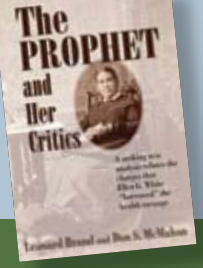
Will It Be Ted in '10?

Your Dream Church



Acquired, Inspired, or Both?

Adventist Today

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WHAT WE MAKE

While the Adventist Church struggles to preserve a uniform pay scale, health care salaries are market driven.

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JOHN DICKERSON, $53,454
Principal, Livingstone Adventist Academy, Salem, Ore.

GABRIEL HENTON, $21,408
IT Director and English Teacher, Laurelwood Academy (self supporting), Jasper, Ore.

BILL TUCKER, $68,976
President/Speaker, The Quiet Hour (supporting ministry), Redlands, Calif.

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by Karah Thompson

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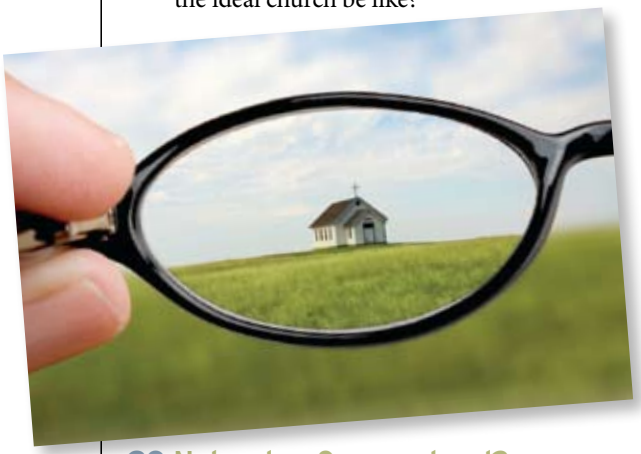

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Adventist Today brings contemporary issues of importance to Adventist Church members. Following basic principles of ethics and canons of journalism, this publication strives for fairness, candor, and good taste. Unsolicited submissions are encouraged. Payment is competitive. Send an email to atoday@atoday.com. Annual subscriptions $29.50 ($50/2 years) for individuals, $19.50 for new subscribers, $40 for institutions. (Payment by check or credit card. Add $10 for address outside North America.) Voice: (800) 236-3641 or (951) 785-1295 Fax: (951) 785-1595 Email: atoday@atoday.com Website: www.atoday.com.

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The Other Way to Feel Empty

Andy Nash

"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with . . ."

This past year I've read about 40 memoirs as part of my doctoral wrap-up. Along with the classic memoir writers—Elie Wiesel, Tobias Wolff, Frank McCourt, Annie Dillard, Russell Baker—I've read a variety of contemporary writers, from the very secular to the very spiritual, who try to make sense of their lives:

Augusten Burroughs, whose lifestyle of alcohol and immorality keeps a talented writer from being what he could be.

Elizabeth Andrews, a bisexual writer who grew up Christian but who now broadens the sacred to include all religions—as well as Stonehenge.

Kim Barnes, so desperate to get away from a heavily conservative Pentecostal upbringing that she panted at most everything else. "Better to risk body and soul," she writes, "than to be imprisoned by the tyrannical laws my father and the church imposed. I was hungry for a world I had never known. . . . I spent my fourteenth year in basements and back alleys, in the blue glow of black lights, listening to Led Zeppelin, learning how to French-kiss, smoking dope, dropping mescaline, waiting for a vision that might change it all."

A beautiful girl, Barnes got so heavily involved in sex that it became her whole identity; when a guy didn't ask for intimacy at the end of a date, she felt like her whole person had been rejected. She eventually gave herself over to a truck driver who took her to seedy locations and rented her out to other drivers. By the end of her story, she summoned the courage to boot him out, restore a healthy relationship with her parents, and find a wholesome faith and marriage.

What struck me profoundly about these stories was the absence of fulfillment apart from God and the godly life, especially when compared to other memoirs, such as those by Kathleen Norris, Anne Lamott, and Thomas Merton—all of which testify to the fullness of a biblically grounded life in Christ.

When I turn from the harder stories back to the church, it's of course sad but not surprising to see plenty of familiar images: sex outside of marriage, recreational drinking, gambling (in all its forms), greed, career over kids, panting after pop culture, embracing other gods.

What's surprising to me isn't the presence of sin in the church (not exactly a headline) but what seems to be a changing attitude toward sin: whether it's confessed or celebrated. When Paul sent his first letter to Corinth (a church estimated at 55 members), he expressed exasperation not just at the sin but at the laissez-faire attitude toward sin: "A man has his father's wife. And you are proud!" (1 Cor. 5:1, 2, NIV).

That's the sense I'm getting more and more. It used to be that when church members sinned, we at least felt bad about it—or if we didn't feel bad, we left the faith community. Now, some of us are doing neither. We're sticking around, even leading out, with an arrogance matched only by those who think we can earn our way to eternal life.

What legalists and libertines have in common is a looking to self for fulfillment. Both groups take a low view of Scripture, which teaches that we find neither joy nor worth outside of a bibically grounded life in Christ.

Everything else is a merry-go-round around a merry-go-round around a merry-go-round. Everything else is a well that never satisfies.

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst." . . .

The woman said to him: "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water" (John 4:13-15, NIV).

What legalists and libertines have in common is a looking to self for fulfillment.

Race-Based Conferences

Elder Fredrick Russell's article educated me on things I had not known about the reasons for our separate colored and white conferences. I agree that the time has come to change them.

Actually doing it, however, may be more difficult than he predicts. He proposes that the entire conference structure of our North American Division be scrapped and replaced by a different system. The governing boards of all our conference-run academies and colleges would be changed. The executive committees of state and union conference would be revised. Many workers who have reached the "higher" posts of departmental secretaries and officers would find themselves relegated to the "lower" task of pastoring churches. Great idea! But think how many egos would be bruised and how much resistance there would be!

I have watched the joining of several state conferences. In each case the motive was to save money on the conference-run academies. Two academies existed where enrollment had gone down, and there was scarcely enough to support one. It was hoped that students from the academy that was closed would go to the one still open in the other state. It didn't work. They went to high school or to academies in other states.

And there was the problem of what to do with officers who were no longer needed.

The revision that Elder Russell proposes would therefore be more difficult than the re-organization of the General Conference in 1901. Sr. White was surprised then that it went through so smoothly. Doing it now would require wide recognition of the need for it, a lot of prayer, and the special help of the Holy Spirit. May He give us wisdom and grace indeed!

RALPH NEALL
Collegedale, Tennessee

Thank you for the timely article on race-based conferences and the need to abolish them completely. Elder Fredrick A. Russell's clarion call echoes amongst the many voices that have been calling for this throughout the years. I preached a sermon on unity and the need to break down walls that hinder this goal in my churches last Sabbath, and I held up your magazine and read the caption on the cover— "IT'S TIME"—to the congregations. Hearty amens were the response!

Many of our people are embarrassed by race-based conferences and consider it a blemish on our denominational face. It is long overdue for this to happen, and it is a disgrace that it has not yet. When will our leaders finally step up to the plate and do the right thing?

MICHAEL CORBEL, PASTOR
Olds, Alberta, Canada

The people who are pushing for racial integration of conferences seem never to have experienced the racial turf wars that frequently occur in the integrated conferences in California. In South Africa, where conferences were integrated a few years ago, the white church is now moribund. The present segregation of conferences may not be politically correct, but it works mostly.

Having said that, I agree that the petty stuff that separates us has to be deleted. More cooperative agreements between conferences could be achieved.

DONALD HOPKINS
Battle Ground, Washington

Note: The conversation on race-based conferences continues on our website, www.atoday.com, where readers are also adding their names to a petition to abolish race-based conferences in North America.

Monte Sahlin Inteview

As a 30-year-plus pastor, when Monte Sahlin speaks, I listen. It has been my experience that his five essential elements are right on target. Those five, "(1) active, practical community involvement; (2) strong, rich spirituality; (3) focused

Something Important

Dear Readers:
Thanks to you, *Adventist Today* has experienced more than 40 percent growth this year. At the same time, we know that the only measure that counts is the increased spiritual health of the Adventist Church.

Each year a new graduating class of Adventist students leaves academy or college, many of them returning to small local churches that sometimes lack the balance, openness, and opportunties for involvement that young people value. Sometimes they just need a point of connection and encouragement.

Adventist Today is a publication that's both candid and faithful–not one or the other. We feel like we can address any topic honestly and respectfully. We believe this is what many Adventists, including Adventist young adults, are looking for.

On the back cover is an opportunity to make a difference for young adults and others who care about both candor and faithfulness.

intentionality; (4) a warm, welcoming, grace-oriented fellowship; and (5) Sabbath activities that target the unchurched," should be discussed openly and honestly with the leadership in every local church.

I'd add only one more to Sahlin's list: a worship service that leads the participant to encounter the Living God. Without that, young adults will not find the local church "spiritual" enough for them.

BILL BOSSERT, PASTOR
The Edge Christian Worship Center
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

We're delighted that Monte Sahlin has joined Adventist Today *as an online blogger. Our other new blogger is Nathan Brown, Australian author and editor.*

Adventist Man

Both my wife and I enjoy the *Adventist Today* issues and have for years! Sometimes it's quite a contest as to which one of us gets to read it cover-to-cover first! We've followed the growth of *Adventist Today* since its birth and have appreciated its purpose and mission and, of course, its innovative journalistic maturity at each stage.

Having said that, I have to register a concern regarding the column Adventist Man. I've followed it in the most recent issues and have tried to sense its import and mission; and I have to say that it seems out of sync with the rest of the magazine and its more serious contributors. I'm not the most brilliant of linguists, not an English Ph.D., but I have a layman's love affair with the English language and the many figures of speech that historically and presently make it one of the richest! The writer of Adventist Man misses the point! Too over the top! Its attempt at poking fun at the inconsistencies of Adventist life seems to value disrespect, ridicule, and insult and gets too close to irreverence and sacrilege; you could eliminate it, and it would not be missed. Who cares if someone drinks Decaf, or [about] the origin of Lucifer or more spiritual names or raising hands in church! Far bigger are the "in-house issues" that face us as progressive Christians! Don't risk shooting yourselves in the foot! At best, Adventist Man is a silly diversion!

I'll keep reading and enjoying *Adventist Today* cover-to-cover, with the exception of Adventist Man. Not worth my time!

DICK WILLIAMS
McMinnville, Oregon

Personally I do not want to know who Adventist Man is. I do feel he is a tiny bit twisted, and that is just what we need for such a diverse church. Not everything can be answered in a cut and dried, black and white manner. Let's step out of our comfort zones and learn new ways to relate and communicate to the world in need! I appreciate the gray area available as food for thought provided by Adventist Man's answers.

I really enjoy his twisted sense of humor—very tasteful not offensive. He makes you think, squirm, and want to make positive changes personally and collectively...what is wrong with that, I ask? So I say do not reveal, continue to enlighten us with answers that sometimes hurt yet always help.

GILDA ROYBAL
Peoria, Arizona

What to do with Adventist Man? Some readers love him, others don't. The best we can tell, Adventist Man is as complex as most of us. At times he seems to practice grace and balance; at other times he seems petty and negative. But we're not sure he should be disfellowshipped just yet. Perhaps we should give him a little time to grow, like the guy in the church lobby.

LETTERS POLICY

Adventist Today welcomes your letters. Short, timely letters have the best chance at publication. Send to atoday@atoday.com or to Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Today*, P.O. Box 8026, Riverside, CA 92515-8026. Please include full name and location.

Ted in '10?

Is it inevitable that Ted Wilson will be the next General Conference president? Will another candidate emerge? Here's one church member's quest to learn who his next world church president will be.

By David Newman

NOTE: *Given the Adventist Church's somewhat-closed system of electing a president, we invited pastor and* Adventist Today *contributing editor David Newman to share his personal search to learn more about the leading candidates. We recognize that different church members look for different attributes in a president, and this article should not be viewed as an* Adventist Today *endorsement of any candidate.*

In less than two years the Seventh-day Adventist Church will, in all likelihood, be electing a new General Conference president. Our current president, Jan Paulsen, will be 75 at the 2010 General Conference Session in Atlanta.

