE ORLANDO CAMPAIGN RAISES THE QUESTION

of whether passages in *The Great Controversy* should today be taken literally. No doubt, Ellen White meant them to be taken in such fashion and hundreds of Adventist evangelists have followed suit, applying them—often mistakenly—to current and anticipated world events.

Much has changed in the 100-plus years since White penned *The Great Controversy*. The church then had a worldwide membership equivalent to that of a large local conference. More significantly, the number of highly educated members has mushroomed, and education prompts members to ask probing questions. The most pressing question regarding any old and sacred text is the extent to which it is historically influenced.

The Orlando billboards raise an urgent question: Did Ellen White's nineteenth century knowledge and experience significantly influence her end-time scenario? Fundamentalists say no. Progressives say yes.

As modern life—and church life—has become more complex, denominational leadership has wanted it both ways. While rhetorically supporting a fundamentalist reading of Ellen White and the Bible, the denomination's extensive educational system and its social involvement (its health systems and its development and relief agency) point to a non-fundamentalist reading of end-time scenarios.

Perhaps the official church will never exclusively identify with either the fundamentalists or the progressives. From early in denominational history the seeds of both views have been present. On the one hand, Adventist pioneers took a literalist view of scripture, but Ellen White also advocated the doctrine of wholism in which the mental, physical and social dimensions were seen as important as the spiritual. Non-Adventist fundamentalists have an easier row to hoe in that their narrow focus on the spiritual easily allows them to establish Bible colleges in which nothing other than scripture gets serious attention. However, wholistic Adventism has fostered accredited colleges and universities where a plethora of disciplines are understood to yield valid knowledge.

An emphasis on education plus other factors has forever shattered the idea of an ideologically monolithic Adventism. Various "Adventisms" exist within America—fundamentalist, historical, institutional, evangelical and cultural. But there is a perimeter to the denominational umbrella—and there should be, as the denominational ouster of the doomsday Branch Davidians demonstrates.

Regarding the Waco disaster, the denomination chose the tack of dissociation. That approach will not work well with the Orlando campaign. The devoted lay people behind the campaign

see themselves as merely applying historic Adventist positions to contemporary events—and in large part their claim is correct. So why are the Florida Conference and the flagship Florida Hospital so theologically embarrassed?

Platitudes or pat answers will not do for modern members and their acquaintances. We need an answer rooted in the best of the Adventist heritage and made sensible for contemporary America. Perhaps through disciplined, creative thinking and God's blessing the denomination can continue to claim the allegiance of diverse Adventisms; the Vatican, for lack of a more distant example, has the tacit loyalty of a range of Catholics. A vacuous response to Orlando would suggest a church theologically adrift. □

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## Next Issue

### Conflict Resolution

*Is the Church Afraid of  
Candor? Discipline for Erring  
Leaders*

### Billboard Follow-up

*Diverse Theological Perspectives  
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# ARIZONA CONFERENCE SUES ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM/WEST

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**THERE ARE TIMES WHEN**, with the best of intentions, equally sincere, honest people unintentionally become involved in a conflict of major importance. Unable to resolve the conflict, they each find it necessary to settle their differences in court. Such is the case now pending in the Superior Court of Maricopa County in Arizona between two entities of the church—the Arizona Conference and Adventist Health System/West.

At the request of *Adventist Today* each litigant has stated the case from its point of view, and each has read what the other wrote. Their statements follow this introduction.

*Adventist Today* does not attempt to evaluate the respective merits of the case or to take sides, but simply to set forth the facts as the two church entities perceive them. Our purpose in presenting these two statements are: (1) to provide a real-life case study of a major conflict of interest, with a view to identifying, eventually, what might have been done along the way to resolve the conflicting points of view without escalating the conflict to its present state, and (2) to provide persons interested in the case from either point of view an opportunity to hear what the other has to say. The first step in conflict resolution is to listen to the other party, attentively and perceptively, in an endeavor to agree as to the facts and to understand why the other party looks at them the way they do.

The Arizona case has become unusually complicated, and it appears that a jury trial will be necessary in order to resolve it. *Adventist Today* will report further on this case, and when a final decision has been reached, we will suggest how the church can resolve similar unfortunate experiences in the future.

## Arizona Conference Statement

**ERNEST E. VON POHLE** GRADUATED FROM THE College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University) in 1936 and set up practice in Tempe, Arizona, a suburb of Phoenix. His private practice developed into a clinic, which in 1944 became the Tempe Clinic-Hospital. In 1961 he donated the hospital to the Arizona Conference (AC), at which time its name was changed to Tempe Community Hospital (TCH). Fully accredited for surgical, general medical, maternity, and pediatric care by the Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation, it operated under the Arizona Conference as a medical institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

At a TCH corporation constituency meeting January 31, 1973, TCH became a member of what is now Adventist Health System/West (AHS/W). AHS/W maintains that it became the sole owner of TCH at that time. AC maintains that the meeting provided for pooled purchasing and management responsibilities only. The AC points to the fact that it never gave up the right to control the membership of the constituency.

