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A Call to Truth

It is a subject we don't like to think about. We all know it exists, and we've heard that it affects more people than we thought, but we think abuse is a societal or family problem, not a church problem. Why mention it in a periodical dedicated to church issues?

It's true; abuse is not strictly a Seventh-day Adventist issue. Seventh-day Adventists, though, are human beings, and abuse is a human problem. That means Adventists are just as vulnerable to it as are the unchurched. In fact, the church is often the place where abuse hides best because that is where people least expect to find it.

Many of us grow up believing that our behavior is linked to salvation. Because ultimate perfection is mandatory, we don't dare to deviate from our parents', teachers' or pastors' expectations for us. We wouldn't think of risking their disapproval. We can be "guilted" into doing the things our elders want us to do. Our salvation depends upon our being obedient.

Some families keep secrets. Children have to do or endure things that violate, frighten, and shame them. They can't protest or escape without endangering the approval they crave from their families. The scars of these secrets live deeply in the children's hearts and memories, and as they grow, they find that the only way they know to deal with their rage and frustration is to perpetrate some variation of the pain they experienced on those closest to them.

These scarred adults feel locked in an uncontrollable vortex of pain and rage. They don't dare reveal their problems; church members and loved ones will know how imperfect they are. They feel so damned by their secret behaviors that they go overboard trying live the rest of their lives perfectly. They focus on eating right, on keeping the Sabbath, on knowing and obeying the doctrines, on insisting that their families exhibit perfect behavior.

Other damaged adults decide that since they feel damned already, they might just as well jettison the church and all it stands for. Why try to be perfect, they think, when already they are hopeless?

You might know people who live with fears and compulsions such as these. You might actually be such a person yourself.

As members of God's family and as his representatives on Earth, we have a twofold obligation regarding abuse. First, we must be committed to knowing the truth, to letting the Holy Spirit reveal our own lives to us. We can't heal from the pain in our past if we never admit it's there. Jesus will transform our scars into strengths, but only if we allow him access to them.

Second, we as a church have an obligation to provide a place of safety for people who hurt. In his book *The Wounded Heart*, Dan Allender observes that the real problem with abuse is not the violation itself but the wound it causes in the soul. Abuse intensifies one's genetic vulnerability to sin and makes it almost impossible for the victims to trust or love the God who is real. Instead, the victims protect themselves by refusing to be vulnerable, not only to the people who betrayed them but also to God. Victims of abuse must struggle harder than others to believe that God has forgiven them and saved them.

We are here to love each other for God. We must provide places of safety not only for the abused but also for abusers. We must demonstrate God's love to them by our willingness to believe that the abuse is real, by calling both victims and abusers to accountability, and by providing professionals who can help the wounded to heal. The Holy Spirit can heal the hurts of an abusive past or present, and our job as a church is to help mediate that healing love.

Remember that there is hope. It is possible to recover from wounds in the past and shame in the present. God can transform our pain and shame into strength and integrity. We are to love each other for God.

Colleen Moore Tinker
Guest Editor

...the church is often the place where abuse hides best because that is where people least expect to find it.

Colleen Moore Tinker is a former high school teacher and PR director. She and her husband, Richard Tinker, design and produce *Adventist Today* and serve on our editorial board.



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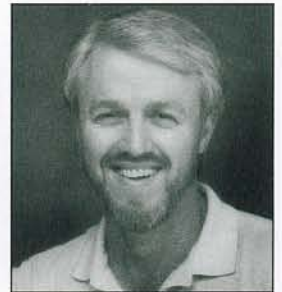
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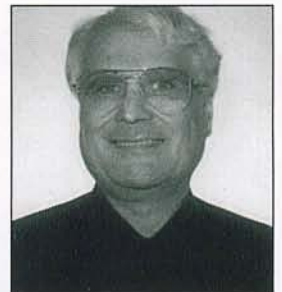
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Photo by Richard Cross.

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EDITOR: Raymond Cottrell
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: James Walters
MANAGING EDITOR: Cherie Rose
ASSISTANT EDITORS: Cheri Lynn Gregory, James H. Stirling

EDITORIAL ADVISOR: Steve Daily
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT: Dean Kinsey
OFFICE MANAGER: Hanan Sadek
DESIGN AND PRODUCTION: Richard Tinker, Colleen Moore Tinker
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS: Antonius Brandon, Loma Linda University; Barry Casey, Columbia Union College; Glenn Coe, South Windsor, Connecticut; Frank Knittel, La Sierra University

Beatrice Neall, Union College
Joel Sandefur, La Sierra University
Lynn Sauls, Southern College
Larry Downing, Anaheim Adventist Church, CA
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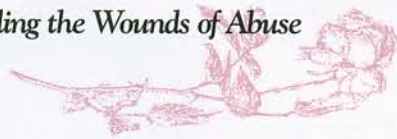
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Fax: (909) 884-3391
Email: AToday@aol.com

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Secrets

“Pray that Mommy won’t hurt me any more,” he pleaded.

by Morgan Anderson

Daddy, don’t leave me!” cried three-year-old Ryan as he clung to the open window of the car door. The street light on the corner revealed his terror-filled eyes. “Don’t leave me!”

Nathan put his hand over Ryan’s small one. “I don’t want to leave you,” he murmured into his son’s ear, “but this is your time with Mommy. I will miss you and Jon, and I’ll pray for you every day.” Slowly he released the brake and the car inched forward.

Ryan, crying, clung to the car and ran as it moved. Nathan braked to a stop.

“I love you, Ryan,” he said, “but I have to leave now. Please go and stand on the curb where Jon is.” He pointed to Ryan’s seven-year-old brother, slumped against the lamp post by his mother’s house.

Ryan turned and walked toward Jon, his sobs audible.

As we drove away, I turned to watch the boys until they disappeared into the drizzling Portland night. Jon still slumped against the post, and Ryan wandered toward the front door where their mother Lisa stood. She did not move to greet or to help them.

“What happens to them when they’re here?” I demanded, my own tears falling now. “I don’t know,” Nathan responded. His shoulders sagged,

and the green dash-board lights reflected off tears in his eyes. “I only know that they’re always afraid to go, and that makes me believe they aren’t safe.”

“They never have bruises on their bodies,” I observed.

“No,” he agreed, “but something happens that doesn’t leave marks. Jon wouldn’t get sick to his stomach on the way to her house if he were going some place safe.”

“True,” I nodded. “And when we come to pick them up, they’re always waiting at the window. They race to jump into the car.”

The past year had been one of unbelievable change for me. Fourteen months before, I had married Nathan, an architect with kind eyes and a sensitive heart balanced by a subtle but penetrating wit. I had also committed myself to stepparent his two sons who lived with him for two weeks out of every month.

I had been a pediatric nurse for 14 years, and I felt confident that I could become a supportive, nondemanding stepmother. I envisioned myself as a sort of “aunt” who would listen to their frustrations, dole out affirmation, and provide balanced support as they adjusted to the emotional rupture in their young lives. I never expected they would demand that I become a mother to them.

Several months after our wedding, I walked with the boys to the park three blocks from our house. It was a day that made up for the monotonous gray of winter. Every needle on the fir trees sparkled in the

Morgan Anderson is a pseudonym.

sun shining between cotton clouds, and we could smell the crimson roses edging the playground.

Five children from Jon's Sabbath School played on the jungle gym, and their mothers sat nearby on a bench. All of them knew the boys' mother, but I was a stranger to them.

I sat on a bench near the playground and watched as Jon joined his friends. As he reached them, he pointed to me and said to them, "That's my mom." When they looked puzzled, he pointed and said again, "That's my mom!" I was stunned.

As we walked home later we chattered together and I called Jon "my friend." "Friend" was my carefully considered, nondemanding affectionate name for him that I'd used since Nathan and I had decided to marry.

This time Jon was silent a moment. Then he turned to me and asked wistfully, "But am I your kid?" I looked into his gray eyes. "Yes," I said with a rush of unexpected emotion. "Yes, you're my kid!"

As the months progressed I noticed things that I couldn't explain. Jon and Ryan often arrived at our house in torn, dirty clothes with hair that always seemed in need of a cut. I discovered that their childhood vaccinations were not up-to-date. Nathan was amazed. Their mother had said she'd been taking care of their doctor's appointments. This negligence was alarming. I began cutting their hair and mending their clothes, and I took them on several dreaded trips to get their shots.

Jon began school during that first year of our marriage. His teacher told us that during the weeks he was at his mom's house, he would often arrive at school late, his hair uncombed, his clothes torn and dirty, and his homework missing. At school he was

"I can't remember," Ryan would dismiss me.

One rainy morning Ryan and I were making his bed. "I don't like Mommy," he said with a sad face. "I wish I didn't have to go to her house."

"Ryan," I said, "when you feel afraid and angry, you can always pray, and Jesus will be there with you."

"Let's pray right now," he said, looking up at me with sad brown eyes.

"All right," I said, "what do you want me to pray for?"

"Pray that Mommy won't hurt me any more," he pleaded.

I was worried. "Nathan," I said to my husband, "I can't prove it, but I think Lisa is abusing the boys."

"It sure seems like it," he fretted, "but what do you think she's doing?"

"I don't know, but I suspect she's sexually molesting Ryan."

"I don't think so," Nathan countered. "She's much too conservative. She's rigid and strict, and she spans too much, but I can't imagine her molesting him. She's worried about being good. That would be too sinful."

I knew that Lisa used prayer to punctuate her severe and unpredictable punishments. I knew she told the boys that they wouldn't go to heaven if they disobeyed. Jon sometimes had nightmares about people dying in church or being sucked into dark, hideous holes.

"Why can't Ryan ever remember what she does to hurt him?" I persisted. "Does he really forget, or is he afraid to tell? Maybe it's so painful he can't remember."

"Mommy used to touch my private parts and hurt me."

becoming aggressive on the one hand and lost in distant daydreams on the other. His teacher was concerned. "I can tell when he walks in the door which house he's coming from," she told me one day.

Meanwhile, Ryan was having his own problems. Always a quiet, sensitive child, he became a loner. Some days he would go into our small back yard, lie in his wagon, and stare unmoving at the tree limbs lacing the gray sky while the autumn leaves fell, covering him. Other times he'd suddenly look up from what he was doing and say, "I really don't like Mommy."

"Really, Sweetie?" I would say. "Why not?"

"She hurts me," he would answer.

"How does she hurt you?" I would ask.

"You may be right," Nathan conceded. "I'm almost certain Lisa's dad sexually abused her. She might be hurting Ryan. But there's no way we can prove it, so what can we do?"