Many observers assume that Ted N.C. Wilson, son of former world church president Neal Wilson, may be next in line for the job. At the last General Conference Session in 2005, where Paulsen was up for re-election, four candidates were presented to the nominating committee for consideration. After the first round of balloting, Jere Patzer and Lowell Cooper dropped out. In the next round, Wilson received 91 votes to Paulsen's 98 with seven people absent or abstaining. The vote revealed that Wilson had a lot of support from the world field.

Wilson will be 62 by the time of the next session. If elected he would become the fourth-oldest person to be elected president after John Byington, 65, the first president; Paulsen (who in 1999 was elected at age 64 following Robert Folkenberg's resignation); and W.H. Branson, 63, who served only one term.

In the Adventist system, while a number of names are usually presented to the nominating committee, only one name is placed before the conference delegates to vote yes or no.

Who Will Be the Nominee?

In preparing for this article, I learned that three names surface more often than others in respect to who the next president might be: Lowell Cooper, Pardon Kandanga Mwansa, and Ted N.C. Wilson. All are general vice presidents of the General Conference.

Lowell Cooper would be 63 and Pardon Mwansa would be 49 at the next General Conference session.

In Adventist history, it has been the unwritten rule that the president comes from the United States and has mission experience. Of the 16 men who have served in this position, only two were the exception: C.H. Watson, president in 1930, who was from Australia, and Jan Paulsen, who is from Norway. Every General Conference president has been white.

Ted Wilson comes from the United States, Lowell Cooper from Canada, and Pardon Mwansa from Zambia, Africa. Currently the membership of the Adventist Church in North America is 6.8 percent of the world membership. The membership of the Church in Africa is 33.9 percent of the world membership.

Ted Wilson has spent 13 years working in West Africa and Russia, with four years as president of the Euro-Asia Division. Prior to moving to the General Conference in Silver Spring, Md., Wilson spent four years as president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Md.

I first met Ted Wilson in the early '70s in Glasgow, Scotland. He was the leader of a group of Andrews University seminary students participating in a field school of evangelism. He had to mediate between the American evangelist and the local pastor, who took their private feuding public in the daily worker sessions. He helped to bring an uneasy peace between the two of them.

He has served twice at the General Conference headquarters, first as an associate secretary, then as a general vice president. My dealings with him have always been very pleasant.

Wanting to get a better feel as to how he operates as a leader, I spoke to some work associates who served with him when he was president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Wilson was considered to be a pleasant but somewhat distant personality. Not the kind that people automatically warmed up to. The vice presidents did not seem to love him or hate him. He was considered sincere and earnest and tried to see the best in people. He is very loyal to those who work under him, almost to a fault. He believes very strongly that standing on principle is a must. However, the principles can become very literal at times. He ordered that mustard be removed from the Review cafeteria but not ketchup. (Adventist Church co-founder Ellen White speaks out against mustard but does not mention ketchup.)

Wilson leans toward the more conservative side of the Adventist Church, say those familiar with him. He is an editorial consultant for the Adventist Theological Society, which is considered to be only slightly less conservative than Hartland Institute, 1888 Study Committee, and Our Firm Foundation.

According to those familiar with him, Wilson is a consistent opponent of women's ordination and also opposes women being ordained as local church elders, even though women serving in that role is an official position of the Adventist Church. He chairs the church board of the Triadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church, to which many

General Conference leaders belong, and opposes women serving as elders in that church (none serve).

In preparing for this article, I invited Wilson, Cooper, and Mwansa to meet with me in person or to answer my questions via email. The same questions were provided to each man in an attempt to learn more about their philosophy as Adventist church leaders. Because I personally care very much about women's involvement in the church, I asked several questions along that line. Other members, of course, would ask different questions. My questions were:

1. What do you see as the three biggest challenges facing the Adventist Church today?

2. What is your position on the role of regional conferences in North America?

3. Where do you stand on the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? The church has officially said "no." Do you see that changing? Do you think it should?

4. Do you support women being ordained as local elders?

5. The church allows each division to decide whether women may be ordained as local elders in their territory, but when it comes to women being ordained as pastors, the church says that has to be a world decision. Biblically speaking, is there any essential difference between women serving as elders and serving as pastors? If there is not, why should one be decided locally and the other universally? If women cannot be ordained as local pastors, why can they still serve as local pastors?

6. The Bible talks about the seventh

Profiles of Three Vice Presidents

(taken from the GC Presidential site)

TED N.C. WILSON

Ted N.C. Wilson was elected as a general vice president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide in July 2000 during the General Conference Session in Toronto. His 32 years of church work includes serving as secretary, and prior to that as departmental director, of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire (1981-1990), associate secretary of the General Conference (1990-1992), president of the Euro-Asia Division in Moscow, Russia (1992-1996), and president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association (1996-2000) in Hagerstown, Md. He is an ordained minister and served in the metropolitan New York area as a pastor in the Greater New York Conference from 1974-1976 and as assistant director and then director of Metropolitan Ministries (1976-1981). He holds a master of divinity degree from Andrews University, a master of science in public health degree from Loma Linda University School of Public Health, and a doctor of philosophy degree in religious education from New York University.

Pastor Wilson is married to Nancy Louise Vollmer, a physical therapist, and the couple has three young-adult daughters.

LOWELL COOPER

Canadian-born Lowell Cooper has served as a general vice president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide since 1998, and he continues in this position following re-election during the World Session of the Church in Toronto, Canada, in July 2000. His 31 years of church work includes serving as associate secretary of the General Conference (1994-1998), secretary of Southern Asia Division in India (1990-1994), and before that as a division departmental director, director of Sabbath School in the Pakistan Union, and pastor in the Alberta Conference. He holds a master of divinity degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Michigan and a master's degree from Loma Linda University School of Public Health. Pastor Cooper is married to Rae Lee Figuhr and has two adult children.

PARDON KANDANGA MWANSA

Before his election as a general vice president in July 2005, Mwansa was president of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Born in Zambia's Luapula province, he has also served during his 25 years of ministry in a variety of positions, including president of the Eastern Africa Division, Zambia Union president, stewardship director for the Zambia Union and North Zambia Field, and was previously at the world headquarters as associate stewardship director of the General Conference. Earlier in his career, Mwansa was also a television speaker for the Gospel Penetration Ministries in Zambia.

An ordained gospel minister with a doctoral degree in missiology from Andrews University in Michigan, Mwansa is married to Judith Mwansa and they have two sons and one daughter.

church being lukewarm while thinking it is doing very well. Ellen White applies the Laodicean message to the Adventist Church even in her day. Do you think the Adventist Church is still in a Laodicean condition? If you think it is, what should we be doing to change the situation?

7. In October of 2007, a conference was held at Andrews University commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of *Questions on Doctrine*. Where do you stand on the value of this book?

8. Could you include a short biographical sketch of yourself?

Both Cooper and Wilson declined to be interviewed for this feature.

Cooper questioned the intentions of my article and added that his travel schedule would make it difficult to answer the questions thoroughly. "The questions you posed," said Cooper, "cannot simply be addressed with binary answers. To do so would oversimplify issues that have complex historical roots as well as trajectories into the future that require careful assessment and attention."

Wilson said that the appropriate place to ask these questions was the administrative committee of the General Conference.

Pardon Mwansa, however, replied to each of my questions via email.

1. Regarding the Church's three biggest challenges, he wrote: "plurality, loss of identity, and keeping the unity of the diverse global church."

2. On regional conferences, Mwansa wrote: "That one day, when those things that have made us separate, are attended to, that we may serve God under one united church structure."

3. On the three-part question about the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, Mwansa wrote:

a. "I am open to learn more from the word of God about God's will on ordination of women. I have not closed my mind to a certain position. I am a seeker of truth on this."

b. "History has taught us that change is possible on almost all things. I see no exception to the position on any issues, including ordination of women."

c. "As long as the church continues to seek light on any subject, including that of ordination of women, He will show them if to and when to change. I will uphold the church's position."

4. Regarding women elders, he wrote:

a. "I support women serving as elders and any act or ceremony that empowers them to serve effectively."

b. "Anyone who is given a task must be empowered and equipped with what it takes to do it."

5. On the additional question about women pastors and elders, Mwansa simply said, "I have given sufficient reflection on this subject in my answer above—sufficient to address this question."

6. On the Laodicean message and the Adventist Church, Mwansa said he didn't have sufficient time to comment.

7. Regarding *Questions on Doctrine*, he stated: "Every book has a context and time and, rightly applied, served and serves its purpose."

8. Mwansa provided this short biographical sketch: "Pardon Mwansa: Servant of the Lord Jesus and His Church. Served the SDA for about 28 years now in different functions and services. Married to Judith and a father of 4." He then added this postscript: "Dear David: Please let this information be used to build the family of God. Amen."

Workplace Impressions

How are these men regarded at the world headquarters in Washington D.C.? It all depends on whom I talked to.

Some like the rigidity of Ted Wilson—that he knows where he stands and does not deviate from it. Some see him as wanting to make the main decisions and not allow other people choices. He reads the Bible and the writings of Ellen White in a very literal way and does not allow much room for contextualization. His personality tends to be structured and not very warm. Following the rules in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy is very important to him. Wilson is viewed widely as a kind person. He does not lose his temper and is calm and considerate even in difficult situations.

Lowell Cooper is seen as a very spiritual leader. After all of the years he has spent in administration, he still has the heart of a shepherd, a pastor. He comes across as a strong yet very loving leader at the same time. He is highly skilled in leadership and administration and has excellent people skills. He is nonjudgmental, listens carefully, respects other people, and seeks to build consensus before a decision is made.

Pardon Mwsana is seen as a leader of high integrity. He lives a consistent, loving Christian life and seeks to fasten people's eyes on Jesus first, rather than on the doctrines and rules, which have their place but which are of secondary importance. It is clearly felt that his identity is first to be a child of God, and people know it. He is not on an ego trip.

In conclusion I would like to suggest that we really open up the selection process of General Conference president. I am told that the reason we don't do this more openly is to avoid politicizing the position. However, it is rather naïve to believe that politics does not enter into the selection process. While there are several Caucasians who would make a fine president, I believe it is time for a non-Caucasian to take that position. With North America making up less than 7 percent of the world membership, it is time for a non-North American to lead the world church.

J. David Newman is the senior pastor of New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fulton, Md. Newman previously served 11 years as executive editor and then editor of Ministry *magazine and spent 10 years on the General Conference Executive Committee.*

ANALYSIS

We Just Want the Spirit to Lead

By John Thomas McLarty

Adventists don't believe in campaigning for the office of (church) president. We don't want crude personal promotion to invade the sacred process of choosing leaders for God's people. We just want the Spirit to lead.

Our antipathy to public campaigning is rooted in church history and noble spiritual ideals. Following his ascension, Jesus' followers faced the tragic gap in leadership created by Judas' betrayal and suicide. They were certain the number *twelve* was not accidental. They remembered Jesus' words, "You who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28, NIV). Since Jesus was not personally present to choose a replacement, the choice fell to the church.

They talked together about qualifications and then nominated two people, Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias. After using the best of human knowledge and judgment, they asked God to make the final selection via casting lots.

Adventists look back to that early election, which combined rational deliberation and openness to divine leading, as the ideal. Through our nominating committee process, we aim to combine the best of human judgment and knowledge with a prayerful openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In this spiritual environment, campaigning seems gauche at the very least. When a person obviously seeks a position of honor in the church, it seems like a blatant disregard for the subtle working of the Spirit through the nominating committee.

Unfortunately, our continued reliance on our traditional process for choosing an international president has a very unspiritual consequence. It tends to minimize the voices of church workers closest to the front-line mission of the church and exaggerate the power of highly visible bureaucratic insiders.

