
All the News That Fits From Adventist College Campuses

by Harvey Brenneise

Changes in a subculture such as Seventh-day Adventism are often gradual, almost imperceptible. Among the most interesting barometers of change are the Seventh-day Adventist college newspapers. Edited by student editors and circulated on the college campuses, these papers often report on issues and reflect changes in the larger Adventist culture.

In this issue we provide a scrapbook of materials gleaned from these newspapers. The papers vary widely in frequency of publication, quality, and quantity of material. We make no claim that the reports that appear here give the complete spectrum of campus life. Our selections are limited to reports that appeared in the papers. Look for further surveys of campus papers in future issues.

New Religious Magazine Published at Southern

Not surprisingly, most collegiate newspapers devote considerable space to religious topics, and this year's events have provided unusual material, including the premiere of a new religious journal at Southern College.

An anonymous donor gave \$100,000 to finance *Adventist Perspectives*, published by Southern's Religion Department. According to an article in *Southern Accent*, the campus news-

paper a provocative, but not radical, approach is intended for the new theological magazine. Gordon Hyde, the recently retired religion department chairman, is now ensconced in a two-year appointment as director-editor of the Ellen G. White Memorial Chair Publications Office, which produces the publication. He said the magazine "is a statement of where the college sees itself theologically." It is not intended to be a scholarly theological journal—its target audience is the well-informed layman. Its content will center around the 27 SDA fundamental beliefs.

The first issue, a slick 52-page production, aimed toward positioning Southern as the ultra-orthodox defender of fundamentalist Adventism. In the dedication, Southern College President Donald R. Sahly makes it clear that the magazine is intended as a public relations tool.

If winning public support is crucial to the success of the institution, that support will only come if the beliefs, values and viewpoints of the institution are communicated effectively so that the school will remain stable and retain constituency support. It is my belief that the future of SC lies in taking fresh hold on the vision that brought the school into existence. *Adventist Perspectives* is a new instrument of public opinion and public relations.

Hyde's opening editorial, entitled "Does It Really Matter?" is a clarion call to Adventist fundamentalism.

We here think that for 40 years or more the history of other Protestant bodies that have preceded us is repeating itself in the SDA church. (We can all recognize, for example, the inroads of worldly behaviors among us.) But we are face to face with a new (to us) and self-conscious pluralism that is of a far more crucial and basic kind than previously. The things discussed in this journal really do matter, and they matter very much. The church is wrestling with these very issues, even as you

read. Pray that the critical tide will be turned back and that the remnant ship will pass soon and safely the reefs that threaten access to the harbor of peace and salvation.

In "The Rise and Wane of Biblical Authority," Dean of the SDA Theological Seminary Gerhard Hasel gives a history of the methods of biblical interpretation. In his discussion of "Revelation/Inspiration and the Authority of Scripture," Douglas Bennett lists 12 propositions that he says SDAs reject. The last is this: we reject "any method of research of the Bible that is based on philosophies which are hostile to the Bible's own self-understanding—as in the historical-critical method." Religion Department Chairman Jack Blanco begins his article by rejecting, on behalf of the entire Seventh-day Adventist church, the following:

1. That the church's understanding and interpretation of Scripture places the church above scripture.

2. That revision of these fundamental beliefs would include the changing of their basic content.

3. That the fundamentals of the gospel are subject to a General Conference vote.

4. That the voice either of the majority or minority is necessarily the voice of the Holy Spirit.

5. That individuals or a minority should lightly jeopardize church unity by pressing unsettled questions of interpretation.

In another article Religion Professor Ron Springett states that Seventh-day Adventists can no longer discuss doctrine with a common understanding of terminology. He believes that because words can be taken in several ways, "We hope to set some limits to the possible interpretations which may be given to the fundamental beliefs of the church and at the same time establish some parameters for the interpretation of Scripture."

The magazine concludes with a section devoted to the new Ellen G. White Memorial Chair in Religion. In his "Declaration of Appointee's Faith," Bennett states:

I have a confident faith in the sanctuary ministry of Christ conducted in heaven, which climaxes with the investigative (pre-advent) judgment beginning in 1844 and in the authority of the gift of prophecy which God has provided the church in the ministry and writings of Mrs. Ellen White. I have found them to provide authori-

tative guidance in clarifying and giving direction for the corporate church. The lesser light is not inferior in inspiration to the greater light.

Seven criteria are given for the occupant of this chair, including the following:

- Provide the trustees with a signed copy of the philosophy and criteria in this document, pledging that he will inform the trustees if at any time he can no longer give his allegiance to the positions he once espoused.