By the time Jon was in grade three, things reached a crisis. His teacher called me one morning to tell me that Jon had just punched one of his classmates. His aggression was getting worse, and she recommended we start him in counseling. I felt a surge of anxiety tempered, curiously, with relief.

Nathan and I began praying that God would help us find a counselor who could perceive the spiritual wounds Jon had received along with his physical and emotional ones.

Lauren Adams was more than we had dreamed a counselor could be. A member of a local

Congregational church, she had been raised as a Catholic and she worked in an independent Christian counseling center. She was a woman of great empathy, insight, and spiritual integrity. She took Jon and his thoughts and feelings seriously.

Jon had been seeing Lauren for several months when I took Ryan for a routine visit with his pediatrician. At the end of his exam, the doctor looked at me. "I am very concerned," he said. "Ryan has childhood depression, and I want him to see a counselor. Something is wrong, but I don't know what it is." His words sent shock waves through me.

My time with the boys now included two trips to Lauren's office each week they were with us. After

with women when they grow up. Nathan, you are their emotional mainstay."

One evening when Nathan was reading to the boys at bedtime, Ryan cocooned himself in blankets up to his chin and lay very still. When Nathan finished reading, Ryan looked at him, his brown eyes wide with anxiety, and said, "Mommy used to touch my private parts and hurt me."

Nathan held him close. At last Ryan felt safe enough to tell his father what had happened.

Sixteen months after Jon first saw Lauren, the court granted Nathan primary custody of Jon and Ryan.

That was three years ago. Today Lauren lives in

Forgiveness means giving up your right to get even.

several months had passed, Jon was beginning to trust her enough to talk about his fear and his anger. Ryan drew pictures that demonstrated rage and fear.


One day Lauren asked Nathan and me to meet with her. "Tell me about Lisa's parents," she said.

"They are professional people," Nathan answered, "and well known in their community. Her father is an elder in their local Seventh-day Adventist Church. The counselor that Lisa and I saw before our divorce told me she strongly suspected that Lisa's father had sexually molested her, but she has no memory of abuse."

"Both boys are exhibiting unusually strong fear and anger directed toward their mother," Lauren stated. "In addition, neither one has normal bonding with her. It is unusual for children to have so little bonding with their mother. Morgan, when you married Nathan, you took on two boys who had been severely emotionally and physically abused. But they have attached to you, and they have formed a strong emotional bond with you. You are the mother figure that will give them the foundation they need to build healthy relationships

another state. The boys see a different counselor on a part-time basis, but Lauren's insight continues to be the bedrock upon which their healing builds.

"Even though your mother hurt you unfairly," she used to tell Jon, "you must learn to forgive her so you will not be angry and bitter. Forgiveness, though, does not mean forgetting and acting as if nothing ever happened. Forgiveness means not forgetting, so you can protect yourself in the future. But forgiveness also means giving up your right to get even. Only God is big enough to handle that responsibility. You are a child, and he wants to take care of you by taking that big load of revenge off of your shoulders and putting it on his strong ones."

As I look at my sons today, I see proof that God can heal our wounds and turn them into strengths. I see two boys who are able to stay in the present instead of escaping into daydreams. I see two boys whose shame has transformed into conviction that they are treasures in God's eyes. They believe Jesus loves them, and they are not afraid of truth. I thank God for letting me be a second mother to them. I thank him for helping me love them for him. 

Coming in future issues of *Adventist Today*:

- Is the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination a Business?
- Mission or Money—What Drives the Church?
- Where Does Your Tithe Dollar Go?
- Sabbath-keeping: Perspectives by Desmond Ford, Dale Ratzlaff, and Jerry Gladson
- Adventists Try to Understand Homosexuality



Resurrection

From the Ashes of Spiritual Abuse

...spiritual abuse happens when people in spiritual authority—pastors, administrators, Bible study leaders, or others—use their positions and authority to manipulate the people they are supposed to be leading and nurturing.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” the psalmist cried (Psalm 22:1). Jesus echoed this cry at his crucifixion (Mark 15:34). Several years ago it was my cry, and it continued for over two years.

How could this happen to me? I had always enjoyed a close, personal relationship with God. Why did I suddenly feel like God had forsaken me and why did my prayers go not only unanswered, but also unheard? What had I done to make God hate me?

I gradually sank into a deep depression that only got worse. There seemed no way out and I was sure I would never be happy again. I felt completely abandoned, and my certainty that I couldn't turn to God for help only intensified my agony. Scripture that had always brought me hope and delight no longer seemed true. Sacred music became a bitter reminder of lost love. I wanted desperately to believe that God loved me, but somehow I just couldn't. I knew that I must be despicable or I wouldn't be feeling lost and hopeless.

I continued to believe in God. I just didn't believe that I liked him very much. I eventually came to the conclusion that God was nothing more

by Edie H. Westphal



Edie Westphal holds an undergraduate degree in social work. She is a Master of Divinity student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

than a petty tyrant, and I wasn't interested in having a relationship with him. Who needed it? I was already in hell, so things couldn't get any worse. The thought of spending eternity with this Being that hated me was repugnant.

I had spent my whole life trying to do God's will, and now my whole life was a mess. I wanted to go to sleep and never wake up. Only then would the nightmare end.

After two years of this agony, I finally decided I had to do something. Obviously I wasn't going to just “fall asleep”. Unless I wanted to completely wreck my marriage as well as every other relationship I had, I was going to have to get some help. I still had enough of a grip on reality to realize that I was responsible for my life and the direction it would take.

On the recommendation of a dear and trusted friend, I started seeing Joan, a Christian therapist. It was the scariest thing I had ever done, but ultimately, the most worthwhile. The first few months of therapy were helpful but not terribly productive. We went through my family tree and tried to identify the reason for my depression. There seemed to be a number of factors that could have contributed, but nothing to account for its severity.

My husband finally suggested that I tell Joan about my experience while working at a nonprofit Christian ministry. I thought he was way off base. I had loved working for this ministry and although it had ended on a rather sour note, I had dealt with it and gone on. I was certain it had nothing to do with the depression I was experiencing, but guessed that it wouldn't hurt to talk about it.

On the day of my next counseling appointment, I decided to take with me a letter I had received from the president of the organization after I had stopped working there. (My position had ended when the ministry ran out of money.) I briefly described the situation to Joan and then handed her the letter to read.

I will never forget the look on her face as she read. This letter essentially blamed me for the ministry's problems. When Joan finished reading it, she looked at me and said, "This is where your depression is coming from." At that moment I started to learn about spiritual abuse.

Like many people, I had never heard of spiritual abuse. The more I learned, however, the more sense it made. I came to understand that spiritual abuse happens when people in spiritual authority—pastors, administrators, Bible study leaders, or others—use their positions and authority to manipulate the people they are supposed to be leading and nurturing. If you are in a situation in which your loyalty to an organization and/or its leader is equated (implicitly or explicitly) with your loyalty to God, you are being spiritually abused.

In their book *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*, Dave Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen describe spiritual abuse in these terms: "Spiritual abuse occurs when someone is treated in a way that damages them spiritually. As a deeper result, their relationship with God—or that part of them that is capable of having a relationship with God—becomes wounded or scarred."

Another theologian and pastor explains it as follows: "To be put on the losing side of an argument against God is to suffer spiritual abuse!" (Ray S. Anderson, *God So Loved*)

Looking back on it, I realize that these dynamics were present in that ministry. Questions I had asked regarding the use of ministry funds or implementation of new programs were equated with disloyalty or lack of faith. Intellectually I knew the accusations were not true, yet part of me accepted them.

I actually did come to believe that I was to blame for the ministry's failure and, as a result, that I was unworthy of God's love. I was a failure and all that I touched was doomed to fail. If I had more faith, everything would have been all right.

Although it is often unrecognized or ignored,

With all
the tragedy in
the world, do
we really
believe that it
is a five-year-
old's selfishness
that makes
Jesus cry?

spiritual abuse can be just as damaging as other forms of abuse. It "puts people at odds with their best Friend. It causes some people to question, doubt, and even run the other direction from their Source. They see their strongest Advocate as their biggest accuser, their Ally as their enemy." (Johnson and VanVonderen, *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*)

Spiritual abuse can also cause one to become cynical and to doubt all relationships. After all, if you can't trust God, whom can you trust? As with other types of abuse, spiritual abuse takes many forms. Sometimes it is obvious, as when a cult leader demands absolute submission by his or her followers. Usually it is more insidious. For example, it may be the Bible study leader who chastises a member of the group for seeking professional help for emotional problems rather than simply relying on prayer to bring healing. Parents sometimes unwittingly inflict spiritual abuse on their children with statements such as, "You make Jesus cry when you are selfish." With all the tragedy in the world, do we really believe that it is a five-year-old's selfishness that makes Jesus cry?

Whatever the method of infliction, spiritual abuse is devastating. In his book *Churches That Abuse* Ronald Enroth explains with the following:

Unlike physical abuse that often results in bruised bodies, spiritual and pastoral abuse leaves scars on the psyche and soul. It is inflicted by persons who are accorded respect and honor in our society by virtue of their role as religious leaders and models of spiritual authority. They base that authority on the Bible, the Word of God, and see themselves as shepherds with a sacred trust. But when they violate that trust, when they abuse their authority, and when they misuse ecclesiastical power to control and manipulate the flock, the results can be catastrophic.

I have often heard the systematic theology professor, Ray Anderson, state: "Every act of ministry says something about God—whether you like it or not." This is a sobering and humbling thought. I have also come to realize that what people believe to be true about God affects every aspect of their lives. Those who seek to enter into ministry in any capacity must be aware of the influence they will have on the lives of others, and of the pain they can cause if they misuse their position. It is a responsibility which must be taken seriously, and with an attitude of humility.

Not all powerful leaders are spiritually abusive, but since the Fall humans have sought to "be like God," and the temptation is strong to use power for one's own benefit. It is the misuse of power—not power itself—that is wrong. "Abuse occurs when the leader conceals his or her own humanity and becomes blind to the humanity of others."

(Anderson, *God So Loved*) Jesus taught that to be a leader, one must be willing to serve (Mark 10:43). If leaders understand their positions to be ones of service, it is unlikely that they will be abusive.

Because of its ambiguous nature, there is no simple checklist to which a person can refer to determine whether or not they are in a spiritually abusive situation. I have already mentioned a few indicators, but there are other signs as well. In his book *God So Loved*, Ray Anderson further states: "When leaders claim to know the will of God as a private revelation, they are close to misusing power and abusing the people."