The General Conference (GC) president is chosen in a nominating committee that is formed at the GC Session. Prior to the GC Session, a lot of back-room scheming and dreaming takes place. Different constituencies and world regions may have "favorite son" candidates. But these aspirations are supposed to be kept out of the public eye. Once the committee is voted at the GC Session, the approximately 200 members are expected to agree on a nominee within a few hours. Most of the committee members have had no opportunity to get acquainted with possible nominees outside their own social circles. They have no way to independently assess statements (positive or negative) made by prominent and outspoken people within the committee. So, instead of the process being strongly influenced by the Holy Spirit, it is most strongly influenced by outspoken members of the committee. Instead of a democracy, the church functions more like an oligarchy.

Our present system assumes the best of human nature, which is not a particularly safe assumption, even in the church. And it relies on the personal connections and personal relationships that were the norm when the church was a small, North American community. But today the church is a global community with millions of members. It is impossible for any one person or even a small group of people to be personally acquainted with even a fraction of the church population. If the members of the GC nominating committee are going to do their work effectively, they need more information, and they need it well before the GC Session. The only way for this to happen is to broadly disseminate profiles of various church leaders. And these profiles need to come from a variety of observers. (Here is an unabashed promotion of the importance of an independent press within the church.)

This intentional communication will look like campaigning. But campaigning is already happening anyway. I have heard Neal C. Wilson shamelessly boasting of his son's leadership abilities in gatherings of church leaders. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with a father expressing pride in his son. But it is important for multiple voices to be heard as the church considers whom to elect as our president.

Given the challenges confronting the church, we would be ill advised to choose a world president on the basis of a family recommendation or meager information. Whether you call it campaigning or information dissemination or leadership cultivation, the church ought to create new ways to bring reliable, multisourced information into the election process. By providing more facts to potential members of the nominating committee, we will equip them to better discern the leading of the Spirit.

John McLarty is the pastor of North Hill Adventist Fellowship in Edgewood, Wash. He is working on his next book, a story titled God, Rocks and Women.

BY EDWIN A. AND
EDWIN D. SCHWISOW

AT What Pr

While the Adventist Church struggles to preserve a uniform denominational pay scale, health care executive salaries are driven by market forces.

When selecting a career path, many young Adventists consider working for the Adventist Church or an organization bearing its name. But at some point they all ask themselves a central question: To what degree will working for the denomination provide financial security?

That depends on which branch of church work one selects.

Donald Jernigan, president and CEO of Adventist Health System, headquartered in Orlando, Fla., received a base salary of $806,000 in 2007.

Robert Carmen, president and CEO of Adventist Health, headquartered in Roseville, Calif., received a base salary of $593,500 in 2007.

Other executives in the Adventist health care system also routinely bring in large salaries. In addition, health care executives earn financial incentives of up to 20 percent of their base salary, plus a generous benefits package that can push total annual compensation above $1 million a year.

But not all Adventist leaders make such large sums.

ice?

David Smith, president of Union College in Lincoln, Neb., received a base salary of $68,688 last year. The pay range for Smith's administrative assistant, Lou Ann Fredregill, runs up to $41,196 a year.

The Adventist world church president, Jan Paulsen, has a base salary of $87,008 a year. Because the world church headquarters is located in pricey suburban Maryland, Paulsen's salary includes a cost of living adjustment of $29,448. (Before the adjustment, his base salary is $57,560.) Denominational salaries are adjusted according to the cost of living in a given area.

In the past, "working for the Church" implied accepting the loss of potential earnings out of conviction that this was one's unique calling in life, well worth the financial sacrifice. But increasingly, young career builders are finding the best of both worlds as employees of Adventist-administered health care institutions, where compensation of most employees is at market rates, except senior executives, whose compensation is typically set to mirror the midpoint in salaries paid to non-Adventist medical administrators throughout the nation. (Unlike denominational salaries, no tithe dollars go to support the wages of health care workers at Adventist-administered organizations. All compensation comes from funds generated from internal health care business.)

Indeed, in a policy turnaround that dates back to 1989, Adventist medical institutions are authorized to pay their executive leaders far higher compensation than pastors, church administrators, and leaders in Adventist academia can hope to attain. The divergent salaries have led many church members to question how such high levels of compensation correlate with an organization whose culture brims with the concept of self-sacrifice.

Mark Buhler is an Adventist attorney practicing in Orlando, Fla., who currently serves on his local conference executive committee and also served for five years (1996-2000) on the board of Adventist Health System in Orlando. "In late 1996," says Buhler, "there was an article in the *Orlando Business Journal* pointing out that on Adventist Health System's IRS Form 990 for 1995, Thomas Werner, then president of Florida Hospital, was reported to have been compensated $238,527, plus $6,216 in other benefits. This was only a little more than half of the $430,123 plus $6,378 in contributions to employee benefit plans that his counterpart at Orlando Regional Healthcare System was paid, according to the IRS Form 990 filed by ORHS for 1995. At that time, ORHS had only about three-fourths the bed count of Florida Hospital's multiple campuses."

But since then, says Buhler, compensation for Adventist health system executives has skyrocketed, right along with executive compensation in corporate America.

"By directly linking administrators' salaries to the median in the health care industry," says Buhler, "our health system has unwittingly, if not intentionally, hitched its executive pay wagon to America's executive greed train, and it is being pulled right along with all the rest. It's disturbing to see the huge differential in compensation that has developed between health care executives and denominational leaders, pastors, and educators in the past few years."

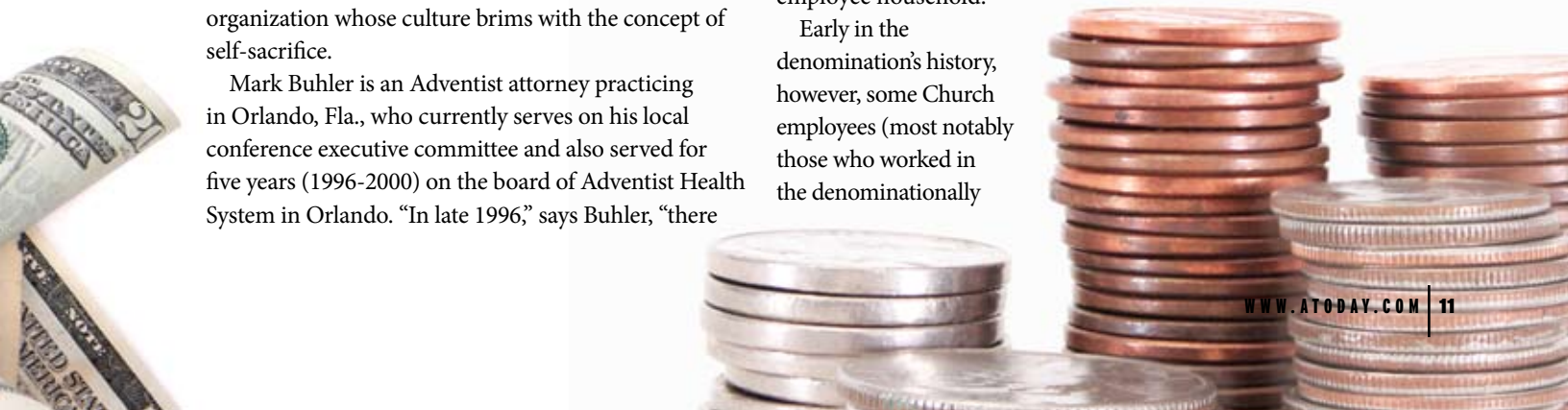
But others say that's an unfair assessment. Max Trevino is president of the Southwestern Union Conference in Burleson, Texas, and board chairman of Adventist Health System. Trevino, who makes less than $60,000 a year as a denominational worker, says he has "no discomfort" with salaries 10 times that amount being paid to health care executives. "We need to have talented people running these operations," Trevino says, adding that Adventist Health System is the largest Protestant nonprofit health system in North America.

Pioneer Roots

The increasing differential in remuneration raises deep questions for the Adventist Church. What has been our denomination's traditional stance on compensation? How did we get to this point? What decisions and mindsets brought us here, and where is the Church headed in the realm of compensation?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has historically measured its growth in terms of its institutions. Located as outposts for gospel dissemination, many early Adventist institutions set wage scales without much regard to what others in the Church were doing. The writings of Ellen White were formative, however, in the denomination's early remuneration philosophy, which was built on the notion of a sacrificial yet livable wage for each employee household.

Early in the denomination's history, however, some Church employees (most notably those who worked in the denominationally



sponsored Review and Herald publishing house) were paid salaries comparable to those they might have commanded as employees in secular publishing companies. Clement Eldridge and Frank Belden, two Review managers in the late 1890s, are notable examples. Throughout their tenure at the Review, Eldridge and Belden pushed for market-equitable salaries, and their demands were initially met. But eventually the Review balked, and the two men resigned and sought employment in Chicago.

Shortly after the two men left the Review, the General Conference asked church administrator A.T. Jones to conduct an investigation into the business practices of the Review. Jones and the committee that worked with him discovered that Review managers were receiving ever-growing salaries that exceeded even that of the General Conference president. By contrast, laborers at the publishing house endured substandard conditions and received only minor pay increases, even after many years as employees. Reacting to the committee's findings, General Conference administrators voted to level the pay scale for Review workers and brought in new administrators to implement the policy.

But even so, many still suggested that Adventist institutions should compensate on a more market-driven wage scale. One such person wrote a letter to Church co-founder Ellen White, suggesting that she cast her support toward this view.

In her response, written in 1902, White says: "You suggest that if we paid higher wages, we could secure men of ability to fill important positions of trust. This might be so, but I should very much regret to see our workers held to our work by the wages they receive. There are needed in the cause of God workers who will make a covenant with Him by sacrifice, who will labor for the love of souls, not for the wages they receive." She later commented on the flip side of this position in the book *The Acts of the Apostles*, published in 1911: "The displeasure of God is kindled against those who claim to be His followers, yet allow consecrated workers to suffer for the necessities of life while engaged in active ministry. ... Those who are called to the work of the ministry, and at the call of duty give up all to engage in God's service, should receive for their self-sacrificing efforts wages sufficient to support themselves and their families" (pp. 340-341).

Two years after the publication of *The Acts of the Apostles*, the General Conference Committee, in a July 7, 1913, meeting, voted to establish a committee that would attempt to bring uniformity to the wage scale throughout the denomination.

The committee later that year recommended that a board be established to equalize pay among Church-sponsored institutions. The stated philosophy was that each worker be given "an allowance necessary for the support of himself and family." No mention was made of workers saving for retirement or establishing reserves for emergencies. After all, it was expected that Christ would return before they reached retirement.

From this committee's recommendations, the Adventist Church instituted its first denomination-wide pay scale—a practice followed in concept to this day. In 1916, the denomination paid ordained ministers between $14 and $20 a week, equivalent in today's dollars to between $272 and $388. Local conference presidents had a threshold of a dollar more a week than local ordained pastors, union conference presidents were entitled to up to four dollars more a week, and the General Conference president could earn up to six dollars more a week than local pastors.

Medical doctors employed by the Adventist Church were the only workers who could receive more than the General Conference president, with an upper threshold of $27.50 a week — $534.09 a week, or $27,772.68 yearly in today's dollars.

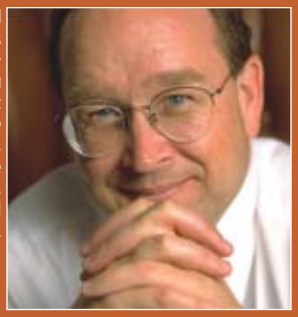
The denomination early on recognized that it would benefit by compensating medical professionals—especially physicians—at higher levels than clergy or conference administrators. Although the wage scale for doctors had risen to a maximum of $53.50 a week ($650.90 in today's dollars) by 1927, General Conference auditors reasserted the view that all institutions should strictly follow the denomination's wage scale. Reading between the lines, we see that apparently some sanitariums were not following the scale strictly and were supplementing doctors' incomes with holiday allowances and other bonuses.

Changes in Health Care Compensation

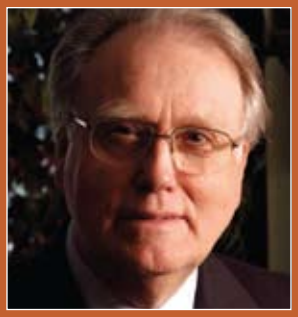
Over the years, the General Conference has given various reasons to defend paying medical professionals more than other denominational employees, citing the higher educational expenses medical professionals assume in preparing for their careers, and the shorter careers because of their years in education and training.

