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**Uncomfortable Choices: The Difficult Journey to University Status and from
Washington, D.C. to Berrien Springs – a Faculty Perspective**

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(Draft)

“While everyone was courteous, the spirit of criticism and hostility was clearly felt.” Old Testament professor Siegfried Horn had noted this in his diary on Sabbath October 25, 1958. He was recording his impressions of a not-to-be forgotten faculty meeting he had attended at Potomac University the previous day.¹ For several weeks, the faculty had become increasingly suspicious as rumors flew around and now they were distressed and angry. They felt betrayed and hurt. Horn notes that they had been “summoned” to the faculty meeting and it was the first time for them to officially meet with their new president, Floyd Rittenhouse who had served as president of Emmanuel Missionary College in Michigan for the past three years. Though he had been appointed to Potomac University four months previously, the summer had passed and he had not yet made the transfer. Rittenhouse was now accompanied by the University Board Chair, Reuben Figuhr. The two presidents needed to officially report on the momentous decision just taken at Annual Council (about to be taken) concerning the future of the new university. With its Seminary and not yet one-year-old Graduate School, it was to be moved from the nation’s capital to a tiny country town in southern Michigan. President Figuhr, in a surprise move by-passing the University board and its own relocation committee, had taken the matter directly to the church’s October Annual Council and the fateful decision had been taken earlier that same day (or on Friday October 24). A vigorous debate on the issue had spread over two days and the question was decided by secret ballot with support of only a 65 percent majority of the Annual Council delegates. University faculty listening in on the debate had been “stunned” at the result, remembered language teacher, Leona Running. In fact, they remained “struck dumb all weekend.”² The process and the result had deeply upset not just the faculty but also many others.

The first University President, Ernest Dick, who concurrently served as the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and had previously served with distinction as General Conference Secretary for a period of sixteen years, called the decision “a denominational tragedy.” Edward Heppenstall, the systematic theology teacher at the seminary,

¹ Siegfried Herbert Horn Diary (SHHD) October 25, 1958. It is not clear from Horn’s diary whether this faculty meeting occurred on Wednesday before the matter went to Annual Council or immediately after the Friday decision. He writes of the decision as a *fait accompli*. Beaven reports that the first time the faculty saw Rittenhouse in Takoma Park was on Thursday when he appeared on the platform at Annual Council standing with Figuhr. W. H. Beaven to F. O. Rittenhouse, February 13, 1959, Fld - Presidential Correspondence, Vande Vere Collection, CAR.

² Runnings’s reaction is recalled in an interview with Edith Stone by Meredith Jones Gray, May 22, 2001 cited in *Forward in Faith: Andrews University 1960-1990*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2024) 24.

would later describe the decision as smelling “of human folly” and made by “men wholly without divine guidance.”³ Richard Hammill, the associate director of the General Conference Education Department, the official assigned to advise the new university, voted against the relocation, believing it to be an unwise decision and beyond financial resources.⁴ Charles Weniger, the Seminary Dean at the time, “said that he could not understand why God has permitted it.” Horn himself was convinced that the church had made “a mistake” and that the leaders did not really know what they were doing.⁵ Fifteen years later when in 1973 Horn was asked to serve as Seminary Dean at Berrien Springs, he still had not been persuaded otherwise. The highly contentious decision caused a huge upheaval.

Appointed as Potomac President in June 1958, Rittenhouse, who was living in Michigan had not previously appeared on campus, nor had he been replaced at the Michigan college, and by October there was much uncertainty about whether he would even move to Washington, D.C. It was rumored that his wife did not like the idea and did not want to move. In the interim, all kinds of anxieties and suspicions had developed among the faculty and dark rumors had spread. His appearance at the October faculty meeting was “four months too late,” noted Horn biting. During the feisty meeting, church historian Daniele Walther had given what Horn considered a “fine speech,” in cutting protest at the decision and the lack of consultation. The faculty, Walther claimed, “had been treated like a medieval wife who was sold by their feudal Lords with the land on which they live.” In his reply, Fighur had retorted that even if the faculty had been asked for their opinion, it would not have made much difference in the decision. The ‘Church’ has spoken,” he declared. It was now a situation where the faculty would need “to carry out the action taken like any minister who is being moved.”⁶ Rittenhouse, according to the Graduate School Dean, Winton Beaven, had talked only of the “glories of EMC” and confirmed for the faculty that he just did not understand the Seminary, its culture or its mission.⁷

The momentous October 1958 decision was clearly deeply traumatic for the faculty, for the administrators involved in making the decision and for those responsible for implementing it. In

³ E. Heppenstall to D. Ford, December 13, 1959.

⁴ R. Hammill, *My Pilgrimage: Memoirs of an Adventist Administrator*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992), 86.

⁵ SHHD, October 25, 1958.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ W. H. Beaven to F. O. Rittenhouse, February 23, 1959.

the months following the decision, Winton Beaven, would report that relations between the president and faculty had deteriorated to the lowest ebb he had ever witnessed between an administrator and teachers on any campus he had observed. He noted that Rittenhouse, who was able to visit the Washington campus only occasionally in the aftermath of the decision, had also sensed the hostility and had sometimes “reciprocated in kind.” In Beaven’s assessment, the situation was “acute and getting worse.” Only two of the faculty, he reported, wanted to move and they were not “wildly enthusiastic.” Most of them, he said, questioned the wisdom of the decision and were fearful and hostile though they did not dispute the action and had not held meetings or circulated petitions in any attempt to prevent the move.⁸ Personal or family difficulties might pose an impediment to moving for some, but the real problem was that the whole faculty feared for the “integrity” of the Seminary and were “desperately afraid for its future.” They did not want to be absorbed into “some larger project whereby their identity and purposes would be lost.”⁹

If the October 25 Annual Council decision had involved administrators weighing up numerous complex and uncomfortable options, it also confronted faculty with uncomfortable choices. This paper will first briefly survey developments leading to the creation of Potomac University. It will then review the winding and sometimes convoluted path church leaders travelled in naming and locating the university as a context for exploring the practical challenges that the relocation decision posed for faculty and their families. This analysis will be from the perspective of some of the faculty impacted by the decision. Diary sources, memoirs and newly available correspondence collections give new insights for this social history perspective on the historic decision.

A Maturing Church responds to Theological Challenge and Social Change

Frustrated at not being able to organize a world-wide Bible conference in 1932 in order to address theological challenges recently raised by W. W. Fletcher in Australia and Ludwig Conradi in Germany, in 1933 General Conference president Charles H. Watson proposed the

⁸ W. Beaven to F. O. Rittenhouse, February 13, 1959.

