

The Soviet-Adventist Publishing Company
Gay Adventists & Change Ministries

SPECTRUM

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CAN ADVENTIST COLLEGES BE RESCUED?

Where is the Academy Class of '87?

How Parents Rate the System

Why Profs Make All the Difference

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Can Adventist Colleges Be Rescued?

“The educational system of the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America finds itself at an extremely critical point in its history,” begins a candid essay in this issue by the executive secretary of the North American Division Board of Higher Education. Gordon Madgwick, the author, quickly gets even more serious: in the five years from 1981 to 1986, North American Division college enrollments dropped the equivalent of three mid-sized colleges; and in the six years through 1986 North American Division colleges and universities increased their operating losses over \$1 million a year, up to \$35 million annually (excluding donations). Madgwick’s plans for rescuing the system begin by listening to what Adventist members want most from their schools.

Crisis focuses the mind on fundamentals—what is the purpose of Adventist schools, to which members provide more financial resources than

any other aspect of denominational life? The symposium of distinguished Adventist educators in this issue provides diverse answers. Other responses come from a group of recent graduates of Adventist academies now attending non-Adventist colleges and universities. The profile of Walter Utt suggests a simple answer that is difficult to implement: get the best teachers that the challenge of dedication and sacrifice can buy. Indeed, according to the poll the Board of Higher Education commissioned, what North American Adventists see as the greatest purpose of Adventist schools is to foster precisely the kind of commitment to excellence Walter Utt exemplified. Ultimately, the future of Adventist education depends less on financial and marketing schemes than on nurturing and cherishing the church’s human resources.

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Deliver the Captives

by Roy Branson

Eleven Sabbath-keeping Adventists are prisoners of conscience in the Soviet Union. According to human-rights organizations, these Sabbath-keepers, whatever the charges brought against them, have been sent to prison because of religiously motivated activities. The world Adventist church is making no public demands that they, specifically, be released. Instead, Adventist world leaders are engaged in serious negotiations with Soviet officials regarding the establishment in the Soviet Union of a joint-venture publishing company—51 percent owned by the Soviet government, 49 percent owned by the church's Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Adventist leaders are understandably excited at the prospect of making available to Adventist members in the Soviet Union—and possibly others—an increasing number of Adventist books and magazines. Denominational officials also acknowledge that the venture entails significant risks.

The general outline of an agreement forming the new publishing company was described to a recent meeting of the General Conference Committee. The company will print not only Adventist literature, but also publications for all religious groups in the Soviet Union and some non-religious commercial materials. The Soviet government will erect a building (probably employing Adventist laborers) and the Review and Herald Publishing Association will provide printing equipment. A board constituted of both Soviet government and Review and Herald representa-

tives will oversee the enterprise. The chairman of the board will be one of the Soviet government officials; the manager of the company must be a Soviet citizen. While the Review and Herald Publishing Association will be responsible for operating the plant, the government, according to standard procedure, will be able to disapprove the contents of publications produced by the company. Company profits will be shared by the Soviet government and the Review and Herald Publishing Association, according to their percentage of ownership.

Obviously, in addition to the potential for state control of Adventist publications, the venture may create misunderstandings between the Adventists enjoying a privileged publishing relationship with the government and other religious bodies dependent on the company for their literature. Still, when analysts within the network of think tanks, university centers, and human-rights organizations devoted to studying Soviet policy learned that the Soviet government and the Adventists might form a publishing company to produce religious literature, they expressed surprise and delight. They see it as another hopeful development in Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. They do stress, however, that Adventists should hire lawyers who specialize in Soviet law to insist that the Soviets carefully spell out in advance the relationship of the Adventist managers to government control, particularly government censorship of the contents of religious publications. Those knowledgeable about the Soviet Union and human rights also strongly urge that before Adventist leaders sign an agreement they should demand that the Soviet government release religious prisoners of conscience.

As of March 1988 the records of Helsinki Watch, one of the major human-rights organizations, indicate that among the total of 360 prisoners of conscience still in Soviet prisons, 160 are religious prisoners of conscience, of whom 11 are Sabbath-keeping Adventists. These 11 prisoners are members of the True and Free Adventists not recognized by the government. No one knows for sure, but many observers believe there are at least as many members of this unrecognized Adventist group as of the officially recognized Adventist organization (32,081 according to the *1988 SDA Yearbook*). Leaders of the Adventists which are recognized by the government claim that the unrecognized Adventists in the Soviet Union hold variant theological views. Whether or not that is accurate, the True and Free Adventists undeniably take positions on not bearing arms in the army and not sending their children to school on Sabbath that are closer to the world Adventist church than to the typical practice of the Soviet Union's officially recognized Adventists.

Last year, Neal C. Wilson, president of the General Conference, accepted an invitation from the Soviet government to attend an international conference in Moscow, where, on February 13-15, general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev hosted Andrei Sakharov and such luminaries from the United States as Gore Vidal, Norman Mailer, and Gregory Peck. There, Wilson, orally and in an extensive written statement, suggested that "on or before May 1, 1988—the 1000th year of Christianity in Russia—the Soviet government witness to its greatness and generosity of spirit by declaring an amnesty for all 'prisoners of conscience,' a gesture that would arrest and grip the attention of the world."

While Wilson has expressed admirable moral concern for all prisoners of conscience, it would seem that Adventists have a special responsibility to work on behalf of prisoners of conscience who are fellow Sabbath-keeping Adventists—whether or not they belong to groups recognized by the Soviet government. Leaders in the interna-

tional human-rights movement, and an increasing number of ordinary Seventh-day Adventists, are wondering whether Wilson's ringing 1987 declaration will be followed by concrete actions on behalf of prisoners of conscience. Their attention has been aroused by the fact that other religious groups have recently persuaded the present Soviet regime to release fellow-believers from prison.

The signing of an agreement between the Review and Herald Publishing Association and the Soviet government to establish a joint commercial venture may be a bold, innovative step, increasing the distribution of Adventist literature, and leading to further concessions from the Gorbachev regime.

But as Adventist leaders enjoy an increasing intimacy with the Soviet government, they may become reluctant to struggle against government interference if it risks losing the denomination's new-found privileges. Even today, the most flagrant violation of Sabbath-keepers' religious freedom—incarceration—seems not to be slowing the progress of denominational leaders toward an agreement with Soviet authorities. Is it likely that Adventist leaders will resist Soviet censors seizing Adventist words tomorrow if they fail to protest Soviet police imprisoning Sabbath-keeping believers today?

For the Adventist church to commit itself to a cooperative enterprise with a Soviet state that continues to hold Sabbath-keeping Adventists in prison would be regarded by Adventists and non-Adventists alike as morally grotesque. Surely, instead, Adventist leaders will insist that before any agreements on joint ventures are signed Soviet officials must, at the very least, release all Adventist prisoners of conscience. Surely, Adventist world leaders should seize this occasion to act in accordance with the one who declared in the Sabbath sermon inaugurating his public ministry that his mission meant "deliverance to the captives," and setting "at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18).

Lawsuits and Scandals — Adventist Homosexuals Not So Anonymous Anymore

by Bonnie Dwyer

Seven men have retained the services of attorney Marie Imyang to file a suit for them during March in the Berks County, Pennsylvania, Court of Common Pleas against Colin Cook and the Seventh-day Adventist church. The seven plaintiffs state that they had contracted with Cook for counseling and relief from homosexuality but instead were sexually molested and abused. The church is named because some of the men allege that they were threatened with the loss of their jobs within the Adventist system or expulsion from an Adventist school if they did not participate in Cook's program to "heal" homosexuals. This civil action case is the result of a sexual scandal that took place at the Quest Learning Center in Reading, Pennsylvania, over the past eight years. This scandal is the primary, but not the only reason American courts and the media have become increasingly aware of the tangled history of Adventists and homosexuals.

Participants and bystanders in Washington, D.C., saw Adventists carrying signs and banners in the October 1987 National March on Washington for Gay Rights. The Adventists' largest banner—requiring more than one person to hold—read: "Kinship: Gay and Lesbian Seventh-day Adventists." Other placards said "Support Ad-

ventists With AIDS/ARC," "Change 'Ministries' Are a Crime Against Nature," "Stop Supporting Sexual Abuse of Children," "Stop Supporting Colin Cook."

At the beginning of this year a California court heard attorneys employed by the General Conference file a lawsuit asking the court to grant a permanent injunction against SDA Kinship, a national 625-member organization to which many of the placard carriers belong. In addition to participating in demonstrations, Kinship for years has held a "Kamp-Meeting," to which it has always invited several Adventist ministers. It also carries out special ministries for AIDS victims. Kinship's newsletter, mailed to about 1200 people, suggests that its members regard at least stable homosexual relationships as compatible with Adventism. The suit requests that the court forbid Kinship from using "SDA," "Seventh-day Adventist," or "Seventh-day Adventists," and that Kinship be ordered to notify its members and business associates that it has no affiliation with the church.

Sunday morning, February 14, 1988, the citizens of Reading, Pennsylvania, were greeted with an extensive account in the *Reading Eagle* of the counseling for homosexuals undertaken by an Adventist, Colin Cook, in their own town. An even larger number of people—the million readers of the *Los Angeles Times*—could read, on Sunday, December 6, 1987, a long article that described how distinctive that program had been; how change ministries, designed to reorient

Bonnie Dwyer, before assuming her present responsibility of raising an infant son, was the public-information officer of the city of Brea, California. As its news editor, she has frequently appeared in *Spectrum*.

homosexuals to heterosexuality, had been pioneered and financially supported by the Seventh-day Adventist church. Indeed, the article described Colin Cook, who founded not only Quest but also Homosexuals Anonymous, as

the best-known figure in the gay-to-straight movement nationwide. Cook's renown has spread through his books, cassette tapes, and speaking engagements. Dozens of change ministries, as they are called, have grown up around Cook's technique which incorporates religious and psychological insights he claims to have used to deliver himself from homosexuality.

Both the *Reading Eagle* and *Los Angeles Times* articles recounted for readers how Cook, during the six years that he headed Quest until he was forced to resign in 1986, persisted in engaging in

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homosexual acts with the young men with whom he was counseling. Although the church pulled out of the original Quest, its board, chaired by a denominational official, continued as the board of Homosexuals Anonymous. The General Conference has begun reducing the amount of its contribution, but plans to continue giving financial aid to Homosexuals Anonymous until 1990. Despite the 1986 scandal, Cook continues to be invited to speak at meetings of Homosexuals Anonymous chapters (of which there are about 50). He was the featured speaker at the Homosexuals Anonymous' 1987 training seminar in August and its annual conference in September. Cook is not only writing a book on how persons can recover from homosexuality, but continues his counseling with two men and in December 1987 announced plans to open Quest II in Reading, Pennsylvania.

The public is beginning to realize that homosexual Adventists exist and that a scandal of major

proportions is drawing the Adventist community into a fundamental debate about an appropriate response to its thousands of homosexual members. In a broad sense, the issue is how the majority of church members will relate to the minority who are homosexuals. Will church members, pastors, and denominational officials limit themselves to supporting ministries trying to change all homosexuals to heterosexuals, or will the Adventist church pursue a variety of approaches? No one knows, of course, just how many homosexual Adventists in North America will be affected by the answers to those questions. But if the standard estimate of the percentage of the general population in North America that are homosexual—five to 10 percent—is accurate, and if there is an equivalent proportion of homosexuals to general Adventist membership, 35,000 to 70,000 Adventists in the North American Division have a homosexual orientation. Even if that figure were substantially overstated, many more thousands of Adventists than most members realize will be affected by how the church as a whole decides to minister to its members with a homosexual orientation.

In a narrower sense, the question is whether church members, pastors, and denominational officials will continue, as they have so persistently in the past, to rely on Colin Cook to shape the Adventist response to homosexuality. Certainly, during the 1980s, the church's official actions toward homosexuals have been bound up with the dramatic chronicle of Quest, Homosexuals Anonymous, and Colin Cook's personal struggles.

That story really begins in Cook's childhood in England. His father, a fisherman, was away from home much of the time. By the age of nine, Cook felt a desire to be close to men, and already at 13 was acting on his erotic compulsions. At 15, he became a Seventh-day Adventist and for 10 years, he says, he kept his homosexuality in check. During that time he earned both a B.A. and an M.A. in religion. By the time Cook began his seven years as a pastor—four in Britain and three in New York City—he had resumed his homosexual activities.

In New York he pastored a midtown Manhattan church and attracted unusually large crowds to his lunch-hour preaching in Battery Park. Concurrently, he engaged in a great deal of anonymous, homosexual sex in bath houses, public bathrooms, and parks. Eventually his promiscuous behavior was discovered by church administrators and in 1974, at the age of 34, he was forced out of the ministry.

Devastated by these events, Cook called the president of the American Psychiatric Association asking for help. He wanted to find a Christian counselor who put theology ahead of psychology. He was referred to Dr. Edwin Hallsten. To support himself Cook eventually moved to Reading,

Cook married in 1978. For some Adventists unfamiliar with the history of gays, Cook's marriage became proof that he had changed his homosexual life-style. In fact, his homosexuality continued.

Pennsylvania, where he worked variously as a health educator, nursing assistant for elderly patients, and gardener at the Reading Rehabilitation Center. He claims now that his homosexual behavior was diminishing and that he was developing an erotic interest in females. He does not claim that homosexual encounters ever stopped completely during this period.

In 1976, he wrote a series of articles for *Insight* that helped to launch him into a new ministry—counseling homosexuals on how to change their sexual orientation. In the three-part article, “God’s Grace to the Homosexual,” he proclaimed, without yet revealing anything of his own experience, that

There is a way out of the homosexual life. . . . You can find new emotions and enjoy the rich possibilities inherent in love for someone of the opposite sex.¹

Although the article generated some hostility (since it was the first to suggest that the church contained substantial numbers of homosexual members), Cook received 150 letters from readers, many struggling with their homosexuality.

As a result, he began holding weekend counseling sessions.

Cook married in 1978. For some Adventists unfamiliar with the history of gays, Cook’s marriage became proof that he had changed his homosexual life-style. In fact, his homosexuality continued. He published another article in *Insight*, “Homosexuality: The Lie,” the year he got married.² This paper took issue with researchers and therapists who contend that “the experts cannot come up with one single case of homosexual cure, and thus, by inference, that change from homosexuality to heterosexuality is impossible.” Cook introduced contrary opinions. He also released a 10-cassette tape album, “Homosexuality and the Power to Change,” which has since had wide circulation.³ His own homosexual activity had still not ended, but diminished to encounters maybe every other month.

In 1980, Cook incorporated the Quest Learning Center, a program that combined personal counseling with “Homosexuals Anonymous” mutual support meetings, “growth classes,” “host families,” and involvement in church activities. The number of applications from would-be counselees rose dramatically after the September 1981 issue of *Ministry* published a 10-page interview by Editor J. Robert Spangler with Cook entitled “Homosexual Healing.” Since this was a “Preach Edition,” it was sent free by its Adventist publishers to 300,000 clergy of all denominations. Almost 1000 clergy wrote letters to Cook, including many pastors who believed homosexuality to be sinful, but had previously not known of any solution to recommend. Shortly afterwards, the article was republished as *The H Solution* and circulated even more widely as a booklet than it had as an article.

Cook applied for and received a grant in 1981 from the General Conference to create the Quest Center. He conferred with Duncan Eva, a retired general vice-president of the General Conference and then special assistant to President Neal Wilson; Monte Sahlin, then pastor of the Allentown, Pennsylvania, church and now in the General Conference, and Dr. Paul Smith, an Adventist dentist in the Reading, Pennsylvania, area and health director of the Pennsylvania Conference,

about how to constitute the board. Eva became the chairman. The other members of the board included representatives of the union and local conferences, a local Adventist pastor, and three of Quest's staff members. All the original board members were Adventists.

The General Conference and the Columbia Union provided \$47,500 annually, which in 1985, constituted 39 percent of Quest's budget. While Quest's bylaws carefully omitted any reference to Adventists, the Adventist church had become the first denomination to commit itself financially to an "ex-gay" ministry.⁴

The board received reports of dramatic successes such as that of the minister who was referred to Quest after serving time in jail for having sex with a minor. The man came to Quest broken over the experience of losing his ministry and family when his sexuality became front-page news in his home town. He had been blackmailed and attempted suicide. He reports that at Quest he found that the gospel works if we let it. He says he has now let go of his compulsive behavior, and worked through the depression. Recently he was selected to be the Homosexuals Anonymous Fellowship Service Coordinator.

Cook's theological approach to homosexual change appealed to ministers of several denominations. Most vocal supporters are people with ministerial training who say they were helped to overcome homosexual behavior. One Baptist minister came to Quest after reading about it in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. After a year of counseling, his obsessive compulsive behavior was gone. Four years after first coming to Quest, he states that he is absolutely heterosexual. He serves on the Board of Homosexuals Anonymous.

To be understanding of the sensitive condition of Quest's counselees, Duncan Eva, then Quest's Board Chairman, says that the board did not require detailed knowledge about the center's clientele. It trusted Cook and knew that the healing process could be lengthy.

The first of Cook's two children was born in 1982, the second in 1985. Their father was quickly becoming one of the most prominent figures and a dominating in-

tellectual force within the "ex-gay" movement. Cook expanded his influence by founding Homosexuals Anonymous, a network of mutual support groups in the United States and Canada. By 1986 an estimated 700 to 800 people were attending weekly meetings in 60 chapters. Cook visited most of the chapters and produced two sets of tapes elucidating Homosexuals Anonymous theory and practice. He also was prominent within Exodus International, a coalition of ex-gay ministries, and he did much to reshape both their theoretical and practical approaches to ministry—indeed, many of their member groups also formed

What started as hugs and head rubs to relax counselees sometimes turned into erotic hugs and full body naked massages.

Homosexuals Anonymous chapters to work beside their counseling programs. Cook was featured in newspaper and magazine stories and appeared many times on radio and television. His visit to the Phil Donohue Show generated 1500 calls to the Adventist Information Ministries 800 line. His booklet, *Homosexuality: An Open Door?* published by Pacific Press in April 1985, sold quickly most of the 25,000 copies printed. In a word he had become a star, not just because of his claim to be a healed homosexual, but because he was able to offer hope. "He integrates religion and psychology very well," says one colleague at Homosexuals Anonymous. And his preaching skills made him a very effective seminar speaker. "We all walked in his shadow," said another of his Homosexuals Anonymous colleagues.

Board members now say they realized he was taking on too much, stretching himself too thin. They did not realize that he had not given up his homosexual activity. He was having homosexual encounters with members of Homosexual Anonymous chapters he visited, and most serious for Quest, he was seducing counselees. What started as hugs and head rubs to relax counselees sometimes turned into erotic hugs and full-body naked massages.

Former counselees talked to Ron Lawson, a sociologist of the City University of New York, who was investigating Quest as part of his research for a book on Seventh-day Adventists. Lawson is also a member of Kinship, and until recently a member its national board. One counselee reported:

[Colin] massaged me three or four times, and he told me he thought it was important. The main idea was that it was all right for men to touch each other. . . . It was usually he who would offer to massage me, although in

“I never thought of myself as seductive, because I told them they could refuse. But people couldn’t say no.”

my apartment once, he came over one morning and said he had a headache and he was wondering if I would give him a massage. At the time I thought it was very strange. . . . but obviously I was there to be open-minded, and I thought I should try it to see what it was like—but I had my doubts. The idea to give him a massage was very unpleasant to me. . . . I was nervous. . . . He told me I shouldn’t pay any attention if I realized he got excited—that was a normal thing. I noticed that he had an erection. I kept thinking, “Oh, gosh, I don’t think this is normal.”

When I moved to Reading I moved initially into the YMCA. One time I called [Quest] because I had a counseling appointment. . . . I had the flu and I was really sick. . . . I could not make it. I went back to bed. An hour later there was a knock on my door—it was Colin. He said he thought it was important that I had my appointment and that we counseled, though it was obvious to him that I was ill. All of a sudden a massage just happened there in my room at the ‘Y’, and I didn’t want it to happen. I told him I was ill and that I wasn’t up to it, but he did it anyway. . . . I was so ill I didn’t argue with him, I just let him do it. The counseling part didn’t happen that day—it was a massage and that was it. . . . I had my underwear on. . . . Another time he asked me how I would react and would it be all right if I got a massage in the nude. I said I didn’t understand why you would want to do it, and he explained to me again the idea he wanted me to know that it was all right for men to touch each other, and he wanted me to trust him. . . . I thought it was very unusual, but I was there for improvement and I wanted to be open-minded and, as weird as I thought it was, I thought it was not going to kill me so I should just let him do it, although I was not very comfortable.⁵

Cook now says such behavior with counselees

in his charge was the biggest folly of his life. He knows it was wrong and hopes to learn from the experience. He calls his actions sinfully dishonest, because he was desiring the contact more than the counselees. According to him, in about one-third of the massage cases there was genital touching, and he always immediately confessed it was wrong. When he saw the counselees again he would ask for their forgiveness. But it became a way, he told himself, of relaxing. He says that while denying anything was wrong he became a sexual addict. He wanted homosexual contact so he claimed it was something it was not.

“It was everything it appeared to be,” he says now, “it was erotic. I rationalized that if it was not genital it was not sexual. I never thought of myself as seductive, because I told them they could refuse. But people couldn’t say no.”

When one counselee reported an incident of a nude massage to the coordinator of Homosexuals Anonymous, the coordinator asked Cook about it. Cook brushed it off as a single incident that was not as serious as the counselee suggested. Nothing further was said until officials from Exodus International showed up one day early in 1985 at Quest headquarters. It had been reported to them that Cook had engaged in nude massage and prayer with an Homosexuals Anonymous member at an Exodus conference in British Columbia where he had been the speaker. They demanded that Cook tell his wife, the coordinator of Homosexuals Anonymous, and the chairman of the Quest board. Finally, Cook did, admitting to only the two incidents known to Exodus International. Homosexuals Anonymous’ coordinator was furious and demanded Cook’s resignation. A compromise was worked out in which Cook agreed to receive private phone counseling from his original therapist. Duncan Eva informed General Conference President Neal C. Wilson. Exodus International did not invite Cook to speak at its 1985 conference.