TCH was sold to St. Luke's Hospital in 1981. Proceeds of the sale, amounting to approximately ten million dollars,

*Continued on the next page, first column*

## Adventist Health System/West

**DURING THE 1972 AUTUMN COUNCIL** THE General Conference voted that healthcare within the respective union conferences be reorganized into multi-hospital systems under the control of a central corporation for each union. In fulfillment of this reorganization plan an Adventist Health Services corporation was established in the Pacific Union Conference. Each hospital corporation then operating within the territory of the union was asked in 1973 to designate the board of the new healthcare corporation as its new common constituency. That question was posed before Tempe Community Hospital (TCH) on January 31, 1973 and its minutes read as follows:

### Organization Report:

Elders Walton and Bietz, representing the Pacific Union Conference Adventist Health Service Corporation, presented a report on the new corporation. (An organization chart is attached.) After considerable discussion, it was voted (Hardin-Bruner) they adopt this reorganizational structure. This resolution was passed 22 to 2. Several of the delegates did not vote either way. Drs. Eddlemon and Price were the two dissenting votes, and they wished to go on record as being opposed. This

*Continued on the next page, second column*

## Arizona—continued

were dedicated to the establishment of a new medical and/or health facility in Arizona and placed in a trust fund under AHS/W management. AHS/W sent AC monthly statements reflecting the principal amount and accruing interest, which by June 30, 1988 had grown to \$12,941,647.00. All of that time AC believed that the funds were being properly administered until such time as another hospital or similar outreach opportunity could be found in Arizona.

Without the knowledge of AC, AHS/W transferred some of the proceeds from the sale of TCH to Pacific Living Centers (PLC) after it began to suffer losses. Later, against the objection of the AC administration, all remaining funds were transferred out of the TCH account. PLC was a California corporation controlled by AHS/W which also operated several skilled nursing facilities in Arizona. These facilities were never owned by AC, nor did AC have any ownership interest in them. According to AC, AHS/W's use of TCH funds to compensate itself for losses for which



*St. Luke's Hospital in nearby Phoenix, Arizona purchased the Tempe Community Hospital in 1981, and renamed it Tempe St. Luke's Hospital.*

AHS/W was solely responsible constituted a breach of AHS/W's fiduciary responsibility to AC.

On February 2, 1989, AC lodged a complaint against AHS/W. At its April 30 constituency session AC proposed resolving the issue by binding arbitration or, if that was refused, by litigation. Objecting to the complaint, AHS/W refused to submit the issue to arbitration. On September 7 AC withdrew the complaint and again proposed binding arbitration, which AHS/W still rejected. On October 24 AC proposed a mediation process. An attempt to mediate a

*Continued on the next page, first column*

## AHS/West—continued

action requires a new constituency to be formed by the central corporation. Until the new constituency is named, the present organization remains in effect.

No reference is made anywhere in the minutes of the session to a management contract or purchasing agreement. Despite this, the Arizona Conference (AC) officers now claim that is all that was discussed—never reorganization. Yet under oath, conference officers admitted they never saw, nor ever negotiated any such contract and that the hospital was always managed by its board of directors on which they served.

After the January 1973 session the previous membership of TCH never again met. On July 31, 1973, the directors of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Health Services, Inc. elected the new board of TCH. All actions by the new TCH membership for the next 17 years—including repeated elections of the TCH board and amendments of corporate articles and bylaws—were taken by the Health Services Corporation board in its official capacity as the TCH membership. What's more, it did so with the full approval and active participation of the AC officers and other conference representatives. Thus, the January 31, 1973, session is significant not only for what transpired then but because of the chain of events initiated at the meeting and the ensuing conduct of key players.

It is revealing that while all hospitals then in the Pacific Union Conference had similar sessions, only TCH disputes the action taken.

In 1981 the hospital, owned by the TCH non-profit corporation, was sold for nearly \$10 million dollars. TCH then hired professional consultants to advise it as to how these funds could best further the church's medical outreach in Arizona. On their recommendation, TCH voted in 1982 to establish retirement centers and skilled nursing facilities in Arizona, and began acquiring land for this purpose. However, it was decided to pursue this outreach mission indirectly by sponsoring another corporation known as Pacific Living Centers (PLC). PLC was to own and operate these facilities supported through (1) the loan of TCH funds for working capital and (2) the donation of land already acquired by TCH as its board unanimously voted. To construct the facilities in Arizona, some \$40 million dollars was committed and financed by borrowing from banks and through the sale of bonds.

Elders Frank Sherrill and Tom Bledsoe, president and secretary-treasurer of the AC, respectively, were active members of the TCH board and voted in favor of all decisions throughout this period. Bledsoe, also a member of PLC board, supported every action taken by it right up to 1990.

It eventually became apparent that despite the best

*Continued on the next page, first column*

## Arizona—continued...

settlement on March 21-22, 1990, proved unsuccessful, and on March 29 AC once more approved resorting to litigation. A final attempt to go to binding arbitration was voted by AC on September 22, 1992—and again rejected by AHS/W.

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Unable to resolve the issue amicably, and with an overwhelming sense of loss, and emotional suffering by the church as a whole in Arizona, AC entered suit in Maricopa County Superior Court, where on December 10-11, 1992, Judge Michael O. Wilkinson heard arguments presented by both AC and AHS/W regarding whether or not the membership of TCH changed on January 31, 1973.

AC presented four witnesses who were present at the contested 1973 meeting, all of whom denied that any change in corporate membership had taken place. Among these was Elder John Stevens, AC president in 1973. AHS/W presented only one witness, the brother-in-law of AHS/W president Frank Dupper. His testimony conflicted with a letter he had written on the subject in 1985. In that letter he said that a particular individual had made a presentation at the 1973 meeting clearly stating that the AC would be giving up control of the hospital. In his testimony to the court this witness admitted that the person he had credited with making such a clear presentation wasn't even at the 1973 meeting. This contradiction tended to tip the evidence in favor of AC.