⁹ Ibid. Beaven believed that faculty who had been with the Seminary for a long time in fact had “good cause” for their suspicion and apprehension. Decisions were frequently made over their heads by church administrators without any consultation. The Seminary was regarded as an extension of the General Conference like the finance office and directions given should simply be followed.

formal establishment of an Adventist theological seminary in America to address the pressing need of ensuring church unity in its doctrinal understanding.¹⁰ Realizing that such a plan was premature, given the deepening stresses of the economic recession of the early 1930s, Watson turned instead in the autumn of 1933 to a more limited but feasible strategy and in the summer of 1934 commenced a General Conference-sponsored succession of annual 12-week courses through an Advanced Bible School at Pacific Union College. The program, under the supervision of General Conference Secretary Milton E. Kern, was designed initially for college, academy and nursing school bible teachers, selected pastors and editors and some college ministerial students.¹¹ In 1936, after three summer sessions at Angwin, the General Conference took action to establish a permanent Seminary in Takoma Park, Maryland at the General Conference headquarters with Kern as its president and no longer General Conference Secretary.¹² Named, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary the institution was housed in temporary quarters in the summer of 1937 with a program of at least two 12-week sessions each year and a third if needed.¹³ The first dedicated classroom building constructed for the Seminary was completed in 1941. A formal academic Masters degree in religion was offered in 1942 and the annual teaching program extended to three sessions. A professional Bachelor of Divinity degree (longer than a Masters program) was added in 1945. The great majority of students during the first decades, however, in the tradition of early Adventist ministerial education, were short-term students taking in-service courses in order to upskill for better

¹⁰ According to Watson, the 1932 Bible Conference had been planned in response to a petition received from the Australasian field appealing for help to address theological questions that “brought perplexity” to the Australian ministry. The expression was a euphemism to describe problems for which they could find no answer. After extensive planning efforts, the Conference had to be postponed because the rise of “the Fascist Regime” in Germany “seriously restricted the movement of men and money” and made it impractical for European personnel to be able to participate. On April 27, 1932, the General Conference approved the request of the European fields that the conference be postponed. C. H. Watson, “Information Concerning the Australasian Petition to the General Conference,” July 12, 1948. RG “Biblical Research Files,” Fld – E. S. Ballenger, GCArch.

¹¹ M. E. Kern report on “Advanced Bible School,” General Conference Committee Minutes (GCCMin), October 22, 1936.

¹² Meredith Jones Gray provides an excellent, comprehensive and detailed account of the history of the Seminary, its absorption into Potomac University, and its eventual relocation to Berrien Springs in Michigan in her second volume on the history of Andrews University, *Forward in Faith: Andrews University 1960-1990*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2024) 1- 65. A briefer account is given by E. K. Vande Vere in *The Wisdom Seekers*, (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1972) 243-252.

¹³ Choosing the name had involved “several days” of consideration. M. E. Kern, “The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,” *RH*, December 31, 1936, 14; Jones Gray, *Forward in Faith*, 6. Choosing a name had elicited many days of discussion.

teaching or ministry. In the thirteen years between 1934 and 1946, only 34 out of the many hundreds of students (less than 3 percent) completed a formal degree.¹⁴ Enrolment growth continued steadily during the next decade with apartment buildings added for married students, the occupation of temporary space in the adjacent General Conference building for needed classrooms and a rapidly expanding library. Rising educational standards in the general population during the post-World War II era led to higher expectations for professional ministry and in 1953 a fifth year of seminary study (beyond a four-year college degree) was established as the minimum education for ministerial internship. After a year or two of uncertainty about the policy, it was firmly established again in 1956. This led to huge pressure on seminary facilities.

In the meantime, during the early 1950s, societal educational standards had also been steadily rising for the elementary and secondary school sector with an increasing number of State educational authorities requiring five years of post-secondary education to qualify for teacher certification. In response to this development, the General Conference's Annual Council in 1950 established a Graduate Studies committee to investigate the problem, but it made little progress. When in 1954 Reuben Figuhr became General Conference President, the problem of rising educational standards had gained more urgency and he gave the matter of the rising demand for more higher education closer attention. A survey in 1954 revealed that only 25% of Adventist school teachers met the emerging state standards. In response, scattered Adventist Colleges had begun offering masters degrees, but by 1954, one-third of the entire Adventist teaching force (400) were enrolled in non-Adventist graduate programs. This was perceived as a possible threat to the distinctive ethos of Adventist education. Figuhr reactivated the dormant Graduate Studies Committee and assigned two sub-groups to study the needs of the church for graduate education on both the west coast and the east coast. E. E. Cossentine, the General Conference Education Director, studied west coast demand, while his associate Richard Hammill was assigned to look at the east coast situation. At this time, the College of Medical Evangelists (CME) in California was urging an expansion of its institutional objectives to embrace research and the quest for new

¹⁴ Seminary Dean, Denton Reebok reported the figures at the 1946 General Conference session. *General Conference Bulletin*, 1946:7, 166-168; Charles Weniger, "The Seminary Comes of Age," *The Journal of True Education*, June 1954, 36, 37. See also Floyd Greenleaf, *In Passion for the World: A History of "Seventh-day Adventist Education*, (Nampa ID: Pacific Press, 2005) 354.

knowledge as well as teaching. This, too, was a response to rising societal expectations.¹⁵ Autumn Council in 1954 approved the CME request. Before long, this decision would have major implications for the whole of Adventist Higher Education. It subtly emphasized the importance of research degrees as a qualification for employment, and it raised the complicated and highly vexed question of the use of state funding for research activities in Adventist education.¹⁶

In response to the recommendations of the two study groups, Autumn Council in 1956, under the leadership of Figuhr, recognized the “continual upgrading in the level of education on the part of the whole population” and that Adventists, too, were increasingly “education conscious.”¹⁷ The time had come for the church to invest in “a better quality of graduate work” than what was then available to Adventist youth. It approved the immediate establishment of a new graduate school in the east to partner with the seminary and it also authorized the establishment of the denomination’s first university—which would function under the General Conference and embrace both the Seminary and the Graduate School while affiliating with Washington Missionary College (WMC) for its undergraduate base. The new university would be established in 1957. In the month after Annual Council, Ernest Dick, the president of the Seminary, , was elected to serve the university as “temporary” university president and Winton Beaven, professor of practical theology was appointed as graduate dean¹⁸ Organizational specifications were clearly spelled out. The Seminary was to retain its separate identity as the sole post-baccalaureate ministerial training institution for the world field, but it would be “organically” embraced as part of the new University while all things undergraduate in the affiliated college program were to be the expense of the local Union Conference. Approval was also given “in principle” for the establishment of further graduate programs in the western states to be coordinated with the College of Medical Evangelists (CME) with implied endorsement of the idea that CME would also transition to university status. It was given permission to begin offering two PhD degrees. Further development in the west, however, was to be delayed

¹⁵ For a helpful summary perspectives on these developments see Floyd Greenleaf, *In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005) 353-373.

¹⁶ See the discussion in my *Ostriches and Canaries: Coping with Change in Adventism 1966-1979* (Westlake Village, CA: Oak and Acorn, 2022) 72-74, 215-217, 343-349.

¹⁷ “Minutes of the Committee on Graduate Work,” October 22, 1956, RG 21, Box 3495, fld – I, GCArch.

¹⁸ General Conference Officers Minutes (GCOMin), November 21, 1956. Dick was already 70 years of age.

enabling the church to better manage the new investments within available financial resources. A delay would also enable the education programs in the west to work through their educational rivalries and settle the identity of what the Loma Linda institution would become: a comprehensive university or a health education university with a medical school.

Naming Challenges

What to call the proposed new university provoked conflict right from the start. After considering a range of options, the Seminary Board, to whom the matter of selecting a name had been entrusted, recommended to the 1957 Spring meetings of the General Conference Committee the name “Andrews University.”¹⁹ A long general discussion of the wisdom of using a pioneer’s name or the specific denominational name ensued which resulted in the Spring Council deciding unanimously to reject the Seminary Board recommendation and adopt the name “Adventist University.”²⁰ Attorneys were instructed to draw up the articles of incorporation accordingly. Three weeks later, just a day before the attorneys planned to submit their documentation to the US Congress, an urgent memorandum from the General Conference Officers instructed them to put the submission on hold.²¹ Time was needed for reconsideration of the name.