"WE ARE AWARE THAT THE STEP WE ARE TAKING TODAY MAY WE

Note: Listed base salaries include cost-of-living adjustments but do not include benefits or, for health care executives, financial incentives.



DAVID SMITH, $68,688
President, Union College, Lincoln, Neb.



JAN PAULSEN, $87,008
President, Adventist World Church, Silver Spring, Md.

KESSIA REYNE BENNETT, $46,000
Pastoral Intern, Oregon Conference, Gladstone, Ore.

ROBERT CARMEN, $593,500
President, Adventist Health, Roseville, Calif.

Later, a lack of qualified Adventist workers in Adventist medical institutions caused the Church to have to compete for staff with non-Adventist medical institutions, which paid substantially higher wages.

By 1968, the pressure to find qualified nurses who were willing to accept sacrificial wages to work for the Church caused administrators to vote to begin compensating nurses at market, or "community" rates.

Then, at a Nov. 10, 1977, meeting of the North American Division Committee of Administration (NADCA), Adventist leaders from the Pacific Union requested permission for the Glendale and White Memorial hospitals to break from denominational pay structures to pay the heads of their departments at generally accepted community rates. With those hospitals hemorrhaging red ink, outside consultants advised that in order to stay afloat, the hospitals had to find competent employees and pay them at competitive market rates.

In granting the Pacific Union's request, the NAD administrators noted the following caveat in the official minutes: "We are aware that the step we are taking today may well portend ill for the future. We realize that within a short time there may be requests for further increases—including, perhaps, increases for hospital administrators. This would mean that the health care institutions would be so far out of line with the rest of the denominational wage structure that we would encounter many problems."

Shortly thereafter, in 1978, denominational policy was indeed altered to apply to the wages of all health care employees, with the exception of institutional administrators, who continued to be compensated according to denominational scale.

Then, nearly 11 years later, at the 1989 General Conference Spring Meeting, the prediction made by NAD administrators in 1977 came to pass when, after much urging and discussion, the General Conference, acting as the North American Division Committee, ruled that Adventist hospital presidents could receive base salaries that should be at the minimum salary level for hospital presidents according to a national compensation survey. In no case was the total compensation to exceed the fiftieth percentile (that is, the midpoint) of what presidents in comparable facilities and organizations earned. Thomas Mostert, who as Pacific Union Conference president chaired the Adventist Health board for 23 years before retiring at the end of 2007, says the fiftieth-percentile cap was established primarily at the urging of then-General Conference President Neal C. Wilson.

According to Mardian Blair, former president of Adventist Health System, some of the Church's medical organizations had already broken from policy before the 1989 decision and were compensating their administrators at levels that exceeded denominational guidelines. Blair interpreted the General Conference's decision as validating the judgment of these health care organizations. "This action allowed changes that were competitively necessary and legitimized certain things already being done by some organizations," said Blair. "It allowed those who were trying to follow policy to pay their leaders on an equal basis."

Health Care Executives' Compensation Today

Those who set the parameters for these lofty compensation packages argue that it is impossible to recruit and retain competent administrators without offering salaries and benefits that are similar to what other health systems are paying.

"It's really a matter of supply and demand," says Mostert. "Nationwide, most health care executives on average can expect to be fired within three to four years, and we are short of people who are willing to take that risk." Trevino echoes Mostert's views, though he points out that CEO positions in Adventist Health System have been "very stable" during the past two decades. Adventist Health System has indeed prospered, he says.

Trevino says that he has received absolutely no special compensation for performing his work as chairman of the board of Adventist Health System and knows of no union president who has been so compensated. When he travels to Adventist Health System meetings, he points out, his per diem and transportation allowances are identical to what he would receive if traveling strictly for Union-related business.

"From time to time I attend health care conferences, such as the Institute of Health, which are held in nice hotel, and when I attend those meetings, I stay in those accommodations," he says. "But when I travel on routine business for Adventist

LL PORTEND ILL FOR THE FUTURE." -North American Division administration, November 1977

DONN LEATHERMAN, $54,151
Professor of Religion, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tenn.

PATRICE HIEB, $47,840
Annual Fund Coordinator, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tenn.

RACHEL WILLIAMS, $42,390
Assistant Professor of Communication, Oakwood University, Huntsville, Ala.

NICOLE ORIAN, $38,721
Nursing Instructor, Union College, Lincoln, Neb.

Health System, I am not staying in five-star hotels, nor am I urged to do so by Adventist Health System. When I fly, I fly coach—not business class. There are no special perks or hidden compensation in what I do as chairman of the board for Adventist Health System."

Mostert says that compensation levels for Adventist Health executives at the corporate level are set differently than for those who serve at the hospital level.

The corporate executives set the compensation levels of local hospital administrators, factoring in the costs of living in the community where their hospital is located, says Mostert.

But for corporate-level executives besides presidents, Adventist Health and Adventist Health System still hold to the 50th percentile cap of the median wage of those with comparable titles nationally (in both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations). Presidents are paid at the 40th percentile of the compensation of their peers nationally. These national levels are determined by Integrated Health Care Strategies of Minneapolis, which surveys the executive compensation of thousands of companies nationally and recommends a compensation level for each Adventist upper-level health executive. The recommendations are reviewed by the corporation's board of directors, who factor in the current financial health of the organization in determining the compensation their executives should receive that year. Adventist health care executives, on average, make between $300,000 and $1 million annually.

"The interesting thing about this compensation system," says Buhler, "is that while I sat on the board of Adventist Health System, very little at all was mentioned about executive compensation. We were informed that there was a subcommittee that dealt with this matter, and everything was fine. Although I occasionally heard or read very generalized reports mentioning the target percentiles, I don't recall ever hearing any actual dollar amounts of upper-level executive compensation. Some years after my term of service on the board ended, I eventually saw some of the dollar amounts and frankly was shocked. In retrospect, [I feel that] these matters were being handled very quietly by a very select group. Leadership no doubt knew that if publicized, the compensation levels would probably raise controversy."

Trevino calls Buhler's perspective outdated, noting that it's been eight years since Buhler served on the board. Trevino says that when questions were raised in late 1999 by the *Washington Post* and other media about executive salaries at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville, Md. (the largest hospital operated by Adventist HealthCare, Inc.), as board chair he made a concerted effort, along with the administration of Adventist Health System, to be as transparent as possible regarding executive salaries. "We agreed that every time we do a major study, it's going to the board," says Trevino, adding that Integrated Health Services, which advises Adventist Health System regarding salaries, has said that Adventist Health System is the "gold standard for process and transparency in the industry."

Trevino says that Adventist Health System executive salaries are set using fiftieth percentile threshold, and that compensation figures used by watchdog websites such as wherethemoneygoes.com are misleading, because the IRS 990 tax forms used as documentation also include retirement income and other benefits.

Mostert says that the current system of compensating health care executives still requires executives to take a pay cut when they join the Adventist system. "I believe that at the 40th to 50th percentile, they're still sacrificing," Mostert says. "We need to switch off our Church pay scale mindset and realize that these men are attempting to manage in a very topsy-turvy environment."

While Buhler says he's pleased to hear of the improvements in process and transparency reported by Trevino, he is not convinced that the current executive compensation system is still competitively necessary, if it ever was.

"Although I am not as familiar with the other two Adventist regional systems," says Buhler, "Adventist Health System has not experienced high turnover or difficulty recruiting at the senior executive levels. Most of the senior executives are longtime employees of AHS, and there are many more executives in the pipeline below them who are anxiously waiting to take their places."

"THERE ARE NO SPECIAL PERKS OR HID WHAT I DO AS CHAIRMAN

BERNIE ANDERSON, $53,700
Pastor, Wasatch Hills church, Salt Lake City, Utah

DONALD JERNIGAN, $806,000
President, Adventist Health System, Orlando, Fla.

STELLA GREIG, $60,911
Professor of English, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich.

REBECCA AYLSWORTH, $35,500
Head Teacher, Madras Christian School, Madras, Ore.

Buhler doesn't dispute that community pay standards are competitively necessary for the routine staffing of the hundreds or thousands of employees needed to run a hospital, but he suggests that the compensation of the elite circle of top administrators is an entirely different matter, especially since it has been directly linked to the meteoric compensation levels of executives in the secular corporate world. "During the past 10 years or so," says Buhler, "executive salaries in corporate America have been soaring beyond all reason, driven by a culture of greed that shocks even the secular public. That the compensation of top executives in our Church's health systems has been allowed by policy to be *de facto* linked to the midpoint of those exorbitant pay scales, without any restraint or limits, is troubling."

Buhler thinks a re-evaluation of the compensation policy for top health care executives is needed, particularly the automatic linkage to national percentiles. "Both the NAD Executive Committee and the health systems' boards of directors—which are overwhelmingly composed of church administrators—need to step up and exercise more oversight, accountability, and leadership in this matter," he says. "Otherwise our institutions will simply look like any other wagon hitched to the secular corporate greed train."

Compensation of Tithe-Paid Workers

Meanwhile, the majority of those employed by the Adventist Church in North America are paid in accordance with the Division's remuneration scale. The scale entitles employees to a percentage (52 to 154 percent) of a monthly base rate ($4,065 as of July 2008). This rate is re-adjusted every year to reflect the effects of inflation. The highest denominational salaries go not to the world church president, Jan Paulsen, whose salary is at 118 percent, but to doctors and attorneys who work directly for the Church. What an employee receives is determined by four factors: preparation, education, and commitment; previous experience and achievement; years of service; and responsibility and annual evaluations. An additional factor is added for employees living in areas with a high cost of living.

To illustrate, a pastor six years out from seminary working in Boise, Idaho, now qualifies for 102 percent of the monthly base rate, plus an additional cost-of-living factor of approximately $650 a month. This brings his monthly salary to $4,796 [$4,146 (102 percent of $4,065) plus $650]. The pastor is also eligible for a travel allowance of up to $390 per month (1,000 miles at $.39 a mile). In addition, he may qualify for a small auto insurance reimbursement, if his coverage meets General Conference guidelines and the cost of his premium is higher than what is considered a normative level.

Beyond salaries, the Adventist denomination also helps pay the tuition of employees' children, but only if those children attend Adventist schools. If the students live in a dormitory, the denomination pays 70 percent of their tuition; if they live elsewhere, assistance drops to 35 percent of tuition.

While these policies are the norm for Adventist employees, the reality is often different. When a recent cost of living study done by the Economic Research Institute showed that salaries in the Southern Union needed to be increased, the financially strapped Florida Conference couldn't afford to do it. That has left Florida Conference employees receiving less than the denominational pay scale calls for.

A Comparison With Other Churches

How does the compensation of Adventists pastors compare with what pastors in other denominations are receiving? By and large, Adventist pastors are doing quite well, especially those who are less experienced or are leading smaller districts.

An Adventist pastoral intern, hired after four years of college, can expect to receive just over $40,000 in salary in the first year of employment. By contrast, a first-year pastor in the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Lutheran Church receives only $25,781. Most denominations pay first-year pastors between $20,000 and $35,000 a year. Young Adventist ministers clearly fare significantly better than their contemporaries in other denominations.

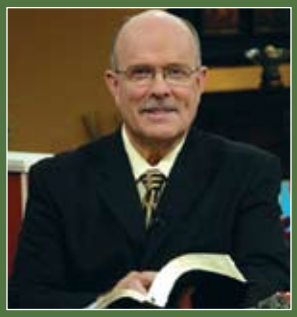
But the situation begins to change as an Adventist pastor reaches six years beyond seminary (often eight to 10 years into

DEN COMPENSATION IN
OF THE BOARD FOR ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM." –MAX TREVINO

CHARLES SANDEFUR, $75,166
President, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Silver Spring, Md.

JOHN DICKERSON, $53,454
Principal, Livingstone Adventist Academy, Salem, Ore.

GABRIEL HENTON, $21,408
IT Director and English Teacher, Laurelwood Academy (self supporting), Jasper, Ore.