- Provide the trustees with a free and voluntary statement giving the basis of his own faith and hermeneutic of the Bible and Ellen G. White.

- Be graciously willing to be periodically reviewed by the trustees as to his continuing compliance with the philosophy and criteria set for the chair.

In addition, the trustees have the function of underwriting publication and dissemination of occasional papers, video and/or audio tapes and other media "for the benefit of the alumni of Southern College, the SDA church and interests beyond."

AIDS and Adventist Higher Education

This fall AIDS has been publicly discussed or mentioned in the newspapers at Andrews, Loma Linda, and Walla Walla. The *Student Movement* at Andrews ran two articles in the November 4 issue. The first, entitled "Will AIDS Hit AU?" stated that the university was planning to formulate an AIDS policy. Questions to be addressed included, medically speaking, at what point will a student with AIDS be required to leave school? Do roommates, suitemates, or teachers have a right to know? Should a teacher with AIDS be allowed to teach, and if so, should the students know? An AIDS educational assembly was announced.

In another article, "AIDS: Fear and Isolation," Andrews professors Duane McBride (behavioral science) and Bill Chobotar (biology) gave a summary of AIDS information. Four methods of avoiding AIDS were listed: sexual abstinence,

sexual monogamy, viral barriers during sexual contact, and other viral barriers (for health professionals). Implications for the Adventist campus were given.

Living the traditional values of Christianity have and will continue to protect anyone against the virus. If students choose to become sexually active, it is essential to use viral barriers such as condoms. Because of a more conservative lifestyle, Adventist campuses and students are probably at significantly less risk for the occurrence and spread of the virus than most campuses. Schools should have policies that educate the student body. The need for services for basic human contact to spiritual counseling is great. There is a real opportunity for Christian service to the victims of this disease.

In a letter of rebuttal the following week Ron du Preez took exception to McBride and Chobotar's article, stating that sexually active students should withdraw from school.

It is the duty of every Christian, said du Preez, never to compromise biblical principles, nor to even teach or suggest a wrong way by which to avoid or solve problems. It is extremely dangerous (spiritually speaking) to tell people how to "sin successfully."

Three letters were received the third week, rebutting du Preez. One asked, "How can we maintain a Christlike attitude and continue to stick our heads in the sand?" The author stated that Andrews should not condone sexually promiscuous behavior of students, but should provide sex education and be willing to share helpful information with those "who do not believe as we do. It's possible that the information could save someone's life and therefore give them more of a chance to accept Christ."

Another found du Preez's letter completely irrelevant to AIDS.

Telling them how to save their lives is not showing them how to sin successfully—they already have this information. We are not talking about dancing or stealing or speeding or lying or any other moderately trivial sin. We are talking about death here.

My Bible doesn't describe Jesus, arms folded, waiting in a synagogue for lepers (then considered to be sinners) to come crawling to the steps of the church before he rushed out to say last rites. My Bible shows him out

healing. The only ones left in the synagogue were the Pharisees. We need more smiles and fewer bony fingers, more instruction and less condemnation.

The Loma Linda University *Criterion* announced an AIDS awareness lecture given by the local public health department for assembly.

The Walla Walla College *Collegian* also announced a chapel talk this fall by Lester Wright, M.D., dealing with AIDS victims. Wright is working with the Walla Walla College administration in developing a policy regarding AIDS victims on campus. Student Administration Vice President Meske stated, "It's no longer a question if AIDS comes on campus, but rather, when. We want to react from an informed position."

Should a person with AIDS be allowed on campus? If a student has AIDS, who should be notified? Does the administration have the right to notify the student's parents, deans, teachers?

The October 29 issue of the *Collegian* devoted about three pages to AIDS. One article explored campus attitudes. Questions included: Should a person with AIDS be allowed at WWC? If a student has AIDS, who should be notified? Does the administration have the right to notify the student's parents, deans, teachers? Meske observed that having AIDS does not prove one to be immoral. "A student with AIDS needs help from us more than anything." He also stated that this will probably be the year that all SDA colleges form AIDS policies. Even though the use of condoms is being pushed hard in the media, most students interviewed were opposed to dispensing condoms on campus, feeling that this would "promote premarital sex."

The weekly religion column was entitled, "Pope Grapples With AIDS Issue."