Reaction from the local field to the name “Adventist University” had been swift and strongly negative. Having “Adventist” on academic diplomas in some countries would be an impediment to the employment of graduates. It could also pose problems for the issuing of travel visas both to and from mission territories, at least in some parts of the world. A denominational name for the university could also be a barrier to obtaining grants from large foundations such as the Ford Foundation. Adventist college registrars at their annual meeting shortly after the Spring Council, voted to write a letter of strong protest. The use of the name

¹⁹ The name of John Andrews had first been suggested back in 1937 as a formal name for the Theological Seminary but had been by passed in favor of the church name. SDATheolSem BdMin, “Report of Committee on the Advanced Bible School,” 1936. 230. In 1958. W. Paul Bradley, an associate secretary in the General Conference and a member of the Potomac University board claimed later that he had been an early advocate of the name “Andrews University.” He again suggested the name to Rittenhouse shortly after the October vote to relocate the university. W. P. Bradley to F. O. Rittenhouse, November 17, 1958, Fld Misc 0472, CAR. See also Jones Gray, *Forward*, 47.

²⁰ GCCMin, April 18, 1957.

²¹ W. R. Beach, “Memorandum from the General Conference Officers,” May 9, 1957. RG 21 {1957} Box 3774, Fld – SDA Grad School, GCArch.

“Adventist University” was a “radical and sad mistake,” wrote one respected registrar who had found the decision “stunning.”²² The General Conference Offices waited until Figuhr returned from his travels abroad before taking up the matter again. As it turned out, negative reactions also came from overseas. The matter went back to the university board for more in-depth discussion. Hammill notes that “several names were decided upon in succession.”²³ This process of formally adopting a name for a time and then abandoning it did not increase the confidence of the faculty. Finally, as Siegfried Horn noted in his diary, “after a year of wrangling, actions and counteractions,” the name “Potomac University” was approved by Annual Council upon recommendation of the University Board.²⁴ The use of a geographical descriptor for the institution was at last thought best. But the adoption of the name did not end the naming drama.

Shortly after the October 1957 naming decision, university officials discovered that in the District of Columbia the name was actually already owned by another business enterprise and had been used for a now defunct institution that had been operated as a “degree mill.” According to Horn, the institution “had a bad name.”²⁵ Embarrassingly, church officials had to pay a fee to the legal owners of the name and request them to disband their entity. Only then was the Adventist university able to have the name assigned to them by an act of Congress and have the constitution and bylaws of the university finally approved. Apparently, the church’s legal attorneys had not been thorough enough in their due diligence.²⁶ Faculty were embarrassed at the snafu and somewhat discouraged that the university had to start off with a name that carried considerable baggage. Horn’s view of things, apparently shared by other faculty, was that “we have very inefficient leadership,” and he lamented that “we are becoming the laughingstock of the nations.”²⁷ But the naming saga was still not over.

When late in 1958 it would be decided to relocate the university to Michigan, the name would again be revisited as it became clear that Potomac, as a geographic identifier, would no

²² E. D. Dick to W. R. Beach, May 5, 1957; W. R. Beach to E. D. Dick, May 10, 1957, RG 21 {1957} Box 3774, Fld – SDA Grad School, GCArch.

²³ Hammill, 81.

²⁴ SHHD, November 1, 1957; GCCMin, October 25, 1957.

²⁵ SHHD, April 6, 1960.

²⁶ Hammill, 82.

²⁷ SHHD, April 6, 1960.

longer work. The uncomfortable process of determining a new, more appropriate name began all over again. This time, the naming process would have to involve two academic communities who in 1960 were still in the very early stages of getting used to each other. And EMC had only recently settled comfortably back on Emmanuel after a vigorous debate about the suitability of the name for the Berrien Springs institution.²⁸ As Andrews' historian Emmet K. Vande Vere reports, numerous names vied with each other for pre-eminence among the constituencies of the two institutions. "Lake Central" and "Lake Arbor" were two early favorites. Rittenhouse liked the idea of using pioneer names and apparently suggested "Griggs" and "Farnsworth" or even "Pioneer Memorial." He also later recalled favoring "Marantha" as a good religious option, but none of these gained traction.²⁹ In April 1959, the board determined on "Lake Michigan" as their choice but according to Vande Vere, this was "battered down" by the Berrien Springs campus people.³⁰ Figuhr then promoted "Emmanuel" but without success. In the meantime a list of 56 possible names circulated among board members, with 33 of the names utilizing various geographical descriptors, seven referring to church pioneers and the rest a sampling of religious or national or political terms.³¹ Finally, a year later, in April 1960 the trustees and then the Spring Council of the General Conference agreed on the name that had first been suggested by the Seminary Board in 1936 and then again in 1957 at the beginning of the recent process. "Andrews University" was chosen in honor of the church's pre-eminent Sabbath Scholar and first official overseas missionary, John Nevins Andrews (1829-1883). This time the name stuck and was quickly adopted even by the faculty and community already associated with the undergraduate institution in Berrien Springs for whom retaining their "Emmanuel Missionary College" identity had earlier been such an important issue.³²

²⁸ In 1956, Education Professor Hans Rasmussen had sparked a student debate on the EMC campus about changing the name of the institution and eliminating "missionary" given the changing focus of the institution. According to Meredith Jones Gray, a "flood of letters" debating the issue crowded the pages of the Student Movement for several weeks during which Daniel Augsburgur urged the suggestion of "Andrews College." The debate produced no change. See the discussion in her *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College & Emmanuel Missionary College*, Vol 1 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002) 337.

²⁹ F. O. Rittenhouse interview with George R. Knight, January 20, 1984, transcript of cassette C000178, CAR.

³⁰ Vande Vere, 251.

³¹ A copy is held in H. L. Rudy's files along with a document entitled "Report of the University and College Relocation and Relationships Committee, February 4, 1958," RG 11 [1958] Box 3774, fld - SDA Th Sem, GCArch.

³² Vande Vere, 251.

Location: Perplexities and Trauma

When the new Potomac University was launched in Maryland in the fall of 1957, the Seminary program was bursting at the seams. Ernest Dick had been more successful than his predecessors in recruiting international students, returning missionaries and local pastors and had added and lengthened academic programs. The pressure for more classrooms, office space, library and student accommodation for the Seminary had already become acute in 1956 and that was before the needs of the one-year-old graduate studies program had been added which complicated things further. It was clear that the university could not stay where it was in its overcrowded classroom building and relying on unused dank, General Conference space and shabby, redundant publishing house facilities. The uncertainty of where the university should relocate to, however, and the organizational form that it should take posed an intractable dilemma and the absence of a clear destination on both counts greatly unsettled the faculty during the next two traumatic years. Some stayed loyal with the institution while others accepted calls to teach elsewhere.

For a while in early 1957, WMC trustees considered moving their entire undergraduate college to a rural location so that the Seminary could use their vacated facilities. Seminary faculty interpreted this as an attempt to “unload their buildings on us.”³³ Consideration had been given in 1920 to moving WMC out into a country region away from its crowded urban home and again in 1930, but finances proved a barrier each time. They also proved a barrier on this occasion. Meanwhile, Ernest Dick had seen possibilities for a university campus on an 18-acre lot in central Takoma Park adjacent to the site of the local Adventist elementary school just two miles from General Conference headquarters.³⁴ Though some thought the site too small, Dick had persuaded his trustees to purchase the property and received board approval to engage an architect to draw up detailed plans. In November 1957, an initial budget of 760,000 was designated with plans to begin building in January, 1958. This site would enable the future university to benefit from proximity to bibliographic resources in the capital, and to enable students and faculty to be drawn on the rich cultural and personnel resources of the location. With plans being drawn up, faculty thought the location issue had been settled. But by the end of

³³ SHHD April 20, May 30, 1957.