However, Cook still did not end his homosexual activity. For Cook to constantly counsel gay men was like putting a reformed drunk in charge of a bar. The psychologi-

cal stress that evolved at Quest from having all these gay men together was felt by the counselees, too. One described it to Lawson:

I was inexperienced when I had gone there, but I became extremely promiscuous during my time there. . . . There were all these men wanting to change, and yet they were very tempted by one another. . . . It was hard to have any relationship with anyone in the group without involving sex. To be invited over to someone's apartment usually ended up with sex. It [Quest] became a meeting place. . . . I became involved with two people who went through the group, and I think that they were really bad experiences for me because they were so confused—they had no idea where they were going in life. They were very hypocritical; they would be in a [gay] bar every other night. . . . and yet they would still faithfully go to the Monday night Quest meeting. It's like getting drunk every night and yet making my AA meeting. . . . Being in a group with men who were attracted to other men. . . . was to me like being in an AA group with, in the center of the group, alcoholic beverages on the table. . . . It was like torturing yourself.⁶

It was not until 1986 that the full extent of Cook's problem was revealed. On October 23, 1986, Lawson mailed a 13-page summary of his findings to Neal Wilson and 29 other people, including some members of the Quest Board. He reported interviewing 14 Quest participants, including four considered to be "successes" and another who now leads an Homosexuals Anonymous chapter. The average period of counseling at Quest was 22 months, and involvement spanned Quest's history from 1979 to 1986. Lawson gave a full report of his findings and did not confine them to just the abuses discovered.

"The interviewees reported two main positive results of their Quest experience," Lawson said:

First, just over half (8/14) felt that broadly focused counselling and its considerable emphasis on developing strong same sex relationships had helped their self-esteem and social relationships. Colin Cook places considerable stress on these goals, so their accomplishment is an intended consequence of the program. However, the evidence denies his claim that these goals are on the same trajectory as becoming 'free from homosexuality' as illustrated by the following:

Second, 11 of the 14 counselees said the Quest program led them to accept and feel good about their homosexuality. Before they came to Reading they had no meaningful gay friendships—their guilt was typically so great that any sexual activity was anonymous (that is,

almost never with the same person more than once). But at Quest they discussed their homosexuality openly, mixed regularly with others like themselves, felt less guilt and shame, formed friendships, were active sexually with these friends and sometimes for the first time fell in love. These new experiences significantly fostered affirmation and self-acceptance.⁷

But there were also negative connotations to the counselees' increased self-acceptance as homosexuals. All had come to Quest looking for a cure, uprooting themselves and moving to Reading. But none of the people to whom Lawson talked had changed his sexual orientation and none of them said he knew anyone who had. Their experience at Quest taught them to be cynical toward public testimonies that seemed to indicate progress toward "freedom from homosexuality." They told Lawson that such testimonials were recognized as statements of "faith and hope for the future, not statements of genuine success already realized."

[One] interviewee told of vacationing in a well-known gay resort with an ex-boyfriend from Quest days who now leads an HA chapter. The two experienced a great deal of sex together, and the interviewee turned aside hints from the ex-boyfriend that the two should settle down as lovers. He was questioning whether he's changed. . . . I felt really badly for him, for this was a man who had gone public (as having changed from homosexuality) on TV and had edited a newsletter telling people you can change! . . . The first day I got back from Florida I received their first newsletter, and it had him featured throughout. . . . telling about freedom from homosexual sin; he was on this TV program; he described himself as a Midwest missionary answering a call to go to some church. . . . where they needed to deal with the homosexual problem—he was there telling them his experience. . . . [Yet] just 24 hours earlier he had been amorous to me and was expressing an opposite viewpoint.⁸

Regarding their experience with Colin Cook, the counselees expressed anger and confusion and a sense that they had been sexually abused and manipulated for Cook's gratification. "Eleven of the 14 reported considerable discomfort from long, erotic hugs with which Colin typically began counseling sessions. During these hugs they often became acutely aware that Colin had an erection," Lawson wrote. One of the counselees told Lawson:

Very often I would feel an erection on the part of Colin [when he hugged me], I was not aroused by this. . . . When I would go to release, he would continue the hug. . . it seemed like for an eternity. . . . Afterwards he wanted to talk about the hug, the erection. He was trying to get across the point it was all right for men to do this, to have erections, be aroused by this. . . that this was all right between heterosexual men. . . . He would watch your reaction during hugs, and I learned to act as if enjoying them, for if I showed that I loathed them he would put more of an emphasis on them.⁹

Cook, in a circular letter addressed to all Homosexuals Anonymous members acknowledged his sins. He wrote to wronged counselees asking for forgiveness.

Nine of the 14 counselees complained to Lawson that Colin insisted on repeatedly going over the details of their sexual fantasies and experiences. Twelve of the 14 said that Cook had them undergo nude massages with him. Some counselees, including one 16 years old at the time, also reported that Cook had handled their genitals. One counselee, a 21-year-old on the West Coast, with whom Cook counseled twice a week by phone, reported that:

I was a little uncomfortable when we would talk over the phone. He would get very explicit about things, and I was not really comfortable listening to the details—in fact in a lot of ways it was more arousing than . . . necessary to talk about it. One time it sounded as if he was out of breath. I didn't understand what was going on because I'd never experienced this before, but what he was doing was masturbating over the phone to the sound of my voice.¹⁰

The counselee didn't know what to do but went on talking. "After he was satisfied he apologized for putting me through that. It was a very humiliating experience." In all, 13 of the 14 counselees interviewed by Lawson had been the objects of Cook's sexual attentions. The only exception was a man in his fifties, far older than the others.

Concluding his letter, Lawson acknowledged that Cook did much to lead the church into an awareness of its thousands of gay and lesbian members.

We believe his efforts with Quest Learning Center

and Homosexuals Anonymous have been well intended. Our concern is not with his private life; we sympathize with his personal struggles. However, it is our view that his professional behavior in counseling settings constitutes a major betrayal of trust and an abuse of his position in counseling relationships."

He called for the church to right its error of publicizing Cook's success by also making known his downfall, and making restitution to the counselees who were harmed.¹¹

Four days after Lawson's letter was sent, Cook was suspended by his board chairman. A week later Cook wrote to Wilson acknowledging that the accusations were correct. Within the month the board accepted his resignation and voted to close Quest. However, the board, at the same time, reaffirmed that it had "no reservations about the basic counseling philosophy of Quest." Its vote to close was triggered by the financial crisis that followed in the wake of the scandal when donation income stopped. Money was not available to continue funding both Quest and Homosexuals Anonymous Fellowship Services. According to the Homosexuals Anonymous coordinator, the board felt it could have more of an impact with Homosexuals Anonymous, which had more than 50 chapters scattered across the country, as well as in New Zealand, Switzerland, and Canada. It voted to keep Homosexuals Anonymous. The board of Quest, minus Colin Cook, continued as the board of Homosexuals Anonymous. By this time two non-Adventists had been added. Duncan Eva continues as chairman of the board. General Conference funding for Homosexuals Anonymous continues, although it is diminishing each year and scheduled to be completely withdrawn by 1990.

Cook, in a circular letter addressed to Homosexuals Anonymous members, acknowledged his sins. He wrote to wronged counselees asking for forgiveness. The board offered to provide a neutral counselor to help these people work through the psychological trauma. At Cook's local Adventist church, he was put under church censorship and assigned three elders to whom he reported until recently. He does continue to counsel people privately, but an oversight system has been

worked out with a local psychiatrist. He claims that he has been free of any homosexual activity since September 1986 (approximately the same time as the Lawson letter). His family has stayed with him through the crisis. Cook says the manuscript on which he is working will detail his long journey to recovery from homosexuality, and will be the most important work on homosexuality since Freud. It is clear that Cook has every intention of continuing his career as an expert on homosexuality and how to overcome it. He is ready to open Quest II, which he says will not place as much emphasis on counseling as on lecturing and writing.

Although numerous Adventist publications had published stories about Colin Cook and his Quest ministry through the years, it was not until eight months after Quest closed that the *Adventist Review* printed a paragraph reporting the closing—with no explanation.

A year after the Lawson letter and Cook's departure from Quest, *Ministry* in its September 1987 issue, carried another interview with Cook entitled "Homosexual Recovery—Six Years Later." This was another PREACH edition, so the editor was updating his 300,000 audience of interdenominational ministers on Cook's activities.

While acknowledging he had sinned, Cook showed how he rationalized his homosexuality while claiming to be "cured." To Editor Spangler's question, "Would you share with us how you seemingly reverted back to the old pattern?" Cook replied, "It was not back to the old pattern, as wrong as these events were. Not the full homosexuality of years ago."¹²

Later in the interview, he admitted that he had been involved in some homosexual activity even at the time of his first, 1981 *Ministry* interview and the establishment of Quest.

But, you know, Bob, there is something important to notice about that interview. I was not willing to state then that I still fell into homosexual sin from time to time. I was, of course, trying to make clear that I was accounting myself heterosexual in Christ and that the faith response to this was breaking the addictive force of the homosexual urges. . . .

I think I genuinely wondered whether my church could ever accept a Christian in the process of struggling

to overcome homosexuality. We love the victory stories. And I had had a sufficiently massive deliverance that I could, without dishonesty, tell a victory story. But what about the "becoming" part of my life? I have never felt comfortable with that.¹³

He also reaffirmed the possibility of homosexual recovery. "I believe it is also the call of God to men and women everywhere to renounce homosexuality in their lives, and my own experience increasingly witnesses to the reality of God's call in spite of my having botched things up."

Reaction to the *Ministry* article was immediate and very critical in the SDA Kinship newsletter, *Connection*. A Quest graduate reported on the piece and said:

The interview sinks to complete absurdity when Cook tells Spangler it was not "the full homosexuality of years ago," and then states that the "major bondage of homosexuality was over well before my marriage." What kind of homosexuality did he practice years ago? Was it something worse than the multiple client partners

It is this issue of how likely it is that a homosexual can change orientation that divides the Adventist gay community.

of the Quest era which Cook himself refers to as a "sexually addictive pattern"? Doesn't *Ministry* realize that the new sexual addiction is much more grievous than the old? Taking advantage of counselees has criminal implications superseding those of anonymous sex in bathhouses.¹⁴

The same issue of Kinship *Connection* carried an open letter to *Ministry* from the Rev. Marsha B. Langford, a homosexual non-Adventist minister, who is the director of an outpatient treatment center specializing in addictive disorders. She calls Cook a very sick man and asks,

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church really believes that homosexuality is a condition that individuals can recover from, why don't they seek credible individuals to conduct responsible research and provide services presided over by trained professionals?¹⁵

It is this issue of how likely it is that a homosexual can change orientation that divides the Adventist gay community. Kinship cites the Lawson findings and studies by the American Psychologi-

cal Association to support its belief that homosexual orientation can be changed in only a few cases.

Cook told Spangler that his accusers were right to be indignant about what he had done, but wrong to couch the issue in the broader terms of homosexual orientation.

They said, in effect, that since neither I nor any of my counselees had changed orientation, that orientation change is impossible. They simply ignored the growth, the "becoming," that had taken place in me and others.

Cook also told Spangler:

It may surprise many people to know that change of orientation was never a major issue at Quest, but rather a releasing from life dominance. It was the pro-gays who introduced the controversy of orientation change. This fact was often misunderstood because of the human tendency to constantly subjectivize the gospel, shifting confidence from Christ to conversion.¹⁶

Adventist members are left to contemplate the implications of this chronicle of events. The narrower issue of whether members, pastors, and denominational officials ought to rely on Colin Cook to lead the response of Adventists to homosexuality is probably not difficult to answer. Colin Cook may find fewer relatives and pastors still recommending that young homosexual Adventists go to Reading

to receive his therapy. Indeed, if he continues his association with Homosexuals Anonymous that organization's work may shrink.⁷

On the broader issue of how the Adventist majority should relate to the homosexual minority, some Adventists steadfastly refuse to believe that Cook's experience discredits all ministries dedicated to changing homosexual to heterosexual behavior. A theological approach that promises that Christ can overcome the sin of homosexuality will continue to have a strong appeal. These members probably support the church's going into court to disassociate itself from an organization like Kinship.

Other Adventists recoil from the story of Quest and Colin Cook by concluding that all change ministries are frauds; worse, that they promise false hope to people when they suggest that all are able to change their homosexual orientation.

Perhaps a lesson to be learned from this chronicle is that both those who say that they benefit from change ministry and those who consider it a fraud are part of the Adventist community. Perhaps the majority should dedicate themselves to exploring more creatively a variety of ways to relate to the homosexual minority as brothers and sisters within the family of Adventism.

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The Moral Danger of Miracles

by David Larson

“Have you ever seen a miracle in your medical practice?” I asked a thoughtful Christian physician who is a department chairman at a large medical school. “No,” he replied after a reflective pause, “but my father, who practiced medicine until he was 90, said he once saw one, but only one.”*

Authentic miracles, especially genuine instances of dramatic supernatural healing, are rare. Sometimes their infrequency prompts great perplexity.

Some wonder if there is something wrong with God. Maybe God doesn't exist, doesn't care, or doesn't possess the power to perform miracles. But for those of us who have other reasons for confidence in God's reality and goodness, these “solutions” don't help.

Others suppose that there is something wrong with our prayers. Maybe we don't have the right presuppositions, procedures, or priorities. If only we would learn to pray appropriately, they insist, we would see more miracles. But this “answer” doesn't work either. We all know at least one person who was not miraculously healed even though his or her prayer life seemed exemplary in every way.

Then there are those who suspect that there may be something wrong with the praying person that is visible only to God. Maybe he or she lacks faith. Perhaps God needs to admonish or chastise him or her with some dreadful illness. Or does God possibly want to warn someone against waywardness? Such insinuations are destructive because they cause us to look askance upon those whom we would otherwise have every reason to

respect. Besides, sickness is not always a sign of faithlessness. Sometimes it takes more faith to live with an illness than to die from it.

Some blame the church and its leaders. The church is so spiritually ill and its ministers are so corrupt, they contend, that God cannot bless us. This “answer” also fails. No denomination is perfect, every adult knows that. And ministers do make mistakes, sometimes big ones. But like all professionals, they usually do the best they can in the circumstances in which they find themselves. So why blame them?

Why blame anyone?

Maybe miracles *should* be rare! Perhaps the primary difficulty is not you, me, or anyone else but the morally questionable consequences of miracles. And maybe it is spiritually immature to hunger and thirst for them instead of for love and justice.

Much depends, of course, upon how we define the word *miracle*. Some say that miracles are events that “contradict the ‘laws of nature’.” But this misunderstands the logical status of “laws of nature.” Such norms are human summaries of the way humans think the universe works. These laws are neither fixed nor infallible. If an event actually contradicts one of our “laws of nature,” our formula must be revised so as to provide room in an intelligent way for the unexpected occurrence.

This is why it is more helpful to think of miracles as events that defy the laws of nature as *we presently formulate them*. Those among us who know the most insist that our scientific knowledge is still embarrassingly meager. Something that amazes us may seem quite normal to someone who is better informed. Although this way of thinking about miracles can have some

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problems of its own, it is superior to the first approach because it humbly recognizes how limited human knowledge currently is.

But even with this definition, we do well to pause before concluding that life would be better if we experienced more miracles. Miracles, even by the second definition, often yield ethically unsavory consequences. Some of these consequences are so morally distasteful that we can be exceedingly grateful that God performs them only very, very rarely. God takes great risks when performing a miracle. The results, all things considered, to human eyes hardly seem worth the hazard.

Do We Really Want More Miracles?

Miracles can prompt unrealistic expectations. A child reads a story about someone who prays and miraculously finds a lost pen. The youngster also prays. But his or her computer disk remains lost. Hope was raised and then dashed in ways that can be spiritually damaging. Some young people struggle with such damage well into their adult years. A medical oncologist once informed me that his deeply religious students, interns, and residents often exhibit more frustration in the face of death and dying than those who are spiritually casual. Disillusionment is a genuine temptation for those who expect miracles more frequently than they occur. Such persons sometimes dodge the acids of bitterness only with great courage and effort. Why make things more difficult?

Miracles can encourage us to avoid personal responsibility. Every doctor has had at least one patient who refused to take the steps that would bring healing because he or she expected God to perform a miracle. This is nothing new. Some “saints” in past ages refused to bathe, believing that God would cleanse them if he wanted them washed. Many live unwisely and intemperately and then beg for divine deliverance from the consequences of their choices. If God honored such requests at every turn, we would become increasingly dependent and decadent. God must

have more noble hopes.

Miracles can create an addiction to the exotic and spectacular. Including miracles in worship services is the spiritual equivalent of snorting cocaine: exhilarating at times but ultimately exhausting. Those who feed their souls on miracles sometimes find it difficult to follow a sustained line of reasoning. Physically and emotionally, as well as intellectually and morally, they become dependent upon religious thrills. This can deafen one to the still, small voice that says, “Come, let us reason together.”

Miracles can frustrate the quest for greater knowledge. If miracles are events that confront our present understandings of the universe, and if miracles are desirable, it follows that the less we know about the world the more miracles we will experience and the more delighted we will be. This approach, whether expressed or implied, places a religious premium on ignorance. What an odd way to honor the one who gave us the ability and desire to learn! And how dark and dank are the seas of superstition that such counterfeit piety produces! If the New Testament can worry about those who prefer conceptual milk to meat, what would it say of us when we choose the garbage of gullibility?

Miracles can tempt us to exploit the vulnerable.

Those who plunder the weak by claiming that God will reverse their ill fortunes if they contribute to the speaker’s favorite cause bring dishonor on worthy ventures.

The history of religion is peppered with accounts of wandering miracle-workers who took advantage of persons made vulnerable by poverty, illness, or lack of formal schooling. Some modern religious movements have returned to such questionable practices when their institutions faced severe financial pressures. “Getting back to our religious roots” they call it. But those who plunder the weak by claiming that God will reverse their ill fortunes if they contribute to the speaker’s favorite cause bring dishonor upon all who seek financial support for worthy ventures in

honorable ways. And the exploitation—raunchy and gaudy though it is—continues every day.

Miracles can distract us from the many ways God graces us moment by moment. A heart beats. A child laughs. Spouses forgive each other for angry words and harmful deeds. A bud blossoms. A colt stretches, wobbles, and then prances! A prodigal daughter or son calls home. A wound, physical or emotional, begins to heal. These are life's primary wonders. But they can be overwhelmed by the heavy rhythm and blinding light of those who conjure the unusual. Theologians refer to routine reminders of God's goodness as "common grace." Unfortunately, miracles often frustrate our ability to see such signs and to hear such whispers.

Miracles can tempt us to wallow in idolatrous hero-worship. Sophisticated miracle workers frequently remind their audiences that their powers are divine gifts, not innate abilities. And they do so even as they turn down the lights and focus the spotlight upon themselves! It is as though they never heard of the one from Nazareth who frequently asked those whom he healed not to noise it about. Some of these modern healers are frauds. Others have been seduced by their own propaganda. Either way, God gets eclipsed.

Miracles can prompt severe doubts regarding God's fairness. If one person is miraculously healed, why aren't the others when we are praying for them all? A friend once asked why it is that God reportedly answers trivial requests ("Oh Lord, help me find my keys! I'm already late!") and then seems distant when someone in a genuine crisis pleads for help? Is this fair?

I once heard a distinguished medical educator explain why he left the employment of a university operated by a famous evangelist and healer. He found himself one day in the school's gymnasium watching one of the evangelists claim to heal many of minor ailments. Just a few yards away in the school's medical center a young Christian woman lay grieving the loss of a leg that had been amputated at her torso because of a malignancy. The doctor left that institution partly because he could not bear to see God portrayed as such an unfair and capricious healer.

Miracles can frustrate God's attempt to let sin

unfurl its true results. Sin is often alluring because it conceals its dreadful consequences. One of the worst results of sin is that it causes innocent people to suffer, as evidenced by the cross upon which Jesus died. Each one must discern this about sin for himself or herself so that each person can thoughtfully reject it. Sin, understood as a conscious and deliberate decision to do that which one honestly believes is wrong, is a permanent possibility. Christianity lives by the hope that sin in this sense need not be an eternal actuality. But if God always spares us from sin's unfair conse-

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quences, we are unable to make informed decisions.

Miracles can overwhelm personal freedom. A "yes" to God is meaningful only when it comes from someone who can say "no." Such freedom is fragile. Miracles can overwhelm it with coercive evidence that God is sovereign. But God, as portrayed in the Bible, yearns for the affection of friends, not the obeisance of subjects. God therefore abides with us as the New Testament says Jesus walked beside the two travelers to Emmaus: close enough to be felt and heard, but concealed enough to be tested and found true.

These morally questionable consequences of miracles, together with others that could also be mentioned, cast great doubt upon our maturity as Christians when we long so thoroughly for God to reverse the misfortunes of our lives in spectacular supernatural interventions. Sometimes we become bitter or perhaps even cynical when things go on and on pretty much as usual. We also reveal our spiritual infancy when we blame ourselves or others for the infrequency of miracles in our day, or when we attempt to excite ourselves and others into heightened states of religious fervor that will ostensibly "allow" God to perform them more often. Such actions and attitudes are ethically retarded and theologically infantile, even though they are increasingly prevalent in some

circles. True saints and sages of all eras declare that immature Christians experience God in the extraordinary, whereas mature Christians discern God in the ordinary. When the ordinary is examined more closely, it is not so mundane after all.

Should We Be So Suspicious?

One objection to this conclusion is that in biblical times, because the devout were allegedly more faithful than they are now, God performed many more miracles. But if we divide the number of miracles the Bible reports into the number of years its stories cover, we will see that miracles were rare in biblical times as well. Furthermore, the miracles of the Bible are not evenly dispersed. They are clustered around five pivotal periods: Creation, Exodus, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus, and the Second Coming. There are long periods of time between these transition points when miracles are infrequent even in the Bible. The pattern throughout the Old and New Testaments is that God sometimes risked miracles, but usually didn't. And this has been the case for as long as anyone can remember.