AC also presented numerous documents as evidence that no change had taken place at the 1973 meeting, including a formal notice in the *Pacific Union Recorder*, which made no mention of a change. (Corporate law requires that a change so fundamental as a complete transfer of membership be properly noised in the manner prescribed in the bylaws.) Minutes of the meeting do not indicate any change.

During the discovery process of the litigation procedure a letter dated July 15, 1981, from Frank Dupper, currently president of AHS/W, to Erwin J. Rembolt came to light. (Rembolt was assisting Dupper in planning transfer of the TCH funds at the time of the sale.) "We must come up with a way of keeping the money on AHS/West's books for health care in Arizona," Dupper wrote, and following a detailed proposal he added: "I am sure if we are too forward on this, the Arizona Conference will see right through it." □

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## AHS/West—continued

efforts of all involved, these facilities were not going to attain the success the consultants forecasted. Two of the major factors were (1) a sudden change in Arizona laws and healthcare regulations and (2) a sharp decline in the Arizona economy. As financial pressures mounted, PLC began selling its healthcare facilities, and sale of these retirement and nursing centers resulted in a loss of approximately \$20 million. That sum was borne first by TCH as sponsor of the Arizona facilities with

AHS/West assuming the balance, approximately \$7 million.

The \$10 million dollars from the sale of TCH clearly belonged to the TCH corporation which earlier had bought the hospital from its founder, Dr. von Pohle. The TCH board, with the active involvement of AC officers, committed these monies to advance the medical outreach work in Arizona. The commitment to sponsor and help finance these projects was made with the expectation that the retirement and skilled nursing centers would be successful, enhance an Adventist healthcare presence in Arizona and make it possible for PLC to repay the TCH loans with interest.

These efforts on behalf of the church work in the AC were initiated solely on the basis of funds from the hospital's sale and with the full realization that the assets of TCH were at risk if the projections were not realized. Absent such funds, none of these efforts would have been possible nor would they have been undertaken. In spite of the commitments by the TCH board, Bledsoe asked that TCH give the AC at least \$5 million dollars. This request was declined by the TCH board. The very extensive financial commitments that had been made for both construction and start-up operations were all incurred relying on TCH's support for the Arizona PLC efforts. Disagreement over the basis for—much less the propriety of—a \$5 million dollar gift to the AC fueled discussion of the matter for five years.

Two different attempts were made to settle this disagreement through mediation (1) within the church and (2) under the auspices of the American Arbitration Association. On both occasions the AC rejected the recommendations of the mediators.

Based upon assertions by the AC officers, their constituents have expressed outrage at a mistaken belief that more than \$10 million was allegedly stolen from the AC. In fact, TCH spent all of its monies on Arizona healthcare projects which were undertaken with the approval and active support of AC leadership. AHS/West lost millions of additional dollars on these Arizona healthcare projects.

Despite this background, the AC and certain of its members filed a lawsuit against AHS/West and against specific officials of the Pacific Union Conference and AHS/West (as well as their wives). Among other things, the AC suit charged the parties with "fraud, theft, racketeering, being of an evil mind," and many other equally heinous allegations.

All individually named persons were dropped by the AC from the lawsuit. The fundamental accusations against AHS/W have remained unchanged. This, despite the extensive involvement of the AC officials themselves in, and their approval of all, of these activities. Given the serious nature of the accusations leveled and the failure of the AC to accept mediated recommendations, AHS/W has no choice but to defend itself. □



# Women's Ordination: Not a Betrayal of the World Church

By Larry Christoffel

**THE SOUTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE** (SECC) constituency, last September, voted: "We request our Conference leaders to devise a plan by which qualified women ministers whom we employ be ordained for ministry within our jurisdiction of the World Church." The vote was bold and appropriate.

At the constituency session most of Southeastern's vocal opponents of this move resisted the measure because such action was perceived to be contrary to the policies of the General Conference (GC) and the North American Division (NAD). However, in fact the special ordination voted for Southeastern women ministers is not contrary to the 1990 GC vote on ordination, and it is in keeping with the substance of the NAD's "Equal Opportunity for Service" policy.

While it is true that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has never ordained women to the gospel ministry, there is no GC action nor working policy prohibiting a regional ordination of qualified female ministerial candidates. The 1990 GC voted that "we do not recommend authorization for women to be ordained to the gospel ministry" for the World field, but it did not forbid an area-wide ordination of women to the gospel ministry. To "not recommend authorization for" is not the same as "prohibiting" or "forbidding." The Southeastern action for women's ordination recognizes the GC's position with respect to the world field and also commits our Conference to nondiscrimination within our jurisdiction.

The GC working policies state that ordination to the gospel ministry shall be for world service. Policy L 55 specifies that conferences shall recommend candidates for ordination and seek the counsel and approval of unions during the process. Conference-limited ordination would not require even the approval of the union, since the ordination would only be valid within the jurisdiction of the conference.