³⁴ The acreage at the intersection of Carroll Avenue and University Boulevard in Takoma Park was surrounded by housing and light industry. It is now the home of Takoma Park Adventist Academy.

January, the trustees who thought the site too small were joined by many others who protested so vigorously that, according to Horn, “even the hard-headed President Dick had to take notice.”³⁵ Though a date had already been set and advertised for a groundbreaking ceremony three weeks hence on February 23, the project was abandoned. One very large and tall building on a hedged-in urban lot did not fit the vision that a majority of trustees held for the new university. Siegfried Horn and his wife Jeanne were frustrated because the indecision now obliged them to put on hold plans for their own “future home.” Now they were not sure where to locate.³⁶

Planning quickly turned to searching for a larger site twelve miles or so out in the country somewhere along one of the developing superhighways. Graduate Dean Beaven recalls the committee inspecting about fifty sites and then settling on what was called the Miller property of 263 acres at Brown’s corner near Ednor, Maryland. The site was attractive though it lacked sewerage, electricity and water service. Negotiating the provision of services and the cost of their provision took several months and eventually proved futile when a factional dispute between Republicans and Democrats on local council politics completely prevented the new? extension of sewage services. Frustration mounted on all sides. In the meantime, the university faculty spent several long meetings exploring whether the organizational model should be an affiliation between the university and WMC or a merger. They declared in favor of an affiliation because they were concerned to preserve and protect the distinct identity of the Seminary. That suggestion was disregarded. “The Brethren,” noted Horn, overrode the faculty and decided on a merger as the organizational structure. A final decision would be made on March 27, 1958. Again, there was much faculty uncertainty and discontent.³⁷ Then in mid-year following the General Conference session at Cleveland Ohio, at the time of the University constituency session, the General Conference leadership on the nominating committee of the university board determined to replace the seventy-year old seminary president Ernest Dick, and temporary university president, since he “had not been able to accept guidance on the location of the university.” His vision did not match with that of the brethren. The forced retirement was not a happy ending to Dick’s career, reported Richard Hammill, who was in the room when Dick was informed that his appointment would not be renewed. “It was a terrible blow to this veteran

³⁵ SHHD, January 25, 1958.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ SHHD, February 22, 1958.

leader,” Hammill recalled, concluding reluctantly though that “there wasn’t much else that could be done.”³⁸ Floyd Rittenhouse, from Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC), was appointed as the new president.

Rittenhouse took several weeks to accept the new assignment. His wife did not want to move to Washington and, according to Hammill, it took several weeks of persuasion from Figuhr before he agreed. His telephoned “yes” to Figuhr, however, was conditional on whether all three educational entities formally agreed to move together in the plan. Consequently, he did not resign from EMC nor did he move to Washington.³⁹ As Horn heard the sad story while he was teaching an extension school in Germany, the University board had grown tired of Dick’s “dilly dallying.” He therefore “got the boot, was retired, then whistled at to come back [because Rittenhouse did not at first accept] and is now slow to return.” There was “much confusion” and Dick felt badly hurt. “He has sent me already three letters telling me the same story,” Horn reported in his diary in August.⁴⁰

During the next two months, the confusion and uncertainty about the way forward grew much worse. Negotiations over the purchase of the Miller property stalled because of the intransigence of the local council.⁴¹ Then negotiations with WMC ran into difficulty when with a change of Union presidency there was a re-evaluation of priorities and the financial implications of relocation as either a merger or with an affiliation. Hammill observes also that for many years, Rittenhouse and the president of WMC, William H. Shephard, had “never hit it off very well.” Personality and the “human chemistry did not mix well.”⁴² Vande Vere adds that local conference support for further investment at WMC also proved elusive and the General Conference was unwilling to assist. Figuhr was adamant that the General Conference would not be involved in financing undergraduate education. The Columbia Union would have to bear all

³⁸ Hammill, 84.

³⁹ Vande Vere, *Ibid.*, 246, provides a good account of these developments. The *Review*, apparently unaware of any conditions publicly announced the appointment as a *fait accompli* which according to Vande Vere embarrassed Rittenhouse and put him under greater pressure to fully accept the position.

⁴⁰ SHHD, August 2, 1958.

⁴¹ H. L. Rudy “Confidential Circular re: The Potomac University Relocation, July 28, 1958,” RG 11 [1958] Box 3781, Fld – Potomac University, GCArch. Rudy’s Committee had been expecting an OK on the purchase of the property by August 12 with three days to spare for the option to purchase expired. He had already prepared press releases. At the last minute all was put on hold again.

⁴² Hammill, 82, 83.

the costs of this.⁴³ Finally on October 14, citing the unmanageable expense, a joint meeting of the Columbia Union Committee and the WMC board after consulting with the faculty who voted no, formally cancelled plans to move and withdrew from participation even in an affiliation.⁴⁴ Two days later, on October 16, Rittenhouse resigned as Potomac University president because his pre-conditions for accepting the role were now no longer going to be met. He was still president of EMC, and since planning for Potomac University had fallen into complete disarray, Rittenhouse would remain in Michigan. Hammill reported to Horn that some faculty and others at headquarters began to urge that the University join with CME at Loma Linda in a joint enterprise.⁴⁵ General Conference resistance to this option ran strongly, however, because Loma Linda with its medical staff seeking higher salaries seemed too materialistic. Soon it was also quietly rumored among the faculty that Rittenhouse was in favor of moving the university to Michigan although as Horn noted in his diary, “not much enthusiasm exists for that suggestion.”⁴⁶

Rittenhouse had apparently been doing serious homework behind the scenes on the Michigan option. Within weeks of his being approached by Figuhr and probably before he had been persuaded to agree to be university president, he had written to General Conference undersecretary O. A. Blake that some of his colleagues at EMC had suggested to him in a “memo” that EMC would, in fact, be a good location for the university.⁴⁷ He had not pushed the idea publicly but had apparently primed his board. Board Chairman J. D. Smith talked of the idea with the General Conference President. Within just a few days after the Columbia Union pulled out of participation, the EMC board proposed that the university move to Michigan. With E. E. Cossentine, the General Education Department Director present, the EMC board authorized

⁴³ Ironically, within three years after the move and the merger the General Conference found itself accepting primary responsibility for the entire merged institution with the Lake Union as a contributor. If this seemingly inevitable outcome had been anticipated and confronted earlier would a merger with WMC have been preferable? Many thought so.

⁴⁴ Vande Vere 246, 247.