The Bible's portrait of the 13th king of Israel exhibits its confidence in the possibility of miracles as well as its hesitancy regarding their moral worth. By all accounts, Hezekiah was a ruler of extraordinary ability, whose tenacity in conflict was recorded even by the Assyrians. But when Isaiah informed him that he was mortally ill, Hezekiah wept bitterly and pled for divine deliverance. Hezekiah's pleas were "effective" by some standards because he lived for another decade and a half. But he may have often wondered if it was worth it. For 10 of his final years, Hezekiah shared the throne with his son Manasseh, an evil king who reestablished soothsaying, augury, spiritism, human sacrifices, and who shed innocent human blood without reserve. Death must have finally come as a gift too long delayed for Hezekiah, whose own antagonism toward religious superstition of every sort had led him to destroy even the bronze serpent associated with the healing of Moses because it had become

a relic of foolish fascination.

Another objection is that Adventism has always had a high regard for miracles. And yet, as evidenced by the publications associated with James and Ellen White, the attitudes of those who established the Seventh-day Adventist denomination eventually paralleled the Bible's hesitancy regarding the moral worth of miracles. But this maturity did not emerge overnight.

In a broadside published in 1849, Ellen White wrote that Adventists should "not dishonor God by applying to earthly physicians, but apply to the God of Israel. If we follow His directions (James 4:14, 15) the sick will be healed. God's promise cannot fail."¹

Ellen White was not alone in her early negative thoughts about human medicine. In an obituary for Josiah Hart, a 41-year-old pastor who died leaving a wife and five children after struggling against a fever for nine weeks in 1858 without medical care, Joseph Bates reported that at one point Mrs. Hart asked "if we thought it would be pleasing to God for us to let him die without calling for medical aid?" "We replied," Bates wrote with no trace of regret, "that we had been following the directions which God had given us in the Bible and that was all, and the best that could be done."²

Such unfortunate attitudes were prompted in part by the questionable therapeutic methods of some physicians in 19th-century New England. But even "natural remedies" were apparently condemned by some Adventists. L.V. Masten, for instance, declared in the *Review and Herald* in 1853 that "I admit that God has given us 'roots and herbs,' and let such as have no faith use them! I am fully persuaded that God is well pleased to hear prayer for the sick."³

Following the death of Sister Prior, who died without medical assistance, Ellen White explicitly condemned the attitude of rejecting even the use of natural or simple remedies. "We believe in the prayer of faith," she wrote, "but some have carried this matter too far, especially those who have been affected with fanaticism. Some have taken the strong ground that it was wrong to use simple remedies. We have never taken this position, but have opposed it."

She went on to declare that “in some cases the counsel of an earthly physician is very necessary.”⁴

As 19th-century medicine improved, and as her attitudes regarding faith and medical science matured, Ellen White’s remarks regarding the work of physicians became increasingly positive. Speaking of the Adventist health work at Battle Creek in 1867, she insisted that “no one obtain the idea that the Institute is the place for them to come to be raised up by the prayer of faith. That is the place to find relief from disease by treatment, and right habits of living, and to learn how to avoid sickness.”⁵ However, she added that “if there is one place under the heavens more than another where soothing, sympathizing prayer should be offered by men and women of devotion and faith it is at such an institute.”⁶ In 1870, she felt that it was “time that something was done to prevent novices from taking the field and advocating health reform” because “it is a great responsibility to take the life of a human being in hand. And to have that precious life sacrificed through mismanagement is dreadful.”⁷

A generation later, Ellen White declared that none should “cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. If we keep these things before the people they will produce an evil effect, an unhealthful emotion.”⁸ And in 1899 she declared that the physician “occupies a position even more responsible than that of the minister of the gospel.”⁹

A third objection is that to be morally suspicious of the longing for miracles is akin to the teachings of the deists that God created the universe and the norms by which it functions and that now God almost indifferently lets the world run on its own. But Christians today must thank deism for its helpful criticisms of superstition and excessive sectarianism, as well as for its attempts to reconcile the doctrine of divine providence with what were new scientific discoveries when the modern era began. Also, the sheer simplicity of deism’s fivefold summation of genuine religion still exhibits an undeniable elegance: (1) belief in the Supreme Being, (2) the need to worship God,

(3) a virtuous life as the most acceptable form of worship, (4) the importance of repentance for one’s failures, and (5) hope for life eternal.

And yet, deism probably did not sense as profoundly as we should God’s continuing role in the universe as that reality which maintains, moment by moment, the links, however we understand them, between cause and effect, apart from which neither good nor evil could be actualized. The deists may well have overlooked what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote that in everything God works for good.

The doctrine of divine omnipresence means

Perhaps the most disturbing objection is that to be suspicious of the morality of miracles is to make prayer pointless.

more to us than that “God is everywhere.” This notion means that there is no circumstance, no matter how tragic or painful, in which God is not present as a personal power and powerful person, gently inviting us and enabling us to bring as much joy for ourselves and others as at all possible from life’s fortunes and misfortunes. This persistent, provocative, progressive, and personal impulse for good in every moment of every life can be observed in magnificent works of creativity, whether artistic, literary, scientific, or political. But more importantly, it can be seen when people cope with loss courageously, or transform their personal disappointments into opportunities for service. This continuing, evocative, and universal activity of God is what the deists may have missed.

Perhaps the most disturbing objection is that to be suspicious of the morality of miracles is to make prayer pointless. This objection is unfortunate because prayer, when honorable, attempts to change us, not God. Prayer enables us to understand our circumstances more accurately, to list our options more imaginatively, to select among our alternatives more wisely, to live with the pluses and minuses of our choices more cheerfully, and to accept the limits and opportunities of life more graciously. In these ways, prayer en-

ables one to combine the joys and sorrows of one's life into a work of art whose brilliance and

shadows coalesce as a joyful response to divine love.

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*These musings about miracles are offered in honor of Timothy R. Smith, M.D., a brilliant scholar, skilled clinician, and loyal friend whose courage and cheer in daily struggles against a debilitating disease inspire all who know him.

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Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of the Giants

by Jerry Gladson

When the Israelite spies returned from reconnoitering the land of Canaan, almost to a man they bore the woeful tidings: “The land, through which we have gone, to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature . . . We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we” (Numbers 13:32, 31, RSV).

I felt the same way when I entered Vanderbilt University to take up graduate studies in Old Testament. This was certainly the “land of the giants,” and I wasn’t sure my backwoods theology would be sufficient to slay the giant intellects who inhabited it. I saw in each professor a formidable adversary. In order to survive, I thought, I must be able intellectually to impale him upon the logic of my theological position. Since every professor was an avowed historical critic, I was tempted to transfer my insecurity into an adversarial attitude toward the historical-critical method. Could this be the weapon “that devours its inhabitants”?

That was 17 years ago. Since then I have had numerous opportunities to observe the potential, methods, and results of historical criticism. I be-

lieve now, as I did then, that only one who has actually used the historical-critical method really has any idea of its advantages or limitations. Historical criticism may be compared to a complex surgical technique: only the surgeons who use it are competent to judge its potential—or its dangers. That was one reason I chose graduate education outside denominational schools. I wanted to find out what the method could do in an environment not prejudiced against it, under those skilled in its use.

During that same 17 years the controversy in the Adventist church over the historical-critical method has heated up, died down, and now seems to be heating up again. The Annual Council recently voted (1986) to accept the report of the Methods of Bible Study committee. This committee had been reviewing the historical-critical method and its effects on biblical authority for more than three years before the report was rendered. The report, which will be discussed briefly below, struck at some of the harsher aspects of historical criticism in words like these: “The historical-critical method minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments . . . [and] de-emphasizes the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book . . .”¹ In view of the recent concern over this method at the higher levels of the denomination, I wish to take a fresh look at the historical-critical method as it relates to Adventist biblical scholarship. Does it constitute the danger envisioned by many in the church and reflected in the Methods of Bible Study re-

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port? Are we justified in all the ado we are making over historical criticism? Is there something we can find in the method which will help us in our mission? Or must we totally reject it out of hand as a tool of the devil to distract and confuse our faith in Scripture?

The Rise of Historical Criticism

Historical criticism is generally acknowledged to have two main roots.² One of these developed out of the general interest in antiquity during the Renaissance period. As if awakening from a stupor (renaissance means “rebirth”), 14th-century people rediscovered the past. Not only did classical art and literature fascinate them, but in the religious realm, manuscript collection and the searching of the biblical text in its original languages piqued their intellectual curiosity. The Protestant Reformers, influenced by this return to the sources, broke with the massive tradition of the church and began a quest to recover the literal text and meaning of Scripture. Modern biblical scholarship can be said to have begun with this Renaissance/Reformation emphasis on the literal, historical meaning of the text.

The second and most controversial root came later with the 18th-century rise of rationalism in the period known as the Enlightenment. With René Descartes (1596-1650) and others, the locus of authority shifted from Scripture (Protestantism) and tradition (Roman Catholicism) to human reason. Reason became the arbiter of truth, and the Scripture, like everything else, came under the dominance of a radical, rational analysis.³ People looked away from a remote God to the activity of the human mind. Scholars of this period began to apply to the Bible the same rational approaches they would to ordinary literature. Thus to the historical study of Scripture was added this “critical,” rational principle. It became historical *criticism*. Since the word *critical* in this context has a different meaning than usually associated with it, we should clarify this term before going further.

Criticism in biblical study does not mean an attack on the Bible. Rather, to cite the dictionary,

it signifies the “art, skill, or profession of making discriminating judgments and evaluations, esp. of literary or other artistic works.”⁴ *Historical criticism means to make careful and discriminating historical judgments about the biblical text.* The kinds of discriminating judgments one makes about the Bible will be determined, in part, by the presuppositions he or she brings to it. One inclined to rule out all supernatural intervention in the affairs of humanity, as did the Cartesian rationalists, will discount those elements in Scripture; one open to such divine activity will not. In other words, the particular judgments made about the Bible are the result, not of historical criticism per se, but of the interpreter’s own psychological⁵ or philosophical orientation.

From the 17th century on, it must be admitted, historical criticism was employed by those who doubted or denigrated the transcendent in religion. Philosophically, they accepted an empirical naturalism, especially visible in the work of David Hume (1711-1776), which precluded any supernatural causation. They linked the histori-

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cal-critical approach to this rationalistic assumption. They therefore used the method in ways that, from the orthodox point of view, led to radical conclusions. For example, instead of crediting the Pentateuch to Moses, it was traced instead back to the folklore of tribal campfires. Isaiah was carved into three or more parts and credited to authors much later than the eighth-century prophet. The historical Jesus became an elusive, legendary mirage.

Such conclusions elicited strong resistance from orthodox Christian (and Jewish) circles, not only to the results, but to the method with which they were obtained. The method came to be confused with the conclusions. “Historical criticism,” in many people’s minds, stood for an attack on the historicity and authenticity of the

Scriptures. What was not so apparent was that empirical philosophical presuppositions were being confused with a basically historical methodology.

At this time, most scholars used historical criticism in ways that reinforced these conclusions. In his research into the relation of history to religion, the German theologian, Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923), identified three principles that have become the hallmark of this kind of historical criticism:⁶

1. Because historical records, including those of religion, only achieve probabilities, not certainties, one has to critically evaluate all history. Biblical history per se cannot be accepted as authentic. This is known as the principle of methodological doubt.

2. In this evaluation, present experience provides the criterion by which the past is to be judged. Events of biblical history must be measured by what occurs today. This is the principle of analogy.

3. History, like the natural world, proceeds through complex chains of cause and effect. For every effect within history, therefore, there are one or more immanent causes, which can be further explained through antecedent immanent causes and effects. Troeltsch called this the principle of correlation.

The Troeltschian principles identify historical criticism with a strict scientific method applied to the historical texts. Pursued in pure Troeltschian fashion, we would have to agree that historical criticism would eventually reduce Scripture to the level of human literature.

Historical Criticism Today

In its earlier development, historical criticism was basically text-centered. It started with the written text and made little reference to extrabiblical epigraphic or artifactual evidence. To do this, it developed a series of methods: text criticism (deciding the most original reading in a text); source or literary criticism (identifying oral and literary sources used by biblical writers); form criticism (discerning life settings and their impact on the use of Scripture

portions); tradition criticism (tracing the development of motifs and forms in biblical history); and redaction criticism (studying the way biblical writers have integrated their materials into wholes). Many scholars tend to limit historical criticism to these literary methods, with the exception of text criticism.⁷

The study of the Bible, however, has witnessed further refinement in this text-centered, historical-critical methodology. Rhetorical/aesthetical criticism, while not new, has been applied with great vigor to the Bible, revealing the subtle patterns of style and rhetorical function within the biblical text. Canonical criticism draws attention to how the arrangement of books and individual texts within books have been received and function within the believing communities. Structuralism, on the other hand, links text-centered methodology with social and psychological context by exploring the relationship between the language of a text and the social and ideological depth structures that give rise to it.

Often these newer literary approaches—structuralism, canonical, and rhetorical criticism—are divorced from the earlier and more historical disciplines—text, source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism.⁸

To these literary, text-centered approaches have been added in the course of the development of modern biblical scholarship other supplemental, nontextual methods. Here may be included archaeology and the study of ancient history; sociology; anthropology; and the history of religions (comparative study of biblical and other ancient religious systems).

With this confusing array of methodologies we really need to ask: What is currently meant by historical criticism? This definitional problem confuses the sorting out of the many intricate hermeneutical issues involved. Therefore, it would be well to indicate the different directions that are being taken, as the issue of defining the historical-critical method looms large in the Adventist debate over the method.

A number of scholars, such as Gerhard Hasel, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, limit this term to the original, literary methods described above

(with the exception of text criticism), and the Troeltschian presuppositions usually attached to them.⁹

We may call this the classical definition of the method.

Other scholars retain the term *historical-critical* as a rubric under which all methods that embody historical as well as critical insight (in the sense of careful analysis using various humanistic models) are grouped. By this definition, all methods above would be included in what we might describe as historical and critical approaches.¹⁰

The problem, however, is that the historical-critical method has been too closely bound to the naturalistic assumptions reflected in Troeltsch. Is

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it possible to free historical criticism from these assumptions, and thus use it in a more theological context? I join a number of contemporary biblical scholars in believing it is possible. At least two assumptions sometimes attributed to the historical-critical method need to be distinguished.

First, the historical-critical method assumes that biblical religion—text and experience—followed a developmental pattern normally seen in ancient and modern religious experience. We may speak of this assumption as the “developmental” hypothesis. It is sometimes linked to a second, rationalistic one: the development of the Bible and its faith can be accounted for in strictly natural terms, without resort to transcendence. We can call this the “naturalistic” hypothesis. When these two assumptions are held together, biblical faith is robbed of its vital power. It is this that the churches oppose.

But the two assumptions need not be held together. It is possible to acknowledge certain elements of the developmental hypothesis as valid—especially those documented by the con-

vergence of biblical and nonbiblical sources—without adopting the idea that these developments are purely natural in origin. One can hold that whatever the development of biblical religion, God worked in and through the process; that there was divine superintendence of the historical matrix of the holy faith we treasure. This would be in keeping with normative Christian ideas of divine providence.

Let me illustrate how the two assumptions can be kept distinct. If we argue that Ellen White’s borrowing of literary materials is justified by literary conventions current in her day, and that inspiration still works in and through these conventions, we will also have to allow that biblical materials originated in accordance with literary conventions of antiquity and that inspiration has worked in and through these as well. We might put this in the form of a syllogism: In harmony with the literary conventions of her day, Ellen White used literary sources in the composition of her works. Ellen White is an inspired writer. Therefore, conformity to accepted literary conventions is not evidence that a writer is not inspired.

Classical historical criticism has made us aware of a number of such ancient literary conventions. For instance, ancient documents were more commonly shaped by the community than by single individuals, so modern ideas of strict authorship do not fit well with ancient texts; even sacred documents were commonly edited;¹¹ reinterpretation and typological assignment frequently took place.

These literary conventions at work in the Bible are discovered by comparing the Bible with ancient nonbiblical documents. Such investigations help us see if there is objective evidence of similar literary conventions in the Bible. In the same way we examine the literary customs of Ellen White’s day and then peer into her corpus to see to what extent she has followed them. The identification of a literary process in a contemporary culture outside the Bible text will alert us to the possibility that such may have also occurred within Scripture.

The question is not whether some of these conventional practices took place in Scripture.

Today, that is probably beyond argument. One does not have to agree with all the scholarly theories about the way these conventions operated in Scripture to recognize some legitimacy to them. The question, as in Ellen White, is whether we can see divine transcendence operating in and through them. Is there room for inspiration operating in, through, and under ancient literary conventions? This is the real issue at stake in the use of historical criticism or any other biblical criticism. If one accepts the inspiration of Scripture in principle, then he or she can recognize both a continuity with ancient literary practices and, at the same time, an element that goes beyond them.

In the same way, one can recognize Ellen White as a literary child of her age, while acknowledging that the divine inspiration of her work transcends her time. Nor does this way of looking at historical criticism dispose one to accept any and all hypothetical reconstructions of the origin and development of biblical materials. One is free to reject any theory, as for example, the document hypothesis of the Pentateuch, on the grounds of its highly speculative character and lack of objective biblical support, while at the same time recognizing that ancient inspired writers did, in fact, use sources for their writings and adapted them—sometimes not so consistently—to their purposes.

Such a view in no way negates the inspiration of Scripture. Precisely the opposite, it shows how the process of inspiration takes what is human and infuses it with the divine, the “Word in the word.” We thus can see light in some of the dynamics historical criticism talks about, and still affirm wholeheartedly the presence of the Holy Spirit in inspiration. It is not necessary to accept the narrow, Troeltschian model of historical criticism to make use of the insights of this method. We can divorce historical criticism from rationalist presuppositions and employ it in the service of our Lord.

Unfortunately, much of the scriptural research of the 20th century has been conducted along Troeltschian lines, thus aggravating the opposition to historical criticism in the churches. But in the past few years, many scholars have begun to question this unfortunate union of naturalism and

historical criticism in biblical research. “The historicocritical method,” complains Brevard Childs, “is an inadequate method for studying the Bible as the Scriptures of the church because it does not work from the needed context.”¹² “The theory and practice of the historical-critical method,” writes Lutheran scholar Terence Fre-

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them, “is not bound to an understanding which views history as a closed continuum in which there is no room for divine activity.” Due consideration, he goes on to say, “must be given to theological intentions,” that is, to the divine dimension witnessed within it.¹³

Even more insistent on this point is Peter Stuhlmacher, professor of New Testament at Tubingen University. Stuhlmacher accepts the legitimacy of the historical-critical method, but objects to judgments that impinge on the theological dimension of the text. “Our hermeneutical method is not and cannot intend to be a special theological model, because God and the Holy Spirit cannot be confined to a method.” He sums up:

What we have achieved beyond the ancient church and Reformation is the possibility and freedom of making use of historical criticism where it is really productive, namely in historical analysis and description, and at the same time of transcending it where it threatens to restrict our encounter with historical reality.¹⁴

From the evangelical side, and thus closer to Adventist thinking, we note the judgment of Carl Armerding:

Is it possible to employ critical method, but reject some of the assumptions which lie beneath it? I suggest that it is—that conservative theology both permits and even demands the use of the best critical tools, but that the way these tools and methods are used may differ sharply at the point of presuppositions from the way the

same tools and methods are employed in the hands of a rationalistic critic. Our point of departure is an examination of the way in which we understand the Bible to be the Word of God.¹⁵

It is a mistake, therefore, to confuse the practice of the historical-critical method with the complete adoption of Troeltschian principles.¹⁶ A number of scholars today recognize the necessity of separating the method from some of the naturalistic assumptions that have been confused with it.

Adventists and Historical Criticism

The debate over historical criticism in Adventism, as we would suspect, is largely the result of confusion over definitions and presuppositions. It is therefore crucial to ascertain in what way each scholar entering the discussion is using the expression *historical criticism*.

A few Adventist scholars think of historical criticism as inextricably bound to rationalistic presuppositions, and therefore of no use to Adventist Bible students.¹⁷ Gerhard Hasel apparently supports this definition. In *Understanding the Living Word of God* Hasel characterizes critical method as a “radical attack on authority of the Bible.” This claim is based on a Troeltschian definition of the method that contains “a totally immanent view of history on the horizontal level without any vertical, transcendent dimension.” Historical criticism is built, he claims, on the three Troeltschian principles. Therefore the “theologian or exegete must not get the impression that he can safely utilize certain parts of the historical-critical method in an eclectic manner, because there is no stopping point”: one who uses it must inevitably accept all Troeltsch’s, or the naturalistic, presuppositions.¹⁸

Over and over in *New Testament Theology* Hasel repeats this claim: “The historical-critical method. . . received its classical formulation by E. Troeltsch.

“The reason for the inability of the historical-critical method to grasp all layers of depth of

historical experience, i.e., the inner unity of happening and meaning based upon the inbreaking of transcendence into history as the final reality to which the Biblical text testifies, rests upon its limitation to study history on the basis of its own presuppositions.”

“It [historical criticism] has a particular view of historical understanding illustrated in Troeltsch’s principle of correlation.”