The issue for Southeastern is not whether to abide by the church's working policies as some would have us



**Larry Christoffel**, an associate pastor at the Campus Hill Church, Loma Linda, serves on the Southeastern California Conference's Gender Inclusiveness Commission and on the Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee.

believe, but rather which of the policies we should follow. Since its commitment to non-discrimination is Southeastern's major reason for voting to treat men and women alike with respect to ordination, it is not surprising that the action for women's ordination cites the 1989 NAD "Equal Opportunity for Service" policy that forbids "gender" discrimination. The church that year voted women pastors permission to perform essentially the ministerial function of the ordained ministry. The NAD "equal Opportunity for Service" policy (NAD D-75) requires that:

*Continued on the next page*

## Make Haste Slowly Response to Christoffel

By Gary Patterson

Christoffel points out that, contrary to often held opinion, neither the world church nor the North American Division has voted to prohibit the ordination of women. The action at the General Conference Session in Indianapolis in 1990 was a vote not to proceed with the granting of permission to ordain women in the world field. It was not a vote either forbidding it or condemning it as improper.

Having made this observation, however, one cannot honestly assume that it is thus acceptable to do so in local jurisdictions. The intent of the floor vote was clear in that the functions of ministry were granted to women virtually in total, but ordination was not granted. The message from the floor was very clear in this split of the two votes between ordination and function. Though the way the motion was worded does not forbid ordination, neither does it allow it without further action.

Likewise the non-discrimination statement quoted from the NAD Policy #D-75 when taken by itself, does not reflect clearly the position stated elsewhere in the NAD Policy book, Policy #C 50 10:

All members in good and regular standing will

*Continued on the next page*

**Gary Patterson**, assistant to the president of the North American Division, received a D.Min. from Vanderbilt University. He writes frequently for denominational publications and was SDA Church spokesperson regarding the Branch Davidian catastrophe in Waco, Texas.

## Anti-Catholicism—continued

There can be little doubt that the Roman church courted much of the antagonism it received. For ever since the French Revolution, the papacy had consistently aligned itself with the forces of reaction. Pius' Syllabus of Errors (1864) had unashamedly condemned the notion that "every man is free to embrace and profess the religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true."

To make matters worse, from the very outset, the Roman church's hierarchy in North America was incredibly arrogant and contemptuous of democratic principles. New York Archbishop John Hughes, for example, in the middle of the nineteenth century was openly dismissive of what he called "the effete Protestant religion," and of American institutions. In 1850, he proclaimed a Catholic crusade to convert America: "Everybody should know that we have for our mission to convert the world—including the inhabitants of the United States." For years, Catholic leaders tried to dump the "Protestant" Bible from the country's classrooms, and constantly pressured state legislatures for subsidies to fund their parochial schools. The Roman Catholic Church of those days was a contemptuous and contemptible organization, rightly perceived as a threat to the nation and the world.

But those days are over. The world has changed. The United States has changed. And even the Roman Catholic church has changed, in the second half of our century, having reconciled itself with progress, liberalism and modern civilization. It is no longer the Bible-suppressing, science-resisting, liberty-opposing, Protestant-hating, culture-ignoring, Latin-mumbling, obscurantism-loving ecclesiastical organization of former years, intent on ruling the world from Rome. Vatican Council II transformed all that.

To ignore these new realities and to refuse to come to terms with the contemporary Roman church is to choose to remain stuck in a religious no-man's-land, condemning a church that no longer exists, using old labels and propaganda that only offend and alienate deeply. Instead, Seventh-day Adventists ought to involve themselves in building bridges of understanding to reach out to Roman Catholics and developing bonds of love to enable them with us to arrive at a fuller appreciation and application of the gospel of Jesus Christ. □

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## Profile of Mould—continued

In a sermon Mould delivered in Jamaica two or three years ago, he said: "If I was in Jamaica, I would ... put a layman in every conference as president. It is time the Seventh-day Adventist laymen get up and take control of this church. You're paying your tithe to devils!"

When questioned about such strident comments, Mould quickly called it "ill-advised." "That is an extreme statement that I regret. The church is not all devils—there are good and

faithful people in positions of leadership." Mould views himself as highly committed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its teachings.

At present Mould says he has some 7,000 donors on his list, and the funds are on the increase. So barring something unforeseen, Adventists throughout North America haven't seen or heard the last of David Mould and Laymen for Religious Liberty. □

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## Southeastern—continued

all services and all levels of church activity be opened to all members on the basis of their qualifications and will afford all individuals equal opportunity in employment, appointment, promotion, salary and other organizational benefits without consideration for race, color, gender, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, age, height, weight, marital status, or prior military service.

Because the church's working policies are apparently in conflict (the one not recommending authorization for ordination of women to the gospel ministry and the other forbidding gender discrimination), Southeastern has opted to conduct non-discriminatory ordinations of women and men to the gospel ministry within our jurisdiction — the moral, ethical, just, fair, and right thing to do. □

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## Make Haste Slowly—continued

be given full and equal opportunity within the church to develop the knowledge and skills needed in the building up of the church, and all service and positions\* of leadership on all levels of church activity will be open on the basis of qualifications without regard to race, color, gender\*, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, age, height, weight, marital status (single, married, or widowed), or prior military service.

\*The words "all service and positions" used in this statement refer, in the case of women, to positions other than those requiring ordination.

Last spring I met with the (SECC) Gender Inclusiveness Committee to Commission. The recommendation made to the conference's Executive Committee out of this meeting—which later was voted by the conference committee—was a request to the Pacific Union Conference and the NAD to assist SECC in finding a way to respond to the constituency vote taken last year.