BILL TUCKER, $68,976
President/Speaker, The Quiet Hour (supporting ministry), Redlands, Calif.

ministry) and 102 percent of the denomination scale—the maximum church pastors can receive, under current policy. Aside from cost-of-living increases, pastors more or less top out at that point in their careers, at just under $50,000.

At this stage, the typical Adventist minister is head pastor of a church district of 200 members or more. Ten years down the road, at age 43 or so, he may well be leading a district of 400 members. But under the current pay scale, he will still receive the same salary (adjusted for inflation).

Comparing what other Christian denominations pay their pastors at various stages of their careers is somewhat difficult since most denominations are not governed by a central pay scale. Large denominations, such as the Southern Baptists and the Church of the Nazarene, and most non-denominational churches, begin with a very low initial salary and augment that pay according to market demands, on a situation-to-situation basis. The pastor's eventual salary is often determined far more by the *size* of the congregation than by his or her years of *experience*, and a successful pastor can reap compensation into the six digits at a church with more than 1,000 members. However, in this model, many experienced pastors with small churches earn less than $45,000 a year, even after 30 years of preaching.

This year, the average salary of an Adventist pastor is slightly more than $50,000, with some receiving as high as $55,000 in areas where their salaries are adjusted for a high cost of living. By and large, these salaries are comparable to those received by pastors in other denominations with centralized pay scales. The list of average salaries from a 2005 salary survey is provided below, for comparison. According to this survey, published by the Church Benefits Association, the median salary of the 15 denominations that shared compensation figures was $50,700 in 2005.

Denomination	2005 Average Ministerial Salary
Baptist General Conference	$50,700
Christian Reformed Church in North America	$58,800
Disciples of Christ	$39,500
Episcopal Church	$59,689
Evangelical Covenant Church	$51,500
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	$51,500
Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod	$52,100
Presbyterian Church (USA)	$48,400
Reformed Church in America	$49,000
United Church of Christ	$46,200
United Methodist Church	$54,000
Median for 15 reporting denominations:	**$50,700**

Current Discussion

Though many Adventists are very comfortable with the 16 percent differential in salary between what an ordained Adventist minister receives and what the General Conference president is allotted in basic salary, before cost of living adjustments, others see the lack of financial upward mobility in the Church as a liability.

Like Adventist Health executives who feared losing competent staff members to institutions that pay more, Adventist universities and conferences have wrestled with how to keep highly qualified employees satisfied while compensating them at below-market wages.

Mostert, who for many years chaired the boards of Pacific Union College and La Sierra University, says that at several Adventist universities—including La Sierra, Loma Linda, and Andrews—administrators have mirrored what was beginning to happen in Adventist health care 20 years ago and have broken with denominational compensation guidelines in an attempt to retain highly educated faculty members.

"Keeping our faculty and recruiting new faculty willing to be paid at our rates is a real challenge," Mostert says. "When we looked at what universities in our region were paying, we saw that we are at the very bottom."

Additionally, some conferences and institutions are using unconventional means to attract employees. Randy Roberts, senior pastor of the Loma Linda University Seventh-day Adventist Church, also is paid for teaching at Loma Linda University.

Karl Haffner, former senior pastor of the Walla Walla College Church and a popular and prolific author and guest speaker, recently moved to Kettering, Ohio, attracted by the offer of joint employment as senior pastor of the Kettering Adventist Church and a consultant-like relationship with the local Adventist medical center.

Haffner says that for years he has augmented his pastoral salary with royalties from books and magazine articles he writes. His goal, he says, has always been to relieve financial pressure on his wife, Cherie, to hold a full-time job. His current situation in Kettering accomplishes that goal.

Haffner also cites his interest and understanding of business (he holds an MBA degree) and says that his new, dual role in Kettering allows him to invest those talents and interests effectively for the church. Both the medical center and the local conference are well aware of his status and have signed off on the arrangement.

In one sense, this is nothing new; for decades pastors and administrators have served in dual roles. But great care was taken in the past to ensure that the person in question would not be drawing overlapping salaries from both organizations.

Jack Sequeira, 75, a longtime college professor in Africa who also served as a union departmental director and now is retired in Keizer, Ore., says he's uncomfortable with what's happening. "My responsibilities as a teacher and leader in Africa frequently called on me to serve several institutions simultaneously, but I always received only one paycheck," Sequeira says. "This was the tradition, and even when I was senior pastor of the Walla Walla City church during the '80s and was called upon to give a series of lectures at Walla Walla College, it was very clear that I would receive no compensation for those lectures. I was a very busy pastor at that time, and it was hard to find the time to teach. But I followed the rules of the day."

Can Bad News Be Good News?

By Alden Thompson

The list of names on the board was short and sobering: Shari Booth, Brandon Moor, Eddie Zaugg, Meredith Fletcher, Marlowe Clarambeau. It could have been longer, but it was already too long. What these individuals had in common was that each had died a tragic accidental death while a student at Walla Walla University. Each loss had been a shattering event for families, for the campus.

I had written the list on the board as part of our Sabbath School discussion on the resurrection of Jesus. But before we turned to Scripture, I asked for a show of hands in response to two questions:

First, how many knew someone whose faith ultimately was strengthened as a result of a tragic death? Second, how many knew someone whose faith had been shaken by such an event?

The number of hands raised was not large in either group. But, strikingly, the number in each group was nearly the same. And it might have been even more helpful if I had asked how many knew someone who fit into both groups. Scripture itself shows that en route to ultimate peace, discouragement and near despair can lurk close at hand, even for devout believers.

Overlooking that biblical perspective can lead to an even deeper trauma. Recently a friend told me of a family whose son was suffering terribly from a bout with cancer but who had claimed God's promises and were confident that God would heal. But their son died. Had God failed?

Philip Yancey explored this issue in his 1997 book *Disappointment With God*. He was surprised to discover that miracles are most prominent when spiritual life is at its lowest. Examples? The time of the Exodus and during the ministry of Elijah and Elisha.

Maybe the two different responses from our Sabbath School class can actually represent two different points in the bereavement process—at least that potential is there. Can we, like Jesus, progress from near despair ("My God, why have you forsaken me?") to acceptance ("Father, into your hands I commend my spirit")? In any event, we should not be surprised if we find the valley of the shadow to be a lonely and godforsaken place.

And the fact that nearly half of the psalms are laments and complaints should give us a kind of back-door encouragement: In our despair, we have lots of company. And that's when we need company most.

Noted church historian Martin Marty tells a moving experience that he and his wife had shared as she was dying from cancer. At midnight, the regular time for her pain medications, they would read a psalm. She read the odd-numbered ones, and he read the even-numbered ones.

After a particularly difficult day, Marty recorded this conversation:

SHE: What happened to Psalm 88? Why did you skip it?

HE: I didn't think you could take it tonight. I am not sure I could. No, I am sure I could not.

SHE: Please read it, for me.

HE: All right:

...I cry out in the night before thee...
For my soul is full of troubles...
Thou hast put me in the depths of the Pit,
in the regions dark and deep...

SHE: I need that kind the most.[1]

"We agreed," notes Marty, "that often the starkest scriptures were the most credible signals of the Presence."

Now if even the bad news in Scripture turns out to be very good, we can know today that he will lead us through pain to consolation and hope. "I am with you always," he said. That's a promise we can trust.

[1] Martin Marty, *A Cry of Absence: Reflections for the Winter of the Heart* (HarperCollins, 1993), xi-xii.

Scripture shows that en route to ultimate peace, discouragement and near despair can lurk close at hand, even for devout believers.

Dream Church

BY KARAH THOMPSON

What are the key elements of a really great faith community?

In a file cabinet in my basement, I have a folder full of pages torn out of home-design magazines. They're chance ideas that have caught my eye through the years—things I'd like to incorporate into my dream house in the event that dream ever becomes a reality. The articles and photos are mismatched and random, but with the right architect and builder they *could* all come together into the perfect home for my family.

Recently I've been doing a different kind of dreaming. I've been collecting a few ideas taken from churches I've attended or visited and from thoughts shared between friends. These ideas are random and mismatched too; I've never seen all of them come together under one roof. Although I've attended many churches throughout my life, I'm pretty sure I've never been to the perfect church. That's not to say I haven't been in a structure that didn't house nearly everything a church should have, but none have been "just right," as Goldilocks would say.

While questioning friends about what their "dream church" would be, I found that their answers tended toward the obvious: friendly (that comes first on nearly everyone's list), alive, full, active, comfortable; all of those things come to mind when you imagine a fabulous church. Of course, those are the basics we would want to see in Any Church, USA, but really, what makes the perfect church? There are plenty of parishioners who are quite content in churches that don't have all of the above particulars in place. I decided to narrow down my list to the less obvious—but equally important—factors that go quietly unnoticed in so many churches, yet are key to creating a dream church. In no particular order:

LOCATION – Until you need to drive 45+ minutes just to get to your church, you probably won't understand the importance of location. Not only does a long commute create a more rushed and forced atmosphere on worship day, it also deeply hinders the ability of church members to socialize and connect in a real way during the week. Without a sense of closeness to each other and the local community, a church is only the shell of a building, filled on Sabbath morning and relatively hollow during the week. Many rural churches have members who drive for sometimes an hour one way just to worship together. I admire the dedication, but how can you invite a neighbor or co-worker to a church with that kind of commute? Church should be in our community, no matter how small or large.

DIVERSITY – One initially thinks of ethnicity, but in addition, a diversity in tradition, culture, and age are very important for creating a dynamic and realistic church environment. Without the variety of diverse and unique backgrounds of members to share ideas, bring fresh perspective or old wisdom, and create balance, a church can't be representative of the whole of God's matchless and purposeful creation. Shouldn't a snapshot of those attending the church also mimic

the surrounding community? We all have differences, but when it comes to worshiping and adoring God, we stand on common ground. A church whose platform and members are open to a variety of worship styles and ages is a rich place to be!

WARMTH – This simple element can't be falsely created. The dream church is full of Christian geniality toward each other, to God, with visitors, and for the surrounding community. The distinguishing factor between friendliness and warmth is sincerity. Anyone can shake a hand and say "Welcome and happy Sabbath." But to truly care about each being who walks through the church door takes affection that comes only from the heart. Especially on *some* days.

A warm church is one that genuinely treasures its children, young people, and elderly. Its members value the "It Takes A Village" principal in raising up spiritually strong members throughout their lives. Every day we are surrounded by "coldness" in emails, text messages, fully automated car washes, and endless other things that distance us from each other. Church should be just the opposite.

READY – A ready church is prepared for random visitors, newly invited friends, seekers, and non-members. Being prepared means having an awareness of Adventist cultural mores that make sense only to "us." The sermon and lesson-study discussions need to be meaningful and understandable whether or not you know what haystacks or Pathfinders are. A prepared church should get information from visitors, be prepared to feed or invite them out, and do a brief but heartfelt follow-up phone call a few days later. No one wants to come back to a place where you have surprised or confused the members! Imagine walking into a church for the first time in your life and leaving with a lunch invitation, four new friends, and a ride to a concert that week.

Another important thought on church readiness is being prepared for natural disasters and having a plan in place for assisting the community if a tragic event takes place. What better way to use the space of a church than to house people in a storm or to feed people after a fire? Church should be prepared for the best of times as well as the worst, and the community should know this.

FUN – Who wants to spend time in a place that isn't enjoyable? Churches can incorporate fun into their lives by planning social events, using gentle humor sprinkled throughout the services, and providing enough activities, educational opportunities, and programs to keep all ages learning and growing together. Often it doesn't take a huge expenditure of funds, but rather a few dedicated people who are willing to be creative and committed to making the church a great place to be.

Fun doesn't have to be limited to activities that take place in the church building, either. A rafting trip or ping pong tournament sound like memories in the making. Recently our small group went camping. It was the first overnight campout for nearly every person there, and being able to introduce our friends to the wild woods, food over the fire, and hiking and storytelling was more than amazing! Church should be a place we want to spend time, and none of us has time to waste in an atmosphere that doesn't include something enjoyable here and there.