⁴⁵ SHHD October 18, 1958.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ This was apparently the memorandum developed by Edwin R. Thiele which did not specifically mention Berrien Springs but which strongly implied the location. The disguise was intentional on the part of the author. See E. R. Thiele to E. K. Vande Vere, March 20, 1969 cited in Gray Jones, *Forward*, 18, 19.

the offering of a 40-acre tract of land if the university moved there.⁴⁸ Cossentine encouraged the Lake Union to endorse the idea. Two days later, a frustrated but now rather relieved president Figuhr introduced the proposal to Autumn Council. As we have noted, it caught the council by surprise. According to Hammill, Figuhr personally saw numerous advantages in such a plan, prominent among which was having returned missionaries and emerging national leaders attending the university as students moved some distance from the rumor mill that Takoma Park had become.⁴⁹ Placing the item on the agenda at late notice involved a calculated gamble. In doing so, Figuhr had bypassed the university's own locating committee and its Board of Trustees. Neither were faculty consulted about the proposal. There was the possibility of strong blowback. Figuhr, however, felt things had come to an impasse and he had to cut through the confusion and the conflicting opinions. Two vigorous days of debate and a secret ballot eventually resolved the question with a two-thirds majority in favor of the move.⁵⁰ Because the initial vote had met with such strong opposition, at a meeting of the University Board two months later in Glendale, California, the question was considered again and this time 75-80 per cent of the trustees agreed that the earlier decision "was no mistake."⁵¹ More troubling to the faculty now, however, was the trustees' follow-up decision to make the move to Berrien Spring in two stages beginning in six months' time. Half of the faculty would move to Berrien Springs in June 1959, the other half would stay on for a year in Washington and then join the others in Michigan in June 1960. This decision, according to Horn, was met by the faculty with "a storm of indignation."⁵² As Beaven later explained in a confidential letter to Rittenhouse, the actions came as "a tremendous shock to the faculty," who considered such a schedule "highly unrealistic."⁵³ They were more irate over

⁴⁸ EMC Bd Min, October 22, 1958. J. D. Smith would later regret this initiative when it became clear that the General Conference would in effect take over the entire institution. The Lake Union felt it had lost its college. J. D. Smith to E. K. Vande Vere, July 13, 1966, Box 16, "Presidential Correspondence," Vande Vere Collection, CAR.

⁴⁹ Hammill, 85.

⁵⁰ According to L. J. Netteburg, secretary of the Northern Union Conference a block of four mid-western union presidents "united their strength" to sway delegate opinion away from the location on the East coast. The four were, J. D. Smith of the Lake Union, Theodore Carcich of the Central Union, R. H. Nightingale of the Northern Union and L. C. Evans of the Southern Union. L. H. Netteburg to E. K. Vande Vere February 25, 1969. Vand Vere Papers, CAR.

⁵¹ SHHD January 31, 1959.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Winton Beaven to Floyd O. Rittenhouse, February 13, 1959, Vande Vere Collection, CAR. Beaven marked the letter as "Personal." He sensitively indicated his reluctance to write such a plain-spoken direct letter on highly

the fact that such a proposal had been taken to the Board without first consulting the faculty.⁵⁴ Implementing the October decision would not be easy and it would pose excruciating choices for some of its surprised faculty.

Faculty Dilemmas

Beaven's confidential letter to Rittenhouse in early 1959 was written as a friendly warning to the new president about the depth of hostile feeling toward him on the Seminary campus.⁵⁵ Faculty morale, he observed, could not go any lower and there was huge suspicion both of Rittenhouse as a person and of his motives. According to Beaven, the faculty "had fought affiliation with WMC and resolutely opposed unification [a merger] with them." Rittenhouse would find no faculty more loyal to the institution, Beaven noted, but they were "desperately afraid for its future." His speeches to them indicated that he "did not understand the [Seminary] program nor appreciate it," or its faculty. They "feared deeply their absorption into some larger project whereby their identity and purposes would be lost." Beaven had heard that it had been reported to the university board that with the exception of two or three, all the faculty were enthusiastic about the move. He wanted Rittenhouse to know that this was simply not true. It was his reading of his colleagues that only two men were somewhat enthusiastic about moving—William Murdoch and Raymond Moore. All the others had "grave reservations." They were deeply concerned about the integrity issue and the lack of consultation. A new faculty member, for example, had recently been appointed to a department without the knowledge or participation of the people already in the department. Decisions made without their participation were intolerable, he stressed. If he understood his faculty colleagues aright, he asserted, these were concerns about process and ethics. They were not concerned with whether they might live in Berrien Springs, "on a bend in the river or behind the barn," these "personal problems" were not serious concerns.⁵⁶ In this matter, however, Beaven underestimated the strength of personal

sensitive matters and would rather have talked in person with Rittenhouse. He had "never written one like it before."

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Beaven had considered writing to Rittenhouse earlier in January but had been reluctant to do so. By mid-February conditions had become "so serious" that felt obliged to reach out.

⁵⁶ Ibid

problems, at least for some key personnel on the faculty. Rittenhouse would have to find ways of resolving them.

As it turned out, Charles Hirsch, who was an adjunct teacher at the Seminary but apparently on track for a full-time appointment, and Winton Beaven decided to stay in the Washington, D.C. area and take new appointments at WMC. Hirsch accepted the role of Academic Dean at WMC in January 1959, just two months after the decision to leave Takoma Park. Three months later he was appointed as WMC president when W. H. Shephard resigned. Beaven was then called to replace Hirsch as Academic Dean at WMC. The competition from WMC rankled Rittenhouse and the loss of Hirsch and Beaven “particularly unsettled” him.⁵⁷ Seminary systematic theologian Roland Loasby also decided to stay in Washington, D.C., taking the opportunity of the relocation decision to retire but he continued teaching part-time at WMC for another nine years. Raymond Moore of the education faculty relocated to the West Coast to teach at Loma Linda. According to Murdoch, this was “a real blow” to the Department of Education in the Graduate School because “there is great difficulty in finding someone of his caliber to take his place.”⁵⁸ Of the nine faculty who moved with the institution to Michigan, it seemed perhaps easiest for Michigan-born language teacher Leona Running. A single woman (she had been a widow for 12 years), Running was on study leave at the time of the fateful 1958 decision, taking classes for her doctorate under William F. Albright at Johns Hopkins university. In 1960 after finishing classes, she moved back to her home state where she picked up teaching again and focused on completing her dissertation. Her parents and siblings still lived in Michigan.⁵⁹ Mary Mitchell, the Seminary’s head librarian since 1953, also apparently was able to make the transition with reasonable equanimity. Robert, her landscaper husband of twelve years, was not tied by employment to a particular place and their one daughter was of school age.⁶⁰

While the transition for William G. C. Murdoch’s family posed inconvenience it was not such a freighted problem as it was for others. Rural locations appealed to them. William had spent the first twenty years of his life on a sheep and dairy farm in the uplands of Southern

⁵⁷ Gray Jones, *Forward*, 31.

⁵⁸ W. G. C. Murdoch to E. Heppenstall, March 25, 1960, AU Human Resource Files: M-H [1960], CAR.