Why is the Pope's interest in AIDS relevant to a small Adventist college in Eastern Washington? Because, as I overheard someone say the other day, it's only a matter of time before AIDS affects this small community, too. Since I've heard very little serious discussion of the issues of homosexuality and AIDS, either formal or informal, I really doubt we're ready for it. In fact, I'll go

so far as to say something that will probably ruffle some Adventist feathers. I think Pope John Paul II was right. His actual theology or doctrine is debatable, but his willingness to respond to a crisis is unarguably right. At least he's grappling with the issue, unlike what I've seen from Ronald Reagan, Jerry Falwell, Neal Wilson, or even myself.

I would hope that we as a community of Christians could put away our hysterical fears, phobias, and righteous "serves-you-right" attitude to reach out to someone dying an awful death. But, since we haven't faced it yet, no one knows how well we'll respond. Without thinking about and discussing it, the realities now and becoming acquainted with AIDS, both scientifically and morally, I doubt we'll be ready for it. "It could even be your town." How will you respond?

On the same page with this column was an illustration that included a picture of a box of condoms, as well as an article entitled, "The Hand of God: Leprosy and AIDS," written by Dean of Theology John Brunt.

Faculty News in the Student Press

Although the newspapers are written and edited by students, faculty concerns sometimes make news. At Andrews and Southern this year debate over fired faculty has been carried in print.

Much of the October 1 issue of the Andrews University *Student Movement* was devoted to the first *cause celebre* of the year: the attempt to fire Religion Professor Josef Greig. In January 1987, five students and former students wrote letters to the board of trustees members, some administrators, and faculty complaining that Greig's teaching was heretical. One letter said,

If I were to sum up the teaching of his class it would go like this. The Bible consists of the ramblings of fanatics who claimed to speak for God by using the messenger formula, "Ko amar Yahweh." He approaches the prophets from a sociological perspective—as the result of mere human interplay rather than the voice of God.

A few of us object to such things being taught in an Adventist institution. Some are enthusiastic about his approach because they have had the same doubts. They are glad that they can be in the church and retain their unorthodox views. One fellow class member told me she would not be an Adventist if it weren't for Dr. Greig.

We might conclude that it is good to allow young people to have their values tested, but what is the worth of even one soul who loses faith in the Bible.

The students denied a conspiracy or formal organization, though they admitted communicating with one another at the time of writing. Following discussion during the February board meeting, President Leshner requested that incoming Academic Vice President Arthur O. Coetzee formally investigate Greig's teaching. Coetzee reviewed documents, interviewed students and faculty, and submitted a report of his findings. Included in this report was a 44-page document of explanation by Greig, a few excerpts of which are included here.

Every sign points in the direction that the Seventh-day Adventist life-style is in trouble. Many SDA college students do not plan to remain in the church after graduation and assuming of independence. We need to address the question if this is not in some way dependent, at least in part, upon an attitude toward doctrine or what we as SDA's believe in relation to the rest of human knowledge—if it is not in some way traceable to something that no longer makes sense to many Adventists, as it used to for them or their parents.

The Bible is the standard of truth; no human word can claim to be the truth. We must continue to search and understand. The Bible is a book of both divine and human communicating. It partakes of both divine and human. To emphasize the human side to the exclusion of the divine side is to treat the Bible like any other book. To emphasize the divine side to the exclusion of the human would result in a community out of touch with the world of humanity, and unable to communicate with the real world.

Accommodating good science and history allows our theological confession to make good sense to the confessing community; working with literary critical and historical critical methods also helps our theological confession make sense. The community of faith cannot endure unless its beliefs make good sense.

The style of teaching in general may have to change as well. Education will have to become more attuned to critical thinking, and question asking; rather than telling the students everything. There is a national consciousness of this need at the present time.

As a community which shares information and faith, believing that the resulting community has come into being through the Holy Spirit, the church will remain a strong, growing social and theological organism.

Reportedly without the recommendation of either Greig's departmental chair, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (who was in Europe at the time), or the academic vice president, Presi-

dent Richard Leshler decided it would be necessary to dismiss Greig (who has tenure), and informed him of this decision by letter on June 29, the day Greig was leaving on vacation. It was Leshler's intent that this be formalized at the July board meeting. In the meantime, Greig was suspended from teaching. This letter contained three charges:

The results of your teaching are contrary to the purposes and objectives of Andrews University. Your mode of teaching results in polarization of all the students in your classes and causes the disaffection of some from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, instead of the commitment to the religious beliefs of the church which is the objective of the university.

Your views on the nature and inspiration of the Scriptures are not in harmony with those of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

You have ignored administrative and collegial counsel and persist in using a particular ideology and mode of teaching inimical to the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Greig appealed to the university grievance process, which resulted in the election of a committee of investigation of five full professors elected by their peers. This committee met during the fall term.