HUMBLE – Without a corporate humility and a continual willingness to grow and change and seek God's master plan, we are fully imperfect in his eyes. Humility is put into action when leaders are willing to implement new ideas and work together to create an environment that is valuable to its members and to God in a real and lasting way.

The thing about a dream church is that each of us could come up with long lists of the most important factors in creating the right place to worship Jesus, and all of them would be unique. We all have personal needs that we want to see met within the walls and roof of our church. The purpose of church also changes throughout our lives and depending on personal circumstances. It can be a safe haven, a support network, a quiet place of worship, and countless other things that make it real to us in different times of need. Maybe the perfect church doesn't exist because we all have a different idea about what it should be.

My folder of ideas for the dream house has changed. Through the past few years I've tossed out pages that didn't fit into the life we have now. With two children and three pets, there are certain things that must be given up! I added new pages when I discovered that front-loading washers could hold 20 towels at one time! There are always improvements to be made to my imaginary home. When I find something that would make a kitchen more efficient or a bedroom more peaceful, I tear it out and toss it in the folder. Who knows if the house will ever be more than a dream, but I'm armed with ideas if the time comes.

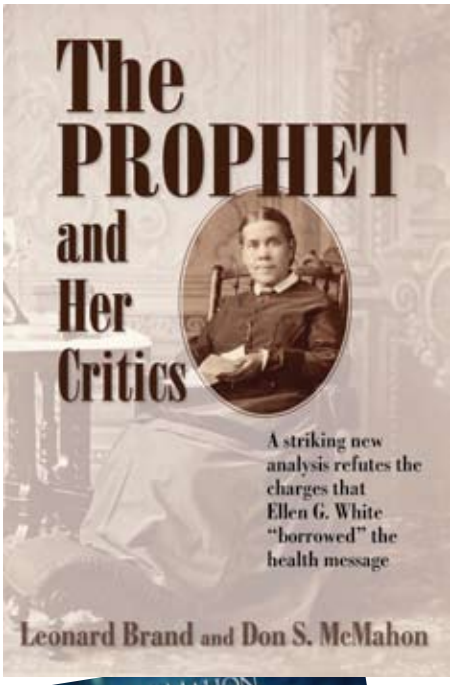
Maybe the dream church is really more like my folder. It's evolving, ever-changing, growing over time. Maybe its true value lies not in reaching perfection, but in the process of striving toward our dreams.

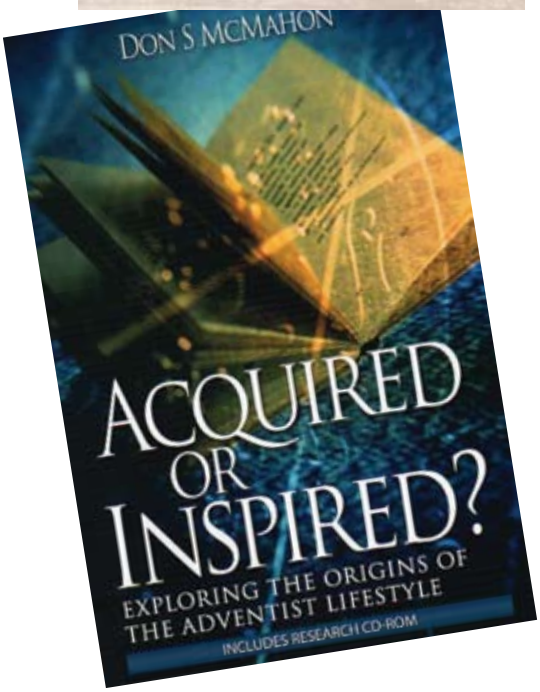
Karah Thompson is a mom and nurse from Birmingham, Ala.

Tell Us What Makes Your Dream Church

Adventist Today wants to know what you think. What big dreams do you have for your church? Have you seen something you love that would make every church better? Which elements of a "perfect church" would you nominate as most important?

Send your ideas to "Dream Church" at atoday@atoday, and we'll put it all together in an upcoming issue.





Natural or Supernatural

Review and Commentary on Two Books: (1) Don S. McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired? Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle.* Warburton, Victoria, Australia, Signs Publishing Co., 2005. 150 pages. (2) Leonard Brand and Don S. McMahon, *The Prophet and Her Critics: A Striking New Analysis Refutes the Charges That Ellen G. White "Borrowed" the Health Message.* Boise, ID, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Feb. 2005. 127 pages.

T. JOE WILLEY

These two books claim to use science to establish that Ellen White's health principles could have originated only through divine inspiration. McMahon is a retired Adventist ENT (ear, nose, and throat) surgeon in Australia; Brand, trained as a mammalogist, is best known as an apologist for creationism and is a biology professor in the School of Science and Technology at Loma Linda University.

McMahon and Brand focus much of their critique on *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (1976), written by Ronald L. Numbers, a historian of science and medicine. Numbers discovered that scattered through Ellen White's health writings were footprints of literary dependency from coeval health reformers. He also found that she embraced antiquated notions on inherited or acquired human characteristics and occasionally gave advice later shown to be wrong. Brand and McMahon seem especially annoyed by Numbers' failure to grant a role for divine inspiration in the historical output of White's writings.

To demonstrate divine origin, Brand and McMahon subjected samples of White's health writings to what they describe as "scientific" scrutiny. Ignoring her first publications on health, *An Appeal to Mothers* (1864) and *How to Live* (1865)—which together represent about 75 percent of her earliest writings—they arbitrarily selected for analysis a chapter on health in *Spiritual Gifts* (1864), based on her June 6, 1863, health vision. They also collected statements from *The Ministry of Healing* (1906), her most mature book on the subject, and various statements that appeared in Adventist publications.

For comparison, Brand and McMahon took statements from four contemporary health reformers, none of whom claimed divine insight. Before his collaboration with Brand, McMahon had created two *ad hoc* classifications: "what" statements (e.g., "Do not eat blood of animals") and "why" statements (e.g., "Blood brings out the destructive propensities and reduces morals"). Using his personal medical judgment, McMahon then "verified" each statement for accuracy and significance, scoring them as (1) inaccurate, (2) accurate and insignificant, or (3) accurate and significant. McMahon made no effort to distinguish between simple and complex or nested statements, for which some form of percentage ratings might be used.

According to McMahon and Brand,

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LEONARD BRAND received his Ph.D. from Cornell University. He is currently professor of biology and paleontology at Loma Linda University and has long been recognized as an apologist for the Adventist Church, primarily in the area of young-life creationism.

DONALD MCMAHON, MBBS, FRACS, DLO, lives in Melbourne, Australia, and is a retired ear, nose, and throat surgeon and university lecturer. He is currently a visiting lecturer at Avondale College in Australia.

Can science establish the supernatural in the health writings of Ellen G. White?

tural?

the non-Adventist health reformers were accurate 14.3 percent of the time on "what" statements, while Ellen White scored overall 55.3 percent on the same. On "why" statements, however, she scored no better than the uninspired writers. They justified the errors in her expository "why" statements on the grounds that God "could not have explained some of the 'whys' correctly at that time without inventing medical vocabulary and revealing physiological concepts that were not known until decades after Ellen White wrote." Not surprisingly, they concluded that "why" statements were not good tests of Ellen White's inspiration and probably "came from different sources of information" (pp. 73-74).

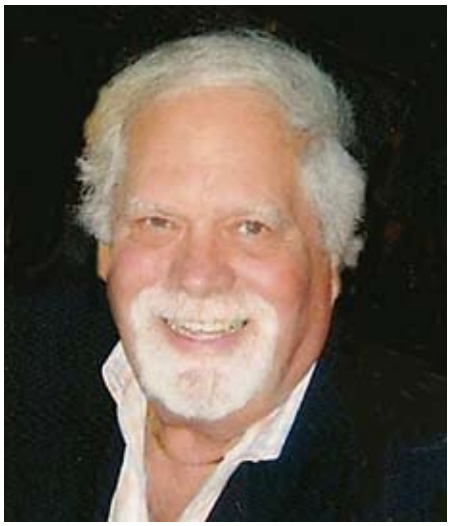
McMahon and Brand concede that Ellen White's significant "what" statements had already appeared in the health-reform literature—indeed, in some instances, in the *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*—and that "sometimes she used the wording found in these other reform publications in her own works" (pp. 62-65), but they nevertheless insist that the evidence points to divine inspiration. They also conclude that what she wrote in *Spiritual Gifts,* little more than a year after her 1863 vision, was more accurate than what came out in her later writings, after she had opportunity to read the books of other authors. If they had included *An Appeal to Mothers* and *How to Live*, they might have reached a different conclusion.

From a scientific point of view, both the approach that the authors employed and their conclusions are decidedly questionable. Despite claiming to apply "careful research methodology to test the hypothesis of divine inspiration" (p. 50), Brand and McMahon neither established normative controls nor followed standard scientific practices using a blind design. Blinding is a basic tool to prevent conscious and unconscious selection of research data. All observations should have been coded and randomized, and a team of unbiased experts (preferably non-Adventist health practitioners and historians) assigned to evaluate each statement or principle. The observations were selected to reinforce certain assumptions, and their failure to employ standard statistical procedures severely undermines their claim to be doing "scientific" analysis.

Brand and McMahon took Ellen White at her word regarding source dependency, assuming, as she claimed, that she was strictly dependent on a supernatural source. However, in writing *How to Live* she acknowledged searching and extracting from uninspired contemporary authors. (It would have been instructive for Brand and McMahon to use the selections included in *How to Live* as a control.) So similar were her early writings on health that readers became suspicious of copying. In October 1867 they wrote to *Review* Editor Uriah Smith and asked if Ellen White's health writings from vision had been influenced by other reformers. White replied in no uncertain terms: "I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts, Appeal to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in *How to Live*. I then searched the various works on hygiene and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to me."[1] Robert W. Olson, a former secretary of the White Estate, acknowledged in *Ministry* magazine in 1991 that this "infamous denial was at best conflated by Mrs. White."[2]

Another problem with this study is the fact that Brand and McMahon had no way of knowing how much bottom-up health and hygiene knowledge Ellen White already possessed as a result of living in a culture saturated with health reform and of becoming a wife and mother concerned about her family's health. The researchers should have designed a method that could discriminate between (1) what White already knew *a priori* about health before her vision and (2) what she learned in vision. Nowhere did she say, "This is what I already knew, and this is what I received from the Holy Spirit." As Numbers showed in 1976, White's "what" statements were not unique for her day; indeed, virtually all of her principles were already available in the *Review* for Adventist readers.

Strangely, Brand and McMahon never mention W.C. "Willie" White's account of his mother's ability to select gems from "rubbish." After the death of his mother, he explained how she obtained the material in her books: "In the early days of her



"From a scientific point of view, both the approach that [Brand and McMahon] employed and their conclusions are decidedly questionable."

Joe Willey

work, Mother was promised wisdom [from the Holy Spirit] in the selection from the writings of others, that would enable her to select the gems of truth from the rubbish of error. We have all seen this fulfilled, and yet when she told me of this, she admonished me not to tell it to others. Why thus restricted I never knew ..."[3]

Despite what Brand and McMahon tried to establish, it is clear that James and Ellen White acquired much of their knowledge of health reform from others and used it to guide their followers into a healthy lifestyle. Accepting the health gospel was motivated in part by the early Adventists' conviction that "cleanliness is next to godliness" and by a regard for their standing in the heavenly judgment. Adventist pioneer J.H. Waggoner probably summarized the development of the health message as well as anyone when he wrote in the *Review* in 1866: "We do not profess to be pioneers in the general principles of health reform. The facts on which this movement is based have been elaborated, in a great measure, by reformers, physicians, and writers on physiology and hygiene, and so may be found scattered through the land. But we do claim that by the method of God's choice it has been more clearly and powerfully unfolded, and is thereby producing an effect which we could not have looked for from any other means. … and so declared to be the means whereby a weak people may be made strong to overcome, and our diseased bodies cleansed and fitted for translation, then it comes to us as an essential part of present truth, to be received with the blessing of God, or rejected at our peril."[4]

Natural causes, not the supernatural, are all that is available for science and history to work with and still maintain logical integrity. Ellen White exerted a profound influence for good on health practices and institutions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But the source of her inspiration is a matter of faith, not science.