“What needs to be emphatically stressed is that there is a transcendent or divine dimension in Biblical history which the historical-critical method is unable to deal with.”¹⁹

Unfortunately, because of his influence over the church’s administrators, Hasel seems to have narrowed awareness and discussion of biblical criticism to the Troeltschian model. His own writings, however, leave considerable ambiguity as to what he means by historical criticism or even biblical criticism. In places, he seems to operate with an even narrower definition of historical criticism than is usual in scholarly parlance. At the same time, he readily uses some aspects of historical criticism as well as other elements of biblical criticism. Here are some examples:

In spite of the fact his 1970 Vanderbilt dissertation, published as *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea From Genesis to Isaiah* in the Andrews University Monograph Series,²⁰ discreetly maneuvers through all kinds of historical-critical judgments without appearing to adopt them, Hasel nevertheless makes several compromising statements regarding historical-critical methodology. He insists his study of remnant will “have to be conducted with the use of *all available tools of research*.” Although I can detect no place where he actually rejects the authenticity of a biblical passage, he does write: “It will not suffice to accept uncritically any particular passage as Isaianic [from Isaiah] nor will it serve the cause of scholarly research to reject outright the critical work of past generations.”²¹

With this methodological caveat, Hasel opens the door for use of historical-critical methods including even rationalistic presuppositions.

In another surprising instance, he seems to approve of the form-critical and history-of-relig-

ions judgment about the Sumerian flood account from the third millennium B.C. This account, not the one in Genesis, is the “earliest,” and the “prototype of later flood stories,” including Genesis 6-9.²² But most revealing of all is his claim that the “Sodom story [Genesis 19] was in its original form probably an old local tradition which was adapted into the nucleus of traditions upon which Genesis 18 in its present form is dependent.”²³ Here we have an unadulterated critical judgment implying the full use of tradition criticism.²⁴ Hasel’s whole dissertation, in fact, is really a tradition critical study of the motif “remnant,” sometimes called *Begriffskritik* (“motif criticism”).

These instances actually reach into the core of methods forming the soul of even what Hasel defines as historical criticism. We could perhaps excuse these instances on the grounds Hasel was writing a dissertation for a Ph.D. at an institution where historical criticism is taken for granted, but this would not explain why they are retained in the revised version of the dissertation published by Andrews University, especially by one who has so adamantly opposed historical-critical method elsewhere in the church.

In his 1974 essay, “Principles of Biblical Interpretation,” intended to downplay historical-critical method, Hasel obliquely admits to the legitimacy of some elements within it. He writes that a “consistently applied historical-critical method cannot do justice to the Bible claim to truth.” He goes on to show that the “divine dimension. . . cannot be adequately dealt with by the historical-critical method,” and advocates a hermeneutic that addresses both the divine and human dimensions of Scripture.²⁵

What makes this statement so unusual is its tacit admission that historical-critical methods *can be employed*, so long as the divine dimension is kept in proper perspective. This amounts to nothing less than a form of historical criticism, or at least biblical criticism, as Hasel’s own scholarly writings attest. Hasel, despite his protest, thus shows that he is familiar with historical criticism, and that he feels free to use tradition criticism, form criticism, text criticism, history-of-religion, in short, “all available tools of research.” What he

takes away with one hand he gives back with the other. He is careful, however, to make sure his use of these forms of biblical criticism allow for the free working of divine transcendence.

The problem with Hasel’s approach is that he ties historical criticism inescapably to the classical formulation of Troeltsch. Hasel’s view pre-

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vents any modification of historical criticism on the ground that alteration destroys the inherent, presuppositional basis of the method itself. Therefore, Adventist scholars who use methods from within historical criticism, but who modify the presuppositions are, in his judgment, not historical critics. This explains why he himself uses methods from within historical criticism and yet publicly condemns historical-critical research.

Hasel must be aware that many scholars inside and outside the Adventist community do not accept his definition. Immediately after referring to the classical formulation of the method by Troeltsch, he acknowledges that today the “method is so differently practiced that it is difficult even to speak of the historical-critical method.”²⁶

Hasel has, therefore, done a great disservice to dedicated Adventist scholars by persuading church leaders that scholars who use historical-critical methods do so only in Troeltschian terms. Actually, many of these scholars are as concerned as Hasel to avoid denying divine activity in human history. Nevertheless, committed Adventist scholars who love the church are left to languish under the suspicion of a church leadership that has been provided an inaccurate view of the methodology currently at work in biblical research.

An examination of Hasel's published works, particularly those intended for a non-Adventist audience, will show little difference between him and other Adventist biblical scholars when it comes to methods for analyzing the Bible. Although, as in any comparison, there will be a few substantive differences, the conflict between Hasel and other Adventist scholars is largely definitional and needs to be recognized as such. *All Adventist scholars use biblical and historical criticism, including Hasel.*

Early in his struggle against this understanding

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of historical-critical method, Hasel won to his side—and thus to a narrow, Troeltschian view—Gordon Hyde, former director of the Biblical Research Institute. These two men represent the major source of the controversy over biblical criticism in the church. While with the institute Hyde attempted to maneuver the Biblical Research Institute—and through it, the church—into an adversarial relation to historical criticism.²⁷ After his General Conference service, Hyde chaired the department of religion at Southern College, where he continued his assault on historical-critical methodology.

Unable to address critical method from the philosophical or theological perspective (he holds a Ph.D. in speech), Hyde has tried to deal with it politically. By systematic elimination of religion faculty known to be supportive of a modified historical-critical method, development of stringent, anticritical criteria for persons holding the recently endowed Ellen G. White Memorial Chair in Religion,²⁸ and long-range plans for departmental publications under the auspices of the

Chair, which he began to edit upon retirement in 1987, Hyde apparently hopes to eliminate completely any vestige of historical criticism from at least the Southern College religion department.²⁹

Hyde's recent activity gives no indication he has moved from his 1976 indictment of historical criticism, in which he, like Hasel, commits the same error of defining it in strictly rationalist, or Troeltschian terms:

We wish to comment on a method that is used by those who think they see conflicts between the Bible's testimony about God and His works and the evidences of nature or science. It is a method used also to explain the teachings of the Bible that do not harmonize with the presuppositions with which men come to its study. To illustrate, if a typically modern person assumes (with the average scientist and historian) that there are no miracles, then he has to do something about the many claimed miracles in the Bible. So what does he do? He probably points out that every writer is "historically conditioned," which means that the writer reflects the prevailing views and understandings of his time and is even limited to the ideas, concepts, and language of his age. . . . So to resolve the conflict, someone must re-interpret what the inspired person wrote so that it will harmonize with present-day knowledge.³⁰

A year later, at the Biblical Research Institute Science Council, meeting at Price, Utah, Hyde was even more direct: "There is no place for the vertical, for transcendence, in historical method or the historical-critical approach to biblical studies."³¹ And in the new Southern College publication, *Adventist Perspectives*, he editorializes: "Some want to go part way critical. But why go any way with a system based on a principle that shuts God and creation and miracles out before you start—or at least makes them uncertain, unlikely?"³²

What neither Hasel nor Hyde seems willing to recognize is that very few, if any, Adventist scholars use historical criticism in anywhere near a strict Troeltschian sense. A rationalistic view is certainly widespread among non-Adventist scholars not committed to a confessional perspective,³³ but not among evangelical or Adventist scholars.

Most Adventist biblical scholars recognize the necessity of divorcing the insights obtained from historical criticism from the rationalistic assumptions that too often have been identified with

them. They do not accept the Hasel/Hyde definition of historical criticism, but instead insist upon a modified version that assumes the reality of divine transcendence. In short, they combine a high respect for the authority and integrity of Scripture with skillful use of all the tools of modern analysis of the Bible.

These scholars realize that no one at work on the Bible today—including Hasel and Hyde—can avoid at least some use of critical method. Against those who deny transcendence in Scripture they insist such a view fails to grasp the essential character of the Bible as a religious text. Against those who try to avoid all critical method, they claim what such scholars actually do is to pick and choose among the various aspects of the method, and employ what is in harmony with their belief in the inspiration of Scripture. There is no way one can be totally opposed to critical method, that is, opposed to careful and discriminating judgment of the text. Every scholar today, they insist, is committed to the twin aspects of historical criticism: (1) the historical reconstruction of the world and thought of the biblical text; and (2) the rational evaluation and interpretation of that reconstruction, if only to the extent of trying to relate its message to the present-day world.³⁴

If Adventists wish to overcome the historical distance between ourselves and the Bible, we will have to employ some form of historical criticism. It may be of comfort to know that many evangelical scholars whose advocacy of the full authority and inspiration of the Bible can't be doubted have reached the same conclusion.³⁵

Taming the Giant: Historical Criticism in the Service of the Church

The Adventist biblical scholar should make use of a modified version of historical criticism, so long as it does not remove the transcendent level or challenge the theological authority and inspiration of Scripture.³⁶ Where there is objective, biblical evidence of transmission and development of a passage (cf.

2 Chronicles 35-36, Ezra 1, Nehemiah 7:38-8:12, with 1 Esdras) the use of source materials by an inspired writer (Luke 1:1-4), the editing of texts (cf. 2 Kings 23:28-30 with 2 Chronicles 35:20-27; Jeremiah 51:64b), et cetera, the Adventist scholar must not be afraid to employ critical judgments. At the same time, he or she recognizes that, whatever may have been the processes by which inspiration has worked, the resulting text is the Word of God.³⁷

1. *The doctrine of inspiration gives due weight to the divine and human character of Scripture and to the tension between them.*

As outlined in the Dallas statement of 1980, the Adventist view of inspiration achieves a kind of balance between the divine and human aspects. Affirming the entire canon of Scripture, Article 1 emphasizes the “infallible revelation,” which insures the Bible as “the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history.”

In two places, at least, stress falls upon the human aspect. The Scriptures were “given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”; and “God has committed to many the knowledge necessary for salvation.” These terse phrases imply what Ellen White made explicit long ago: the Scriptures, the “oracles of God,” are “a guidebook” to heaven.³⁸

Equally, Ellen White addresses the human dimension. God committed the preparation of the Bible to “finite men.” In it they express his truths in human language, but it does not represent God’s mode of thought or expression. Not the words of Scripture, but the writers, are inspired. Style, even the conception of truth, varies from writer to writer.³⁹ There is even error: mistakes in copying, intentional changes, as well as general imperfection. These imperfections were permitted by God, yet the divine and human so intertwine they are inseparable.⁴⁰ The whole text, including the human process by which it came into being, speaks as the Word of God. “The utterances of man are the Word of God.”⁴¹

It seems to me Ellen White concedes far more to the humanity of Scripture than many Advent-

ists do.⁴² On a popular level—and sometimes on an administrative one—there seems to be operative a view of Scripture that differs at many important points from that reflected in the writings of Ellen White.⁴³

What Ellen White has said about the divine-human relationship in the Bible shapes the Adventist understanding of the character of Scripture and opens the door to some form of historical

It is now generally recognized that Hebrew wisdom is the most universal literature in the Bible. Beyond question, it has taken up concepts and forms found in other cultural contexts and employed them in an Israelite setting.

criticism. Because of this understanding, the Adventist biblical scholar is much better able to appreciate the human dimension critical methods uncover than the fundamentalist who is committed to a strict inerrantist view of Scripture.

How the divine and human are intertwined in Scripture is, of course, a paradox, a mystery. But since it embodies diffusion of the divine through the human,⁴⁴ we expect to encounter both divine and human characteristics in the Bible.

Adventists affirm the divine inspiration of the Bible, recognizing God as the primary cause of Scripture. But there are numerous other indirect causes: human thought, historical occasion, literary forms, sociological conditions, et cetera. All these play lesser, intermediate roles in the overall divine activity producing Scripture. Multiplex causality result in the Word of God appearing in human language. Evangelical scholar Donald Bloesch put the matter simply:

Some neo-fundamentalists object to speaking of culturally conditioned words and concepts in Scripture, but we contend that if justice is to be done to the true humanity of Scripture, we must fully acknowledge the human element The Holy Spirit can accommodate to the thought patterns and language of the people of biblical times and therefore into their cultural and historical limitation. . . . we must likewise contend that because of the superintendence of the Spirit the Bible is a fully

reliable and trustworthy witness to the truth revealed in history that it records. It gives us an accurate reflection of the mind and purpose of God though not an exact duplication of the very thoughts of God.⁴⁵

What distinguishes the Adventist approach to Scripture from some others is this careful subordination of the human, indirect causes to the divine direct cause. An Adventist need not feel uneasy when he or she realizes the text has been shaped by human activity. Behind it divine inspiration works both in the initial inception of the message and its preservation through whatever stages it may have required. This enables Adventists to avoid the pitfalls of a strict, naturalistic biblical criticism, while recognizing the legitimate fruits of the critical method in calling attention to the human factor.

2. *The ongoing study of biblical literature against its ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman setting constantly makes ever more clear the human dimension of the Bible.*

While we could illustrate this with a great variety of biblical genres, let us briefly note the case of Hebrew wisdom literature. Scholars have become acutely aware that these works remarkably resemble literature known in other ancient Near Eastern cultures around Israel. This was dramatized in 1923 with the publication of the ancient Egyptian text, “Instructions of Amen-em-opet.”⁴⁶ Strikingly similar to Proverbs 22:17-24:22, Amen-em-opet represents one of the few documents whose use by a writer of Scripture can be virtually demonstrated. Parallels in this instance extend to both form and content.⁴⁷ Here is an example:

Do not associate to thyself the heated man,
Nor visit him for conversation
(Amen-em-opet)⁴⁸

Make no friendship with a man given to anger,
nor go with a wrathful man.
(Proverbs 22: 24)⁴⁹ (RSV)

Proverbs, moreover, is not the only wisdom book to display such parallels. Job and Ecclesiastes have similar counterparts elsewhere in the ancient Near East. It is now generally recognized that Hebrew wisdom is the most universal literature in the Bible. Beyond question, it has taken up concepts and forms found in other cultural con-

texts and employed them in an Israelite setting. The Bible, in fact, compares its wisdom to that of other nations (1 Kings 4:29, 30). Hebrew wisdom possesses unique characteristics, but that does not negate notable parallels elsewhere in the ancient Near East.

At several places in Proverbs, as well, we encounter evidence of editorial work—a collecting and traditioning process—indicating that the book is an anthology assembled over a period of time. Note the heading at chapter 25: “These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.”⁵⁰ Collecting and traditioning are processes studied by *redaction* and *tradition criticism*, both elements of historical criticism.

Although wisdom appears to be very human in many respects, it nonetheless comprises part of the inspired text.⁵¹ The human dimension, rightly perceived, does not block out the divine revelation. God inspires in, through, and under the human, but does not displace it.

3. *Adventist biblical scholarship has made use of some aspects of the critical method for at least 40 years. There exists therefore a precedent for the use of a modified version of this approach.*

Problems in Bible Translation (1954) called for careful attention to the historical, literary, and linguistic context of biblical materials, and even sketched a hermeneutical method employing such.⁵² The *SDA Bible Commentary* implemented this suggestion, using what R. F. Cottrell calls the “historical method.”⁵³ This is not the historical-critical method in classical, or Troeltschian terms, but a modified version of it, which continues to affirm the divine character of Scripture. One is not therefore surprised to discover critical results in the *Commentary*, particularly in the area of source or redaction criticism.

The book of Samuel, to take but one example, derives not from a single author, but represents “composite authorship . . . a collection of narratives, each complete in itself.” This conclusion sounds essentially like what one might read in any standard critical introduction,⁵⁴ except that the writer goes on to qualify his statement by introducing the divine element: “Each writer wrote by inspiration, and all parts were eventually brought

together as a united whole under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁵

What the writer of this portion of the *Commentary* has done should not be missed. He has been led by the actual text of Samuel to a conclusion similar to that obtained by historical-critical methodology. He has found historical-critical methods useful in explaining what he has observed. At the same time, he recognized the transcendent by pointing to the divine dimension behind the human.

Some unfortunately misunderstood—or took issue with—these hints in Adventist literature of

[Hyde’s] attempt to link critical methods inseparably to naturalistic presuppositions overlooks long-standing Adventist practice, and runs counter to the historic Adventist view of inspiration.

several decades ago.⁵⁶ As director of the Biblical Research Institute, Gordon Hyde organized three Bible conferences on hermeneutics in 1974, one of the purposes of which was to curtail the use of the historical-critical method among Adventist scholars. In the preface to *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, a collection of the papers from these conferences, Hyde explains the focus. The volume—and the conferences—trace

the history of the principles by which the Bible has been interpreted during the Christian era. It includes a survey of the sources, courses, and effects of the presuppositions and methodologies of modern biblical criticism, especially in their impact on the authority of the Bible.⁵⁷

This attempt to link critical methods inseparably to naturalistic presuppositions⁵⁸ overlooks long-standing Adventist practice, and runs counter to the historic Adventist view of inspiration.

The view advocated in the 1974 Bible conferences has never been the unified conviction among Adventist scholars. William Johnsson, editor of the *Adventist Review*, stated in a paper written shortly after the conferences that “the question must not be *whether* we will employ historical methods (because we already do to

some extent) but *how far* shall we rely upon them.” He then added that every method used with Scripture must be weighed carefully in the light of its results. The Adventist scholar will consequently not limit his work to the historical-critical method.⁵⁹

Richard Coffen similarly approves of historical criticism, cautioning against its inherent lim-

The report could bring greater unity into Adventist biblical scholarship by clearing the air so scholars who use a version of critical method will be able to serve the church without persistent, lingering suspicion.

its.⁶⁰ Hans LaRondelle, to cite a recent creative use of historical-critical approach, employs source, tradition, and redaction criticism, all elements of the critical approach, in elucidating the doctrine of the millennium. Yet he carefully maintains the divine nature of Scripture.⁶¹

The 1986 Annual Council, meeting in Rio de Janeiro, October 7-14, approved the report of the Methods of Bible Study Committee, which had been at work for about three years on the question of whether historical-critical method should be used by Adventists. The report seems to approve a cautious use of historical criticism, such as that illustrated in the work of the above-mentioned scholars. This document, reflecting its committee origin, is one of diverse emphases. Very little of it actually deals directly with historical criticism. It seems mainly concerned with shoring up the church’s understanding of apocalyptic prophecy and responding to specific conundrums that arise in Scripture study, e.g. the problem of Holy War in the Old Testament. To ensure biblical authority, the committee sets forth an approach to Scripture consisting of looking at a text in its literary and historical context, as well as placing it into the framework of the Bible as a whole. This approach, except for the use of Ellen White, is essentially that used by most conservative Bible students.⁶²

When the committee addresses historical criticism, it does not condemn the method *in toto*, but warns against the adoption of naturalistic presuppositions. Although the document never calls directly for a modified historical-critical method, several statements leave no doubt this is what is meant: Adventists appreciate “reliable methods of Bible study consistent with the claims and teachings of Scripture.” The *strict* historical-critical method is singled out: “Scholars who use this method, as *classically formulated*, operate on the basis of presuppositions which . . . reject the reliability of accounts of miracles and other supernatural events narrated in the Bible.”⁶³ “We urge Adventist Bible students,” the report states, “to avoid relying on *the use of the presuppositions and resultant deductions* associated with the historical-critical method.”

These cautions go back to the conviction that the Bible is “an indivisible union of human and divine elements.” Human reason therefore must always bow to the authority of the Word, unlike what usually happens in a strict critical approach. The committee finally seeks a balance between the divine and human element:

Even Christian scholars who accept the divine-human nature of Scripture but whose methodological approaches cause them to dwell largely on its human aspects risk emptying the biblical message of its power by relegating it to the background while concentrating on the medium.⁶⁴

The document does not really address the deeper issues in the interpretation of the Bible, and so does not provide assistance to biblical scholars who are working on complex problems concerning methods of interpreting Scripture.⁶⁵ Perhaps the main function of the report could be to encourage scholars, rather than specifically direct them, in the cautious use of a modified historical-critical approach. The report could bring greater unity into Adventist biblical scholarship by clearing the air so scholars who use a version of critical method will be able to serve the church without persistent, lingering suspicion.⁶⁶

4. *A modified version of the critical method is helping the church come to terms with the genesis of the Ellen G. White writings.*

In the past few years, attention has been drawn

to the extent and number of literary sources used by Ellen White. This has proven extremely threatening to many Seventh-day Adventists. Those trained in historical-critical methodology, however, have not been so perturbed, for they know that biblical texts indicate similar processes of development. Warren Johns, one of the first to respond to the Ellen G. White crisis, employs both source and redaction criticism in accounting for her literary borrowing.⁶⁷ A White Estate document, issued two months later, even suggests "source criticism" as an appropriate tool:

At one time in the infancy of "source criticism" the Gospel writers were thought by higher critical writers to be little more than "scissors and paste" plagiarizers. Now critical scholars realize that literary studies are not complete until they move beyond cataloging parallel passages to be the more significant question of how the borrowed material was used by each author (redaction criticism) to make his own unique statement.⁶⁸

This concept is then applied to Ellen G. White. One caution is in order: It must not be assumed that the development of the Ellen White corpus and that of the Bible directly parallel. Adventists, in their haste to resolve the Ellen White crisis, need to be careful they don't unwittingly sacrifice the integrity of the Bible on the altar of Mrs.

White. The differing cultural and literary contexts must be taken into account before theories of development in either case may be advanced. However, the use of critical approaches with Ellen White will serve to demonstrate their usefulness in the study of Scripture. Whatever the outcome of the Ellen White question, one positive result might be the church's becoming less afraid of using critical method.

In conclusion, I have suggested that the Adventist scholar may accept and use a modified version of the historical-critical method. I have specified that this view ought to give due weight to the divine *and* human aspects of Scripture, i.e., it must be historical and theological in scope.⁶⁹ "Let us go up at once, and occupy it; for we are well able to overcome it." No human attempt to understand divine truth is perfect. The time may come when the historical-critical method is replaced in whole or in part by a superior one. We must never think our methods beyond revision. But it seems imperative that contemporary Adventist scholarship employ biblical criticism cautiously and reverently in the service of the gospel, to speak Christ ever afresh to a world perishing without him.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "Actions of General Interest From the 1986 Annual Council," *Adventist Review* (January 22, 1987), pp. 18-20. All citations in this study will be from this source.

2. Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-critical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 7-9.

3. A rational analysis of Scripture, which led to the awareness of external and internal inconsistencies, had surfaced sporadically long before the Renaissance. If we discount the activity of the Gnostic critics of the Christian faith, as early as 145-180 A.D., a certain Ptolemy challenged the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. Among the Iberian Jews both Ibn Yashush (c. 1000) and Ibn Ezra (1092-1167) were convinced that portions of the Pentateuch were written in the 17th century. (cf. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1969], pp. 4-7). The "critical" impulse is much older than the 17th century.