Leshler stated that "this goes back 16 years. It's not a new thing. There have been many questions that have arisen and come to my attention." However, Religion Teacher Keith Mattingly stated that

The university is going to have to analyze the breach of employment issue because I don't personally see that Greig changed a whole lot from the time that he was

given continuous appointment until now. He's the brightest thinking person the Religion Department has, and I would hate to lose him. He outshines all of us in his mental acuity. And I think we need to keep that kind of a person.

The article concluded:

A number of faculty have expressed concern with this issue, for they see it as establishing a precedent on the extent of academic freedom to be tolerated on Adventist campuses. Many also feel that this decision will affect the future spectrum of theological thought in the Adventist Church. Some fear Greig's dismissal, seeing it as a dangerous shift to the right for the church. Others fear that he will remain, leading to what they view as an intolerable plurality and liberality in the future.

The same issue of the *Student Movement* included a reprint of the article "Can the Church Tolerate Open Minds?" by James Londis, as well as two editorials by the paper's student editors regarding the Greig affair. One editorial stated:

The crux of the issue, I believe, rests in the validity or invalidity of the historical-critical method approach to scripture and inspiration. While the historical-critical method is one approach to viewing the scripture, it is not the one that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has accepted. Finally, open-mindedness and tolerance are essential for all Christians. While we are accepting each other, let's also ask ourselves why we are at a Seventh-day Adventist University. Across the country there are many other fine colleges and universities where students can attain sound intellectual proficiency, but at Andrews perhaps we should offer something more.

The other editorial, "Tolerance vs. Rigidity," stated:

Andrews University is facing a crisis. These gentlemen (the grievance committee) are in a difficult position. No matter which way they decide, they will end up offend-

Comments from Adventist College Newspapers

(September—November 1987)

On Military Recruiters at Walla Walla College's School of Engineering

Because Jesus Christ is the center here at WWC, I see a real significant problem with allowing military weapons depots and weapons centered corporations to recruit on our campus. Somehow the thought of a product of WWC Engineering Department perfecting a "better" lethal weapon is completely repugnant to me, and is unacceptable in a Christian founded institution.

Collegian
Walla Walla College

On Pluralism

To begin with, we must accept as a fact of life that some diversity of opinion about the Bible is normal, and will always be with us. This represents a new radically different viewpoint on my part. I now accept that pluralism in the church is inevitable in view of the personal nature of religious experience.

Richard Hammill
Student Movement
Andrews University

On Thought

It (*Adventist Perspectives*) is to provoke thought—but not to the extent that *Spectrum* provokes thought.

Douglas Bennett
Southern Accent
Southern College

ing a large segment of the University community. If they recommend that Greig be dismissed, they will offend those who feel that open discussion and critical analysis are necessary to the development of active, thinking minds. If they recommend that he stay, they will offend those who feel that it is the duty of an Adventist university to guard against liberalism, doubt and the possibility of divergent theology. Both groups feel that they have legitimate concerns, and to a certain extent both groups feel that a contrary decision will spell disaster and philosophical ruin for the university.

While a church needs a certain doctrinal consistency, it is also true that a closed mind is a dead mind. If we don't open ourselves up to the possibility that we are occasionally mistaken; if we don't listen openly to differing philosophies, we can rest assured that we will never progress in our world view. We can be thankful that people like Paul, Martin Luther, William Miller and Ellen White did not confine themselves to their original paradigms, but allowed compulsive evidence to broaden their perspectives and change their conceptual frameworks.

Andrews University is, after all, a university. If everyone who didn't totally agree with me were to be dismissed, I would be the only one on this campus. A certain tolerance is necessary.

Joe Greig was reinstated in January, 1987. See the enclosed box for the outcome of the process undertaken at Andrews to deal with the Greig case.

At Southern College, the faculty brouhaha began with the simple announcement in the September 17 *Southern Accent* that religion professor

Jerry Gladson had become academic dean at the Psychological Studies Institute in Atlanta. The next week four letters were printed demanding to know why Gladson no longer taught at Southern. One stated: "I found nothing controversial in Dr. Gladson's lectures or assignments."

The Gladson controversy arose again in November with the receipt of a letter from Gladson giving his reasons for leaving.

I left SC under duress. In March I learned that my department chairman, in conjunction with other prominent but unknown individuals, had decided my moderate perspective, although fully in harmony with orthodox Adventism, would no longer be compatible with the new, ultra-conservative image of the college. I was then informed that it would be best if I took a call elsewhere.

I miss my many faculty and student friends there. Now I teach in a warm, caring environment, and am enjoying a life free from the condemnation and criticism which marked most of my fifteen years at SC.