This request has been received and is being processed in the NAD. To move ahead now, opting "to conduct nondiscriminatory ordination of women and men to the gospel ministry," within SECC is not keeping with the spirit of the GC action, the NAD policy nor SECC Executive Committee vote. □

**WALLA WALLA COLLEGE**

An experiment involving Walla Walla College's School of Theology (ST) and laypersons in Portland, Oregon, began in October, 1992. Throughout the past school year, the Sunnyside church has hosted presentations by ST members in what is known as the Institute of Bible, Church and Culture.

These lectures, which serve as a forum for the presentation of independent research, are designed to stimulate lively discussion among those in attendance. Wildred Geschke, MD, one of the prime backers of the program, hopes the Institute will "stimulate creative thought for individuals away from academic centers by providing insightful presenters who share with us ideas gleaned from their research."

The Institute arises out of several years of planning that led ST to vote a proposal for a one-year trial. The proposal included a salary for an additional faculty person to lighten the class load from the presenters so they would have time to develop the lectures as well as time to be away from classroom functions. Funding requirements demanded that the salary be in place by the end of 1992 for the second year. This was accomplished, and since then, additional funding and requests for similar programs have been received by ST from throughout the North Pacific Union.

Doug Clark, Dean of ST, has expressed gratitude to those who have supported the Institute in its attempts to create dialogue. The following presentations have been given: Adlen Thompson's "The Changing Face of Adventism," Doug Clark's "Excavating the Bible: Archeological Discovery and Faith," Bruce Johanson's "Adventists Among Mosques, Temples, and Pagodas," Ronald Jolliffe's "Monopoly on the Gospel? Adventists and Other Christians," Glen Greenwalt's "Reclaiming

the Sanctuary: The Relevance of 1844 in the 1990's," and Larry Veverka's "Church Discipline: Shooting Our Own Wounded." For information on these or future presentations call the Theology Department at Walla Walla College at (509)527-2615.

Bob Bretsch  
Sunnyside Church  
Portland, OR

**UNION COLLEGE**

Union College, the first Adventist college to become accredited (1937), the first to have a computer in every dormitory room (1983), and the college with the craziest school song ("Slinga Da Ink and Pusha Da Pen"), continues to be an exciting center for education.

Not only does the commercial art program feature a new MacIntosh lab with the latest graphics and design software, but dormitory computers have been upgraded, loaded with Wordperfect and Lotus software, and connected with electronic mail.

In October, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education renewed accreditation for teacher education assuring education graduates of nation-wide acceptance.

Union is one of 112 colleges and universities—including Notre Dame and Brigham Young—named to the John Templeton Foundation's 1992 Honor Roll of Character Building Colleges.

The Joe Mertz Center for Volunteer Service, a newly established agency, offers students opportunities to help in the community. A current project is Jimmy Carter's Habitat for Humanity—helping low-income people

build their own homes. 10,000 hours of volunteer service will be completed by students this year.

Union offers a pastoral care degree for women in ministry, giving them an advantage over traditional theological graduates in areas such as abuse, grief, divorce, addiction, and the development of parenting skills.

Significant progress has been made in reducing indebtedness from \$8.9 million in 1986 to a projected \$3.5 million at the close of the current school year.

Beatrice Neal  
Professor of Religion

**ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE**

Since 1985 Atlantic Union College's (AUC) enrollment in the on-campus traditional programs has doubled to nearly 700 students. Furthermore, despite the misinformation in the January 21, 1993, *Adventist Review*, the 1992-1993 school year brought another increase, though slight, in on-campus enrollment.

In addition, AUC again has nearly as many students in its non-traditional programs such as Adult Degree Program, Continuing Education, and Electronic Distance Learning.

*Continued on the next page*

**Future Issues**  
**Adventist Beliefs in the 21st Century**  
**Women's Ordination**  
**The Different Faces of Adventism**

# Families on Television

By Jill Potter

20

WHEN FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT QUAYLE CRITICIZED the television show "Murphy Brown" for depicting what he deems the problem with America today—a restructuring of family and its values—he touched off a tremendous debate.

Suddenly, the words "family values" became part of daily conversation: some people used them as if a universal definition had long since been established. Others contended that the interpretation is situational and varies with each family. Discussion ranged from the absurd to the serious, finding its way into late night comedy shows as well as newspapers and magazines. Television's role in shaping and portraying American families came under critical scrutiny by liberals and conservatives alike.

In an interview with Stephanie Coontz, Peggy Taylor states, "From clichés such as 'A man's home is his castle' to political rhetoric about the lost 'traditional' families of years past to scenes of domestic perfection exhibited by the TV Cleavers, Bradys, and Huxtables, we have been indoctrinated with images of a family life that has never existed and that—despite the longings of some politicians—could not be lived by real people today" (*New Age Journal*, "The Way We Were," Sept/Oct, 1992, 64-66).

My generation grew up with shows such as "Leave it to Beaver," "Little House on the Prairie," and "The Brady Bunch." Each of these programs is conspicuous in its conception of family life as something which is intrinsically moral (and of the Judeo-Christian persuasion). Each revolves around the individual who "wears the pants" in the family (hint: Mrs. Ingalls wears petticoats); and in which the dress wearer owes the rest of the members of the family three hot, square meals a day. Whether these shows describe or reflect reality or not, their constant moralizing at least evidences a strong prescription for how to achieve the wholesome American family.