In an article entitled "Are You Under Spiritual Control?" in the July 1992 edition of *Charisma*, Pastors David Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen identify the following seven dynamics found in spiritually abusive systems:

1. **Power-posturing:** This occurs when leaders spend time focusing on their own authority and reminding others of it as well.

2. **Performance preoccupation:** Abusive spiritual systems are preoccupied with the performance of their members. Obedience and submission are two important words often used.

3. **Unspoken rules:** In abusive spiritual systems, people's lives are controlled from "the outside in" by rules, spoken and unspoken. Because they are not explicitly stated, people often do not learn of their existence until they break them. For example, no one is allowed to disagree with the pastor or openly question doctrine.

4. **Lack of balance:** One kind of imbalance is extreme objectivism, in which authority is based solely on one's level of education and intellectual capacity. The opposite imbalance is extreme subjectivism, in which truth is evaluated on the basis of feelings and experiences, giving more weight to those than to what Scripture declares.

5. **Paranoia:** In the spiritually abusive church or family, there is a notion that "outsiders" will misunderstand what the group is all about and respond negatively unless they become one of the group themselves. "Insiders" share an assumption that what they say, know or do is a result of being more enlightened than "outsiders."

6. **Misplaced loyalty:** Spiritually abusive systems foster and even demand a misplaced sense of loyalty. This is not loyalty to Christ, but rather loyalty to an organization, church or leader. This loyalty is assured by teaching that, "we alone are right," and by using scare tactics such as, "you will be lost if you leave."

7. **Secretiveness:** When you see people in a religious system being secretive, watch out.

The good news is that God does love you, there is hope, and your healing is not dependent on your faith or performance.

People don't hide what is appropriate. They hide what is inappropriate.

If any of these sound familiar, you are probably in a spiritually abusive situation. If you believe that God is displeased with you and that no matter how hard you try, you can never be good enough, then you have suffered spiritual abuse. If you have come to the point in your life where you no longer believe God loves you and that you are hopeless, you have been spiritually abused.

The good news is that God does love you, there is hope, and your healing is not dependent on your faith or performance. It is okay to be angry, and you can be assured that God does hear your prayers, even those filled with doubt and cursing.

You must, however, get help. Whether you decide to leave the situation or to stay and try to change it, you will need support. Find a Christian counselor experienced in dealing with spiritual abuse who will help you regain your grasp on reality. The wounds inflicted by spiritual abusers go deeply into the soul and no ordinary therapy can heal them.

The spiritually abused need someone with whom they can be honest and who will share their grief; someone who will not judge them for their "lack of faith." If you know someone suffering from spiritual abuse, please be that person's friend. Let him know that you are not frightened by his doubts. Let her know that her anger doesn't upset you.

The only way we can stop the cycle of spiritual abuse is to recognize and teach the following truth:

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38, 39, NRSV)

FOR FURTHER READING ON SPIRITUAL ABUSE

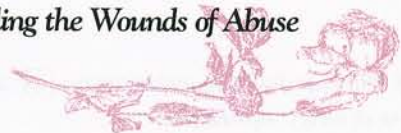
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THROUGH THE LENS OF

ABUSE

by Mitchell Henson

I was seven years old, and I tasted fear in my mouth on that hot afternoon in 1950 as my girl cousin shoved me into an old sharecropper's cabin in the deep South where I grew up. Twenty minutes later my entire life had changed.

How could those moments so long ago still impact my life some 45 years later? If I had been shot or if I had lost my eyesight in a horrible accident, no one would question the effects of my childhood trauma. But the wounds I received that day were internal and emotional. They were invisible, but they were not benign.

One of my earliest memories is of my family's taunting line. "Blame Mitch," they would say when something went wrong, "he looks guilty anyway." But the scarce family photographs of me show no guilty look.

I was raised in a strict Seventh-day Adventist home. My dad was a colporteur, my mother a commercial seamstress. The average annual income for our family of six was \$5,000. We grew most of our own food and never bought a new car. We had no television, and our social life comprised only church-related activities. We celebrated no birthdays nor holidays. Our life revolved around Friday night Missionary Volunteer meetings, Wednesday night prayer meetings, Sabbath School, church and Adventist education. My folks were determined that one of us would be a doctor, one a nurse, one a preacher and one a singing evangelist. Only I pursued one of their chosen professions. I have been a pastor for over 30 years.

Often, I looked back over the years and wondered. Why was I always afraid? Why did people think I looked guilty? Why did I feel afraid at week of prayer altar calls—too fearful to go forward when the speaker made the call, yet equally afraid not to go?

I reached the age of 12 (that mythical age of accountability) absolutely convinced that I had committed the unpardonable sin. I was certain I had no hope of salvation. By the time I was in academy and college, the conviction of my own damnation made Friday night altar calls times of helpless fear and despair.

In later years, I reminisced about those times with old friends. When I talked about the fear I felt, they looked at me and said, "Why were you so afraid? I just thought those altar calls were silly," or "Yes, I went forward because I knew Jesus loved me and I knew I would be saved even if Jesus came that night."

Why, I wondered, had I perceived those meetings so differently from my friends? Why was I certain I was lost? How could they feel so confident they were saved?

It was years later, after many painful sexual experiences (which seemed exciting at the time) and after extensive therapy and personal study, that I came to understand the horrible, lasting effects of being molested at the age of seven and again at the age of nine.

I do not subscribe to the “recovered memory” theory. I clearly remembered the two events, although together they would not have lasted an hour. I was not aware, however, that they were molestations nor that they had such a powerful impact on my young life.

In the 1950’s, sex was something no one talked about openly. Certainly a good Adventist never would. Masturbation was a heinous practice often called “self-abuse” and was sure to prevent salvation. These attitudes set the stage to make those two brief events in my childhood grow in power and impact as I reached puberty and young adulthood. The long-term effects of the molestations, coupled with a religious environment which was antisexual and which taught fear of one’s carnal body, created an atmosphere of great secrecy.

If you can imagine the difference between the sound of a finger snapping and the sound of a bomb exploding, you can begin to understand how differently those of us who had been sexually and physically abused heard the “straight testimony” during weeks of prayer. Our classmates took the whole thing in stride. They heard the call to repentance as something to which they could respond. They believed God really loved them, so they cried, confessed and burned their wicked books and record albums on the Friday night bonfire. Three or four weeks later, they bought new records and books and went on with life, still sure that God had not condemned them.

They had a healthy core of self-esteem which allowed them to hear the call as a finger snap while to me, the same sound seemed to be the thundering bomb of God in judgment saying, “Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. This night thy soul is required of thee.”

Today, as a husband and father of two beautiful daughters, I do not see myself as a victim. I have worked through the pain, the helplessness and the hopelessness. It did hurt though, when I attempted, at the age of 44, to tell my aging parents what my 18-year-old cousin had done those many years before. I saw the code of silence in operation when my father walked over to the TV and said, “Do you want to watch something else?” and changed the channel. I have never mentioned the abuse to them again.

I have since come to realize how pervasive physical, emotional and sexual abuse is. A recent study in Adventism revealed that 43 percent of those answering the survey would classify themselves as “abused” or as living in a home where physical, emotional or sexual abuse has occurred. That staggering statistic leads me to believe that the code of silence still exists and that our homes, boarding academies and colleges may be in dire need of emerging from denial. I wish to make the following recommendations:

1. Every boarding school, academy or college should have on staff a full-time, licensed counselor, psychologist or social worker. Boarding schools are filled with kids from broken homes. These students need the help of someone who will listen and guide them to awareness and resolution of issues arising from within their families of origin.

**We are as sick
as the secrets
we keep, and I
for one will
not be silent
about this
issue as long
as God gives
me a voice.**

2. No evangelist, no pastor, no teacher should be allowed to put emotional pressure on a group of students to make a decision to be baptized, repent or confess their sins. No one knows how deeply a listener could feel the pressure. Over the years, I have met hundreds of ex-Adventists who have been angered and deeply hurt by this mass pressure. I believe many of them were sitting on some painful childhood events which affected how they listened and what they heard.

3. If we gave our kids the positive message of God’s unconditional love and acceptance, we would establish a rapport that would lower the number of discipline problems.

4. Regardless of one’s attitude about homosexuality, much damage follows from presenting it as an unpardonable sin, an abomination or the sin God hates. I have taught and pastored on academy campuses for six years and I know that some young people gave up hope of ever being “normal” because of the ungodly mishandling of this issue. Whether you believe homosexuals are born or made, you will never talk anyone out of being one. Homosexuals cannot grow into an understanding of their situation without support,

love and acceptance. And, loving a person does not mean that you automatically approve of their life style.

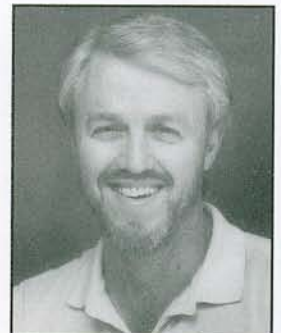
5. Finally, the child who is being yelled at, judged, kicked out, or excommunicated is each of us. Unless we can identify with our own weaknesses and helplessness, we will not be able to accept that God’s love and forgiveness can heal the scars in our memories. Unless we embrace our own truth, we cannot help someone else come through denial to awareness. We are as sick as the secrets we keep, and I for one will not be silent about this issue as long as God gives me a voice.

I know from personal experience that healing is a process. It is not a single event. I know now that the childhood I missed, the innocence and the wonder and the discoveries I never made because of guilt, fear, and repression of pain, can still become mine.

As God heals those hidden hurts, the joy and spontaneity and laughter of childhood become ours. They no longer hide under the weight of our secrets.

It is possible to recover from abuse, and it’s never too late to have a happy childhood!

Mitchell Henson, MDiv, PhD, MFCC, is the senior pastor at the Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Glendale, California. He also has a pastoral counseling practice. Mitch is currently writing his autobiography using a recovery model. He is entitling his book, *It’s Never Too Late To Have a Happy Childhood*. He and his wife Sue have two daughters.



MAX GORDON PHILLIPS

Dear Dr. Walt,

I hope you will indulge the familiarity. Although we've never met, I feel as though I've known you all my life.

I read your letter of resignation from the church as well as your "Reflections Ten Years Later" (AT, March-April, 1995), and I admire your courage, intellectual honesty and candor, as well as your desire "to be fair to my brethren."