4. *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1982), s.v. "criticism."

5. The question of the role of an interpreter's psychology

on the results he or she obtains from biblical research has been explored by Cedric Johnson, *The Psychology of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

6. "Über historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie," *Zur Religiösen Lage, Religionsphilosophie und Ethik* (2nd ed.; Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1922; reprint ed., 1962), pp. 729-753.

7. So apparently Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 204-212. Hasel can criticize historical criticism for not being open to the transcendent dimension, then call for the "careful use of proper tools of historical and philological research" (p. 205), which would inevitably involve the use of methods that others might include under historical criticism.

8. Some scholars insist the newer methods start with the text as it stands rather than with theories of its development. They are synchronic (analytical) rather than diachronic (chronological), and thus not aspects of historical criticism. "Structural methods do not fit into the series of traditional

exegetical methods," insists Daniel Patte. "Text criticism, literary criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism belong together because they all assume a historical paradigm with a specific preunderstanding of the biblical text. . . the very introduction of structural methods in exegesis implies a shift in the exegete's preunderstanding of the biblical text."—*What Is Structural Exegesis?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), p. 1.

9. Cf. his *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), pp. 131-137.

10. This tendency may be seen in the Fortress Guides to Biblical Scholarship, which include introductory volumes to each method.

11. Harrison shows that ancient Near Eastern scribes revised the documents entrusted to them with great care, even those of great antiquity. This revision extended at least to grammar, spelling, and content updating. An Egyptian religious papyrus from c. 1400 B.C. had a certification with it indicating the scribes had copied, revised, and compared it with its archetype [original] (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 522, 523).

12. *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), p. 141. A similar point is made by Gerhard Hasel in *New Testament Theology*, pp. 206, 207.

13. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (1976), s.v. "Source Criticism, OT."

14. *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), p. 90.

15. *The Old Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 3, 4. Emphasis supplied.

16. "The method is so differently practiced that it is difficult even to speak of the historical-critical method" (Hasel, *New Testament Theology*, p. 208).

17. See Gerhard Maier, *The End of the Historical-critical Method* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977), for Lutheran advocacy of this view.

18. Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1980, pp. 28, 24-26.

19. Pages 206, 209, 211. This same view appears in Hasel's recently published, "The Rise and Wane of Biblical Authority," *Adventist Perspectives* 1:1 (1987), pp. 14, 15. On this new periodical, published by Southern College, see below.

20. Vol. 5 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1972). This does not contain the full text of the original dissertation.

21. Page 46.

22. Pages 63, 382, 384.

23. Page 147.

24. In note 39 on pp. 147, 148, Hasel cites several critical scholars in support of his statement. These include Hermann Gunkel, Gerhard von Rad, and Otto Eissfeldt. Nowhere does he indicate disagreement with the essentials of their critical conclusions.

25. *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. G. M. Hyde (Washington: General Conference, 1974), p. 167. Emphasis supplied. We can see him at work with this approach in "Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels," *Andrews Uni-*

versity Seminary Studies 10 (January 1972), p. 120. In this article Hasel shows the radical difference between Genesis 1 and other ancient Near Eastern creation accounts. In the process, however, and without accepting rationalistic presuppositions, he makes use of comparative form criticism and the history-of-religions, both methods at the heart of classical historical criticism. In his *New Testament Theology*, Hasel likewise calls for a method that takes "into account the reality of God and his inbreaking into history" as a basis for "historical and theological interpretation" (p. 212). Despite this insight, and despite his awareness of the entire problem of definition (pp. 207-212), in the footnote to this statement, he lapses back into a univocal identification of historical criticism with the Troeltschian model (note 37). Does Hasel define historical criticism narrowly as the Troeltschian version, and all other forms of criticism as simply historical or literary in nature? There is considerable ambiguity in what he has written on this matter.

26. *New Testament Theology*, p. 208. Emphasis Hasel's.

27. Hyde's reactionary work at the Biblical Research Institute in this regard has been documented by Raymond Cottrell in an unpublished manuscript entitled, "Our Present Crisis: Reaction to a Decade of Obscurantism" (August 1981).

28. These criteria have finally surfaced in print. The relevant line reads: "the chair will *decline to follow the historical-critical method and its procedures*, including its actual and virtual rejection of miracles and other supernatural events recorded in the Bible. It will *regard as unacceptable even modified usages of this or other methods* that are not grounded in, nor in harmony with, the Bible"—"Extracts From Chair Documents," (*Adventist Perspectives*, p. 50, emphasis supplied). A source within the Southern College administration expressed to me on November 12, 1986, that college administration was concerned that, under the influence of Gerhard Hasel, Hyde would incorporate such a statement in the criteria for appointing the chair, and thus isolate Southern College from the mainstream of Adventist scholarship. This concern now appears well-founded, for unfortunately their incorporation in a formal statement has now occurred. As can be seen, the criteria repeat the fallacy of tying contemporary historical-criticism to a Troeltschian model.

29. This is evidenced in a March 24, 1987, letter to the faculty of the Department of Religion, in which Hyde calls for personal written statements from each member of the faculty on each of the 27 Articles of Belief. These statements are to be molded into a position document for the department on "Where we understand the theological lines of this Advent message" to lie. "To use one of the President's [Don Sahly, President of Southern College] recent analogies, he wishes that the religion faculty on this campus would snap the chalk line to indicate—to the various entities that are concerned, to know—where the boundaries lie for the edifice of truth which this institution—among others—is both helping to erect and also to maintain." There can be little doubt Hyde, given his preoccupation over the past 20 years, excludes here any form of historical-critical method. This is now obvious in the new departmental publication, *Adventist Perspectives*, pub-

lished in November 1987. Written statements from all the religion faculty appear, most of which repudiate any form of historical criticism, e.g. Ronald Springett: "the biblical methodologies and hermeneutics that dominate in our time—the historical-critical method of Bible study, for example, and its many variations—are based to a greater or lesser extent on the naturalist world view" ("World View," *ibid.*, p. 26).

30. *God Has Spoken* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing, 1976), pp. 25, 26. Emphasis supplied.

31. "The Divine and Human in Revelation," paper read at the Biblical Research Institute Science Council, 12, May 1977, Price, Utah, p. 4.

32. "Does it Really Matter?" p. 7.

33. Krentz, p. 71.

34. This is precisely the position advocated by Hasel: One must first understand (1) "historically and theologically what the text meant." Having done this, he or she is then (2) to "express more adequately and comprehensively what the text means for man in the modern world and historical situation" (*New Testament Theology*, pp. 212, 213). Cf. his "The Relationship Between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology," *Trinity Journal*, n.s. 5[1984] pp. 113-127). Here he notes that a systematic approach to biblical theology ought to utilize the full range of historical, psychological, sociological, and philosophical information so long as it is subjected to the norms of biblical revelation. To carry out such a mandate would inevitably lead to the utilization of methods from within historical criticism, albeit without rationalistic presuppositions. In short, it would require a modified version of the historical-critical method.

35. *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. 55, note 1. Evangelical Donald Bloesch concurs: "We need to be free to examine the Scriptures as human literature; yet we must not stop there but go on to find and hear the Word of God in and through the words of the human authors. Historical and critical studies may help to cleanse the lens of Scripture so that it is not simply an opaque medium of the Word of God" (*Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 2:274). Cf. G. E. Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967).

36. This assumes the view, long advocated by the White Estate, that the Bible is accurate in theology, but not necessarily in every detail of its history, science, etc. This is called *limited inerrancy*. Recently, leading evangelicals have adopted the same position, although they speak of it as a form of the *inerrantist* view of inspiration (cf. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 1:64-70; G. C. Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture*, Studies in Dogmatics [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], pp. 195-212).

37. Evangelical scholar Carl Armerding reaches this same conclusion: "Inspiration is seen as applying to the end product of what was in some cases a long process, while the length of the process in no way affects its authority" (*Old Testament and Criticism*, p. 99).

38. *Selected Messages*, book 1 (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1945), p. 15.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-21.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 20; *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Re-

view and Herald, 1945), pp. 220-221.

41. *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21.

42. This was the conclusion of the 1919 Bible Conference. Cf. the transcript of this crucial meeting in *Spectrum* 10:1 (1979), pp. 27-57.

43. Cf. for example, Robert Pierson, *We Still Believe* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1975), p. 251.

44. *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21.

45. "Theological Table-Talk: Crisis in Biblical Authority," *Theology Today*, 35 (1979), p. 458.

46. Wallis Budge, *Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, second series (1923): *The Teaching of Amen-em-apt* (1924).

47. James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), pp. 220-222.

48. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. J. B. Pritchard, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 423b.

49. The Hebrew of this saying, given the differences between Egyptian and Hebrew, is almost identical to the Amen-em-opet version.

50. Cf. also 1:1-7; 10:1; 22:17-20; 24:23; 30:1; 31:1. The titles in these verses seem to point to separate collections of proverbs that have been brought together to form our present book. Job 8:8-10 speaks of the cultivation of a wisdom tradition that would have transmitted proverbial sayings.

51. The similarity of Hebrew wisdom to other ancient Near Eastern sources, the evidence of traditioning, and the absence of direct reference to inspiration naturally raises the question of how this literature is to be understood as divinely inspired. This is an extremely difficult question. I would suggest two considerations that affirm the transcendent dimension:

Inspiration utilizes several possible modalities. The most familiar we might call the *prophetic* mode. Here an individual receives a visionary or auditory revelation from God and is instructed to write down what he or she has seen or heard.

But at least two other modes come immediately to mind. The *editorial* mode appears in the prologue of Luke (1:1-4). Wisdom literature, I think, falls into still another category: that of the *reflective* mode. The wisdom teachers, convinced that their observations of world order were in harmony with ultimate truth found only in God, held all truth to be from God, and as such a gift or "revelation" from God. Through the order behind reality, the sages learned something of God. A certain hiddenness existed in God's self-disclosure, but the order of the world did its part to disclose, or unveil God.

The second consideration is that the New Testament itself places the arch of inspiration over the entire canon of the Old Testament and permits us—even though we do not grasp the mystery of how it all came about—to regard the wisdom corpus as inspired Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

52. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1954), p. 105.

53. "The Historical Method of Inspiration," *Review and Herald* (April 7, 1977), p. 7.

54. Cf. James L. Crenshaw, *Story and Faith: A Guide to the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 129, 130. Crenshaw speaks of "several strands of traditional

material which make up the work," but is unable to find "an overarching perspective."

55. 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1953-1957), 2:448.

56. Gordon Hyde has on more than one occasion confided to me his suspicion of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* in this regard.

57. (Washington, D.C.: General Conference, 1974), p. iv.

58. In a key essay, Hasel cites the Troeltschian principles as definitive of critical method, a misunderstanding that occurs even in his recent writings. "The historical-critical method understands history as an unbroken series of causes and effects in which there is no room for God's activity" ("Principles of Biblical Interpretation," p. 166).

59. "SDA Presuppositions to Biblical Studies," paper presented to SDA members attending the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Convention, Chicago, Ill., October 29, 1975, pp. 44, 45.

60. "Taboo on Tools?" *Ministry*, 48 (September 1975), pp. 7, 8.

61. "The Millennium: Its Old Testament Roots," *ibid.* 55 (November 1982), pp. 10-12.

62. Cf. Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

63. These judgments unfortunately lead the authors to some pejorative statements, such as "The historical-critical method minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments." "A committed Christian will use only those methods that are able to do full justice to the dual, inseparable nature of Scripture, enhance his ability to understand and apply its message, and strengthen faith" (pp. 18, 209). My personal acquaintance with several Christian scholars who use a strict historical-critical method finds them to be, not only committed Christians, but supremely ethical and faithful as well. In church documents of this

nature, we should try to avoid categorizing other Christians in this way.

64. "Actions of 1986 Annual Council," pp. 18-20. The quotation is from p. 20. Emphasis supplied.

65. My interpretation of the committee's report is more positive than that of R. F. Cottrell, who rightly objects to its "myopic" view that the word *critical* in historical criticism "indicates a critical attitude toward the inspiration and authority of the Bible." Cottrell, who holds a view of historical criticism very similar to my own, and I would agree the limiting of membership on the committee to persons not experienced in historical criticism disposed it to an inaccurate appraisal of the method (cf. R. F. Cottrell, "The Annual Council Statement on Methods of Bible Study," unpublished paper, December 1, 1986).

66. Unfortunately, despite its current status as a "report," there is some evidence that it is instead being used against loyal Adventist scholars. It recently played a negative role in the suspension of Joseph Grieg from the Andrews University faculty for allegedly teaching "the historical-critical method." Grieg's reinstatement is extremely encouraging because it suggests that church administrators are not locked into following the Hasel/Hyde approach, but may be moving toward accepting the more enlightened view anticipated in the document on methods.

67. "Ellen White: Prophet or Plagiarist?" *Ministry*, 55 (June 1982), pp. 5-19.

68. "The Truth About *The White Lie*," insert, *ibid.* 55 (August 1982), p. 2.

69. In this I concur with Gerhard Hasel: "If the reality of the Biblical text testifies to a suprahistorical dimension. . . then one must employ methods that can account for this dimension and can probe into all the layers of depth of historical experience and deal adequately and properly with the Scripture's claim to truth" (*New Testament Theology*, p. 211).

Do Adventist Colleges Have a Future? A Symposium

No one cares more about Adventist education than those who have devoted their professional lives to it. Recently, some of Adventism's most distinguished educators have spoken out on the direction they think Adventist schools ought to take. They have expressed their views in commencement addresses, alumni weekends, teachers' workshops, campus newspapers, and Adventist Forum conferences. With their permission, we have taken the following excerpts from their presentations to form a lively and diverse symposium of ideas about the future of Adventist education.

—The Editors

The Customer—The Student—Is *Numero Uno*

by William Loveless

If a simple change were made in the mission statements of Adventist colleges, a case could be made that instead of closing colleges, Adventists could double the number of their colleges in North America. That simple change would state that the mission of Adventist education includes not just meeting the needs of the Adventist denomination, but responding to the educational and training demands of the local community. Once a college assumes that it has an obligation to serve the institutions of the community in which it is located, all kinds of new constituencies and markets open up. While production of workers for the Adventist church is

a major mission of all of our colleges, another important mission could be serving the educational requirements of the community. This change in mission would change everything.

Already, Adventist colleges and universities are changing from ivory-tower enclaves to consumer-driven businesses. The marketplace has suddenly become very important, and the customer, the student, is *numero uno*. It is interesting that the American Council on Education estimates that 75 percent of freshmen entering college now say that they are doing so to get a better job, and that is the most important reason they have gone to college. As more people equate college with career advancement, student bodies become more diverse. The most rapidly growing groups of college students are women and those over age 25. Less than half of all students now earn their college degree in the traditional four-year situation.

Because of the baby bust, the number of high school and academy graduates peaked at 3.2 million in 1977, and then began a 15-year toboggan slide. According to the Center for Education Statistics, high school and academy graduates were down 16 percent in 1977 to an estimated 2.7 million in 1987. By 1992—and this has captured the attention of all of us—this number will drop another 11 percent to 2.4 million. A careful look at the projected number of graduates from Adventist academies in North America the next five years shows exactly the same picture as the public high school. Thus, Seventh-day Adventist educators in higher education are concerned about what the future holds. We have been very complaisant, but now the numbers have given us a good, swift kick to get going.

We must thank David W. Brenneman, the

author of the monograph, *The Coming Enrollment Crisis—What Every Trustee Must Know*, published in 1982, and Harold Hodgkinson, American Council on Education senior fellow who wrote, *Guess Who's Coming to College?* These documents, published in the early 1980s, warned us all of what was coming. Some have listened and profited and some haven't.

Many colleges and universities have adopted a new strategy that seems to be working. Despite the loss of half a million high school graduates in the past 10 years, total enrollment in two and four-year colleges during the same period rose from 11.5 million in 1977 to 12.4 million in 1986, contradicting the projection of a decline made by the Center for Education Statistics. But between 1985 and 1986, as the number of high school graduates declined by 68,000, the number of college freshmen increased by 150,000. The same

phenomenon in freshmen classes appeared in the Adventist system across the nation. (There is an air of relief among many college administrators today, but we must be careful. The estimates indicate that a decline of 11 to 15 percent is still to come in the next three to five years.)

The grim enrollment projections were probably naive because they left out the fact that the economy was equally important. When times are relatively good, more people are confident enough to go to college. A surging stock market and lower interest rates have been good for college and university endowments and for our students in the Adventist system as well.

Colleges and universities also benefit as the United States economic base shifts from manufacturing to services and information. As the demand for professionals and technicians grows, people with college degrees earn a lot more, and

How to Finance a College Education

by William Loveless

I know Columbia Union College best, so I will use its actual fees as the basis for showing how a person can still finance an Adventist college education. A student taking 16 hours a semester will pay \$6688 a year for tuition, \$800 for food, \$300 for books and supplies, and \$1260 for housing. That's a total of \$9048 a year (a little more for men and a little less for women), roughly \$36,000 for four years.

What kind of grant money is available to the student? While the cost of Adventist higher education has grown at a rapid pace, there is more money available to students than ever before in our history.

So, to meet the costs at Adventist colleges, students first of all can obtain scholarships. At my school students with a 3.0 grade-point average receive a \$1000 scholarship each year. In essence, this is a tuition discount of approximately 20 percent, which is not insignificant. If the student comes from a family that qualifies for a government Pell Grant at the median level of \$1400, add that to the total. If the student comes from a state that offers a state scholarship, credit the minimum, \$300 a year. That makes a total of \$2700 in grants that the student need not repay, or a total of \$10,800

over a four-year period. That essentially cuts the \$36,000, four-year bill down to less than \$26,000 or \$6500 per year that the student and/or parents must supply.

Numerous loan programs are available to students today. The most attractive is the Guaranteed Student Loan, from which the student can borrow up to \$2625 per year as a freshman and sophomore, and up to \$4000 per year as a junior and senior. Repayment is at 8 percent interest, must begin six months after the student leaves school, and does not need to be completed for 20 years.

The Perkins Loan Program offers the student the possibility of borrowing up to \$2250 a year at five percent interest, with pay back due within 10 years after graduation. Nursing students can borrow up to \$2500 per year at six percent, also to be paid back within 10 years of graduation.

Many students are electing to borrow money and graduate from college in debt. This is not something which we recommend on a large-scale basis, but it is an attractive option for many students. They recognize the value of such a strategy when they realize that the average differential in income between students with a high school or academy diploma and those with a college degree is \$9552 per year. Within three years, the difference in earning power between a high school and college diploma could totally pay for a college education. A college education remains one of the best investments in the world.

the gap gets wider. There is a dramatic difference in the ability to earn money as a direct result of higher education.

There is no question that for Adventist colleges to survive they will have to undertake fundamental changes in their shape and character. Most important, in order to continue to exist in our world, Adventist educational institutions will have to expand their mission from training denominational employees to what their communities define as their educational needs. I am firmly convinced that if we do expand our mission, we can look forward to more, rather than fewer, Adventist colleges.

William A. Loveless is president of Columbia Union College. His 10 years in that post make him the senior president among heads of North American Adventist colleges. Formerly pastor of the two largest Seventh-day Adventist congregations in North America, the Sligo and Loma Linda University churches, and president of the Pennsylvania Conference, Loveless received an Ed.D. from the University of Maryland. This selection is taken from a lecture to a conference on "Crises in Adventist Higher Education," held in November 1987 by the Loma Linda chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums.

Sustaining an Adventist Ethos

by Michael Pearson

Many Adventists in Europe have grown up with a feeling of inferiority about being Adventists. This is based on our deep-seated feelings about being obliged to be different at school, about attending small, unimpressive churches, where there were a lot of old and a few odd people. A feeling of inferiority comes from knowing that we belong to a church that is small and not influential in the wider society. We are saying things that few want to hear, and we live in a culture where numbers are important.

In our educational system, one of the chief

ways in which we attempt to compensate for corporate feelings of inferiority is by seeking high academic qualifications at secular universities. There is nothing wrong with seeking such qualifications, unless we do so to cope with a sense of personal or institutional inferiority.

On the question of encouraging our workers to gain high educational qualifications, it must be noted that there is a kind of naive belief among many Adventists that education is a good thing, that whatever further studies we pursue they will inevitably confirm the Truth—the kind of world view for which Adventists stand. It is a naive view because many of the concepts, many of the ways of looking at the world that are taken for granted in the world of higher education in Europe, in fact strike at the very foundation of the Adventist world view.

I am not for one moment suggesting that Adventists stop pursuing excellence in secular institutions of learning. What I am suggesting is that we do our best to perceive the alien attitudes when we come across them, that we are careful not to import them untreated into our schools and colleges, that we form our own thoughtful response to such hostile ideas, and that, when exposing our students to ideas which they may well find threatening we provide them with a way of dealing with them. In doing so, Christian teachers need to formulate ideas that are robust and attractive. Flat, defensive rejections of ideas hostile to the faith will not do. On well-chosen occasions we need to share our doubts with students. They will know that those who shout loudest about their convictions sometimes do so to paper over the cracks of their own doubt. They need to know that the existence of doubts is no indication that one has ceased to be a believer.

In short, we need to teach our students respect for the tradition of our faith, and provide freedom for them to move beyond (notice, I am not saying, away from) that faith, to make it their own. We need to help students live in a certain tension: that we don't have all the answers, that we have to live with mystery and paradox; that we believe in an imminent return of Jesus but continue to plan new

buildings and make provisions for the 21st century. The alternative is that they will become secularized, either by lapsing into agnosticism or by developing a rule-bound, programmed spirituality that is far removed from true discipleship.

Michael Pearson, professor of religion at Newbold College in England, recently received his doctorate from Oxford University. His 1986 dissertation, *Seventh-day Adventist Responses to Some Contemporary Ethical Issues* is being published by Cambridge University Press. His address to the July 1987 teachers' convention of the Trans-European Division included the comments printed here.