What then, of current broadcasting? Consider the situation comedy "Married With Children," where the members spend the majority of their time exploiting one another (financially and otherwise), making insulting wisecracks, and sitting on the tacky couch in the living room (dying room, maybe?) swilling beer and watching TV. One might hope that this is not so much a reflection of our society as it is a result of oversaturation with the piety and make-believe of former sitcoms.

Whatever the case, "Married, With Children" remains televised, obviously satisfying certain audience demands. Which demands might these be? One possibility is that it targets those who are very unlike the Bundy family and who enjoy laughing with contempt about this difference. Another is that there are

individuals who sincerely identify with the characters, who would really enjoy telling members of their family off the way that the Bundys do on a regular basis.

For example, at a party, Peg Bundy (wife and mother) went down a line of not-so-good-looking men, telling each of them, "You are who I think of when I have sex with my husband." She was about to utter this same "romantic" phrase to the back of another man's head when it turned around and was her husband, and in mid-sentence she course-corrected saying, "You are who I think of....when I clean the floor around the base of the toilet."

These two possibilities—the satisfaction of feeling better than the Bundys and the enjoyment of living vicariously through them—would allow us refuge from the unpleasant prospect that we are being depicted. It appears, however, that the joke's on us. Strange, but Dan Quayle got it (sort of) right, after all. Television has moved away from hyper-didacticism toward uninhibited vulgarity; the question is whether or not we all shall move with it.

Unwittingly, Mr. Quayle opened up a large-scale debate because he made us consider the relationship between what we see and who we are. It reminds me of a certain quintessential dilemma...but where the "chicken and egg" conundrum appears unsolvable, there always remains the unequivocal element of self-perpetuation, regardless of what came first. □

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## Atlantic Union—continued

In 1988 the New England Association of Schools and Colleges renewed AUC's accreditation for another full ten-year term. All of its professional programs are likewise accredited for their maximum terms, by their respective agencies. These include the two- and four-year nursing programs, social work, music, and education.

In 1992 a campus-wide master plan—"Priorities for Excellence"—was adopted by faculty and trustees. An extensive campus and constituency dialogue led to a Vision Statement based on AUC's Mission Statement. At its heart is an academic plan sustained by student services, financial administration, and advancement. Prior to its adoption a spiritual master plan was devised, coordinating the spiritual resources on campus in such a way that the greatest number of students would be positively affected in terms of their spiritual growth.

Another document that has been influential in campus decision-making is AUC's Human Relations Statement, which recognizes the multicultural nature of our community and consciously values and affirms diversity while taking advantage of it in achieving genuine unity.

Larry Geraty, President

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Jill Potter recently graduated from Columbia Union College with an English major and studied at Collonges and the Sorbonne.

# Letters to the Editor

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## General Response to the Premier Issue

I believe that *Adventist Today* can render a unique and valuable service to our church....I believe that God is leading Seventh-day Adventists to accomplish a special mission. But by its very nature a bureaucratic organization is highly limited in the area of self-criticism....

There are a great number of us who are basically loyal to the church and believe its fundamental doctrines but who crave a safe and free atmosphere where thoughts can be exchanged. Your editorial voice is hardly that of a novice in search of attention or an embittered loser lashing out at those who rejected him. Your supporters include those who love the Lord and want to see "His truth shine more and more" as the Day approaches. May the Lord's blessings be with you.

H. Ward Hill  
Lincoln, NE

I really enjoyed your first issue of *Adventist Today*, although I do hope that it does not become another *Spectrum*. (I really enjoy *Spectrum*, but find that often it becomes a camp for closed-minded liberals trying to disprove every church doctrine, and tends to be written in a style that is too much trying to impress us with their education.) I like the way that you are short and to the point in plain English, and have current events. I also like the way you balance the pro's and con's...Thank you for your journal.

Kevin D. Neidhardt  
Redlands, CA

I do not plan to subscribe to [*Adventist Today*]. I fail to see the need for additional publications to further confuse the issues, but if you think it is necessary, you can at least leave the name Adventist out of your title so readers can readily see that it is an independent publication.

If your staff would lend its talents to the upbuilding of our current leading publications, the *Adventist Review* and *The Signs of the Times*, we could speak with one voice...

I read with interest James Walters' editorial "Let Freedom Ring." This is a beautiful sentiment. I disagree with his assertion that we have reasonable trust in the editorial judgments and the stories of the *Los Angeles Times* or the *Washington Post* and the implication that we cannot give that confidence to our denominational periodicals. Try

giving them your support instead of your criticism and see what happens.

Robert A. Dexter  
Porterville, CA

Of course we want to be part of [*Adventist Today*]. We believe that opportunities to discuss issues strengthen the church and encourage young people to remain with us.

Alice I. Holst and Geneva E. Durham  
Angwin, CA

I am so glad someone is having the courage to start another Adventist magazine....I am 72 years old and I miss what used to be the good old *Review*....Please let us know what's going on in the SDA churches and the conferences as there is more going on than anyone tells us anymore.

Daisy Chinn  
Cincinnati, OH

A pity so much time, means, talent and thought is so wasted. The SDA church is under the direct guidance of our Lord

and He gave directions as to what was His intent and how it should be conducted....The lovely Jesus does not seem to absorb your attention. Turn your eyes upon Jesus....Your focus is inward—not heavenward.

Palmer [sic]  
Glen, MS

I am pleased with the first issue of *Adventist Today*. I have talked to a number of people who have read the magazine, and the impression is without exception positive.... I think you've come up with a winner.