T. Joe Willey, Ph.D., taught neuroscience at Loma Linda University School of Medicine.

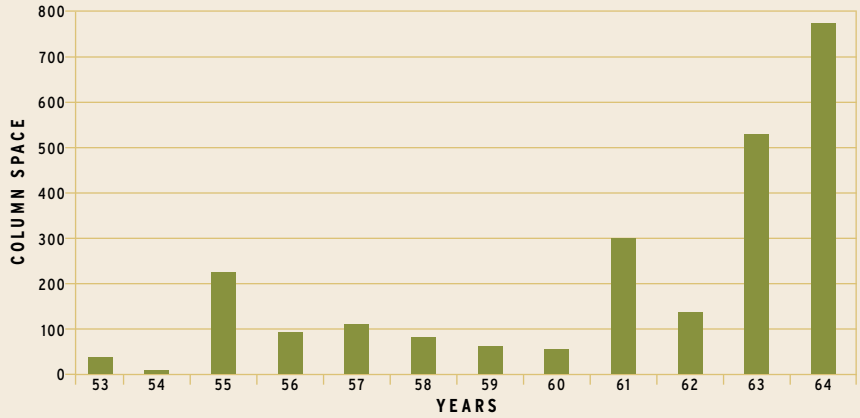
[1]*Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, Oct. 8, 1867.
[2]Robert W. Olson, "Ellen White's Denials," *Ministry*, Feb. 1991, p. 13. Olson indicated that "Ellen White had indeed read the health works of others in 1864 but had forgotten this fact by the time she made her 1867 statement."
[3]W.C. White to F.E. Froom, Jan. 8, 1928, *Selected Messages*, Book 3, Appendix C.
[4]J.H. Waggoner, *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, Aug. 7, 1866.

LEONARD BRAND
RESPONSE TO WILLEY

T. Joe Willey has given a number of reasons why he rejects the conclusions of our books. We will respond to them one at a time.

Willey makes a constructive suggestion about research design, and that is to analyze the data using a blind design.

Health Articles in the *Review* From 1853 Through 1864



A graph showing space devoted to a total of 118 health articles appearing in the *Review* from 1853 through 1864. Ellen White's writings on health appeared 1864-1865. By this time Adventists were in possession of the lifestyle principles found in her writings. The interest in health appears to begin in earnest around 1861. Approximately 60 percent of the *Review* articles were selected from non-Adventist health reformers; many were against tobacco, tea, and coffee. None of the *Review* articles were written by Ellen White.

Reanalyzing the data using this approach would be a helpful second step in this research. However, his statement that "the observations were selected to reinforce certain assumptions" is false. In contrast to Numbers, McMahon used all of the data from all of his sources and even made that data available on CD so that anyone else could do an evaluation of the data. We believe a blind reanalysis might change some of the numbers but would probably not change the conclusion. It would be worthwhile to test this.

Perhaps Willey's claim that we "selected" the data is referring in part to the fact that two publications, *An Appeal to Mothers* and *How to Live,* were not used in the main data analysis. Actually, in the book by Brand and McMahon a whole chapter was devoted to the issue of White's views on sexual relationships, including *An Appeal to Mothers*. *An Appeal to Mothers* dealt with essentially one issue, masturbation, and adding that one principle only slightly changes White's accuracy level for "whats," as determined by comparison with modern medical opinion.

Don McMahon has already done further research responding to various issues, including those raised by Willey, reported in a soon-to-be-published paper presented to the recent Ellen White symposium at Andrews University. He reanalyzed the principles of healthful living espoused by White and other health reformers up to 1871, including White's health principles in *Spiritual Gifts*, *An Appeal to Mothers*, *How to Live*, and *Testimonies* Vol. 2. He also included the book *Healthful Living* by David Paulson (1898), which includes statements made up to 1871 in letters, manuscripts, and journals. All of these were assessed using criteria from the World Health Organization's published *Risk Factors for Death and Disability* (2002). This approach resulted in no significant changes to the data in our published books.

Willey seems to dismiss the division of health principles into "whats" and "whys" because he considers it an *ad hoc* classification. Actually, it is a meaningful separation of two very different types of statements. It is not difficult to understand the difference between a principle, a statement of *what* to do (drink lots of water), and a physiological explanation of *why* the principle is important (not drinking water will damage your body).

The only data Willey cites from our work is his claim that the percentage accuracy for "what" statements was 55.3 percent for White and 14.3 percent for the non-SDA reformers. Where did he get these figures? They must be the result of analyzing what McMahon called "significant" health principles and excluding the minor health principles. It appears that Willey was not willing to recognize that White's health principles ("whats") ranged from 87 to 96 percent verified by modern medicine.

Giving Willey the benefit of the doubt, perhaps he used only the "significant" principles because he classified McMahon's "minor" principles as "insignificant." But this distorts the facts. McMahon classified the verified principles as "significant" or "minor" according to how much effect they have on health. Both categories are verified by modern science, and both make some positive impact on health. To relegate the minor ones as insignificant and not recognize that they are verified by modern medical knowledge gives a false impression of the evidence.

Willey makes the statement that "McMahon and Brand concede that Ellen White's significant 'what' statements had already appeared in the health-reform literature—indeed, in some instances, in the *Review* . . ." This statement would have been true if he had said that *some* of her "what" statements had already appeared in the health-reform literature, including the *Review*.

In fact, one of the most serious problems with Willey's critique is his claim that we don't know how much she

"Willey refers to a statement by White, denying that she read the works of other reformers before writing *How to Live*, a statement that contradicts other things she said and that is difficult to square with the evidence . . . As we pointed out in our book, prophets are not necessarily perfect in their personal lives, and this alone does not tell whether their inspirited writings are trustworthy."

Leonard Brand

knew about health principles before she had her 1863 health vision. He states that we took White at her word when she claimed "that she was strictly dependent on a supernatural source." He asserts that "virtually all of her health principles were already available in the *Review* for Adventist readers." Here it appears that Willey is unaware of the major content of our books and unaware that we did address this issue. Willey includes a graph of his own (the only new data he gives) showing that a large number of articles on health were published in the *Review* before her vision, especially beginning in 1861. However, we include data that directly addresses this question of how many of White's health principles could have come from this source. Health writings by White included very few of the principles that were in those *Review* articles, and the accuracy level of White's principles that were not in the *Review* (N = 28) is an order of magnitude higher than the accuracy of the *Review* principles that White did not use (N = 27). That difference in accuracy demands an explanation. She clearly did not get her health principles from the *Review*. Her accuracy level is also at least twice as high as any other health reformer of her day, and this also demands an explanation.

Willey does not answer, or even give reason to think he is aware of, the core of data in our books. If he has defensible logical reasons for thinking our analysis is wrong, why doesn't he explain why specific graphs and their interpretation are wrong? We invite readers to examine our books for themselves. For one thing, if we were intent on supporting the concept that all of her ideas came by inspiration, why would we recognize that her "whys" were no more accurate than those of other reformers of her day?

Willey refers to a statement by White, denying that she read the works of other reformers before writing *How to Live*, a statement that contradicts other things she said and that is difficult to square with the evidence (she also includes *Spiritual Gifts* in this statement, but the data indicate that she did not get her *Spiritual Gifts* health principles from other reformers). As we pointed out in our book, prophets are not necessarily perfect in their personal lives, and this alone does not tell whether their inspired writings are trustworthy.

Willey ends by stating that "natural causes, not the supernatural, are all that is available for science and history to work with and still maintain logical integrity." Willey and Numbers are here following a principle that defines the majority scientific view today. Willey's statement could have two possible meanings, and he doesn't indicate which one he intends. One meaning could be to state that scientific or historical research cannot use supernatural evidence in that research. That is fair enough, but neither Brand nor McMahon received any supernatural revelations in this research! All of our data are available from purely natural sources and can be examined by anyone. This research can't prove divine communication from God to White, but when the evidence indicates that White's accuracy level cannot even come close to being derived from any human source available during her lifetime, it is not especially scientific to pretend these data do not exist. They require an explanation. Does anyone have another realistic explanation besides inspiration to offer?

The other possible meaning of Willey's statement, and probably the one he intends, is that it is not scientific to use the supernatural as an explanation for things we see here on earth. But there is a logical problem with this concept, a problem that is not acknowledged by most of the scientific community. The aim of this research was to evaluate whether White's accuracy level can be accounted for by a non-supernatural explanation. If a question like this has two or more possible answers, and we eliminate one possible answer purely by definition before we even begin, we have eliminated the possibility of objective, open-minded research. This seems to be what both Numbers and Willey, by their own statements, have done. It is true that the source of her inspiration is a matter of faith, but in this case, a denial of the possibility of supernatural communication from God flies in the face of a mass of evidence. Pretending otherwise would not make us better scientists or historians.

The real question is not whether it is valid to consider the possibility of a supernatural source. The real question is simply whether additional careful research (not anecdotal research like that of Numbers and Willey), open-minded research that does not *a priori* deny the possibility of divine inspiration, will continue to support our data analysis. That is what it means to do valid science on this topic.

DON McMAHON
RESPONSE TO WILLEY

T. Joe Willey has critiqued two books: *The Prophet and Her Critics,* a philosophical work to which I contributed in a small way only, and *Acquired or Inspired*? an analytical book that I wrote. Willey has relied totally on the former book to make judgment on the latter, with no reference from, or usage of, the contents found in *Acquired or Inspired?* or its accompanying CD. Even though Willey gained the contrary view, the data I used was collected and handled without preconceived prejudice. Four panel members, medical practitioners who have a good knowledge of lifestyle and health, were presented a random, blind set of medical statements to assess. These people had publicly acknowledged their differing views on the inspiration of Ellen White, but they had high enough integrity not to let their personal opinions influence their assessments. One assessor held a similar view to Willey (pp. 24, 25).

There were well-set-up controls (chapter 4). The "whys" were the controls for the "whats." They represent half of all the

"Willey seems to think that I consider myself to have used science to prove inspiration. May I quote my final conclusion: 'When the knowledge of the mid-19th century is taken into consideration, it is impossible to exclude inspiration from Ellen White's [medical] writings.'"

Don McMahon

medical statements made by Ellen White and were found to be a random selection from the writings of the time. The innate accuracy of the assessment of the "whys" is seen by the progressive improvement that occurred over time (p. 113). I have recently expanded the research to include a work by Kellogg in 1899, and this also fits the curve. I have also included an expanded list of "whys" used by Ellen White over the same period, and she also follows the same curve. Contrary to what Willey claims, I did use Ellen White writings that were written after she admittedly "incorporated other people's work," as a control to assess what she wrote in *Spiritual Gifts*. This did include the *How to Live* articles (pp. 39, 64 and White "whats" 4, 7, 9 and "whys" 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 on the CD); but due to the small numbers of extra "whats" added in *How to Live,* I expanded this control to all post-1864 work (pp. 44, 45). The other control that I used was the minor "whats". They represent close to half of the "whats" and also are a random selection from the knowledge of the time. These were used as a control to assess the significant and unverified "whats," where the first is a bias selection and the latter a bias rejection (pp. 72, 73, chapter 14).

I was very mindful of any pre-existing medical knowledge that Ellen White might have had at the time of the vision (chapter 5), and I did a lot of reading around this subject and consequently made appropriate adjustments in the statistics (pp. 122, 123).

One area where Willey makes a correct assessment is that *Ministry of Healing* was written much later than those I was comparing her with. With the use of the book *Healthful Living* and an 1899 book by Kellogg, I have been able to establish nearly all of Ellen White's early writings and compare her standard over the later half of the nineteenth century with the other health workers in both "whats" and "whys." This has not altered the conclusions (presented to the Fourth Annual "Ellen White and Current Issues" Symposium, April 7, 2008, and soon to be published).

The *Review and Herald* was read and incorporated to see if James White was a factor in Ellen White's gift. As there were insufficient "whats" used in the *Review and Herald* to be a factor, and as there were plenty of other sources for her to copy, it was a minimal factor if at all. Much more importantly, I assessed James' ability to select gems "from the rubbish." He proved inadequate to do so, and thus could not be a help (chapter 7).