When asked to comment, former Religion Department Chairman Gordon Hyde and current Chairman Jack Blanco declined. President Sahly stated that he would discuss this situation in private with interested students, but not in print.

The Gladson issue was raised again November 12. An editorial stated that Sahly would not comment because it might have legal implications for the school. He also stated that there were extenuating circumstances, though he did not

Josef Greig Reinstated At Andrews University

The following statement to the faculty was released, January 5, 1988, by W. Richard Leshner through the Public Relations Office of Andrews University.

Josef Greig, associate professor of religion, has resumed teaching in the religion department, following a six-month suspension, according to W. Richard Leshner. The reinstatement came after completion of a lengthy investigation by a peer review committee appointed by the university professors at Greig's request and according to university working policy.

Greig had been suspended last summer following concerns that certain of his classroom teachings were not in

harmony with basic theological understandings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Leshner said the five-member committee, chaired by Ralph Scorpio, recorded its findings and recommendations in a unanimous report submitted to Leshner in late November. Leshner said the report and its recommendations have been accepted by both Leshner and Greig, and the recommendations are being implemented.

"I am pleased that the question has been resolved in a manner which all parties seem to agree is fair," Leshner said. "Matters like this are always difficult. They usually don't end so well. The university owes a great debt of appreciation to the members of the peer review committee for their insight and the outstanding professionalism with which they handled a very difficult task."

According to Leshner, the specific details of the report, with the concurrence of the peer review committee, will not be made public.

state what these were, and it was unnecessary to print something that was “history,” and, most important, that might have a negative impact on the school’s image. The editorial questioned whether this served the students and others concerned with the college. “Sometimes the best way to clear up a controversial issue—and to protect the college’s image—is to be open on the record about the facts.”

Five letters (three supporting Gladson) were received. One stated:

The administration is ashamed or embarrassed by their actions. Indeed, if they are upholding the image of our traditional school and their actions were done in a good Christian manner they would have no reason for a coverup or censorship. Last year administrative censorship of the *Southern Accent* led to an underground publication.

Another letter said,

Gladson’s love for God and the Adventist church was always very apparent. It is ironic that a man so dedicated to our church and teaching young people about God and Adventism should be driven away from SC. It is a sad example of the way the church responds to its brightest and most promising members.

Looking at the Bigger Picture

Campus newspapers by definition report on campus life. But news of the outside world appears sometimes, often in editorials or in by pieces by columnists.

The editor of the Walla Walla College *Collegian* called for greater attention to the world outside in October:

We’re too busy working, going to school and socializing to get an education. Knowing about the world around us, being familiar with national and international affairs is all part of what our cultural awareness should encompass. I look to Berkeley with great longing not because I feel I’m being cheated by an unworthy curriculum at WWC. People are alive at Berkeley, at Chico State, at Brown, and we know they’re alive because they tell us so. Students on those campuses demand to make a

difference in the world they live in.

Somehow I just know that they’ll be able to tell that I’m a culturally illiterate wimp. When Whitman was holding political meetings and forming a petition to deny Bork his Supreme Court nomination, WWC was. . . . What were we doing? No, we weren’t worried about the shorts policy, that one’s past—perhaps it was our dismay over the new chapel attendance policy. Hey, people, wake up. There’s a world out there.

At Pacific Union College, the *Campus Chronicle* carried a special five-page feature, as well as an editorial in November, discussing the problem of world hunger. The editor suggested a personal choice between helping PUC with its financial woes or giving money for the hungry.

The *Campus Chronicle* also carried regular columns by Faulkner who wrote about the Hart and Biden affairs, U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf, and the Bork nomination.

At Oakwood College, the home economics and communications departments sponsored the local viewing of a national World Food Day teleconference, which originated at Howard University. Oakwood now belongs to the Black College Television Network.

Union College students participated in the local CROP, a program attempting to raise money for the hungry.

Special guest speakers also brought the outside world to the campuses:

Fred Friendly, former president of CBS News, visited Southern College and sparked a debate on situation ethics.

Malcolm Forbes was the featured speaker at Southwestern College’s autumn convocation.

Harvey Cox, Martin Marty, and 10 SDA ethicists are giving a lecture series entitled “A Righteous Remnant: Adventist Themes for Personal and Social Ethics” at Loma Linda University.

Chaim Potok visited Atlantic Union College.

Leonard Teitelbaum, delegate to the Maryland Legislature, gave an assembly at Columbia Union College on sludge disposal and the condition of Chesapeake Bay.