You are right to leave, if such is your conviction. I note with pride that you chose option four—go purposefully out the front door—listed in Richard Winn's ground-breaking article, "When the Pew Gets Uncomfortable," (AT, September-October, 1995). Winn characterizes options four through six as spiritual positions, choices not taken by victims, but by those who are self-defined and self-accountable.

I chose option six—become an *a la carte* member. This option allows me to decide what my church can and cannot contribute toward my spiritual growth—and, I would add, ministry. "Keep the good," writes Winn, "discard the damaging. And shop elsewhere to meet unfulfilled needs."

You told me why you chose option four, and now I want to tell you why I chose option six. I will do this by answering the questions that I perceive you raised.

IS THERE ENOUGH ROOM?

You wrote, "The institutional Seventh-day Adventist Church does not have room for a dubious believer such as myself."

Interesting word choice, "institutional." I agree with you. But wouldn't you agree with me that there is more to the church than its institutional superstructure and that people are infinitely more true and fundamental to the New Testament concept "ecclesia" (those summoned by God to assemble) than any institutional concept? While people can establish institutions, only God can establish "ecclesia."

I have found that I can make my own room in that part of the Adventist Church constructed of sweet heartwood, in precisely that part that is not coldly institutional but warmly "ecclesian."

BY WHOSE AUTHORITY?

You quoted former *Review* editor Kenneth Wood, "Anyone who professes to be a Seventh-day Adventist should be able to affirm, without mental reservation or qualifications, I believe these doctrines."

But when confronted with this assertion I immediately ask, Who confers divine authority upon Kenneth Wood? Does the God who has so graciously made you and me priests?

Furthermore, who recognizes such self-conferred authority? Do I? Can I afford to give any mortal human being—or body of mortal human beings—such power over me and over my soul?

With all due respect to both him and the *Review*, Wood's statement—despite its Adventist face—is quintessential papalism. An upstart Adventist Martin Luther would have a field day with this one! "...should...be...able...to...affirm..." How these frightening, stifling words resound at 11:00 AM on Sabbath morning in a cathedral gone stone damp, stone cold, stone hard, stone empty and stone dead. T.S. Eliot instructs from his classic "The Hollow Men": "There, the eyes are / Sunlight on a broken column /

The C Leave It a Open Letter to W

By Ma

There, is a tree swinging / And voices are
fading star."

No, God is not mocked. Neither does
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God remains not only alive, but free an
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The Church: Leave It and Love It?

Open Letter to Walter Fahlsing, M.D.

By Max Gordon Phillips

There, is a tree swinging / And voices are / In the wind's singing / More distant and more solemn / Than a fading star."

No, God is not mocked. Neither does God become enmeshed nor entangled nor entrapped nor immured nor entombed in any points of fundamental belief, whether 27 or any other number.

God remains not only alive, but free and active as well, retaining consummate authority—but with a twinkling eye—in your spiritual odyssey and in mine.

WHAT ABOUT THE SANCTUARY?

You wrote that the sanctuary doctrine is "seriously flawed." What an understatement! Fashioned not to save souls, but to save our collective, wounded ego in the wake of a "great disappointment" (as though God could be guilty of "standing us up"!), it is actually destructive to the individual soul. Regarding it I again hear Winn: "Discard the damaging. And shop elsewhere to meet unfulfilled needs." In this respect I have already begun my personal inquiry into what mainstream Jewish scholarship has to say about Old Testament apocalypticism in general and Daniel 8:14 in particular. As far as a new Adventist sanctuary doctrine is concerned, I am excited to see how it may develop, since of all doctrines it may well be the most mysterious, mystical, spiritual, intimate and soul-healing.

WHAT ABOUT ELLEN WHITE?

In your words, she was "a pious fraud," "a liar" and "a false prophetess." But your words make you sound more like a jilted lover than an avenging archangel. "I realize that these words will sound harsh," you said, "but in order to get believers' attention and awaken them from the sedation of 'we have the Truth,' I will risk being misunderstood."

Why do you want "to get believers' attention and awaken them" if you have already said your fond good-byes and have disappeared into the greener grass beyond the well-trampled fence?

Of course she was a prophet. No shred of biblical evidence suggests she could be the last or in any way alone. The great Adventist anchor text (Joel 2:28) says, "Your sons [plural] and your daughters [plural] shall prophesy."

Yes, she copied without permission or attribution (as did Bible writers), and misquoted and misinterpreted scripture (also as did Bible writers).

She made other mistakes, such as espousing the shut-door theology, asserting and later retracting the proposition that the General Conference is the highest voice of God on earth, accepting the pseudo-science of phrenology, making racist statements that certain peoples (such as the Hottentots) result from amalgamation between humans and apes (a genetic impossibility), to list a bare minimum.

Beyond her visions I have no reason to believe she was more of a prophet than Martin Luther or Mother Theresa. But I do have reason to believe she was a prophet nonetheless. And a mighty one at that. What is more, in a cultural way that these other prophets (nothing against them) can never be, she is my prophet.

She was connected to God. Why do I believe she was a prophet? For one thing, she was a mystic, and I think people who enjoy a direct, unmediated connection to God are prophets *prima facie*.

How miraculous (in the best sense of that word) that she had visions and dreams! References to them as resulting from "temporal epilepsy and complex partial seizures"—even if confirmed by laboratory research—could not be more irrelevant. Medical science has yet to discover how God works.

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God bless you, Dr. Walt


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She arose from virtually nothing to apply these visions and dreams to one of the most marvelous spiritual events of the 19th and 20th centuries—the Advent movement, something I happily choose to believe to be nothing less than a spiritual Second Coming!

Without her where would we be? Most importantly, she had vision (as opposed to visions). Her contributions to spiritual living, healthful living, missionary activity, education, medicine, frugality, the work ethic, the abolition of slavery, women's rights within the church, etc., rise beyond measure. Why are Seventh-day Adventists in North America more upwardly mobile than people of any other religious denomination? Without this prophet among us, where would Adventists be today? Where would you be? Where would I? Don't we owe her something beyond epithets?

A sinner? Flawed? Of course she was. Abraham Lincoln wanted to send the emancipated slaves back to Africa. King David committed adultery and then murder to cover it up. In the same year Babe Ruth set his home run record he also set a strikeout record. Albert Einstein flunked math.

Historical accusations against George Washington's character stand, and yet the judgement of history also stands, "If there are spots on him, there are spots on the sun." Can the fact that misguided Adventists continue to hold Ellen G. White to an unrealistic standard be rightly blamed on this mortal human being? Are not all people—great and small—sinners? Are not all flawed?

"False"? Be your own judge. I judge "true."

I TOO WALKED OUT THE DOOR

When I walked out I too wrote a letter to the church. I requested a *transfer* of membership in the spirit of Christ from the Mountain View, California, Adventist church to the Sunnyside, California, Presbyterian church—much as one would transfer from Mountain View Adventist to, say, Loma Linda University Adventist Church. To my knowledge my request was never acted upon. Therefore I can only assume my name remains on the books. If it doesn't, then it was expunged without my request, knowledge or consent, and against my will. But that's not my problem. I've done nothing wrong. It's a moral-ethical-spiritual dilemma I cheerfully leave to the collective conscience of the brethren and sisters involved.

For 10 years I attended the Presbyterian church on Sunday and—after a year or so—the Adventist Church on Sabbath as well. The earliest Christians, you will recall, followed this practice.

Now I attend the Adventist Church only, Sabbath School at one location where I exercise my mind, 11:00 o'clock worship at another where I imbibe wonderfully spiritual sermons. I endure a measure of "good old Adventist shunning," but I realize that it is only the spiritually ill who shun, and the church has a duty to function as a hospital for them.

I marvel at the ground swelling ecclesian spirit within certain local churches of the denomination—to ordain women, for example—and wonder if an ecclesian movement will grow into historical proportions. Content, even serene, I regret nothing.

God bless you, Dr. Walt,

Max

Max

Max Gordon Phillips is a writer and editor of health publications in the Northwest, where he takes responsibility for developing his own kind of Adventism and obtaining his spiritual nourishment a la carte, from many different sources.



How I Learned to Study the Bible:

One Layman's *Odyssey*

“Over the past 45 years, my faith journey has taken many twists and turns.”

by Bob Davidson



Bob Davidson recently retired from the job of Chief Chemist for the State of Pennsylvania. He has for many years served as an elder in his church and regularly preaches in his own and other congregations.

I joined the Adventist church when I was a sophomore at a liberal arts college in my home town. My first mentor in the church was my local elder. He guided my early steps toward understanding what the Bible said. His biblical insights and his non-threatening approach to the Scripture and Ellen White left a lasting impression.

As time passed, I began to study the Bible and other books on my own. My reading brought me to the point where I began to question some of my mentor's theological and doctrinal positions. New ideas took root. I found that even among Adventists there was room for disagreement. I learned that not everyone believed the same.

As I read the various theories relating to the Bible, its interpretation and application, I began to wonder where I stood on the issue of proof-text methodology versus the historical/critical approach. I struggled over the scriptural literalism I had known in my early Adventist years. The idea of progressive revelation fascinated me. Some of my early beliefs were challenged. I had heard it said, for example, that while we base our beliefs on the Bible alone, we must not neglect what Mrs. White said. I had the distinct impression that Mrs. White was the infallible Scripture interpreter. I began to question this conclusion.

Over the past 45 years, my faith journey has taken many twists and turns. In my roles as church elder, preacher, Sabbath School discussion leader and spiritual guide, I have been the one that others have looked to. I also acknowledge the questions that come to mind: What should I tell people when they ask me what the Bible and the Adventist church teach? Where should I direct them to find their own answers? What should I say when I preach?

After this 45-year journey, I now use the following guidelines when I come to the study of Scripture:

1. There are two primary purposes to the Bible: to make us aware of God's plan to save us and to

give us an understandable picture of the unconditional love of God through the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The Bible is all that I need, with the influence of the Holy Spirit, to direct me to the will of God.

3. I look for the picture of God's character in every book.

4. Some of what appears to be the picture of God, especially in the Old Testament, may, for the present, be set aside.

5. Apparent contradictions in the Bible are attributed to the human writer, but will not obscure the pathway to salvation.

6. The Bible writers were influenced by their surroundings.

7. Contemporary writers who are not Seventh-day Adventists can be read with the same confidence and caution as Seventh-day Adventist writers.

8. My definition of the church is the body of believers. The end time (remnant) church, visible and invisible, includes the Adventist Church.

9. I use different translations and paraphrases without letting any paranoia, expressed by scholars who review these translations, to get in my way.