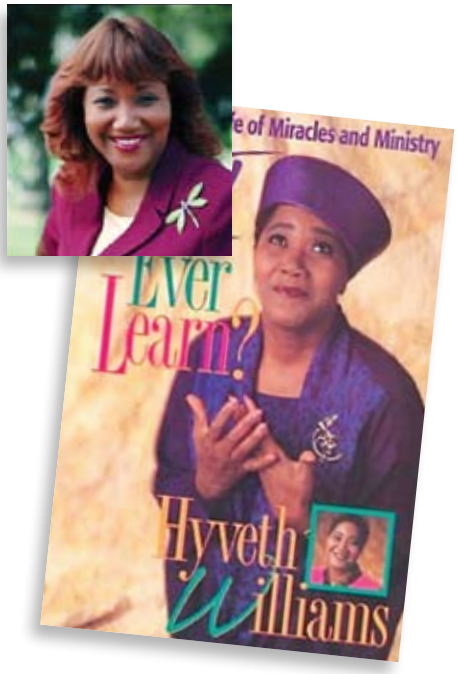
Willey seems to think that I consider myself to have used science to prove inspiration. May I quote my final conclusion: "When the knowledge of the mid-19th century is taken into consideration, it is impossible to exclude inspiration from Ellen White's [medical] writings." This means an entirely different thing.

Ellen White's gift in her medical writing is illustrated in the words of her son, whom Willey quotes: "In the early days of her work, Mother was promised wisdom (from the Holy Spirit) in the selection from the writings of others, that would enable her to select the gems of truth from the rubbish of error." That is exactly the gift I have shown Ellen White to have demonstrated. Alcott could not do it, Coles could not do it, nor could Jackson or Kellogg or James White. Not even the people who lectured me in medical school in the 1950s with 1950s knowledge could match her standard. But Ellen White could do it and did it so well that she differed from her contemporaries by 11 standard deviations; this is as close as statistics can get to infinity. This is why I have placed all of the data on a CD and included it in the book. If I had marked [skewed the evidence] favoring Ellen White by 11 standard deviations, it would be obvious to anyone with even rudimentary medical knowledge. Forgive me for using a crude Australianism that illustrates how obvious it would be: "even the drover's dog would see it."

Go to the Adventist Today *website,* ***www.atoday.com****, for additional discussion of this topic.*

7 QUESTIONS for...Dr. Hyveth Williams

By Marcel Schwantes



Once a successful politician and a drinking feminist who was also an atheist, Dr. Hyveth Williams had her own "Damascus Road experience." This led her down a path to become the first woman senior pastor and also the first black woman pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in America. Currently, she is the senior pastor of the Campus Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Loma Linda, Calif., and is an adjunct professor of religion at Loma Linda University.

She's now an internationally acclaimed author, speaker, and in-demand preacher of the gospel. Her influence is profoundly felt around the world.

I spent some time interviewing and getting to know the real person ordained by God to affect lives everywhere. Here is the result of our chats.

1 Your story of conversion is well-known. Many people who convert maintain certain personality traits unique to their DNA as designed by the Creator. Are there any parts of that cigar-smoking, swearing feminist politician that still remain in you as a preacher, counselor, and minister?

One of the fantastic things about God is that when he changes a person inside out, he takes old corrupted passions, cleans them up, and sends us out to make waves for Jesus. So my answer is yes, I am still passionate, political, and–some would agree–pushy. Only now, it's with a winsome smile and a compassionate heart. I know what I want, I set my face like a flint toward my goals, and in time I look up and I've arrived. Then I start all over again with new challenges and opportunities.

2 Before you turned your life over to Christ, your No. 1 goal as a politician was to get elected as the first black female mayor in the United States. How much of that personal drive and ambition would you say led you to become the first black female pastor and first female senior pastor in our denomination?

I'm sure that some of that latent ambition drove my life, but I was not particularly aware of it. The fact is that in the beginning, I didn't want to be a minister. I prayed and fasted, asking God to allow me to continue on the lucrative path I was on. When I heard him again instruct me to go into the ministry, I was just nominated to be vice president of a quasi-federal agency in Washington, D.C., with offices in several states. I even promised to pay double tithe and give more Bible studies, but God would not bargain with me. Eventually I gave in and pursued ministry. I had no idea that I would be successful because at the time there was a great hoopla about women in ministry, and I was certainly discouraged by some church leaders to pursue this goal. I was told that I was too old, divorced, and a woman of color so my chances of being hired was nil. From that background I launched out thinking, *If I want to throw my life away at this stage, who better to throw it on but God?* I had already tried the world and gotten zero returns for my investment.

Anyway, as I've said in my autobiography, *Will I Ever Learn?*, being first is not all that it's cracked up to be, but at this time in my life I wouldn't trade it for anything. I just thank God that he trusted me to be the first.

3 You have been both praised and criticized for your sermons, theology, and preaching style. How and why are you misunderstood?

I believe that sometimes I am misunderstood because I share things some members of our church have not heard or thought of before. However, more often than not, after people have taken the time to check things out, they agree with what I have presented. I am of the belief and agree with Ellen White when she said that "truth is never afraid of scrutiny." Since I am a pastor who happens to be female, there's greater scrutiny and skepticism when some people listen to my sermons. The blessing is that there are more who appreciate them than those who don't. It reflects a lot of the many [positive] emails I receive each day.

4 You are the recipient of several distinguished awards, including last year's Citizen of the Year for San Bernadino County. If you were to choose one personal success story as a pastor, what would it be?

About eight years ago a stranger challenged me to do something about pregnant teens in our county. She owned an agency that looked after girls who are wards of the state—pregnant, truant, abused, broken in every way. I shared this with my church, and they rallied with me. We started a program called Macedonian Ministry, echoing the call the apostle received from that city. A group of medical students and social workers took over the program and recruited a lot of other volunteers. We taught these teens a lot of skills and tutored them so they could graduate from high school. We dedicated their babies every year and taught them about the love of Jesus. Many of them have moved on to find jobs, live independently off the streets, or attend college. Every day we run into one or more of them who share their success stories with us. The ministry leaders are now focusing on foster children.

5 What is your biggest regret as a pastor in the Adventist Church?

None yet.

6 Your church, Campus Hill, is smack in the mecca of Adventism: Loma Linda University. What are you most proud of about your church in an area so saturated with other Adventist churches competing for territory?

First, we are known for our diversity. Sixty-five different nationalities worship in our church and get along as kingdom dwellers. Second, we are lauded for our involvement in the surrounding community. Third, the foundation out of which the above grows is our

consistent preaching of the gospel; you may see our Gospel Statement on our website. This has been shared with ministers around the world, some of whom have adopted it in their churches.

How has your church benefited from the explosion of media technologies?

A few years ago we established the position of a media pastor and invested in video equipment to record our worship services. We were able to attract the interest of Hope Channel, on which our sermons, musical programs, and counseling series called "A Painted World: Portraits of Illusion and Reality" are aired daily, worldwide.

Like other churches, we face many challenges in these uncertain economic times. God, on his part, has been consistently faithful in opening opportunities where there seemed to be none. To him be the glory!

Due to space constraints, this interview was edited for content. For the full version, visit our website at ***www.atoday.com.*** *Visit Dr. Williams' website at* ***www.HyvethWilliamsMinistries.org.***

Two Requests: Adventist Offering Envelopes and Jesuits

Adventist Today readers are invited to assist researchers in two current studies. The first is examining variations in offering envelopes being used in Adventist churches in North America. The second seeks to document when Adventists first began to allege that Jesuits are infiltrating the Adventist Church. We currently possess evidence of such allegations back to the mid-1920s.

Please mail examples of offering envelopes to *Adventist Today*, P.O. Box 8026, Riverside, CA 92515-8026.

Please email to ervin.taylor@atoday.com any information you possess concerning Jesuits and the Adventist Church, including the existence of documents or other written materials that contain these allegations.

Thank you for your assistance.

Adventist Man

Rock and Roll Figuring Last Days Legalism or Apathy?

Is rock and roll music sinful?

Obviously not. The established statute of sinful limitations for music is 28.7 years. After that, a music genre is free and clear, redeemed through maturation.

Moreover, the further along in time we move from a rhythmic innovation, the more harmless it becomes. Thus boogie-woogie today is cute, played with impunity by Adventist academy bands, whereas 70 years ago devout parents burst new aortic pathways if they heard a measure of it.

Adventist Man's own preferred pop music, folk rock, became sanctified on May 4, 1993.

If you're keeping track, rap is still sinful.

We hear often that we are in "the last days," but does anyone actually know when Jesus will return?

Some have used Bible texts—such as "The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matt. 24:44, RSV) and "You know neither the day nor the hour" (Matt. 25:13, RSV)—to suggest that no one knows the time of Jesus' second coming.

Adventist Man prefers to use "the plain words of Scripture" in the Authorized Version. As Matthew 24:36 points out, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Ignoring the last part, note that this verse literally says that no *man* knoweth. That opens up fully half of humanity for such a time-keeping as this!

As an example, in the film *The Return of the King,* the Witch-King warns, "No man can kill me." Galadriel tears off her helmet, declares "I am *no man*," thrusts her sword, and he crumples like a can of Mountain Dew at the bottom of the Mariana Trench. (*Hooray, X chromosomes!*)

Then again, perhaps, as Jesus stated, really nobody knows when the Son of Man will appear again. Every being is liable to the surprising midnight stroke of death. This does take a bit of the sport out—making people accountable *all* the time.

Isn't that just like Jesus?

What's worse—legalism or apathy?

Adventist Man has to wonder, Would you rather die from asphyxiation or starvation? Legalism smothers; apathy abandons.

Fortunately, Adventist Man shuns both extremes, just as he shuns the excesses of so-called "conservatives" and so-called "liberals." As a bulwark of balanced humility and enlightened perspective, Adventist Man perceives that the fire of legalism and the ice of apathy are equally destructive. Witness Robert Frost's sterling poem "Fire and Ice":

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

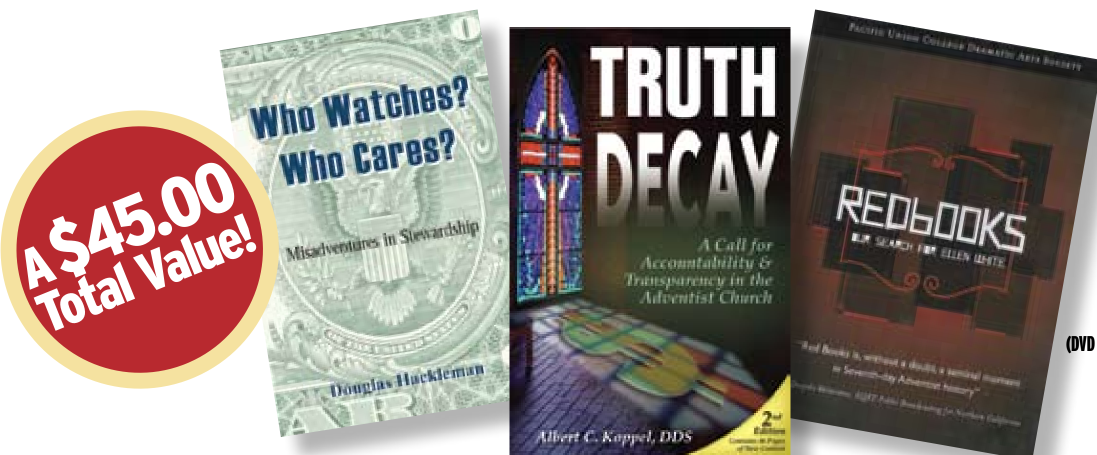
Do you have a tough question? Adventist Man has "the answer." You can email him at atoday@atoday.com

Candid. Faithful. *Adventist Today.*

STEP 1: Take this form (or a photocopy) to your weekly study group.

STEP 2: Sign up 7 friends (or more) to *Adventist Today* magazine for only $19.50 each for one year.

STEP 3: We'll send one set of these free gifts (to the first address listed) for your whole group to enjoy.



(DVD of Redbooks play)

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