⁵⁹ Madeline Johnston, “Running, Leona Glidden (1916-2014),” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=DA31&highlight=Running>

⁶⁰ Sabrina Riley, “Mitchell, Mary Jane (Dybdahl) (1915-2006)” *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=C9T4&highlight=Mitchell,|Mary>

Scotland and his wife Ruth had grown up on a farm in Montana until she went off to college at eighteen.⁶¹ Murdoch also placed much more store on the Ellen White argument that had been made about the relative value of a rural location as opposed to an urban setting. Edwin Thiele, the EMC theology professor, had developed a four-page memorandum setting out the urban vs rural argument and circulated it anonymously. It had been effective with many church leaders.⁶² As principal at Stanborough Park thirty years earlier, Murdoch, himself, had presided over the relocation of the college to a rural location at Newbold Revel. Murdoch's daughter, Marilyn, who was fifteen at the time of the relocation to Michigan, recalls that she and her siblings saw the move as an advantage. She could find work on the campus and make many more friends among the college students. She spent the last two years of high school at Berrien Springs and the first year of college at EMC. Her younger brother Floyd made a smooth transition into his freshman year at EMC and her eldest brother, John Lamont, went to Loma Linda for medical school.⁶³ William Murdoch was also brother-in-law to Floyd Rittenhouse through his wife Ruth who taught education courses at WMC. It was planned that she could continue to teach at EMC. During the messy transition before the construction of housing had been finished, the Murdoch children were able to camp in the student dormitory for a time with their father and then move in to stay in the home of their Rittenhouse cousins until their assigned new faculty house was finished. While the move was inconvenient and disruptive of family routines, Murdoch seemed more able to cope, and real estate transactions were not so threatening. They were able to sell their older style house near Takoma Park for more than they paid for it, recalls Marilyn.⁶⁴ The transition became highly traumatic for the Murdoch family for other reasons. Ruth Murdoch had planned to stay temporarily in Maryland to finish writing her doctoral dissertation at American University and attend her oral defense. This plan was interrupted when she was diagnosed with

⁶¹ Betty Carol Patterson Spalding, "Murdoch: Ruth Mae (Rittenhouse) (1906-1996), *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=A9U9&highlight=Murdoch>; "Murdoch, William, Gordon, Campbell (1903 – 1983) *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=5HX2&highlight=Murdoch>

⁶² Gray Jones, *Forward*, 19. He had kept its authorship confidential for a decade after the decision.

⁶³ Marilyn Herrmann (nee Murdoch) email to Gilbert Valentine February 26, 2025. Copy in author's possession.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

breast cancer and had to endure uncomfortable surgery and follow up treatment.⁶⁵ Though delayed, the determined Ruth Murdoch was able to complete her doctoral program a year later. Of the other eight faculty, the decision to move with the university posed serious difficulties for three and the prospect of their making the transition was at first doubtful. Earl Hilgert, Edward Heppenstall, and Siegfried Horn all considered serious offers to work elsewhere in the Adventist system. For Heppenstall and Horn, the decision process was particularly difficult and drawn out. A closer analysis of the cases of these two faculty members throws considerable light on the relocation drama and the dynamics of church development at this time.

The Case of Siegfried and Jeanne Horn

As Siegfried Horn sat in the auditorium on Thursday October 23, listening to the initial speeches for and against moving the university to Berrien Springs he thought, by noon, that the Berrien Springs argument was winning the day and during the lunch break he telephoned Jeanne to warn her. During the afternoon the arguments for staying in the Washington area seemed to prevail and he went home “quite hopeful.” On Friday, when, after a third session of debate, the final decision sealed the move to Michigan, he felt miserable and struggled with a serious headache all afternoon. The action distressed him deeply and he observed that he “did not enjoy going home and breaking the news to Jeanne.” Jeanne was so upset she could not prepare meals Friday evening or Sabbath, “hating the whole world.”⁶⁶ He reflected in his diary the cause of some of the distress. They had recently lost \$5,000 in the sale of their Takoma Park house in order to move further out into the suburbs where they had purchased a larger house at a township called Rolling Acres near Jeanne’s place of employment. She worked as an RN at an Adventist Hospital. Now they would be obliged to move again at the high risk of further loss. What really worried Jeanne, though, was that there was no hospital in Berrien Springs and therefore little prospect of work in her field. She was rather adamant that they could not move.

Horn was not the only faculty member confronted with the anguished choice because of domestic constraints. Edward Heppenstall, whose wife Margit taught in a State elementary school, had also recently constructed a new home out near Silver Spring which they had

⁶⁵ W. G. C. Murdoch to E. Heppenstall, November 9, 1959; January 7, 1960.; E. Heppenstall to W. G. C. Murdoch, March 16, 1960, AU Human Resource Files, M-H [1959-1960], CAR.

⁶⁶ SHHD, October 25, 1958.

designed themselves. They faced a similar problem of substantial loss if they sold it so quickly. Within a month there developed an unseemly scramble on the part of WMC to recruit Seminary staff who had reason to stay in the Washington area. Charles Hirsch, who taught history at the Seminary and who in mid-December 1958 would become WMC Academic Dean, talked with Horn about his teaching history at WMC in their emerging graduate program. On Monday December 8, the WMC board placed a formal call for Winton Beaven, Heppenstall and Horn. “It was a grab for the faculty – not very nice,” observed Horn in his diary.⁶⁷ But then he reflected further, if the Seminary was “going to pieces anyway by moving to Michigan” and all the other colleges were wanting to begin graduate work, there might be good reason to stay in the D.C. area. In the meantime, he learned that the General Conference was not willing to pass on his WMC call – “at least not for the present.”⁶⁸

A month later, on January 15, Figuhr called Horn into his office and with Rittenhouse present asked Horn about his decision – was he planning to move to Michigan? Horn explained that his circumstances had not changed. The two presidents urged Horn and his wife to visit Berrien Springs in February, “in order to see our way clear.” This news, shared at home, produced “another bad night for Jeanne,” he noted.⁶⁹ The situation had become complicated because Horn had learned from Heppenstall that Norval Pease, the president of La Sierra College was in town and had asked Figuhr if he could speak with Horn about a call to California. Figuhr had denied the request and Pease had honored the ban. But Heppenstall had let Horn know what had happened. Horn could have contacted Pease on his own initiative and thereby not gone against policy, at least technically, but he chose not to – although sorely tempted. Two weeks later, the University Board re-affirmed its commitment to move and determined the two-stage relocation approach. If he continued with the Seminary, Horn would stay put for a year in Maryland before having to sell and move north. “I wish I knew how to get out, and I would do it,” he confided to his diary after he had shared the news at home and faced another Friday night “storm from Jeanne.” The “storm” had “abated” somewhat by Sabbath afternoon.⁷⁰ In fact, on that end-of-January Sabbath afternoon, Horn recorded, Jeanne had come “over the hump” and

⁶⁷ Ibid., November 15, December 13, 1958.

⁶⁸ Ibid., December 13, 1958.

⁶⁹ Ibid., January 17, 1959.

⁷⁰ Ibid., January 31, 1959.

“said she would try Berrien Spring,” apparently on certain conditions. They should not incur any financial loss.

Grasping at his wife’s concession, Horn had immediately written to Rittenhouse saying that he would come to Michigan if the university would guarantee to make good any loss he might incur arising from the forced sale of their new house. If the university refused to take that risk, he confided to his diary, he would “take it as an indication that we should stay here.”⁷¹ At this time, the call to WMC as history teacher for both graduate and undergraduate classes had been permitted to reach Horn and the couple faced, therefore, a very real choice with advantages and disadvantages competing with each other. Horn wanted a reply from the University Board before the end of February because that was when WMC needed an answer from him. Horn didn’t get his reply until the first week in March, but it was positive. Rittenhouse reported to him in a face-to-face conversation on March 5 that the executive committee of the board guaranteed that he should not suffer any “substantial loss with the sale of his house” as a result of the move to Michigan.⁷² Horn consequently “promised to try it” and formally declined the call to WMC. Was he closing doors too early on the basis of only a verbal assurance? A week later, on March 12, General Conference Vice President and vice-chair of the university board H. L. Rudy, confirmed to Horn also verbally that any unavoidable loss on the sale of his house in the vicinity of 300-400 would be “considered a reportable moving expense.” This was apparently a matter of principle for Jeanne, and with this assurance, in the last week of April the couple made a four day “spying trip” to Berrien Springs to reconnoiter the township and campus. They returned to Rolling Acres convinced that they liked their Maryland location much better but that they must be “reconciled with a situation that cannot be changed.”⁷³ They would face the relocation reluctantly and, it seems, with serious reservations. But they would go to Berrien Springs. In his diary, after his earlier conversation with Rittenhouse, Horn had expressed a confidential hope that if CME out in California started a graduate ministerial program within the next five years and if he received a call from there, he “would immediately accept it.”⁷⁴ He did not see Michigan as a permanent destination. Further developments over the next few months on the

⁷¹ Ibid., February 6, 1960.