10. I attempt to let the Scripture writers speak for themselves in their own words.

11. I attempt to read the Bible from an applications viewpoint. What is the text saying to me in 1996?

12. The Bible is not a book of formulas such as I may find in my chemistry books (I am a chemist) or in my math books. It is a love story and should be read that way.

13. Integrity to the text is my motto.

This is my prayer, as I seek to understand what the Bible says:

God, here I stand. I choose to be loyal to you. I choose to know your will. I choose to share your love with others through my words and actions. I choose to allow the Holy Spirit to direct my thinking as I read the Bible. Lead me and help me to lead others into a closer walk with you.

Union Constituents to Assume Debt and Raise Funds

Atlantic Union College Will Remain Open With Skeleton Staff

by James Walters

Atlantic Union College will cut an estimated 40 employees to stay afloat; the college president is resigning; and Andrews University has bowed out of merger talks. But the plan emerging from two key constituency meetings in March is that AUC should remain open indefinitely. The Atlantic Union Conference is assuming an indebtedness expected to total \$11 million by September, and an unprecedented drive for funds and students is planned. Some critics believe the vote puts the entire Atlantic Union at risk. The North American Division (NAD) leadership appears to question the wisdom of the move, but recognizes that the decision must be made by the Atlantic Union constituents themselves.

College Constituency - March 10

The AUC constituency, which met March 10, is composed of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and conference representatives. According to some accounts, their session was a free-for-all blend of both pessimistic and optimistic speeches. One faculty member described the 10 1/2 hour session as "very emotional and theatrical."

College administrators were very blunt. "We survived by borrowing money," said Mark Hyder, AUC's interim vice-president for finance, "but we're out of money now." The college auditor announced that "the college is bankrupt. You're out of students and out of money."

"Something drastic must happen," stated Alfred McClure, NAD president. "It must be tangible; it must be something whose success is demonstrated." Richard Osborn, NAD vice president for education, agreed, "We have to deal with realities here."

Niels-Erik Andreasen, Andrews president, reminded constituents that his institution was involved only because it had been invited to help, and that he was enthusiastic about the possibility of creating a new paradigm for

delivering higher education. Funds could be saved by transferring some support functions to Andrews.

The administrators of AUC, Andrews, and the NAD pushed hard for a merger of AUC with Andrews University, but many students, several alumni, and other church members valiantly fought to keep the college a local institution. They presented an anti-merger statement signed by 180 students and called for greater faith and a mammoth fund raising campaign.

Will Kitching, '70, a CPA and chair of an ad hoc committee of alumni, students and faculty, presented alternative ideas for financing the debt, fund raising, downsizing, recruiting and marketing, stating that up to 50 percent of the college budget should go into marketing. Many administrators saw Kitching's proposal as inappropriately critical of previous efforts and naive.

By a 2-1 margin the college constituents voted to study both the Andrews merger and the "alternative proposal" presented by Kitching. The two-track vote was a disappointment to most faculty, the AUC president, and the Andrews president, and apparently to NAD officers as well. The vote sent a mixed signal to Andrews.

Early the next week, Andrews notified AUC that the university was withdrawing from merger talks until the college established a clear direction. Two weeks later, AUC president James Londis submitted his resignation, effective at the end of this academic year.

Meanwhile a faculty task force, following up on the March 10 constituency vote, recommended a flexible budget and drastic surgery:

- Reduce staff by about 40 and also eliminate about 12 faculty, 10 through "normal attrition";
- Use depreciation funds for operating (leaving practically nothing for maintenance or repair);
- Cut back scholarship funds by about \$285,000;

- Trigger a faculty pay cut of up to 17 percent if enrollment dips below 400 students; and

- Reinstate full salaries retroactively if enrollment rises above 400.

No academic programs in which students are taking majors would be cut, and the student:faculty ratio would merely rise from 8:1 to 11:1; because this is a survival budget, the severe measures must last only one year. The recommended budget would balance, saving \$4.5 million or some 40 percent of this year's \$11.7 million budget.

Atlantic Union Conference Constituency

The full Atlantic Union constituency met on March 31. This body is composed of union officers, eight college representatives, and elected representatives of the local conferences. In contrast to the March 10 meeting of college constituents, the union constituents, discussing most of the same issues, were essentially upbeat, and it was evident that some church leaders, and particularly members of the Northeastern Conference, had concluded that AUC was to remain open. Indeed, the college board, in its meeting the previous week, had voted to recommend full union support.

The opposition that surfaced was criticized for lack of faith and was roundly defeated in signal votes. The idea of keeping AUC open indefinitely had been made possible by a key union conference decision days earlier to lend \$3 million to the college for immediate use, and to assume the existing \$8 million debt.

The union constituents accepted the '96-'97 budget, proposed earlier, as a given. However, the delegates engaged in spirited debate over how much lower enrollment could go or how much higher the borrowing might climb before defeat would be acknowledged.

A delegate from New York moved that the college close if, after next school year, borrowing becomes necessary or enrollment dips below 400 or payroll cannot be met. This

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Jerry Gladson at Southern College

I was especially impressed with Dr. Gladson's comment (vol. 3, No. 6) "Adventism must move beyond its preoccupation with itself."

**Francis Hecker
Lovell, Wyoming**

We chose not to continue our subscription for the following reasons—

First, it seems that every issue tells of a very bright minister who finally gave up and now is happy in another denomination. This time it is Jerry Gladson. He is so happy now...I am not mad at him—I feel sorry for him.

Second, such statements as one minister says: "Ellen White is a pious fraud and a liar." I still feel she was a good Christian and a human being who made mistakes. I wish you would not wash our dirty linen in public...I know you won't print this.

**A. H. Reiswig, MD
Fullerton, California**

We felt very saddened by the Jerry Gladson story. We met them... Both Jerry and his wife were very special people. They were young, handsome, vibrant, exceptionally intelligent, warm, friendly, cream-of-the-Adventist-crop type. May God watch over them both, guide and protect them...I can identify with both of them, and the decisions they had to make.

**Dowell & Mabel Martz
Drain, Oregon**

It was so good to hear from Jerry Gladson in one of your recent articles. Although his circumstances reveal the heartbreaking crises he has experienced, I'm glad he has found work in a field that he enjoys. I have very fond memories of Jerry, as do many students he taught at Southern Missionary College during the early 1980s. Two principles I learned from him that have been a tremendous help to me through the years are to argue with the issue, not the person or personality, and to spread your education over

several years, with much experience between periods of instruction. There is so much wisdom in these principles that I've yet to live up to, but I try.

It's hard to see the effect your actions will have on a person when you are caught up in the hoopla of the moment. Although I was not articulate nor brave enough to actually throw the stones, I held the others' coats. In those days, orthodoxy was supreme. I was a six-month Adventist, brought into the church by very conservative medical missionaries and pastor.

The turmoil at SMC was indescribable. Close friendships with my family were dissolved overnight, my wife and I developed ulcers, and all teachers were analytically scrutinized daily. Meetings with "orthodox" instructors (now deceased) were held weekly to monitor classroom viewpoints discussed. Although Jerry was never the focal point of my attacks, a few of his fellow teachers, blatantly outspoken in their views, became prime targets. Large money and political clout developed a plan to "purge" SMC and the conference president, Gary Patterson, of any heretical influence, and prevent the faculty and Patterson from corrupting the minds of Adventist youth. This plan was ultimately successful.

Characters were destroyed, witch-hunts ensued, and the battle was fierce, but the conservatives won, removing a conference president and several staff at SMC. The only "crimes" committed by these men were having a difference of opinion from the majority and a compassionate heart. I look back with horror on those days of war.

It took me six years to finally realize my problem. I did not know God. I knew orthodox Adventism, but not God. As the years have passed, Paul's experience has become meaningful to me. He must have anguished at the pain he had caused others, in his ignorance and determination to do what was "right." How differently Paul acted after the Damascus Road experience. I despise the way I acted, so I try to reflect with understanding. Orthodox conservatism is a

sickness, blind to its ruthlessness and ignorant of God. Wonderful Christian people have frequently suffered by its actions. God have mercy on us who blindly follow "truth" with unscrupulous passion. Jerry and many very fine people suffered at the hands of the "righteous." Our only hope is in the hands of a merciful, compassionate, and understanding God, who is extremely patient with our weaknesses. I hope we can learn to reflect this goodness in our relationships.

**Alan Williams (former minister)
M.S.W. student
Alabama A & M University**

The three articles relating to Jerry Gladson and Southern College (AT, Nov/Dec, 1995) were of interest to me since I served as Academic Vice President at Southern College from 1984-1987. Hopefully the comments below will illuminate that turbulent era at Southern.

McArthur states that the "refusal to renew his (Gladson's) credentials brought an unhappy end to events beginning at Southern nearly a decade before." The historian is technically correct, but I doubt that psychologically it was the end for Gladson. Furthermore, it didn't bring an end for others or for the institution itself. As recently as the Southern centennial in 1992, those planning the celebration felt uncomfortable inviting former administrators back to the campus!

McArthur identifies the issues that erupted at Southern in the 80s; however, I recall different issues involving Gladson in 1987. I also find a dissimilarity between the issues I encountered and those Patterson described three years later. For the first time since leaving Southern College I have read my diary for the dates between February and June, 1987. My notes recorded nothing about the ordination of women, Ellen White and her role in the church, nor the Investigative Judgement. I would not deny that these may have been the issues before or after the spring of 1987, but the criticisms of Gladson by his department chair that I recorded were as follows: preparing a book to be circulated as part

of "Harvest 90," support for the statement on the use of the historical-critical method of investigation as voted in the 1986 Annual Council, and authoring articles in the *Adventist Review*. The chair of Southern's religion department told me that the church had theological-ly drifted to the left and now a group was needed to the right of center to drag it back. It seemed to me that any speaking appointment, committee assignment, or contribution to the church that tended to validate Gladson upset the chair. In the spring of 1987 Gladson was in the mainstream of the church, and that was unacceptable at Southern.

Were theological issues the only problems? Of course not. The struggle at times became personal, and president Don Sahly and I both worked to bring rapprochement. Gladson can be second-guessed or criticized for some of the things he did or said, but so can the department chair.

By accepting a position at the Psychological Studies Institute and leaving denominational employment, Gladson let everyone off the hook. The campus did not have to take a stand; accreditation issues had been side-stepped; and a court battle was avoided.

I was interested to note that when Gladson departed, the religion chair, who had recently been called from active retirement to that post, also departed, resuming his retirement.