On the Importance of *Not* Knowing

by Dean Hubbard

Churches place a high premium on knowing. After all, people come to church for answers, not questions. So churches spend their time refining answers, which over time they claim to know with ever-increasing certainty. Universities, on the other hand, place a high premium on not knowing. In fact, not knowing is a notion that is embedded in the very heart and soul of a university. Universities claim that their primary objective is to help students learn how to learn. This involves learning how to question, probe, challenge, doubt. The whole process implies that we don't know, and this kind of ambiguity can be upsetting, particularly to the sponsoring church.

The problem seems intractable because questioning is endemic to scholarship. Not knowing is an inescapable byproduct of all true scholarship. A scholar by definition is one who goes out to the edge of knowledge, past the previous questions and answers to a new set of issues. That's the reason that every dissertation worth its salt ends not with a final answer, but with a set of questions to be explored. It is at precisely this point that churches and their universities inevitably lock horns. When intellectuals raise questions, par-

ticularly about doctrines that churches vehemently claim to know with certainty, they are often misunderstood and labeled as disloyal and subversive.

Now let me state my thesis: *Not knowing (i.e., questioning), coupled with an appropriate tolerance for ambiguity, is absolutely essential for corporate as well as individual growth, vitality, and relevance.*

Many believe the basic product of a church is answers. In response, as a church matures it often congeals its answers into precisely worded, broad-ranging, and elaborate creeds. Or, for those who do not like creeds, statements that have the same function.

It is with this quest for certainty that the maturation cycle of universities differs from that of their sponsoring churches. For a variety of reasons, as universities mature, instead of becoming more confident with the old answers, they become more sensitive to the limits of human knowledge (uncertainty, if you please), and to the ethical imperative of preparing students to live with ambiguity.

I would recommend that as an Adventist church we rethink and reaffirm what is *really*

Not knowing (i.e., questioning), coupled with an appropriate tolerance for ambiguity, is absolutely essential for corporate as well as individual growth.

basic and fundamental. Instead of formulating more and more answers, that are longer and longer, we should seek an appropriate balance between knowing and not knowing. We must do all in our power to prevent our colleges and universities from becoming immobilized, intimidated, or decimated by those who insist on knowing too much. Hopefully, realizing that not knowing (i.e., questioning), coupled with an appropriate tolerance for ambiguity, is absolutely essential for corporate as well as individual growth, would help us

appreciate the true basics, which all of us could enthusiastically endorse.

Dean L. Hubbard, president of Northwest Missouri State University since 1984, was the president of Union College from 1980-1984. Earning a doctorate in administration from Stanford University, Hubbard earlier served as a pastor and an educator in the Far Eastern Division. Honored at the 1986 Andrews University alumni weekend, Hubbard gave the Sabbath morning sermon at Pioneer Memorial Church, from which this excerpt is taken.

The Passion for Excellence: A Thirst for the Divine

by Frank Knittel

I believe it is a lack of interest in excellence that has fostered a significant element of anti-scholarship among our members. The summer of 1986, at church convocations featuring church leaders, some of the speakers betrayed their lack of support for church education, especially on the collegiate or university level. Some sermons included comments such as: "Friends, I do not have one of those higher degrees. I have not studied higher criticism. I am not an intellectual. I am just a simple believer of the Word." And the audience silently, sometimes even audibly, applauded. The speaker was saying that one cannot be highly educated and still be a "simple believer of the Word."

I abhor that. I disbelieve it. I defy it. Such a statement is opposed to God. God, after all, created the human brain, that organ of unending capability, that transmitter of God's own self to a reeling world. God calls us to educational endeavors so that we may be vastly more than simple believers of the Word. God calls us to be nothing less than reasonable facsimiles of himself, and there is nothing simple about that. To be like God is to be wise, to be intellectually curious, to be demanding of ourselves, to be thinkers of our own creative thoughts. Being created in the image of God prohibits us from suggesting that our spiri-

tual concepts never rise above the merely simple. And presenting a God—of which we are an image—to the world that both wants Him and yet does *not* want Him, requires skill, knowledge, and cultural awareness. That is a highly complex calling to which we have been called; one that demands nothing less than excellence. And that, I affirm, is what our schools are all about: creating in our students, in our church, in our community a hunger and thirst for excellence, and thereby for God.

Frank Knittel, professor of English at Loma Linda University, was president of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists from 1971 to 1983, its period of highest enrollments. His reflections on excellence were part of a presentation to the conference on Adventist education organized last year by the Loma Linda chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums.

In Defense of Pluralism

by Richard Hammill

Seven years ago, I experienced a major ending and beginning when 44 years of my active service to the church as an educator came to an end, and I began the new experience of retirement. I have read extensively in the field of Old Testament studies, trying to catch up in my own discipline after 25 years of neglect caused by administrative assignments that took me from the classroom. In the process of that study, I have been almost bowled over by the multiplicity of belief one encounters in the scholarly publications about the interpretation of the Bible.

I decided also to investigate pluralism in the Adventist church. In carrying out my research project into Adventist diversity, I attended a privately sponsored seminar advertised as centering on biblical fundamentals. There I heard an able retired minister belabor at length a narrow, speculative view on Christology, which he maintained as an absolute essential to believe in order to be an Adventist. It appeared that many in the audience agreed with him, although he used only the data that agreed with his thesis.

Thanks to research carried on by some Adventist historians in the past two decades we have learned that there has always been far more diversity of belief among Seventh-day Adventist than we realized. Right now, in some countries, the differences about proper relationships between the church and government run very deep among Adventists. Pluralism has become an important issue among us, and I want to share my ideas on pluralism in the Adventist church.

To begin with, we must accept that some diversity of opinion about the Bible is normal, and will always be with us. This represents a new and radically different viewpoint on my part. I know that ultimate truth is one; that truth is self-consistent. And all my adult life I have believed that if sincere Christians take the Bible as their guide they will achieve unity of faith and spirit. But now, I have finally been forced to conclude that this ideal will not be attained on this earth. In view of the personal nature of religious experience I now accept that pluralism in the church is inevitable. Biblical history shows that the religious pilgrimage is a personal one. Adam, Eve, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Matthew, John—all had unique relationships with God. The New Testament church, and that which followed it, was full of diversity.

The Holy Spirit helps believers understand the Bible and leads them toward all truth. It is God's own impulse that leads believers to search. And in the process, human opinions from many sources intrude, leading to diversity of belief.

Moreover, the gospel message itself embraces both the impulse to hold what one has and the impulse to reach out for something new. This paradox, evident in the Christian church for centuries, is coming to the fore in the Adventist church. Some Adventists are oriented toward the past, and conceive of our church as a small, embattled remnant consisting of victorious, perfected believers who must entrench themselves from the world. They look back to primitive Christianity and to the early Adventist believers as their models.

Other, equally dedicated and biblically in-

formed Adventists, look upon the church as a divinely established community that must change the world, casting a wide net to bring in all kinds of "fishes;" or to use another of Jesus' metaphors, to entertaining "guests" from the highways and byways, and help them accept the divinely proffered wedding garment. To these Adventists, the church is a group of pilgrims moving toward a future ideal.

As I see it, both orientations are part and parcel

Diversity of opinion is tied closely to the uniqueness of each human being. How else can persons see, except through their own eyes?

of the gospel message, and we should be thankful to God for both perspectives. Apparently, there are paradoxes in religion just as there are in the natural world. Scientists have not been able to find a unified field theory to account for the four diverse forces at work in the universe. Neither can theologians find a unified theory that includes all the orientations wrapped up in the gospel.

These diverse orientations within our church greatly alarm some believers, but as I see it, the danger of schism or loss of momentum are much greater from other problems than from pluralism. In fact, since I became an Adventist as a college freshman in 1932, the church has been enriched and strengthened by the ongoing search for understanding of God, and of our part in his program of redemption. Of course, pluralism should not shatter the unity of spirit and the core beliefs that characterize a genuine Christian community. The community must ultimately separate itself from those who would destroy it. However, it is not good for a religious community like ours to become greatly upset by some diversity in biblical interpretation. Such pluralism is as endemic to human nature as polarity of positive and negatively charged molecules are a part of physical objects.

Diversity of opinion is tied closely to the uniqueness of each human being. How else can persons see, except through their own eyes? And how can we comprehend language except through

our own mind and unique experience? When individuals use language to understand God, indeterminacy and diversity of understanding immediately become apparent. Adventists need to acknowledge this pervasive phenomenon, and not be unduly exercised about the unavoidable pluralism of ideas on at least noncentral biblical teachings. If proper approaches are used, out of the pluralism in our church, an enriching synthesis may be found.

How do we make pluralism a positive experience in Adventism? First, persons searching for truth must use all the data they can get on a topic. Careful researchers not only try to prove theories, they also try to disprove them. This scientific method of attempting to falsify a proposition, to test if it is really true, could be used with great profit by persons developing their theories about religious things. Humans very easily become so enamored with their own ideas about religion that they are blind to fallacies contained in them.

Martin Luther once said that the human mind is a factory, making idols. Ellen White, one of the founders of our church, made a similar observation about the tenacity and insistence with which the titular head of our church and some of his associates promulgated a certain explanation of Paul's epistle to the Galatians. She wrote, "they were approaching idolatry by placing the commandments of men where God and His requirements should be." "Any pet theory," she said, can be made "as sacred as an idol, to which everything must bow. . . . Any idea so exalted as to be placed where [nothing of] light and evidence cannot find a lodgment in the mind, takes the form of an idol, to which everything is sacrificed" (Manuscript 55, 1890).

My second suggestion is that we must foster more open discussion of ideas. Conscientious searchers for religious truth should be willing to have their ideas tested by other competent, qualified searchers of the Word. Exposure of our ideas to criticism, evaluation, and correction by persons competent in the field of investigation is compatible with the Christian spirit of humility and charity.

More than 1000 years ago, Plato said in his dialogues that only when our usual encumbrances of pride of opinion are cast aside, can real conversation take place, can the subject matter of our discussion carry us toward the experience of understanding. A century ago John Henry Newman, a leading Christian thinker, defined *The Idea of a University* as a community fostering Plato's kind of conversation,

a place in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. A university is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge. . . . It is the place where the catechist makes good his ground as he goes, treading in the truth day by day into the ready memory, and wedging and tightening it into expanding reason. It is a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith, and Alma Mater of the rising generation.

I do not fear pluralism of views in the church one-half as much as I fear the refusal to discuss these views openly and without rancor, for it is this attitude that prevents God's Spirit from using the creative power of one mind to stimulate and sharpen that of another searcher.

My third suggestion for making pluralism a blessing to the church is to always remember that religion embraces mystery, the greatest mystery in the universe. In his revealed word, God in his goodness has helped us penetrate some of that mystery, but each one of us has his or her own journey, in the company of others, toward that mystery.

Karl Barth, a Swiss theologian, was one of the most influential religious leaders of the 20th century. I have never been much of a follower of Barth's theology, but I do admire very much his willingness to change his mind when his fellow biblical scholars pointed out flaws in his voluminous publications. Because his own views kept maturing, while his many followers were still dealing with views published in his early books, Barth once said to a friend, "I am not really a Barthian."

Genuine Christians do grow in their understanding of the Bible as they carry on their search.

At some stages in our lives we are able to comprehend truths which we could not at an earlier time. Pluralism may bother us at times, but knowing that it results from human searching for understanding, we will trust God to guide the church during that process, secure in the knowledge that God “will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4)

In my retirement I sometimes become lonely—not because I am no longer in the midst of busy activity, but because I cannot find people with trained minds who are willing to discuss frankly and honestly issues that greatly concern me. So often they become upset, suspicious, even hostile. Often, while I am trying to discuss a matter of biblical interpretation that is meaningful to me, I can tell that those with whom I am talking are not listening but thinking of which label to attach to me. I hope that in the coming years in our colleges and in our church, we will honestly face all the data, and learn the art of listening without suspicion or ill will to other earnest seekers after truth. If we do, I am confident that God will be able to make of all our lives a pilgrimage of faith seeking understanding.

Richard Hammill was a general vice-president of the General Conference at the time of his retirement in 1980. He came to the General Conference from Andrews University, where he was president from 1963 to 1976, the longest presidency in its history, including the days when it was Emmanuel Missionary College. He previously earned a doctorate in biblical languages and literature at the University of Chicago and taught at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists. His thoughts published here were originally part of his summer 1987 commencement address to the Andrews University graduate divisions.

What We Really Need: A Nondenominational Adventist University

by Harold T. Jones

A “self-supporting” Adventist college or university is a concept I’ve fantasized about from time to time. Although I’ve

been told by some pretty important people that it is a silly idea, I still fancy that it could function as a saving institution.

One of the most crippling consequences of a university being owned and operated by the church is that it is expected to be a model of Seventh-day Adventist perfection. Long after church members far from Berrien Springs were watching a wide variety of motion pictures, Andrews University ventured nothing more daring than “Bambi.” Although a significant fraction of Seventh-day Adventists are not vegetarians, the Andrews University cafeteria maintains vegetarian menus. Although Seventh-day Adventists of the most conservative stripe can be seen in shorts in public places, persons wearing shorts on the Andrews University campus put themselves in jeopardy of embarrassing reprimands, or worse. The list of such examples could be extended by anyone who has lived on the campus and has also had some contact with Adventist society at large.

This situation can handicap a church educational institution in certain of its primary functions. One of these is surely strengthening the commitment of young people to the church by providing an atmosphere in which they can mature spiritually, intellectually, and socially, and which is, at the same time, congenial to the lifestyle and doctrinal positions of the church.

However, the conflict arises because, on the one hand, the university is supposed to be a model of Adventist heaven on earth. On the other hand, it must maintain a nurturing relationship with a large number of young people who are at the stage in their lives when they are expressing independence in almost every aspect of their lives. It is almost essential for young people at this stage to make mistakes, and hence they must live in a forgiving environment. When these two conflicting demands on the university collide, it is almost always the needs of the student that are neglected. In order to maintain the image of perfection required of the university because it is owned and operated by the church, it must dismiss any student who does not conform to a certain prescribed behavior pattern. The result is that the university loses its opportunity to further influence the lives

of precisely those young people who need its influence the most.

A prime example of this conflict is the perpetual feuding that takes place between student newspapers and the administrators of Adventist institutions of higher learning. The students, wishing to try out new ideas and perhaps also wishing to tweak the noses of the authority figures in their lives, do and say things that outrage the mainstream Adventist membership. There is no doubt that the administration must deal with such situations with a firm hand, guided by wisdom and cool judgment. More often than not, however, the administration, conscious that its every move is being watched by church administrators and the constituency on which it relies for financial support, reacts nervously to maintain its image rather than to help the maturing young people involved. Only the greatest statesmen can avoid an outbreak of revenge in these situations. The young people involved are often future leaders, either inside or outside the church. There are those who somehow survive this trauma. They become leaders in the church and return to the campus on alumni weekends to declare what a great blessing it was for them to be dismissed from school. But I know of some graduates who have achieved considerable stature outside of the church, and who have a different view.

A second area in which close and official ties to the church organization can impair the effectiveness of an institution of higher learning is in the matter of its apologetic function. In the community of scholars on its college and university campuses, the church has its greatest resources to maintain its relevance to the issues under discussion in the intellectual world at large. In the formulation of its position vis-a-vis such matters as evolution, ethics, the fine arts, a view of history, theology, and psychology (to name only a few areas that can present problems), the church must rely on this community of scholars for guidance. But forging a sound and defensible Adventist view of such matters requires a great deal of time, and involves false starts and mistakes. False starts and mistakes in these sensitive areas are almost intolerable in an institution that is an official arm of the church.

Hence, I see a place for a university that is deeply committed to Adventist values and Adventist life-style, but which is not subject to the requirement that it speak for the church in every detail. I believe it could function as a link to the church for a large number of talented young people who feel alienated and rejected but still find much in Adventism that they value. And it could provide a home for a large number of committed Seventh-day Adventist scholars who would relish the opportunity to grapple honestly with the problems of synthesizing an Adventist intellectual stance that is worthy of the serious consideration of the world at large.

Sure, it's a silly idea because the financial resources for such a venture are not at hand, but I still think it's a useful mental construct. And if anyone decides to start up such an institution, I know where you could hire a pretty good mathematics teacher.

Harold T. Jones is professor of mathematics at Andrews University, where he has trained several generations of mathematicians. We have reproduced in its entirety his January 20, 1988, contribution to the "Faculty Forum," a regular feature of the *Student Movement*, the Andrews University campus newspaper.

College: Community of Memory, Not Corporation

by Otilie Stafford

At my college, registration lines for business majors outnumber most other majors put together. College freshmen (particularly the young men) arrive at their first classes in suits, vests, bow ties, and carrying attache cases. Even the young women wear grey flannel suits, and look like the chairman of the board. They are bright, respectful, carefully assessing how to walk down the corridors of power. A recent poll of thousands of entering college freshmen across the United States revealed that 80 percent of them have as their main goal learning

how to make money. One student quoted in *Time* magazine said his primary goal was to enjoy life and retire young.

Should a different vision of what it means to be human flourish in Adventist colleges and universities? Robert Bellah's book, *Habits of the Heart*, explores the conflict in American society between the self-absorption of individualism, and the need for establishing a "community," within which the public and private realms are united into a just social order. Bellah suggests that churches establish what is not just desirable but essential—"communities of memory," that take isolated individuals and connect them with the past. In the late 20th century, "We have imagined ourselves a special creation, set apart from other humans," Bellah says. "We have attempted to deny the human condition in our quest for power after power. It would be well for us to rejoin the human race." For Bellah, communities of memory are necessary for us to be fully human, for us to know the world as morally coherent.

In an age like ours, where wealth and power are worshiped, how the church's colleges conduct themselves is crucial, not only to hold the present generation in its community of memory, but to help the larger society establish a necessary link with the future. . .

I suppose that every teacher has had the experience of shaking her head over a student who seemed discouragingly slow and uncomprehending, feeling that student is hopeless, and then years later encountering that person, now an impressive adult. I always think of an English major who, many years ago, was in a department in which I taught. The student was a plodder, not brilliant at all, never impressive, doing only barely adequate work. We debated every semester whether or not we should advise the student to change majors or at least not to plan to teach English. But we hated to give up hope for that person. The student finished college (taking more than four years to do it), and did indeed become a teacher.

Not long ago I sat in that person's classroom, warmed by the obvious affection between students and teacher. The teacher was now alive with a quickness and confidence that stimulated the

students' thinking. One community of memory had nurtured a person who was fostering another that would, in turn, shape the memories of the future. . .

The mission of the church and its colleges is to create communities that do not condemn society, but remind it of what being human truly means. If that mission is to be fulfilled the church and its colleges must be communities whose horizons extend beyond our present self-absorption, whose memories and shared beliefs link us to the past, and whose imagination moves us toward the future. The church and its colleges are to be communities that enlarge our lives with meaning. . .

The mission of the church and its colleges is to create communities whose traditions and memories remind us that to be truly human we must live beyond contemporary self-interest, communities where we realize that if we scorn others we diminish ourselves. Our colleges are to be communities that draw us out of individual isolation into identification with others, young and old, rich and poor, weak and powerful, women and men; communities in which we respect both the lowly and highly placed in society, in which we learn that we are most fully human when we are most steadily serving others.

Such a vision of education, if serious, would shape our degree requirements and unite theoretical study with civic service. It would establish a common subject matter to bring together fragmented basis of knowledge. It would encourage students to view life not as a pathway to money and pleasure, but as a process of growing in more of a purpose. It would change shared memories, shared beliefs, and shared worship experiences into creative power that might move us toward greater justice and harmony.

Otilie Stafford, chairman of the English department at Atlantic Union College, has probably taught more students who are now professors of English on Adventist college campuses than anyone before her. She founded the adult degree and honors programs at Atlantic Union College, and this year prepared her college's self-study report for accreditation. She has written, translated, or adapted several hymns in the new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. In November 1986, she delivered the Scales Lectures at Pacific Union College, from which the comments published here were taken.

Where Have All The Flowers Gone? Adventists in Non-Adventist Colleges

by Dolores Kennedy Londis

We gathered one evening in my living room to talk about life at non-Adventist colleges and universities. All the students had strong Adventist roots (three were from denominational employees' families). All attended Seventh-day Adventist schools through academy. Now all were away living in dormitories or apartments at non-Adventist universities. Three of the students were undergraduates; two of them in graduate programs.

Among the undergraduates, effervescent, sparkling Tonya spoke with the most intensity. She was exhilarated by the variety of her options at the state university she attends. Her blond hair bobbing, she responded quickly in conversation.

Linda, the youngest of the group, stated her opinions candidly and honestly. Her crossed leg, which bounced all evening, increased in tempo whenever she entered the discussion. Her excitement at being an undergraduate challenged by an academically demanding university could hardly be contained.

Although Robert spoke softly he was alert and articulate. He was still an undergraduate, but previous education in Europe and world travel had already given him a cosmopolitan approach to issues.

The two graduate students—John and Polly—spoke with the confidence that comes with having survived the fray of undergraduate life and the prospect of settling into careers. Through the evening John sat back in his chair, smiling appreciatively as the undergraduates volunteered their feelings. He had been where they now were and understood exactly what they were experiencing. He filled the role of sage.

Ever since academy Polly had juggled lots of activity, and kept everything under control. She was still juggling (writing a Master's thesis, job hunting for the first time, working for a temporary agency), but the night's activity seemed important to her. As she sat pensively on the couch twisting the curls of her black hair, she was eager to talk about her experiences in two large, prestigious universities.

We began the evening by exploring why the students chose to attend a non-Adventist school. Tonya, the irrepressible undergraduate, sprang forward, tossed her blond hair back from her face and tumbled out an answer,

"Expense," she said simply. "I was working 35 hours a week, taking 17 hours. I was a sophomore in college and I was burned out. I wasn't enjoying life."