Marvin Moore  
Nampa, ID

This is the first Adventist magazine I've read cover-to-cover in ages. It's comforting to read an Adventist magazine that deals with unpleasant issues without assassinating characters or institutions.

Linda Brawner  
Mansfield, OH

I do hope that many who have thrown out the baby with the bath water and do not attend church anymore will

*Continued on the next page*

**Letters  
to the Editor**

ADVENTIST TODAY  
PO Box 1220  
Loma Linda, CA 92354-1220

Letters for publication  
must be signed and brief.

## Letters—continued

have a chance to read this new publication. And I hope that some who have become fossilized in their beliefs will appreciate the articles and grow in their conception of church.

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Joyce Rigsby  
Hanford, CA

### Waco Articles

A publication that aspires to honest, straightforward Adventist journalism—at last. May *Adventist Today* thrive until the Lord returns...Your coverage of the tragedy in Waco provides a superb example. Thank you for avoiding the self-justifying, "he had nothing to do with Adventism" tone of so much denominational PR....

Darrell Holtz  
Overland, KS

The role of weapons in the Branch Davidian community is an important development neglected in your article, "History and Fatal Theology..." All other Davidian groups are solidly pacifist, as were the Branch Davidians as of a decade ago. The first weapon entered the compound in 1985, a pistol worn by George Roden...

I doubt that Howell/Koresh would have armed his followers if George Roden had not introduced arms into the compound and used them against Howell and his followers. The brief media circus in 1987 probably did even more damage in making the Branch Davidians a militant group. Religious fanatics tend to have little sense of humor and cannot stand being laughed at. Between November 1987, and February 1993, Howell/Koresh made sure that the Branch Davidians would not be people to laugh at.

By the way, George Roden was pushing for legalized bigamy long before Howell ever tried it...Whatever George came up with, Vernon would top it.

James Miller  
Madison, WI

### Abortion Issue

Ginger Hanks-Harwood would have been a service to the readers if she would have spent her mental energies on writing a new succinct "Abortion Guidelines" rather than taking negative pot-shots.

J. Fred Hughes  
Richardson, TX

### Editorials

I doubt very much that the article by Kit Watts will be a credit to your publication or to the church. The so-called

Adventist gays and lesbians will be happy to read her article especially when it comes from a *Review* editor.

H.D. Schmidt  
Pleasant Hill, CA

### Mission Statement

It is to be hoped that the mission statement and policy declared in your first issue can be faithfully followed, and that finally our people may have access to an unbiased source of facts and suggested solutions.

There must be a solution that permits both sides to be heard, and opens the door to free discussion and final decision by the Adventist church at large. What you propose seems to offer just such a remedy, but only if you don't become a "dissident" also by presenting an unbiased point of view.

Earl Meyer  
Oakhurst, CA

I think it was Thomas Jefferson who said, "When truth is published freely and every man can read, liberty will have nothing to fear." In that same spirit of liberal optimism, I am glad to welcome *Adventist Today* into our Adventist subculture, and into my own home.

I think it is very healthy for all sides of an issue to be heard. You will undoubtedly hear from some who would argue that our unity is threatened by frank discussion of our differences, but I would argue just the opposite—that real unity can only be achieved by surfacing our differences, dialoguing about them, and working the issues through. I hope *Adventist Today* will successfully avoid both the Scylla of liberal-political-correctness and the Charybdis of conservative-organizational-conformity, to give us a truly thoughtful, comprehensive and fair reporting of the Adventist news and views. My prayers are with you.

David VanDenburgh  
Loma Linda, CA

## To Potential Writers

The editors desire manuscripts from a diversity of writers on issues facing contemporary Adventism. Please send for our Writers' Guidelines.

# Let Justice Roll Down Like a River

M. Jerry Davis

23

**ALL OF US ANXIOUSLY DESIRE A BRIGHT FUTURE** for our church, but first, let's talk about Jesus. Let's talk about Jesus before we talk about plans, and programs, and projects, and positions.

Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commandments!" But when a young man came to Jesus saying he had kept the law from his youth, Jesus said, "You lack one thing!" and to people who scrupulously kept the law, Jesus said, "You have heard it said, but I say unto you." And when finally asked directly, Jesus said, "Love the Lord with all your heart and treat your neighbor like you would want to be treated."

We begin the spiritual journey by bringing our lives into harmony with God's *explicit* commands, in order to open our minds and hearts to the *implicit* demands of love. Moral maturity brings the spirit of the law to situations not specified by the law.

Let me illustrate. A story is told about the two giants of early 20th century psychology, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Freud was established, and Jung was a promising newcomer. When they met, they would analyze each other's dreams. Freud shared a dream, and Jung asked for the associations to Freud's current life. Freud said, "I can't tell you!" Jung asked, "Why?" "It would be hard on my authority!" Freud replied. Jung told him, "I can't work with someone who is more concerned about authority than he is about the truth."

Our concern is not to put truth over, or against, authority. Rather, as we hear plans and proposals, let us listen for the "authority of truth" and "the ring of right." The power of God's people, the power of a church, the power of *our* church, is not in our buildings. It is not in our resources. It is not in our institutions. It is not in anything that can be named or numbered! "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord. The power of the church is God's Spirit, and this is the moral authority with which it should speak and act on issues that matter. When good people hear the ring of right, and the authority of truth, they will follow.