When will the problems that troubled Southern in the 80s end? I suggest we will know they have ended when faculty members can move without stigma into and out of the religion department at Southern. That day is beyond my range of vision.

William M. Allen

*Director of Lifelong Learning Program
La Sierra University*

Leaving, Staying, or Continuing With the Church

Christians have long sought, and many have found, warm friendship in the supportive fellowship of worshiping congregations. So the recurrence of this sen-

timent is expected and welcomed in your series about leaving, staying in, and returning to the denomination.

I may have misread, or have overlooked, the presence of two other themes. Did I miss, or should I even seek, any affirmation of a necessary and authoritative linkage between a Christian and Adventist cosmic view and life as lived here and now? And is there another truant theme: the absence of comment about the personal and congregational life suffused by the Holy Spirit?

I have thought these of the essence in personal and corporate narratives set in the idioms of leaving, staying, and returning.

Maurice Hodgen
Riverside, California

Christmas Special

Those who watched the Christmas Special program from Andrews University have enough sense to evaluate it on their own without any help from any of those who write for you. We have a world of people who can tell the church and others how to do things.

If Elder Folkenberg comes to my church and preaches and, if I disagree with what he says, I can take care of it with him. I do not have to send my criticism out for the whole world to read. We have a good number of magazines already which do things like that, and we are hoping that *Adventist Today* will not become just another one of them.

Jim Brown, Pastor
Sand Hill, Kentucky

I find nothing of the Spirit in [*Adventist Today*]. In its reporting it reflects the culture of our American scene. It follows the path of reporting that which is controversial, or presents the news in a manner that stimulates controversy.

I have not found the magazine even-handed in its presentations. An example of this was in the first issue I received. One of the items was titled,

"Folkenberg Criticizes..." It was a report of statements he made at a church in Washington...The article mentioned that he "hurt the feelings" of many of the members.

The same issue had an article by Virginia Rittenhouse in which she criticized the broadcast, "A New Noel." Her article was not titled, "Rittenhouse Criticizes"... It was titled, "A New Perspective." Neither did the article about her remarks suggest that her comments would "hurt" many of those who worked diligently to produce "A New Noel."

David Manzano
Rockwood, Tennessee

Women's Ordination

...I am stimulated particularly by the remarks of Anita Strawn de Ojeda (I Am Not the Parenthesis of My Husband)...If Ojeda and other SDA women, who comprise 65% or more of the membership, are not parenthetical, why in this world can they not get their act together and resolve the ordination of women in ministry issue (and the like) decisively, quickly and permanently? This is ultimately a voting issue and women certainly own the votes—at the grass roots... Maybe, after all, few SDA women agree with Ojeda. Maybe they concur that they are indeed parenthetical! If that be true why should this male get agitated about female ordination?

Frank Lemon
Beaumont, California

Editor's note:

The delegates to General Conference at Utrecht were almost all male church employees (88.8 percent). Local conference constituency meetings, the only meetings that might include many women, do not decide general church policies. The meetings that do vote general policies include very few women, although a 1989 survey of women church employees around the world showed only 27 percent thinking it is inappropriate for a woman to serve as senior pastor (Adventist Review, Sept. 28, 1989, p. 16).

Whatever happened to your original format of giving balanced coverage of issues by covering both sides of a discussion? Your coverage of women's ordination has been very one-sided. You have taken the position that ordaining women is the "moral high road," implying that there is no room for further discussion. It seems to me that your magazine has evolved into a forum for academic "intellectuals" who are increasingly bewildered and confused about the truth...*Adventist Today* is not addressing our hopes and dreams for the church.

Laura Holt Sutherland
Magalia, California

I find it very difficult to understand how and why some women today feel better qualified for ordination than Ellen White was. Since God spoke directly to her and in vision would He not have told her if that was His desire? She refused. Would you please ask some of the women to respond who have been ordained and after much study and prayer have been strongly impressed of God not to be elders again: Four among the few ordained women I know. . . have reached this decision because in their study they have not been able to find a Bible basis for ordaining women. How many more are out there? Are we just hearing a few very vocal ones?

Juanita Guthrie
Ukiah, California

Editorial Note: Only seven Seventh-day Adventist women so far have experienced the full ordination ceremony, and all of them are functioning, and enthusiastic, ministers in the church.

Congregationalism

I find your current issue to be excellent and thought provoking. I have a serious concern that our NAD is going to be confronted with the choices that some churches are making to go ahead with women's ordination. The issue is not so much about women's ordination as it is about freedom to function as a local

body. Congregationalism is the New Testament model for church organization, not denominationalism. As I look forward to the future, I wonder what changes are in store for this church, but I believe that there will be a separation from the "mother church" at the GC for many, no matter which side they are on.

Don Talkington
Redding, CA

Adventist Today Coverage

I am thankful for your paper and the San Diego Forum information.

After 63 years of Adventist heritage, education and family, I feel compelled to withdraw from the corporate church, to maintain my personal integrity. Particularly after many years thinking over the EGW problem—how we... add to the deception in all church papers and lesson study. The corporate church (SDA) does not seem to have the capacity (or integrity) to be honest with this issue.

It is not a pleasant path to decide, after a lifetime of "corporate church" support. I love the Lord, and I know he cares greatly for us all. Thanks for presenting the dialogue and open honest forum.

Joseph D. Riederer, MD
Juneau, Alaska

We do appreciate your up-to-date news items and information. It is like a ray of sunlight beamed into some of these sleepy little woodsy churches. We appreciate your tackling difficult issues from both sides. For the most part, you select excellent representatives for both viewpoints.

Topics like "Tithe Slump Endangers Retirement Fund" will force open discussion to find better planning for rescuing the future. Too many times our GC brethren wait too long, until we are in a bind, or are too fearful to change, and sometimes haven't a clue as to where to start. We are getting like the Federal Government. We have too many pro-

jects, probably all good worthy ones, but we are spread too thin, from so many of them. Someone needs to decide, and quickly, which projects belong on the wish list, and use the line item veto.

Dick Winn's article "When the Pew Gets Uncomfortable" was right on. The only problem is that I don't know whether I want to be a four or a six.

After a sad story like the Gladson account, isn't it about time for that merry little minx of a preacher, Maryan Stirling, to write one of her by-lines to put us all back in perspective? She has a real knack for cutting through the misery and bringing us cheer and sunshine even when the clouds are pretty low and heavy. My kind of preacher. Come on GC, let's get on with women's ordination!

Dowell & Mabel Martz
Drain, Oregon

When we subscribed to *Adventist Today* we understood that it was to represent a balanced presentation of the issues that face the church. And I believe that it began with this approach. However, it soon seemed to me that it became captive to the liberal viewpoint...

Do liberals have a place in the church? Of course! In fact, I suspect that a large number will be saved. What I would like to see is for liberals, conservatives, and all branches of the church to earnestly seek the Holy Spirit, engage in outreach, and seek to save souls while there is time. Let each one bring his unique contribution to this effort, and all work together. Let this be the focus of our discussions and our articles. Then we would have something worth saying and worth reading!

Hubert F. Sturges, M.D.
Delhi, CA

Letters to the Editor
Adventist Today, P.O. Box 1220
Loma Linda, CA 92354-1220
Email: AToday@aol.com

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Atlantic Union College Will Remain Open with Skeleton Staff

motion got support from delegates focusing on the numbers, but was criticized by delegates filled with hope. These optimistic delegates made statements such as the following: A positive vote on the motion (to contingently decide to close the school) would be a marketing disaster. Others suggested that delegates should stop looking at the difficulties because the battle is the Lord's; Caleb and Joshua would be proud of us. (The motion failed by a wide margin.)

According to several delegates at both sessions, the constituency could roughly be divided between those advocating a "theology of stewardship" ("accountability," "responsibility," and "care") and those espousing "faith accounting" ("repentance," "submission," "courage," "hope," and "trust").

Although the various motions and amendments were hard to follow at times, the official minutes show that three ideas were voted by 168 for and 40 against. (1) The Atlantic Union Conference constituency accepts full financial responsibility for the college. (2) The Union constituency will raise \$1 million per year for the next five years to aid AUC in turning itself around. (3) The college will continue to seek an affiliation with another Adventist college or university.

Considerable debate arose over just who is responsible for raising the \$1 million per year. Alfred McClure, president of the NAD and occasional chair of the day's deliberations, suggested that responsibility be divided among the union's conferences, according to their tithe incomes or membership. This was supported by most of the conference leaders, with the exception of the Northeastern Conference.

According to the NAD's *Monday FAX* of April 1, "The president of the Northeastern Conference, whose membership makes up 60 percent of the Atlantic Union, asked that the record reflect his conference's unanimous dissent" from the idea that responsibility for financial shortfalls be allocated according to conference membership size.

Indeed, the delegates discussed but did not resolve the question of whether a vote by the

Union constituents could commit local conferences to additional funds for the college.

The issue of ascending liability has been raised by Steve Timm, a delegate to both March constituency sessions, but AUC president James Londis, in a statement to *Adventist Today*, said that he does not agree. He said the union has been giving a \$2.2 million subsidy to the college each year already. Now \$1.3 million of that amount will be going to relieve the \$11 million indebtedness. And even if the college closes after borrowing additional monies, the debt can be repaid even more quickly if the usual, annual \$2.2 million is allocated for that purpose.

Londis Resigns

In early April, AUC president James Londis wrote to faculty and students notifying them of his decision to resign at the end of this academic year. Londis told *Adventist Today* that he has two reasons for resigning. First, since he came to AUC three years ago, the constituent conferences and union organizations have never given AUC the financial security it needed. Second, Londis' vision for AUC differed from the concept pursued by the chair of the board and a significant portion of the board.

According to Londis, there is in the Atlantic Union a growing rift between second-, third-, and fourth-generation Adventists

on the one hand and recently converted members on the other, particularly newly converted members who recently immigrated from The West Indies, Haiti, Central America, and South America. These immigrants make up a substantial percentage of the Adventist Church in the Northeast.

As Londis pointed out, many observers have noted before that recent converts to Adventism—first generation Adventists—often hold fundamentalist views, whereas many who have grown up Adventist—often around Adventist institutions—tend to have more moderate-to-liberal and progressive views.

Future Tasks for AUC and Atlantic Union

Politics in the Atlantic Union will be intense throughout the next two months, according to some sources at the college. A new college president and new vice presidents must be selected. (See *Adventist Today*, Nov/Dec, 1995, for news of three vice presidents resigning.)