⁷² Ibid., March 7, 1959.

⁷³ Ibid., April 27, 1959.

⁷⁴ Ibid, March 7, 1959.

loss guarantee issue unsettled the couple further. A relocation for the Horns was not yet assured. At the end of March, when in an hour-long interview with Figuhr, this time in Horn's office, Figuhr was surprised to learn that a "no loss" guarantee had been given to Horn and he was perturbed fearing that such an assurance might also have been given to others.

Six months later as the first cohort of relocated faculty struggled to settle in on the Berrien Springs campus, Horn received reports that his faculty colleagues were encountering "a great mess." Student housing was not ready, teachers were being housed in dormitory rooms and agreements were being broken in regard to facility development. The Lake Union had apparently "no more money to build anything."⁷⁵ Of more concern to the Horns was the news, which he heard second hand, that the board had been obliged to rescind its "no loss" guarantee. Richard Hammill had supposedly reported to the Seminary librarian, Mary-Jane Mitchell, that Figuhr had "seen to it." Horn was distressed and his reaction muted. Clearly a little disillusioned at the apparent backtracking he noted in his diary, "if this is true, and they stay by such a refusal to honor their promise I shall take that as a sure sign to stay here or seek another job."⁷⁶ He did not mention Jeanne's reaction. But the winds of circumstance soon began to blow more favorably.

On November 27, Horn found himself with an opportunity to leverage further concessions from university administration to secure his move to Berrien Springs. He had been approached by one of his former middle east tour group participants with an offer to fund an archeological expedition, if Horn would agree to organize it. He immediately approached Rittenhouse about the possibility of an extended leave of absence for such an activity. A week later a personal interview with the president on the topic won at least a verbal assurance of "enthusiastic cooperation and support" for a possible excavation. He was encouraged. During the last week of the quarter, when he had to attend Christmas parties with colleagues and listen to Margit Heppenstall "rave" all night about the "infamous move to Berrien Springs," he, at least, could quietly hope that perhaps the move to Berrien Springs might enable him to become "a field archeologist."⁷⁷ He had never seriously thought it would be possible. November 27 now might

⁷⁵ Ibid, October 2, 1959.

⁷⁶ SHHD October 2, 1959.

⁷⁷ Ibid., November 28, December 24, 1959.

turn out to be “a momentous day in his life.”⁷⁸ The prospect certainly softened the pain of relocating for Siegfried Horn.

As it turned out, supervising his own archeological dig in the Middle East did not work out as his first introduction to field archeology. Instead, an invitation to participate with famed archeologist Ernest Wright in his dig at Shechem proved to be a much better option. At last, on April 2, 1960, a “For Sale” sign went up in front of the Horn’s home at Rolling Acres. Two weeks later he received formal board approval for his leave of absence to participate in the Ernest Wright expedition. He spent a long summer in Jordan before heading to Michigan in September to teach at Berrien Springs. It had been an uncomfortable journey and as he settled into his new Michigan home, he and Jeane were still not firmly settled. Before his first year was finished and confronted with the likely failure of the new university to secure accreditation for the graduate study program at Berrien Springs because of its inadequate facilities, he agreed that if he was called to Loma Linda along with Earl Hilgert and Edward Heppenstall (for what promised to be a better resourced program in the west), he would accept the call.⁷⁹ As it turned out, the prospect of life on the West Coast was not quite so glittering and the arrangements fell over. Horn stayed in Berrien Springs for the next sixteen years until his retirement in 1976.

The Case of Edward and Margit Heppenstall

British born Edward Heppenstall, the systematic theology teacher, had joined the Theological Seminary faculty in June 1955 after fifteen years of teaching and religion department chairmanship at La Sierra College. He and his Norwegian born wife, Margit Ström, had ministered in Michigan during the first two years of their marriage in the late 1930s. They had both studied at EMC. Berrien Springs was not new to them. Heppenstall had taken his Masters degree at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor before joining the Michigan Conference in youth ministry. He had spent a decade in the state and knew its winters well. He did not like the prospect of a return, Furthermore, Margit’s health did not mesh well with the extreme climate. What really complicated the decision for the couple, however, was the fact that just a year before the decision to move the university from Washington, D.C. to Berrien Springs,

⁷⁸ Ibid, November 28, 1959.

⁷⁹ Ibid., April 9, 1961.

they had moved into a new house that they themselves had designed and built in a delightful leafy suburb near Silver Spring, Maryland. It was an idyllic home compared to the rented apartment in a crowded downtown suburb they had endured for the previous two years. Like the Horns, they feared a substantial loss through a forced sale of their new home. Moving to Michigan would also disrupt the education of their two children. Their son Malcolm was studying at WMC and their daughter Astrid still needed to complete a year of high school. It was not a good time for moving the family. Then there were financial considerations. Margit had secured employment as a state school elementary teacher in Maryland and to teach in a similar role in Michigan would involve a drop in annual salary of at least \$3,000. Margit's income was vital to maintain mortgage payments and the anticipated educational expenses for children who were planning to go on after undergraduate study to complete medical school. The Heppenstalls also valued the free access to the libraries, museums, art galleries, arboretums and concert halls of the capital. Heppenstall strongly believed that easy access to these cultural riches of the capital provided an incalculable and necessary enrichment to the study experience of his seminary students. For the Heppenstalls, the decision to follow the university to Michigan was not at all easy. Margit felt she had good reason for raving on about the "infamous" decision to move the university away from Washington, D.C.

Staying behind in Takoma Park for a year to help teach out the cohort of already-enrolled students proved to be a frustrating experience for Heppenstall. There needed to be much individual student planning, coordinating what each student needed and then arranging local teachers. Exam questions for Takoma Park students needed to be set by teachers in Michigan. With a geographically-divided campus, many administrative details began to fall through the cracks and important curriculum reforms had to be put on hold. As the year progressed, tensions emerged between himself and Murdoch who, as head of the department in Michigan, was struggling to cope with temporary living and teaching quarters, borrowed office space and his wife's serious illness. Maintaining communications required a great deal of effort as each of the men tried to keep their teaching up as well as the administrative tasks, in addition to their regular schedule of off-campus speaking and professional development appointments. In November 1959, Heppenstall had declined an invitation to join the Walla Walla College religion faculty but then a call to WMC was renewed and on top of that he had been invited to return to La Sierra.