We are asked to make many decisions. We hear many arguments. Some decisions are routine. Some are common sense. Some are good business. But some have moral and ethical

overtones, dimensions, and consequences. These moral and ethical questions should never be decided by asking: What have we done before? What's the rest of the church doing? Who's for it? Who's against it? Rather, keep these questions in your mind: Is it right? Is it fair? Is it just?

What do I mean by the "ring of right" and the "authority of truth"? Remember some of the long steps of human progress in American history: The British gained dominance over the French in the New World in 1763. They then turned their attention to the colonists; they increased taxes, imposed duties on imports, and quartered troops in private homes. The colonists dumped tea in Boston Harbor, and the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. What if the representatives had said, "The world is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice"?

In 1865, the United States was torn by a variety of slavery-related issues, economic, financial, philosophical, and political, and was bleeding from the last throes of the Civil War. President Lincoln articulated the prevailing, though not always dominant, view that it was simply not right for one person to toil endlessly so that another could live in leisure and luxury. What if, when Lincoln proposed the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery, Congress had said, "The nation is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice"?

When Lyndon Johnson was elected to the presidency in 1964, he stated, "We have the opportunity to move not only toward the Rich Society, but upward to the Great Society." Congress enacted legislation to fight poverty, improve education, and care for the aged. Johnson dreamed of ending discrimination in housing, education, and transportation. What if Congress had said, "The country is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice"?

A matter not settled justly is not settled. Whatever our church votes today, because it's expedient, because it's traditional, because it's what others are doing, will come before us again and again until it's made right. Whatever we can agree to do now, because most of us feel it has the ring of right and the authority of truth, will stand, and we can move on to new issues!

Amos said, "Let justice roll down like a river." And to paraphrase Proverbs, "Right doing exalts a church." Let us be more concerned about injustice than disorder, for the church more concerned about disorder than injustice will have more of both! Real unity is not the absence of tension, but the presence of justice. May we be open to truth as God gives us the ability to see it, and may we be willing to be counted for it! □



**M. Jerry Davis** is Director of Chaplain Services at Loma Linda University Medical Center and Adjunct Professor in religion at Loma Linda University. This piece is an edited version of the devotional Davis presented at Southeastern California Conference's September 1992 constituency session.

# As We Go To Press

## Anti-Catholic Billboards in Oregon—Denver Next?

Four anti-Catholic billboards have been placed in Portland, reported the *National Catholic Reporter* (see p. 5). Similar billboards were placed in Medford and Salem, and mainline religious leaders are "seething," reports Portland's primary newspaper *The Oregonian*. Les Balsiger and his Printed Page Ministry, Troy, Montana, is sponsoring these Oregon billboards. And rumors continue to suggest that one or more right-wing Adventist organizations will also run an anti-Catholic media campaign in Denver, coordinated with the visit of Pope John Paul II in August. In late June neither of the two major billboard companies in Denver had contracted to place billboards featuring the pope, said an official at the Rocky Mountain Seventh-day Adventist Conference office.

"There is a clear feeling among Adventists in the Northwest that placement of the billboards is a step toward the establishment of 'historic' Adventist groups and congregations," stated Ed Schwisow, director of communications for the North Pacific Union Conference.

The official church is running a proactive media campaign in Denver, aside from what might be advertised by independent Adventists. During July, 119 thirty-second television ads are running on the NBC, ABC and CBS affiliated stations in the early evening. The ads will focus on Christ as the answer to modern ills, with the Adventist denomination identified as a sponsor. An 800 number will be listed so that callers may request a complimentary copy of *Steps to Christ*. A \$50,000 budget comes from individual church members and the local, union, division and general conferences. The Adventist Media Center is producer of the television ads.

## The Vatican and *The Great Controversy*

During the Waco, Texas, Crisis in March the Dean of the College of Cardinals at the Vatican asked a papal representative to the archbishop of Mexico City, leading prelate of the church

in Mexico, to secure a copy of *The Great Controversy*, presumably in order to evaluate its comment on the Catholic Church. He is an American citizen and has a direct telephone line to the Vatican. Robert Folkenberg was away from his office when the representative called, who then conversed with George Reid, director of the Biblical Research Institute. Reid referred him to Pacific Press, publisher of *The Great Controversy*. In itself this is a relatively innocuous incident, but preceding the visit of the pope to this country in August and the anti-Catholic billboard campaign in Florida, Oregon, and reportedly Jamaica, it may have ominous overtones.

## California Conference Proceeds on Women's Ordination

The Southeastern California Conference's Executive Committee on June 17 reaffirmed an earlier vote of its constituency to ordain qualified candidates on a nondiscriminatory basis for ministry within Southeastern's geographical boundaries. By a 12-6 vote, a five-person committee was charged to draw up a concrete plan and date for "ordination of men and women to be presented to this Executive Committee at our next regular meeting. The integrity of our constitutional form of conference governance demands that we proceed deliberately, with wisdom." The Executive Committee earlier voted to invite support from the Division and Pacific Union Conference for its constituency ordination vote.

Since the Southeastern California constituency vote last fall, the North American Division officers have received seven other voted actions requesting the Division to allow for women's ordination. The Division's Ministerial Association meeting delegates voted such an action with 88 percent in favor. Other Adventist groups acting on similar resolutions are the Pacific Union Conference Executive Committee, the West Coast Religion Teachers, the Hospital Chaplains Association, the Women's Ministries Advisory Committee, the Office of Human Relations Advisory Committee, and the Military Chaplains Association. □

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