John, the graduate-student sage, added: "Non-Adventist colleges made a bigger deal of trying to get me to go there. I felt in some ways slighted—perhaps that's too big a word to use—but I felt there were a lot of very good non-Adventist colleges saying, 'Hey, you're important to us, your

Dolores Kennedy Londis, director of volunteer services at Washington Adventist Hospital, was for many years director of guidance at Takoma Academy from which both her son and daughter graduated. She holds a Master's degree in counseling from the University of Maryland.

decision about where you go is important to us.' I felt Adventist colleges didn't care where I went. I felt, during my junior and senior years, that I might go into the ministry, but there was no real push for me to make that decision because none of the people in the Adventist college system seemed geared to that kind of recruiting. As a result, I had more exposure to opportunities available to me at non-Adventist colleges."

"The only Adventist college that I was particularly interested in at the time was Newbold in England," said Polly, looking back from the perspective of an undergraduate student. "But a friend of mine, during my senior year, encouraged me to apply to some big-name universities because he felt it would be good for me, that I could handle it and I owed it to myself to try. He said that I was selling myself short if I didn't. So, half-heartedly, I applied late never thinking that I would get in. I sort of said, 'Well, God, if I am accepted that must mean you want me there, because there's no other way that I'll get there.' So when I got in, that was it."

Robert, the cosmopolitan undergraduate, spoke quietly about purely academic reasons. "I was told when I was in the eighth grade that when I went to academy, I would have to work like I'd never worked before. I'd be up all night. Well, I got to academy and I didn't have to stay up all night. By the time I reached my senior year, they were starting to say this again. This time I thought, It's a lie. They told me this a few years ago. Now I wanted to be in a place where I would be pushed and challenged."

Linda, her leg bouncing, wanted to find out whether she could meet the greater challenge she perceived awaiting her on a non-Adventist campus.

"I decided to apply to non-Adventist colleges because I wanted to know if I could get in and if I could handle myself. I was curious. I knew what going to an Adventist college would be like, but I wasn't sure about a non-Adventist college. I also wanted to make it easier on myself when I applied to graduate schools. Coming from a non-Adventist college they would know I had a good background. There was no challenge getting into an Adventist college. I could go where I wanted.

"Because everything is so easy in the Adventist system, you tend to think that the real world is outside the system. I know the philosophy is that every Adventist is entitled to an Adventist education, and I think that's true, but there should be competitiveness within the church system. We should have schools that range from your community-college level to the Harvard-level colleges that will also attract the most motivated students."

Robert agreed: "I had no doubt that I could make it well in an Adventist college, but I wasn't sure about a non-Adventist college, and I needed to know that."

All said that until their senior year in academy they had intended to go to an Adventist college. Another option had not even been considered. What happened to them during their senior year obviously changed their decision. As John made clear, one major factor was the contrast between the seeming lack of interest in them from Adventist colleges and the aggressive marketing they experienced from secular institutions. Another factor was their growing curiosity about whether they were good enough to be accepted by a college with a selective admissions policy and be able to hold their own against intellectual peers.

We proceeded through the evening asking how they related their Adventist experience to their new academic environment.

Educating for the Church or for Life?

How did your Adventist education prepare you for the colleges you attend?

Responses to this question lasted half the evening. The students felt deeply that changes must be made in the academy Bible curriculum.

John: "In areas like English composition, my background could have been stronger. I don't think there were enough rigorous writing requirements imposed on students. Perhaps it shouldn't have been imposed on everybody, but it should

have been there for students who were going to college, where they'd be required to do significant amounts of writing."

Tonya: "I feel it was really lacking in the humanities. I now sit in college classes with students who have had three years of languages, philosophy, et cetera."

John: "I felt the school was really deficient in the religion/Bible courses. I look back now and think that the treatment of the subject was much too superficial. That's really a danger, because the school isn't sure how many of these students will ever have Bible again. I think it's important when you have impressionable teenagers that you not just skim the surface of religion but say, 'Let's examine this stuff critically. Let the critical examination that's going to go on the rest of your life start here.' I didn't have that sense from my Bible classes."

Linda: "I graduated from academy getting A's in all my religion classes, and largely mastered a bunch of stories. When I got to college, I discovered that some of my friends who had gone to public schools knew a lot more about the Bible than I did. They had done things like join Bible study groups in which they really studied Scripture. In academy, we had a book that contained a text or two, but we never read the Bible. It always felt like grade school to me. When I got to college, I discovered that religion was one of the biggest majors on the campus. People were excited about religion courses and loved taking them because they were so interesting."

Polly: "You know, if there was anything I felt smug about when I went into the non-Adventist setting, it was my knowledge of the Bible. After all, I had been raised by Adventist parents who took me to church every week. I had been in Adventist schools for 12 years. I had no qualms about my knowledge of the Bible. I joined one of the Christian groups on campus that met each Friday night for Bible study and fellowship. I was shocked to discover that I really knew very little about the Bible. I understood the rules and regulations and doctrines—that I shouldn't eat meat, drink alcohol, or wear jewelry—but I could not defend any of them from the Bible."

Polly went on to say that she had visited her

pastor, talked a lot by phone with her parents and teachers, but still struggled in vain to find persuasive answers. Her non-Adventist friends were pushing her in ways she had never been pushed, and she was astonished that students who had never been to religious schools could seem to know so much more about Scripture than she did.

Her first reaction to this experience, she told us, was anger. She felt almost betrayed by the school system that professed to be unique because of its emphasis on religion and yet could leave her comparatively ignorant about the Bible itself.

Choosing a Life-style to Fit One's Faith

What about an Adventist life-style and job?

I raised the questions about dating on non-Adventist campuses, the temptations to drink and experiment with drugs. Space does not permit quoting each student, but their answers may be summarized in the following way: "Marriage is not even on our minds; the average age for marriage is 26 for men and 25 for women." The women agreed they were going to complete their education before thinking seriously about matrimony. This means (and they realize it) that they may not even meet their future spouses until they are out in the work world.

On drinking and drugs, they quickly assured me that the issue is a problem on every campus, including Adventist ones. Those who are going to do it will do it anywhere. The specific campus environment would not be the decisive factor.

Toward the end of our discussion, I asked if any of them would consider working for the church. With the exception of Polly, they all said "no." With a public-health degree, Polly feels she might seek church employment someday because she believes she is in the one area where the church is doing some good things.

The others felt it would be too restrictive for them. They want to be involved in bigger causes and work for a greater number of people. The youngest student, Robert, summed it up this way:

“I’ve thought about this for a long time, and the question I finally decided I had to answer was this: Do I want to spend the rest of my life working to change an institution, or do I want to spend the rest of my life working to change the world? The answer to me is very clear.”

The Way We Were

What do you miss about not attending an Adventist college?

Robert: “I have friends at Adventist colleges who have time to play tennis, swim, et cetera. By my choice, I don’t have enough balance to my life. The pressure of my academic program does not allow enough time for some of the other things.”

Polly: “I really miss the drama and choir groups, the things they would do on the weekends with faculty members. I found myself remembering how much fun it was to get to know your teachers, go over to their houses or whatever. I remember thinking I was missing out on that. I never get to the point of wanting to leave my non-Adventist college, but I did really miss that community or family environment.”

Linda: “The thing that I miss about an Adventist college is being able to keep the Sabbath. I miss that a lot. When you’re in a non-Adventist college, in the dormitory, if you want to keep the Sabbath, you do it by yourself. My sophomore year, two other Adventists arrived on campus, so it was better. But it can be a real lonely time. The Sabbath certainly means more when you can share it with others.”

I Wouldn’t Change a Thing

If you were deciding today where you would attend college, would you decide differently?

Polly: “No. I would still choose to go where I am, and it has to do with God and what I learned and how I grew as a

Christian. It doesn’t have to do with academics. Even if I knew that the academics were equal, I would still choose the non-Adventist college because I grew there as a Christian. I was challenged to know my God more personally than at any other time in my life. Maybe it would have happened in an Adventist college, but I think the interaction I had in the Christian fellowship groups far surpassed the challenge to grow I would have gotten anywhere else. I learned so much about God and about myself in these groups. I don’t think it would have happened without the stimulation of other Christians. In the many Adventist things I had done in academy—Bible conferences and so on—there wasn’t the emphasis on what it means to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ; and there wasn’t as much discussion about personal prayer, personal Bible study, or growing in a relationship. It was more about belonging to the church and doing the things you’re supposed to do, such as reading the Bible and attending the weeks of prayer. The emphasis was, ‘Have you studied your Sabbath school lesson seven times this week or read the morning watch for the day?’ It should have been, ‘Have you spent some time with God today, have you learned something new in your relationship with God? What’s God teaching you, how have you grown?’ I was challenged in that way, held accountable by my fellow Christians, challenged to know what I believed.”

Tonya: “I’ve had a greater appreciation for my religion just because I got outside the shelter. I got away from the protection, and the things that I always took for granted I began to look at more carefully. I questioned, ‘Why do I do this?’ I am the kind of person who has to have both sides of the picture. For example, now that I have studied evolution I can appreciate their point of view, but also understand more fully why I believe what I do. Some of the questions have been resolved, some haven’t; but the religion and why I believe it have become more important to me.”

Polly: “I may not be termed a ‘good Adventist’ by a lot of people, but I feel I’m a much stronger Christian than I’ve ever been before.”

Robert: “I’ve worked with other Christians on several projects and, at this point, I can say that I

defend Christianity, but I'm not sure I can defend Adventism, because I find a lot of the 'package' of Adventism rubbish. It has nothing to do with knowing Christ. That's part of my problem and I'm working on that."

When I asked how many of them went to church on a regular basis, all but one responded positively. One student went to the local Adventist church for the warmth of community, not because there was good preaching or teaching, and then went to the non-Adventist church on Sunday with her other friends. There she got strong preaching and enjoyed it very much; so, between the two church services she felt she got it all.

What Do We Learn From These Students?

As the conversation progressed it became increasingly clear that the two younger students—Robert and Linda—had not yet come to a conclusion regarding their commitment to Adventism. They were still struggling with a variety of issues and were not sure where they would come out. Uncertain about the denomination's real priorities, they nevertheless cling to a basic "core" of Adventism.

The three older students, Polly, John, and Tonya, had arrived at a much more comfortable relationship with their Adventism. They had worked through the issues and had come out feeling that there were important things about the faith they could hold on to (for example, the Sabbath and the health emphasis), while there were other issues they had to let go for lack of proof. They were not only comfortable in what they regarded as their "mature" Adventist faith,

they also believed their non-Adventist college experience made that more mature faith possible.

For me, there were two surprising outcomes of this meeting—one specific, the other general. The specific point that emerged was the consensus of the students that their Bible classes were more sociology than religion. Each of the students told stories of feeling inadequate to either articulate why they were Adventists or to defend Adventist positions from the Bible. While some of their Bible courses were good, they should not have been billed as "Bible." The students all felt cheated in this respect. Their question seemed to be, "If this is Adventist education's *raison d'être* and it is failing in this critical area, what is Seventh-day Adventist education accomplishing?"

The more general impression that I gathered was the sense on the part of the students that their own Christian commitment had been deepened on a non-Adventist campus. While they were frustrated by what they saw as irrational and superficial emphases in the church, instead of giving up on religion altogether, they seemed to yearn for something more deeply spiritual.

Our talking lasted for hours. The students had been eager to express their own concerns and to hear what the others would say about their experiences. Naturally, I was saddened to hear them cite the reasons they did not choose an Adventist education, but happy they still cared about the church.

I am convinced that these young people love the church they censure, because they do it in the name of strengthening the church. Speaking honestly is their ultimate act of respect. Those who criticize us in love always teach us infinitely more than those who love us without criticism. The leadership can best return that respect by taking students as seriously as they take the church.

Not Some Sainly Mr. Chips: A Memoir of Walter Utt

by Bruce Anderson

Spectrum readers may remember Walter Utt as an occasional contributor. In clear, astringent prose he discussed topics such as the search for an “Adventist” philosophy of history, the origins of “the Ford affair,”¹ and, most recently, the historical errors of *Omega*.² Lightly seasoned with hard-edged wit, these essays suggested a writer put off by pomposness or puffery. Walton’s celebrated tract, for example, never quite recovered from Utt’s dissection of its “breathless and spooky” style and high-handed use of facts. In another article, Utt summed up the sins of Desmond Ford as well as anyone by saying that the charismatic Australian had been guilty of talking “in front of the children.” Calling for the church of the 1980s to face the necessity of addressing “a question of doctrine publicly rather than discreetly in some theological dove-cote,” Utt saw a lesson in the history of the 1919 Bible Conference. In 1919, he wrote, church leaders looked at the problem of Ellen White’s authority and “realized its complexity and divisiveness, blenched, and swept it back under the rug.”

A larger group of Adventists know Walter Utt from his two historical novels published by Pacific Press. *The Wrath of the King* (1966) described the adventures of a Huguenot family escaping France after the revocation of the edict of toleration. Utt clearly enjoyed himself in the creation of the book’s hero, Major Armand de

Gandon, dashing Protestant officer in the Regiment of Maine. (I think I remember Walter complaining that the publisher had pruned a romantic subplot.) His second novel, *Home to Our Valleys!* (1977), described the “Glorious Return” of the Waldenses to their Piedmont home in 1689. Like the first, it was so richly detailed and scrupulously accurate that some readers thought that the “historical” overwhelmed the “novel.”

I knew Walter Utt as his student. From 1957 to 1960 I was a history major at Pacific Union College, entertained and overawed by “Doctor Utt.” But his greatest impact on me came after graduation, in the letters we exchanged several times a year. Whenever I wrote, he answered promptly, sometimes covering several sheets with his odd, left-handed scrawl, more often typing his missives, which were always lively, gossipy, candid. I realized when he died in 1985 that my file of 72 Utt letters was one of my most precious possessions, the kind of thing you grab first when the house is on fire. I also recognized that, outside my immediate family, this Christian teacher had been the most important person in my life.

As I discussed my Utt papers with his colleagues and other former students, I found that there are dozens of people around the country with similar treasured files. By conventional academic standards, Walter Utt was not a very productive scholar. He wrote only three books, none an academic treatment of his specialty, and left unfinished his lengthy, scholarly study of Huguenot resistance to Louis XIV (the “real one” he used to call this almost-completed book). But if the full range of his writing is considered—the

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campus newspaper articles, the contributions to church papers, and his personal correspondence—Walter Utt was a voluminous writer. It occurred to me that his letters say a great deal about the rewarding and vexing world of the Adventist teacher. Walter Utt was like many of our best teachers: his casual and large sacrifices, his professional obscurity, his powerful influence in his students' lives.

Walter's letters cover a remarkable range of topics, big and small. (I was unable to call him by his first name until 18 years after graduating from Pacific Union College, when he insisted that I do so. Even now it does not seem quite appropriate.) As I read his letters over now, the most interesting ones are those in which he discusses his role as both an intellectual and a believer. He seemed to understand clearly the requirements of an Adventist "loyal opposition." Much as he was a political contrarian, skeptical of Eisenhower amid Angwin's blind admiration of Ike in 1952, and of conventional liberalism in the 1980s, Walter offended both fideist and iconoclast among Seventh-day Adventists.

"I am inclined to wish to weigh, balance, analyze, consider causations, etc., and this probably prevents me from the fiery commitment I should have," he wrote in 1971. He added, in typical Utt fashion, that it was sometimes difficult to accept the "ukases" of "one's masters," especially "when you suspect many of them of being little more than careerists and innocent of theology, intellect, or visible piety."

He laughed when a crusading "liberal" Adventist called him a "gradualist." The word "was a good descriptive term for one of my historical views and temperament but to him it is a pretty strong pejorative—about equal to 'imperialist lackey' or 'running dog.'" A few months later Utt added, "I realize he sees me as a 1977 Erasmus when I should be a Luther."

The same caution and moderation appeared to Adventist reactionaries as cynicism. But Walter was no cynic. At heart he was a defender of the faith—witty, skeptical, independent, but a defender nonetheless. Somebody once said that the

world is divided into two camps: liberals who wonder why the world isn't better and conservatives who are surprised that it isn't worse. By that definition, Walter was a profound conservative.

He recognized that the Adventist educational system had been assigned an "essentially defensive role," and only hoped that this role could be carried out sensibly and flexibly. "I do understand the fears of those who distrust historians and sociologists messing around with the origins of the church," he wrote in 1973. "They have reason to fear some consequences. It's just that, from my standpoint, to cover up or to misrepresent (notice how I refrained from mentioning Froom's latest book) is even worse." A talk by a White Estate spokesman prompted these reflections: "We speak of truth being able to take care of itself but don't really believe it, the way we act." The spokesman kept talking "about 'responsible' historians having no problem, though *even they can-*

**Cocksure intolerance irritated
Walter more than anything else
(with the possible exception of
wacky conspiracy theories).**

not be shown some materials in the files." Since the archives were private property, historians were told, the White Estate must have the right to reject irresponsible scholars or research that would not help the church. "In the meantime, browsing," he said, "is not permitted. (I love browsing in archives. You stumble on such interesting trivia that way.)"

"I do wish that our church would allow something on the order of a Hundred Flowers to Bloom," he wrote on another occasion. "Could we live with both Roy Branson and . . . Robert Brinsmead? I realize that Truth is truth and that we should not foster error, yet each of us perceives Truth through such a darkling glass, I feel very uncomfortable at many of the specific efforts to make precise application of general and true statements." Cocksure intolerance irritated Walter more than anything else (with the possible exception of wacky conspiracy theories). "From a discussion Sabbath I witnessed, which stopped just

in time to avoid acrimony, I judge the PUC faculty is not capable of a warm mutual respect which would permit real discussion of questions such as the nature of inspiration, or even the tithing system without instant . . . suspicion.”

Even as Pacific Union College faced bitter theological quarrels in the late 1970s, Utt cherished a calm, self-deprecating detachment. He explained the situation at the college to me just before my family and I moved to Angwin in 1978. “The Justification/Sanctification split here does not really upset the college campus that much, outside the Religion department, but it does reverberate around the ‘field’ . . . and . . . as it is picked up by the extremists of either side, one finds it a battle between antinomians and perfectionists.” Ever a fanatical moderate, Utt refused to be entirely solemn about the matter. “Each of us, they say, makes a God in his own image, so therefore I *know* that God, being an English gentleman, somewhat of the views of C. S. Lewis, prefers a tilt to the justification side but is able to understand and pity the zealots even if He doesn’t necessarily have to agree with them.”

What kept Walter Utt going was his students. Like many Seventh-day Adventist teachers, he saw the chance to have an impact on thoughtful young people as more important than institutional politics. Sometimes he found himself “more bitter or frustrated than I ought to be,” as a result of being constantly “talked down to, bombarded with platitudes, while real problems are not discussed or tackled.” Those were the days he went home and wrote a scintillating letter on his battered typewriter.

As he explained to me in 1968: “I have accepted the . . . thesis that God is not of necessity preoccupied with His Church organizations, but He does expect to process individuals in the judgment. My lot being cast . . . with the organized work, part of the criteria in my personal case will be my attitudes and relationship with the ‘work,’ but my real significance, such as it is, will be my effect in personal relationship.” Such selective, occasional withdrawal was the only sensible way of “living with the never-ending stream of bla-bla, of watching the leadership shy away in terror at change, real or imaginary.” Scratching away in a

handwriting only the initiated could decipher, he retreated a bit from this “grim” analysis. “Actually I respond quickly and begin to purr like a cat when spoken to in a friendly tone.”

He was sad when favorite students abandoned Adventism. “I always hope that somehow the students, the kind I like—talkers and thinkers, perhaps—will prove sound enough in basic philosophy, and perceptive enough, to see the important things about man and his destiny, without getting too badly derailed and permanently turned off. . . by their collisions with or observation of the older generation. If it becomes simply the peculiarities of the quaint SDA subculture, and they can’t see beyond that to what we are trying haltingly to call their attention to, then we have failed.”

One of the most memorable letters he sent me described a series of discussions he had with a former student, in whose home he was visiting. Now a successful professional, this student was a cheerful agnostic who had ceased going to church, largely in reaction to the rigidity and exclusiveness of his parents’ Adventism. “He and I discussed these things way late sometimes, long after the ladies had retired with strong hints we do likewise.” Walter wished that his student-now-friend could “go along a little more with the externals while he debates these matters in his mind . . . I hope his evolution eventually brings him closer to what you and I regard as basics again . . . I have to agree . . . absolute certainty is not available in human terms of proof or demonstration, but however inconsistent it may be, I hate to let loose of some ‘fundamentals’ and be completely at sea. All systems and system-makers are *not* alike, to my way of thinking.”

Walter Utt was a hemophiliac, plagued by constant pain and frequent bleeding episodes, forced to inch his way around campus with the aid of one or two canes. Though I am a physician, I heard little about his physical problems in the letters, and when he did refer to them, he wrote matter-of-factly, tersely. I found this near-silence eloquent. Never indulging in self-pity—or even conscious courage—his few direct comments on

his handicap were ironical and amused. When I was drafted into the Army, he wrote admitting his curious fascination with things military. "I can remember being actually envious when registering for the draft in 1942 because I could not go. I was never crazy enough to say so out loud—religious implications hardly being the reason—for fear of being either considered a nut or a liar. I have always had a strong interest in military history and such appurtenances thereto as uniforms, but of course it was a safe, armchair interest." Then he added, in a most untypical reference to his illness: "Perhaps the Lord equipped me with my disability to prevent me from being killed in Italy in 1943 or getting yaws or something in New Guinea in 1944. To believe this, however, seems to make me loom a little larger than real life in the scheme of things, for more obviously valuable types were eliminated in those years."

For a long time I knew little of Walter's early years. Though I was vaguely aware (perhaps from reading Walter's history of the college, published in 1957) that his father had been a Pacific Union College teacher, I never thought to ask him about his childhood, his rather informal education, and his graduate work. Walter's letters did not dwell on his own history. Shortly before his unexpected death in 1985, in a long, leisurely, Sabbath-afternoon conversation in Walter's home, I made a point of asking about his life before he became "Doctor Utt."