Also, at the regularly scheduled union constituency meeting in June, Ted Jones, union president, will be up for reelection. The recent closure of merger discussions with Andrews and the new, heavy financial commitment of the union to the struggling college may upset some former supporters and make Jones' reelection less sure.

AUC Facts and Figures

As reported in the March 10 constituency meeting, AUC's yearly operating loss had gone from \$390,000 for the '90-'91 year to \$1.9 million for the '95-'96 year by March 10. Projected operating loss between the March 10 meeting and the beginning of the '96-'97 school year was projected to be \$3.2 million.

Enrollment had dropped, by 174 students, to the present 430. Faculty houses were being sold, the endowment had been spent, and the college had less than 10 days of working capital. Over \$1 million in federal and state student loan funds were in serious jeopardy. Several banks had refused loans for operations.

The Atlantic Union's revolving fund (mostly church members' funds loaned at low interest to the union for building

funds to local churches) has \$20 million in assets and was 75 percent loaned out before the recent AUC commitments.

The Atlantic Union, paradoxically, has the lowest per-capita income of any union in North America, while one of its six conferences, the Bermuda Conference, reports one of the largest per-capita giving histories in the world church.

Of Atlantic Union's college students who attend denominational schools, only 31 percent have historically chosen AUC; 28 percent go to Oakwood, 22 percent go to Andrews, 13 percent go to Southern, and 6 percent go to Columbia Union College.

AUC's troubles apparently are not unique; a consultant told AUC's president James Londis that forecasters estimate that 400-600 small colleges in the U.S. will close by the year 2000.

Adventist Academy Team Wins Basketball Championship

by Anita Cafferky, Portland, Oregon

The Pendleton, Oregon, Convention Center in eastern Oregon was packed to capacity on Saturday night, March 9, 1996, as the Portland Adventist Academy Cougars basketball team defeated the Roman Catholic Regis High School team and captured the state 2A OSAA championship. The Portland Adventist team had cruised through the season undefeated (27-0) on their first trip to the state finals.

An estimated 1,000 Adventists and other supporters, including Oregon Conference president Alf Birch, watched the game. Fans included Portland Adventist alumni, as well as pep band alumni, come to help "raise the roof," as one parent commented.

Coach Norm Ballou and his team thought long about the opportunity to join in the Oregon State Activities Association basketball program. The 2A designation meant Portland Adventist would be competing with other schools of at least 200 students in the top three grades. "Our community had to be ready to do this," Ballou said. "It was something we carefully thought through."

Norm Ballou was encouraged by other coaches in the league, who admired his team,

to petition the OSAA for scheduling that would allow them to avoid Friday night and Saturday games. This year, the Cougars would have been scheduled for a Saturday game had they not won all their semifinal games. Conversations with OSAA officials will likely occur before next year to see if all obstacles for Portland Adventist can be removed, according to Ballou.

When reporting the win, the *Oregonian* newspaper explained that "Adventists do not participate in recreational activities between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday, a fact that has kept Portland Adventist from several past state tournaments....Saturday night, the Cougars let their worthiness show through their play, leading most of the game and by as many as 26 points."

Portland Adventist principal Michael Conner expressed pride in his students and described the basketball victory as an outgrowth of the faculty's emphasis this year on community involvement. Conner described other community involvements, most notably the work of Portland Adventist student teams who helped clean up after severe flooding at Vernonia High School, west of Portland.

The flooding had destroyed the Vernonia gym, cutting short their team's basketball sea-

son. But several Vernonia basketball players traveled to Pendleton (across the state) to support the Portland Adventist Cougars in the championship game. Conner reports that one Vernonia fan told Portland Adventist personnel, "I want to congratulate you on your win. What we (at Vernonia) really appreciated most was the way that Portland Adventist prayed for us. You reached out and cared for us."

One community spectator remarked to Bob Bretsch, senior pastor at the Sunnyside, Oregon, church, "The Portland Adventist kids showed more class than anybody else on or off the court." Bretsch noted, "This was one of those events that gave the kids a chance to sort through their faith systems and decide their priorities. By staying faithful to their core values of belief in the Sabbath, they were a powerful witness in our community."

Coach Ballou recognizes that some traditional church members may have questions about competitive sports, but no organized opposition has arisen, and Ballou has not personally heard any criticism.

Portland Adventist has been involved since the mid 80s in various interscholastic programs of the Oregon State Activities Association. During the last eight years, the band has finished first place seven times and second once. In the last three years, the choir has won second place two times and third place once. The academy has also had respectable math showings.

Adventist Schools Take Up League Sports

by Al Dittes, Portland, Tennessee

Most Adventist colleges in North America now play competitive league sports, and a growing number of academies do also. Those now actively involved are Walla Walla College, Southwestern Adventist College, Union College, Atlantic Union College and Columbia Union College. CUC also offers athletic scholarships. Southern College has stayed out of varsity sports but remains under pressure to join. Andrews University and Oakwood College do not belong to any athletic league but play an annual game against each other, which they point

out is in line with published denominational policy.

In 1989, the North American Division voted 2-1 to allow friendship games between schools but prohibit varsity sports from Adventist campuses, according to George H. Akers, former director of the Education Department, General Conference of SDA.

Akers expresses disapproval of the failure to implement this ban. "The boards just wouldn't prohibit it," Akers said. "They have no will or stomach to deal with conflict. They have lots of sanction leverage. If leadership at the top accepts something, you see things line up quickly."

The denomination did approve gymnasiums in the 40s and 50s for on-campus sports only. Today, the issue is not about competition and innocent play, Akers wrote in the Spring,

1990, edition of *Adventists Affirm*. It is about going off-campus, in varsity athletics. It has to do with the best way to accomplish the educational objectives of a school's physical education program; it is about an Adventist school's spiritual mission in the society.

Akers concludes his article by saying that the 1989 Annual Council and North American Division Year-End Session delegates rightly comprehended that varsity sports just don't belong; they are not part of our mission in Christian education. In Akers' view, that was the macro-issue at stake in the Annual Council debate, and it was dealt with decisively.

When contacted by *Adventist Today*, Akers laughed at those statements. "Oh, how naive can one be?" he asked. "This has turned out to be the biggest hypocritical charade in the history of the modern Adventist church."

At Meeting in San Diego, Forums Envision 21st Century Church

by Maryan Stirling, Fallbrook, California

The Fifth National Conference of the Association of Adventist Forums came together March 14-17 in the Bahia Hotel, hosted by the San Diego, California, Forum chapter. In a conference room with a view of white sails on Mission Bay, 340 registrants from across America listened to presentations clustered around the theme "Adventism on the Eve of the 21st Century."

Analyses of the past story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the currents that challenge it in the present, and what can reasonably be hoped or dreaded in its future, filled every time slot.

Highlights included the keynote address by Fritz Guy, who stressed that "we should never underestimate the power of grace." Adventism will survive, but revising our role will require decision and action.

A sociological perspective came from Ron Lawson in the form of a report of his broad study of rapid growth in third world

Adventism, where many are baptized with varying degrees of commitment to the church.

The challenge of pluralism was addressed by Caleb Rosado, who affirms that it is here, won't go away and should be embraced. The response by David Larson featured a metaphor from his childhood home in Hawaii—the banyan tree. As it puts down new trunks and root systems in various soils, the whole tree draws nourishment from the diversity.

One panel of young Adventists was moderated by Roy Branson and another by Lawrence Geraty.

Herold Weiss presented a study of the sources of theology and declared that theology should not come from above by human authority, but rather from below, as a grass-roots product. Madelynn Haldeman, La Sierra University's recently ordained theologian, responded with a spirited give-and-take interview with Weiss.

Frank Knittel's presentation suggested an approach to the dilemma of Adventist

higher education. The near-demise of Atlantic Union College seems to suggest that the day of 11 senior colleges in North America may have come to an end. Fewer colleges, more specialization, less duplication, and longer travel distances may become true in the future.

The Sabbath morning sermon was described as "vivid poetry," when Smuts van Rooyen used a series of metaphors on coping with change: a goal-directed housefly, a hospital gown, Moses' rod that revealed its potential for evil by becoming a snake. When the snake changed back into a rod, Moses leaned on it again, "but he leaned on it in a different way." It was predicted by one hearer that Van Rooyen's prayer will be memorized and kept ready to be repeated "as needed."

Hailed as a happy portent for the future of the Adventist Forum was the prominent presence of young professionals, including the new vice-president, Attorney Brent Geraty. Plans for national conferences in 1998 and in 2000 are being developed with an emphasis on youth.

Professionally prepared audio tapes of the Forums presentations are available from Sigma Audio Video Assoc., P. O. Box 51, Loma Linda, CA 92354. Telephone 909/824-3232.

Black Professionals Organize

An organization of black professionals, Operation ReachBack, Inc., has been started to help harness the talent of the black community to benefit black people. "This group is in response to a perceived need to harness the experience of black Adventist professionals, much of which is not being utilized to do good things in Africa and the black communities," says Calvin D. Rock, vice president of the General Conference and chairman of the board. It is not an Adventist-Forums-type group for clarifying issues but an attempt to say to these people, the Lord has blessed you. You have been given the opportunity to get a good education and have position and responsibility. Now what are you doing with it?

Rock describes the meetings as think tanks. The next meeting will be in Dallas the first weekend in November. Previous meetings have been in Nashville, Tenn., and St. Louis. Members meet by disciplines and do what they can to encourage young people with scholarships and initiatives within the community such as black baby adoptions, black organ donations and drug-related issues. So the organization is more of a social-action, think-tank group than anything else, Rock says.

The group has three membership levels: \$1,000 entry fee plus \$500 a year for Level I, \$500 entry fee plus \$200 a year for Level II, and \$100 entry fee plus \$50 a year for students on Level III. In addition to Calvin Rock, other officers are Wilbur Daniels of the Federal Government Department of Transportation, treasurer; and Marjorie Felder Brewer, an administrative assistant in the General Conference Trust Department, executive secretary.

Adventist Today discussed Operation ReachBack with Anthony Paschal, vice president for black ministries in the Southeastern California Conference. He sees Operation ReachBack as an attempt of blacks to address issues with economic power.

"It originated with well-to-do blacks applying their time and economic backing to help make a change," he says. "I predict it will make a difference."

Paschal says Operation ReachBack is still in its embryonic stages and has been slow to catch on along the west coast. Future scheduled meetings in Denver and San Diego may raise its awareness level there.

"Like any other thing, it takes time for it to become fully grown," Paschal says. "It has not yet had a chance to become fully visible."