He did not know which way to turn.⁸⁰ Michigan was certainly not very appealing and when Murdoch did not seem to urge him to stay with the university and join him in Berrien Springs, Heppenstall took offense thinking that Murdoch was signaling he was not wanted and it was time for him to go elsewhere. In January 1960, Murdoch hastily assured Heppenstall that while he had heard the rumors of Heppenstall being lured elsewhere, he had not seen any official calls come across his desk. He was glad to learn from Heppenstall that official calls had come but he then made an appeal. “At this time, Ted,” he pled, “it would be very unfortunate to break up the team. If ever we needed to stand together and to hold together as a faculty, it seems to me that this is the time.” Murdoch thought that the recent increase in enrollment in Michigan was a very good sign, “despite all the difficulties,” and he urged Heppenstall to stay by. “We find ourselves placed under circumstances which we did not request,” he sympathized, “but it is best for us to do what we can under these circumstances.”⁸¹

The strength of Heppenstall’s anxiety and his deep ambivalence about moving to Berrien Springs were expressed in a surprisingly frank personal letter Heppenstall wrote to Avondale College theology teacher and former student Desmond Ford in early December 1959. At the time, Ford was studying for his Ph D degree at Michigan State University in Lansing, Michigan. Heppenstall had personally typed up the letter on the back of the copy of the family’s circular Christmas letter which the Heppenstalls sent out each year. The mailing list always included the Fords.⁸² Heppenstall vented to his Australian colleague that, for a year, he had been “in almost constant turmoil of mind.” The church’s decision to “dump” Potomac University and move to Michigan had been “a mad scramble” without any regard for “adequate provision for library, office space, or any dignified operation of the school whatsoever.” There was “still no place for this magnificent library of ours or for classrooms for teachers.” As Heppenstall’s saw things, the decision to move had been taken “with utter disregard for the dignity and worth of either teacher or student,” and the decision had marked the leaders “as men wholly without divine guidance.” There had been no evidence of “the dignified movings and leadings of the Holy Spirit,” the

⁸⁰ W. G. C. Murdoch to E. Heppenstall, November 9, 1959; January 7, 1960; E. Heppenstall to W. G. C. Murdoch, December 28, 1959, AU Archives, [1960] Fld M-H, CAR.

⁸¹ W. G. C. Murdoch to E Heppenstall, January 7, 1960, AU Archives, [1960] Fld, M-H, CAR.

⁸² E. Heppenstall to D. Ford, December 13, 1959. FC, Box 3, South Pacific Division Adventist Heritage Center, Cooranbong NSW.

aggrieved professor ranted. “Everything smells of human folly.” He was “sorry to feel this way,” he noted, but the General Conference administration at that early December moment, “simply frustrates me no end.” An official from the General Conference education department had told him, he reported to Ford, that he would block his call from California unless Heppenstall first formally resigned from the Seminary. Heppenstall saw this as a bluff, but it deeply annoyed and offended him. The threat, however, meant that things were turning ugly. He had also heard that even by the coming summer of 1960 “no buildings will be completed” in Berrien Springs. They would have to use temporary accommodations. How could he expect Margit, who taught school all day, to come home to some makeshift camping situation?

The real rub for Heppenstall, however, was that if he did not go to Michigan, he would have to give up graduate teaching. That was “the one point,” he told Ford, that drew him to Michigan for “nothing else does.” To return to undergraduate teaching after five years in the Seminary was “simply unthinkable.” He just could not reconcile himself to the situation, and yet, within two weeks he would have to make a decision. He asked that Ford offer “careful prayers” for him and share any “personal convictions” he might have by way of advice.

By the end of December, Heppenstall had apparently resolved his conflicts and informed Murdoch that he would stay by the Seminary and join them in Michigan the following June. What eventually helped ease Heppenstall over the hump was the no-loss guarantee on the sale of their house, as had been given to Horn. He also was invited to make a reconnaissance visit to look at housing possibilities. And, like Horn, the offer from Rittenhouse of an extended summer leave to visit his aged mother in the UK and Margit’s family in Norway prior to moving to the new campus was persuasive. The leave, in Heppenstall’s case, was linked to participation in a Reformation Tour to give it legitimacy and to avoid the idea that this was an out-of-policy favor. His request to be regarded as an inter-division employee with regular furlough rights would also at least be considered, but approval was doubtful. He had come to the United States independently. Finally, fourteen months after the Annual Council decision to move the university, Heppenstall agreed to follow it. He was the last of the faculty to commit to the relocation. Heppenstall’s decision had been awaited with bated breath for some time by his friends, students and the university administration in Berrien Springs. It brought great relief to Murdoch who immediately and delightedly announced the decision to the students and faculty. “We are all very happy over the prospects of a re-uniting of our forces,” he reported to

Heppenstall with enthusiasm.⁸³ The decision to move, however, was a commitment that was not yet rock solid.

Eight months after Heppenstall and his family had settled in Berrien Springs, Loma Linda called him to be the Dean of the School of Religion and the General Conference forwarded the call on to him.⁸⁴ The institution on the west coast had ambitious plans for developing graduate education for doctors and chaplains and perhaps ministers. Heppenstall took eight weeks to think about the call and its implications and took the time to go to California to assess the situation. In the process, he secured agreements from Siegfried Horn and Earle Hilgert that they would join him if he accepted the call. Teaching in the boondocks of Michigan still carried no deep appeal. The Seminary would have suffered severely if the plan had worked out. Uncomfortable politics, however, swirled around the administrative position in California and eventually Heppenstall decided not to go, although it had initially been an attractive option. According to Heppenstall's colleague Siegfried Horn, the California climate would have better suited the health of his wife Margit who suffered from sinus problems. It would also have given her an opportunity to earn more teaching in the California state system and would have enabled them to be with their children during their medical studies. In another year's time she would be too old to benefit from the opportunity. Horn acknowledged that it was a difficult decision for the couple to make, but was glad they had declined the call and decided to stay because the Seminary would be greatly benefited.⁸⁵ "Will it be his last?" Horn asked himself as he closed off his entry for the day.⁸⁶ It was not but, nevertheless, Heppenstall would remain on the Seminary faculty at Andrews University for another seven years.

Conclusion

The creation of Adventism's first university in Takoma Park, Maryland in 1957 with its merging together of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and the church's first Graduate School and then its further merger with Emmanuel Missionary College in Berrien

⁸³ D. Ford to E. Heppenstall December 13, 1959. C190: Box 28, Fld 4, CAR. Ford also had been one who awaited the decision with much anticipation. W. G. C. Murdoch to E. Heppenstall, January 13, 1960, AUArch: M-H [1960], CAR.

⁸⁴ GCCMin, February 23, March 16, 1961.

⁸⁵ SHHD April 9, 1961.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Springs was not the result of some carefully thought-out long-range plan. Rather, it was a response to rapidly emerging needs and a steep rise in societal educational standards and expectations in the decade following World War II. When expansion of facilities became necessary in 1958, the hope of merging the Adventist educational ideal of a rural location with a site still proximate to the cultural and educational benefits of the national capital clashed with limitations of budget, differing perceptions of the nature of the relationship that should exist with the existing regional undergraduate college and inadequate time to work things out. Discussions and agreements were also negatively impacted by clashing administrative personalities. The resultant short notice decision to relocate the institution to Michigan and merge it with Emanuel Missionary College confronted faculty with uncomfortable choices and met with significant opposition. One quarter of the university faculty decided not to make the transition to the new location. Another quarter were at first tempted to separate their connection with the institution but special policy accommodations eventually enabled them to accept the relocation and having made that decision they stayed in Michigan through until retirement. Both Horn and Heppenstall moved to California at the end of their teaching careers.