Interest queries should be sent to DuPont Park SDA Church, 3985 Massachusetts Ave SE, Washington, D.C. 20019.

PUC and LSU Feature Interdenominational Speakers

In an age of broadening appreciation for interdenominational perspectives, both Pacific Union College and La Sierra University gave prominent roles this year to speakers who are not Seventh-day Adventists. At PUC, Brennan Manning, a Roman Catholic, spoke for the entire week. Students and faculty told *Adventist Today* that Manning had touched their hearts.

At LSU, evangelical Protestant Tony Campolo led in three meetings with a message emphasizing the power of love and the importance of service. This theme supported Serve '95, a campus program dedicated to serving local and global communities in the name of Christ. "Students were more enthusiastic in their responses to this week than to any previ-

ous week of devotion we've had in my 16 years here," said Campus Chaplain Steve Daily.

Campolo's ministry at LSU was complemented by that of Jose Rojas, who shared speaking opportunities during the week. Daily said that "Rojas and Campolo proved to be an unbeatable combination as the Holy Spirit used them both with incredible power. These weeks at PUC and LSU again remind us that God's Spirit and revival work is certainly not limited to Adventists."

LLU Church Studies New Ministerial Policy

Loma Linda University Church committee is advancing a new ministerial education and ordination policy that, if adopted, would greatly alter the way ordinations are conducted in that large congregation as well as in a number of Adventist churches across North America. The new policy has three especially significant features: it is gender inclusive, it sets uniform standards and it is congregation-based. According to William Loveless, senior pastor and primary architect of the proposal, it is "Bible-based" and it promises to be "controversial."

The policy is scheduled for presentation to the church board on April 22. A

subsequent business meeting may be called. If adopted, the proposal will become policy for the congregation. Loveless believes that at least one of the church's women pastors could be ordained within a year, if she meets the standards set forth in the policy. Although the women's ordination issue provided the impetus for Loveless's proposal, the policy emerging from the committee is much more comprehensive.

The University Church, a congregation of over 6,000 members, has been criticized for moving too slowly on women's ordination in light of actions taken by other large institutional churches within the denomination. However, if the University

Church creates a thoughtful policy that will be useful for much of North America, it will in fact provide the leadership many expect of this "national" church.

Pastors of other Adventist churches have expressed interest in wide use of the new policy. One, the pastor of another sizable Adventist church and a member of his conference executive committee, believes that ordinations should proceed at the congregation level, not by conference mandate; some conference churches object. He welcomes the prospect of a policy his church board might adopt for future ordination of a woman pastor on his staff.

The University Church's ordination committee is headed by William Loveless and includes Patricia Foster, who teaches educational psychology at La Sierra University; Patricia Jones, nursing professor at LLU; and Bernard Taylor, associate pastor at the church.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Adventist Review

ship is not in harmony with the ethics code of the Associated Church Press which states:

Fundamental to any statement of journalistic principles is the concept of freedom of the press. Such freedom is not a privilege of journalists but a need of the community—a need of its leaders as well as of all its members. It is out of concern for this that all publications strive for autonomy.

It is inconsistent for the Adventist Church to embrace First Amendment freedoms for evangelistic ends while rejecting them for internal communication.

It would be tempting, however, for church leaders to dismiss a North American concern for freedom of the church press. When Ellen White wrote high praise for the US Constitution in *The Great Controversy*, the church was almost totally a North American operation, but today the fastest denominational growth is taking place in Africa. In some parts of Africa, objective journalism is

still considered a crime. New members there might neither understand nor sympathize with a North American fuss over freedom of the church press.

Francis David Nichol, revered *Review* editor from 1945 to 1966, took his editorial responsibility seriously. Raymond Cottrell, associate *Review* editor under Nichol, recalls his editor's frequent refrain: "No one—not even the GC president—can tell me what goes or doesn't go into the *Review*. But they can fire me if I use poor judgment."

The Door to

Healing

I hate pain. In fact, I have spent much of my life avoiding pain. I've begun to realize, though, that I'm not the only one who has run from hurting. Most of us have.

Physical pain compromises us. We limit our activities when we hurt, and we take pain pills. Emotional pain, however, can completely paralyze us. When we're hurt or angry or scared or lonely or anxious, we can't concentrate. Our productivity falls. We can't respond to the needs and feelings of our friends and families. We doubt ourselves, and we succumb to shame and chronic guilt.

Emotional pain is often the worst when it results from abuse or injustices committed against us. It's the damage from events we could not control that wounds our souls most deeply and makes us most doubt ourselves.

The solution seems simple. Ignore the pain and go on. Assume the ostrich position and get on with life. The problem with the ostrich position is that our heads are stuck. We don't realize that while we think we're protecting ourselves, we are still exposed and vulnerable. And because our heads are stuck, we are helpless to avoid danger and damage.

The reason that ignoring or numbing emotional pain doesn't work in the long run is that emotional pain is the symptom of a deep wound, a wound in our soul. Soul wounds don't heal with a little anesthetic ointment and a band-aid as do skin wounds. Soul wounds only heal when we face the source of the wound.

Often we cry to God for relief merely to feel disillusioned when he doesn't remove our depression or anxiety or shame. God is not a divine Band-aid. He respects and loves us too much to treat us casually or superficially. When God offers us his healing, he calls us to an exacting and permanent cure. He calls us to embrace truth.

by Rosalie Anderson Lynn

God is not a divine Band-aid. He respects and loves us too much...



Rosalie Lynn teaches college writing and also counsels youth and recovering addicts who need help with problems of drug abuse. She teaches a Sabbath School class at her local Adventist church.

To know and to admit the truth of our wounding is, at first, far more painful than the familiar chronic discomfort which had been shading our lives. To know and admit the truth is to feel not only unspecified fear and shame and anxiety but also to know and admit that people we love have betrayed, neglected, or hurt us. Truth is being honest about the wound in our soul.

To admit the truth is to embrace the reality that we have hurt others as a result of our soul wound.

Identifying the source of our wound is like correctly diagnosing a disease. We can administer the proper cure instead of palliating our pain with compulsions, addictions, perfectionism, or religion. The cure is

accepting Jesus's forgiveness for ourselves. We cannot accept this cure, however, if we refuse to feel our pain. We become vulnerable to Jesus's healing touch only when we become vulnerable to the pain of knowing the truth. When we let ourselves feel the pain of being rejected or misused or hurt, only then can God touch us and relieve our soul agony. God cannot heal hurts we don't admit we have because we keep them locked away where neither we nor he has access to them.

The miracle is that the searing pain we experience when we're finally willing to know and admit the truth is the pain of a deep but purifying flame. When we're finally honest with ourselves, we can be honest with God. When we experience the impact of the sadness and fear we have kept hidden away, God can then touch the wound in our soul and heal it.

God's healing touch assures us of forgiveness. It tells us that we are loved, that his strength is ours, that our lives will be different. His touch reminds us that we never have to deal with our pain by ourselves again. He will carry it now. He will take care of the anger and revenge we might feel.

I hate pain. But I'm learning not to run from it. Pain is the door to healing.

Adventist Review Now Clearly a General Conference Organ

by James Walters

A final step has now been taken to clarify and ensure the role of the *Adventist Review* as a formal organ of the General Conference leadership, reports *Review* editor William Johnson in his January, 1996, monthly issue. The benefit of the new arrangement is that the *Review* can be used to more effectively promote GC plans, policies and views.

The Adventist denomination has struggled with issues of centralized authority for most of its history. In 1901 Ellen White led the denomination in decentralizing authority; a small group of three men at headquarters had been making virtually all key decisions. Ellen White also contended for a diversity of denomination publishing houses in the US in an effort to encourage multiple voices.

NEWS ANALYSIS

For the next 82 years, until 1983, the *Review* was owned and operated by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, which was one of three denominational publishers. In 1983, however, church leaders voted at their Spring Meeting that the editorial offices of the *Review* would be at or near the GC building in Takoma Park, and that the Review and Herald Publishing Association, which was moving to Hagerstown, would continue as publisher. The GC would now pay the expense of the editorial offices and set up its own *Review* editorial board chaired by the GC president, functions formerly done by the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Some officers had reservations about this arrangement. According to meeting minutes, they wondered whether the *Review*

should "be considered an 'arm' of the GC," whether this would "be good for the image of the *Adventist Review*," and "Shouldn't the *Adventist Review* be seen to be free and separate from General Conference domination?"

"The *Review* has had two heads," states Johnson in explaining the latest change: the GC has been owner, "giving oversight to the editors" and the Review and Herald Publishing Association has been responsible for "printing, marketing, advertising, design and subscription fulfillment." Now the GC is the official publisher and will contract with the Review and Herald Publishing Association for services such as printing.

This move, to make the *Review* more of a promotional magazine, is questioned by some members. The denomination now has a larger percentage of educated members than ever before. A problem may be diminished credibility for the *Adventist Review*, given the role that journalism plays in free societies, including established church denominations, in North America. Direct control of the church paper by the leader-

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Southeastern Returns Some Tithe to Local Churches

Southeastern California Conference officers announced an experimental plan to return to each local church 10 percent of this year's tithe increase compared with the previous year. For example, if the 1995 tithe totaled \$100,000 and the tithe for 1996 totals \$120,000, the church will receive a \$2,000 tithe-sharing rebate check representing 10 percent of the tithe increase. The purpose of this tithe rebate, according to a March publication sent to all the conference's churches, is to "provide your church with additional monies for local ministry" or to "buffer your church in the coming year from the

increased school subsidy contribution that you would incur from the prior year's tithe increase."

Thomas Staples, conference treasurer, announced the new plan to the pastors at the March 12, 1996, Conference ministers' meeting. He stressed that the money rebated to the local church is tithe money and that there are no restrictions as to its use.

Folkenberg Calls Ordinations Rebellious, Not Valid

Robert Folkenberg, president of world Adventism, says that the recent ordinations of women in Adventist churches

are not ordinations to the gospel ministry as defined by the SDA church. He further declared that these events were intended to be "rebellious" and that each ordination event resulted from a "rebellious leader" (not always the church pastor) who felt 'morally justified' in attempting to impose their view on the world church (just like Korah, Dathan and Abiram)."

In these comments posted on the Internet December 16, 1995, Folkenberg held that elected church leaders do not have the power to impose unilateral authority: "We [the leaders] have no option but to pray that the membership (most of which were 'uninformed or uninvolved') ...wake up and decide if their congregation is going to be a Seventh-day Adventist congregation, which in part means they will respect the authority of the ever-broadening constituencies."