A profoundly learned man, Walter Utt hardly went to school at all. Disabled in the second grade by bleeding into his knees and ankles, he was unable to walk until he entered college. ("Why my legs straightened enough to stand on then, I don't know," he told me. "Nice timing though.") Restless as a child, with time on his hands, young Walter read everything he could find, even employing the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for pleasure reading. When his father came home from an auction with a set of bound volumes of a turn-of-the-century magazine called *World History*, eight-year-old Walter read them all the way through. Walter's younger brother, Richard, remembers that he then "began teaching what he

had learned to anyone who would listen, principally me." At the age of 10, Walter was sent to the hemophilia research ward of Chicago's Cook County Hospital, where he stayed for a year and a half. Separated from his family, Walter remembered hours of solitary reading, sitting in his wheelchair under a dim light, straining his eyes.

Later, while his family was living in Berkeley, California, Walter's educational program became more structured, with a "home visitation" teacher visiting him once a week. Still, his only extended experience with normal schooling was limited to his college and graduate-school years.

After graduating from Pacific Union College, Walter worked as a payroll clerk in the Kaiser Shipyards and saved for graduate school. A month before World War II ended, he quit his job to enroll at the University of California, Berkeley. In six years at Berkeley, Walter served as a teaching assistant in history and speech and earned a Phi Beta Kappa key. Six months before he finished writing his doctoral dissertation, he agreed to become the second teacher in the history department at Pacific Union College, joining the faculty in 1951.

In 1954, after his older colleague resigned, Walter began his 31-year tenure as chairman of the history department. Until the 1960s there were never more than two people in the department. ("There was a while there I taught the only sociology that was being taught. Never taught it before in my life. In fact when they asked me to teach it I wasn't even sure what it was. And geography and political science and that sort of stuff. So I just had the valor of ignorance, I guess. . . . Looking at the size of those classes and knowing how I graded then, I don't know how I did it. I just didn't know any better.")

During his long reign as professor of history he steadily pursued his interest in the Huguenot heroes of southern France. He made four arduous research trips to Europe to gather material for this work, always looking for the human details that he considered the most fascinating part of history. Describing his nearly completed book in 1985, he expressed eloquent compassion for "people who are standing for the truth with fingers crossed behind their backs. . . believers who are trying to

be good enough that God will eventually accept them but [who have] got to live in the meantime. . . protect their family and their property.” Even as he refused to condemn those who “pretended and survived” in a time of persecution, his real admiration was for those he called “the hard nuts. . . the peasants who had nothing to lose and were hard to get at anyhow.”

It was with anger and a profound sense of loss that I confronted Walter’s death three years ago, at the too-young age of 63. Clutching my folders full of letters, I was bitterly disappointed that I could never again ask his advice or enjoy his witty commentary on people and events. (It is still difficult to believe he is gone, and I still half expect to hear him teach his Sabbath school class next week.) However, my grief has diminished and been replaced with a measure of acceptance.

His letters now remind me not only of a beloved friend, but also of his work. Near the end (though neither of us knew his death was near), he expressed a note of weariness, as if he had been worn down in a long struggle to defend his church

and his faith from people who had all the answers, on the one hand, and those who had only questions, on the other. I wondered, as I reread his letters, if my church has sufficiently cherished its Walter Utts. Teachers like Walter Utt have too often been considered disloyal, somehow, for challenging illusions and exposing shortcomings; their patient, steady defense of the enduring principles of Christianity have too easily been overlooked.

I told Walter once that I wanted to write something about him. “I don’t mind at my age and condition being mentioned as one of the Adventist teachers who has apparently worn better than most,” he told me, “but I don’t want to be singled out as some kind of saintly Mr. Chips, or anything of that sort.”

Walter Utt does deserve to be singled out, but not, like James Hilton’s fictional teacher, as a charming illustration of a disappearing type. I realize that our schools face serious financial and administrative problems. But none of these worrisome problems is as serious as the challenge of continuing to discover and nurture dedicated Christian teachers, men and women like the one who still teaches me in a dozen old file folders.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Walter Utt, “Ford Dismissal: Reactions and Response—Journalistic Fairness?” *Spectrum*, 11:2 (1980), pp. 2-11.

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Discovering the Church's Vision of Education: Making the First Telephone Call

by Gordon Madgwick

The educational system of the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America finds itself at an extremely critical point in its history. During just the five years from 1981-1986, Adventist colleges dropped in enrollment the equivalent of 2748 full-time students—about the same as closing three mid-sized Adventist colleges. Those same five years marked the period when enrollment in North American Adventist academies dropped almost 1000 students. Because fewer students will be graduating from academies, freshman classes in Adventist colleges are expected to shrink dramatically within one-and-a-half years.

The gravity of the condition facing our schools can be seen in the "Financial Summary of Educational Institutions, North American Division," for 1980-1986. During those six years, operating losses for colleges and universities increased from \$26.4 million to \$34.9 million (excluding church donations). Boarding-academy losses

rose from \$9.4 million to \$10.3 million. Day-academy losses escalated even more rapidly, from \$6.4 million to nearly \$8 million. Total losses, excluding donations, rose from \$42.2 million to more than \$53.4 million. (Figure 2, next page.)

The Seltzer Daley survey of Adventist members' attitudes towards their schools, which will be analyzed in detail later in this essay, reveals further disturbing news about the future of Adventist education in North America. A significant number of parents in the survey indicated that their offspring would not be attending an Adventist school or college in the current year, even when one is available. (Figure 1.)

need for an Adventist education, the lowest regard for Adventist schools, and the highest regard for public schools.

To survive, North American SDA schools will have to use every possible element of ingenuity, fiscal creativity, and strategic planning.

Of course, Adventist colleges are part of a larger scene. In 1983, George Keller, in his highly respected book, *Academic Strategy*, stated that experts were predicting that by 1995 as many as 30 percent of the colleges and universities in the United States might have vanished—either through merger or outright closure. America, he said, was facing a turning point in the history of

Are You Planning to Send Your Children to SDA or Non-SDA Schools in the 1987-1988 School Year?
Fig. 1

	% ADVENTIST	% NON-ADVENTIST
Grade school	67%	33%
Academy/high school	61%	39%
College/university	53%	47%

Gordon Madgwick, executive secretary of the North American Division Board of Higher Education, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. He has been an administrator at four Adventist colleges, including dean of the graduate school at Andrews University. For three years prior to his present post he was director of strategic and long-range planning for Manor Health Care Corporation.

Even more significantly for the future are the attitudes of those Adventists, who, within five years, will be deciding (or helping their children decide) whether they will attend Adventist schools: students who are now 19-25 years of age. Among all age groups they express the lowest level of belief in the

education. The "golden age" of higher education was clearly over.

That golden age had been a time of tremendous growth. According to federal statistics, the number of students more than tripled, from 2.5 million in 1955 to 8.8 million in 1974. During that time physical facilities for higher edu-

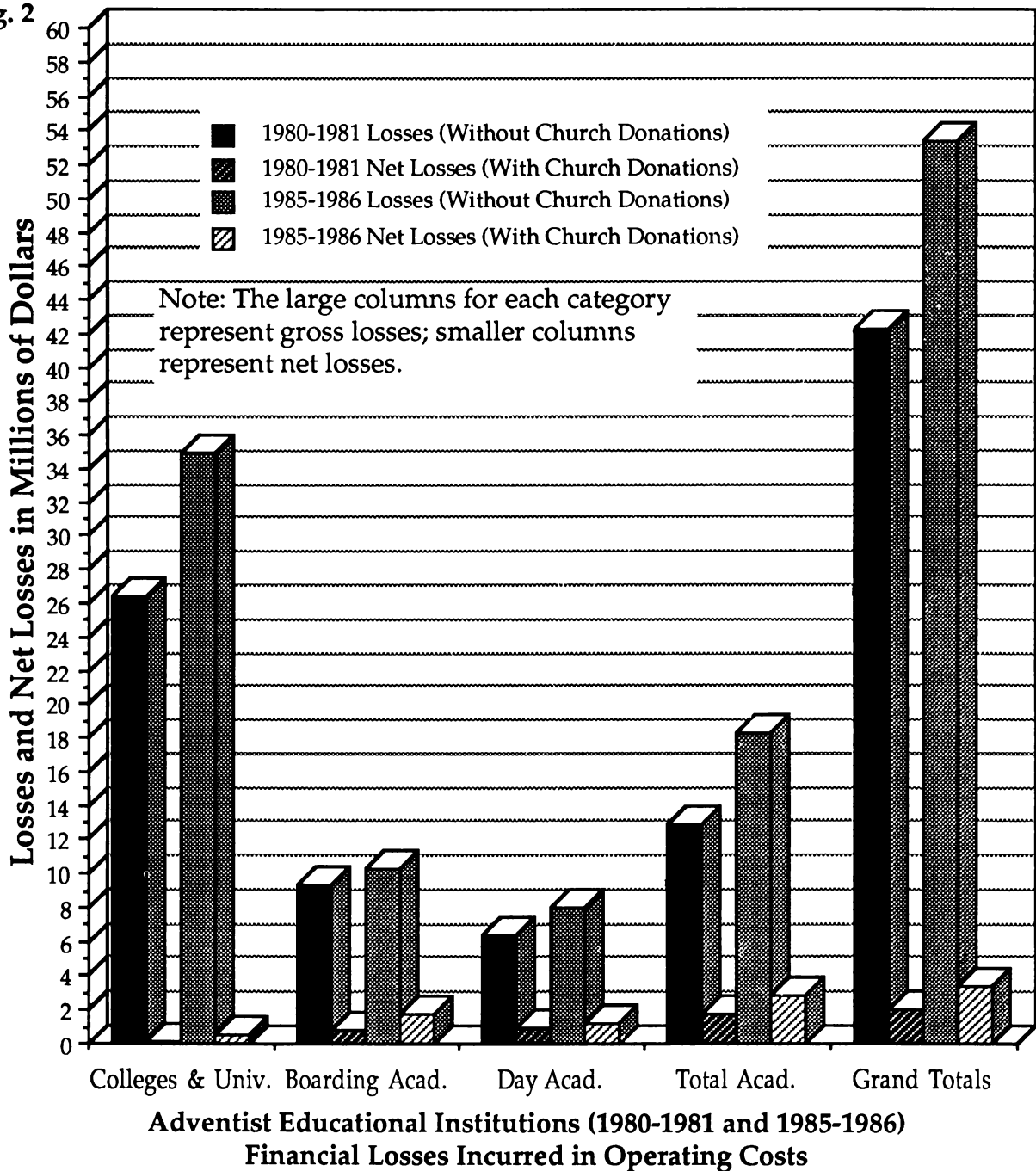
cation in the United States doubled. More college buildings were built in those 20 years than during the previous 200. During the golden age community colleges particularly expanded, their number doubling from about 400 to 973. Their enrollments exploded from 325,000 students to 3.4 million. In other words, 10 times as many students were studying in community colleges in 1974 as in 1955.

The North American Division, recognizing the urgent need to create a clear, bold vision for the future, convened a meeting of the K-12 Board and the Board of Higher Education (the Joint Boards of Education), on January 7, 1987, at Loma Linda University. The joint boards took action to insure the development of a joint master plan. That plan would delineate the innovations and actions necessary for the

Adventist system of academies and colleges to survive into the 21st century.

The boards voted to follow a three-step program that some other denominations have used to revitalize their church-related systems of education. First, strengthening ties with constituents by listening to their views and expectations. Second, clarifying the mission of the educational system and

Fig. 2



clearly articulating a vision of its future. Third, creating a master plan to fulfill the expectations expressed by the mission and vision of the future.

Planning the First Telephone Call

The joint boards decided that the first step—listening to Adventist members—should begin with a telephone survey. It would obtain an up-to-date, objective map of the attitudes of North American members toward their educational system. The boards felt that whether or not the perception of members correspond to what actually takes place in the schools, the schools must respond to the perceptions. Clearly, the survey would be only a first telephone call, the initial part of a continuing, expanding program to invite constituencies to speak up about the direction they want their schools to go.

The choice to conduct the survey was the Seltzer Daley Companies. They had recently completed a church membership survey for the Adventist Health System/U.S. The companies had established a national reputation by conducting planning research and corporate strategy for such clients as AT&T, Bristol Meyers, General Foods, Gillette, Johnson & Johnson, the Mayo Clinic, and Sears Roebuck.

The four researchers who ran the survey for the North American Division complemented each other. Eliot Daley, a cofounder of the Seltzer Daley Companies and former president of the "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" organization, provided analysis skills and served as the main spokesman for the group. Mitchell Seltzer, a former corporate vice president for marketing and advertising for the Quaker Oats Company and currently vice chairman of the National Council for Children and Television, acted as internal critic within the group and its spokesperson. Jennifer Macleod, with a Ph.D. from Columbia University in social psychology, and formerly a research director

and chief psychologist with the Opinion Research Corporation in Princeton, directed the research design and analysis of the survey. Elayne Howard, with an M.B.A. from the Wharton School of Business, was managing director of the project.

The first task of the Seltzer Daley personnel was to review the relevant demographic statistics and economic trends in both Adventist and national publications. The writings of Ellen G. White were also studied in depth. The second task was to conduct in-depth interviews with key individuals representing a wide variety of informed views concerning Adventist education. Thirdly, focus groups were conducted with parents and students attending both Adventist and non-Adventist schools. Out of these focus groups a list of major issues was developed and extensively reviewed. Fourthly, a questionnaire of 162 questions was developed to investigate the major issues revealed in the exploratory research.

Most of the questions asked members to give their perception of the purpose and characteristics of Adventist education. In addition, the questionnaire, in order to obtain separate results for various subgroups, included numer-

ous background questions. Before implementation, the questionnaire was reviewed by members of the Joint Boards of Education and a special panel of educators with expertise in research and research design.

The questionnaire was carefully constructed to keep within a 45-minute limit. That is considered much too long for a general public telephone survey, but Seltzer Daley had found in its 1986 survey for the Adventist Health Systems that Adventists are extremely cooperative in surveys relating to their church. An incredible 96 percent of those contacted for this survey completed the the entire 162 questions.

Making the Calls

Telephone interviews were conducted with a total of 1419 members of the North American Division, a number comparable to election-year polls by Gallup and Harris surveying the entire country's preference for president of the United States. As in those opinion polls, respondents to this survey were scientifically selected.

The names and addresses of 1121

Fig. 3 How Important Are SDA Schools to the Future of the Church?

	% Essential	% Very Important	% Fairly Important	% Not Important	% Undesirable	% Can't Answer
GRADE SCHOOLS						
Church members in general (1121)	46	42	9	2	1	1
Parents of students (381)	52	35	10	2	1	1
Students (183)	36	47	17	0	0	0
Educators (143)	70	25	4	1	0	0
Ministers (110)	80	18	0	2	0	0
ACADEMIES						
Church members in general (1121)	45	44	6	2	1	2
Parents of students (381)	54	32	8	4	2	*
Students (183)	34	45	16	2	2	0
Educators (143)	70	26	4	1	0	0
Ministers (110)	76	22	2	1	0	0
COLLEGES/ UNIVERSITIES						
Church members in general (1121)	39	44	14	2	*	2
Parents of students (381)	42	37	19	2	*	*
Students (183)	31	37	26	4	2	1
Educators (143)	56	31	12	1	0	0
Ministers (110)	68	26	6	1	0	0

*Less than 1/2 of 1%

church members, aged 21 and upward, were drawn from the membership lists of each union conference in North America. Statistical weighting was used to ensure that the number of respondents in each union conference corresponded to the number of members in each union.

Within households with more than one adult member the adult with the most recent birthday was interviewed. This avoided bias due to some household members typically answering the telephone more often than others. Statistical weighting procedures also avoided bias resulting from the likelihood that members living alone would be interviewed more often than members living in households with several adults.

Employees appeared randomly in the general sample, or were selected from denominational lists, such as the *1987 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. These included 143 educators and 110 ministers.

The 183 students were those planning to attend a college or university (Adventist or non-Adventist), or who would be a senior at an academy or high school in the fall of 1987. Some students aged 21 and older were picked up in the general survey. Names and telephone numbers of other students were obtained from parents included in the general survey.

The survey provided separate re-

Fig. 4 How Great Are the Improvements Needed in SDA Schools?

	% No major improvements needed	% Some major improvement needed	% Drastic change needed	% Closed/ Eliminated	% Don't know/ Can't answer
1121 CHURCH MEMBERS					
Grade schools	16	65	8	1	11
Day academies	17	51	8	*	23
Boarding academies	20	46	8	2	24
Colleges/universities	27	49	5	*	18

*Less than 1/2 of 1%

sults for church members in general, educators, ministers, and students, as well as 56 subgroups based on various demographic and attitudinal patterns. Data from the survey generated 486 computer tables based on 70,000 individual statistics.

Discovering a United Vision

Some denominational leaders anticipated that the Seltzer Daley survey would document a polarization within the North American Division about Adventist education. A number of church leaders expected the survey to show

large numbers of members echoing the sentiment found in the sort of letter published in 1987 in the *Pacific Union Recorder*: Adventist colleges have so strayed from their original purpose they might as well close down.

Many of us out here in the constituency of the church are puzzled at your puzzlement as to why enrollment has declined so sharply at our colleges for the last decade. We have been trying desperately to get through to you as our leaders with this message—It is not worth it to us to sacrifice and send our children to a Seventh-day Adventist college if the solid, historical doctrines, values and standards we believed when we attended college and still believe today are not upheld. It's as simple and as complex as that.

Furthermore, we are not fooled in the least by your insistence that all is well in these aforementioned areas, when plainly, it is not. Nor are we worried. God is in control. If it takes total financial collapse of our education system to show us that these institutions have already been lost to us—in that they bear little resemblance to the blueprint originally given to us—so be it, and praise God for His resourcefulness.

Actually, the survey demonstrated a remarkably unified vision of Adventist education, one that looks very different from that expressed by the correspon-

Fig. 5 What Improvements Are the Most Important?

	Grade Schools	Day Academies	Boarding Academies	Colleges/ Universities
% Giving responses relating to better academic quality (expand programs, improve teachers and quality of education)	43	31	24	31
% Giving responses relating to greater emphasis on spiritual and religious values (return to principles of faith, adhere to Adventist rules and standards)	16	22	17	24

Fig. 6 How Important Are High-Quality Bible Classes and Spiritual-Growth Activities in SDA Schools?

1121 CHURCH MEMBERS	% Absolutely Essential	% Extremely Important	% Important	% Not Important	% Undesirable	% No answer/Don't Know
High-Quality Bible Classes/Spiritual-Growth Activities						
Grade schools	25	59	15	1	*	0
Academies	28	60	10	*	0	1
Colleges/universities	26	57	16	1	*	1
*Less than 1/2 of 1%						
Basic SDA Religious Beliefs Upheld in Courses and Programs						
Grade schools	22	55	19	3	*	1
Academies	28	52	18	1	*	•
Colleges/universities	25	51	20	2	*	1
*Less than 1/2 of 1%						
SDA Atmosphere and Values Emphasized						
Grade schools	19	56	22	1	1	1
Academies	26	53	19	1	*	1
Colleges/universities	22	54	20	3	*	2
*Less than 1/2 of 1%						

dent to the *Pacific Union Recorder* and other vocal critics of Adventist higher education.

One overwhelming sentiment is that Adventist schools are essential or very important to the future of the church (from 82 percent for colleges to 88 percent for grade schools).(Figure 3.)

The survey found further evidence that Adventists highly value their schools. At the grade school level, 80 percent of respondents rated their local Adventist school as excellent or good, while only 49 percent said the same for their local public school. At the high

school level the ratings for Adventist and non-Adventist schools were almost even: 76 percent and 74 percent respectively. At the collegiate level, there is a modest edge for Adventist over non-Adventist schools—87 percent to 76 percent. While Adventists value their schools and no almost no one stated that Adventist schools at any level should be closed or eliminated, many North American Adventists believe that improvements need to be made at all levels, with most choosing “some major improvements needed,” to describe their views. (Figure 4.)

Academic Excellence, Religious Values — the Highest Priorities

Perhaps the most surprising result of the survey was establishing that in their vision of education Adventist members place the highest priority on improving academic excellence. When those respondents who said improvements were needed, were then asked “What

Fig. 7 How Important Is Providing Financial Aid so Any Adventist Family Can Send Their Children to SDA Schools?

1121 CHURCH MEMBERS	% Undesirable	% Not Important	% Important	% Extremely Important	% Close if Not Available	% No Answer/Don't Know
Financial Aid Provided for Any Adventist Family						
Grade school	1	3	22	52	20	2
Academy	1	2	23	56	17	2
College/university	1	4	25	51	16	3
Ample Work Opportunities Available for Students						
Academy	1	2	24	58	15	1
College/university	*	1	23	59	15	1
*Less than 1/2 of 1%						

major improvement do you have in mind?" they placed "better academic quality" above even "greater emphasis on spiritual and religious values" for every level of Adventist education, especially grade schools. (Figure 5, p. 58.)

These results correlate with other attitudes discovered by the survey. When it came to evaluating teachers, a

substantial majority of members said that they should be caring and committed, but even more said that it was "extremely important" or "absolutely essential" that the teacher have academic competence.

Certainly, in its unified central vision of Adventist education North American Adventists made it plain that

their other great value, in addition to academic excellence, was religion. In answering questions about spiritual-growth activities, teaching of religious beliefs, and emphasis on Adventist atmosphere and values, the majority stated that they regarded these aspects of education as "extremely important."

A significant minority, 19-29 per-

Fig. 8 Who Should Be Responsible for Financial, Academic, Administrative, and Religious Matters in SDA Schools?

1121 CHURCH MEMBERS	<u>Financial</u>	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Administrativ e</u>	<u>Religious</u>
IN THE GRADE SCHOOLS (%)				
School administrators	20	23	33	25
Teachers	8	28	20	34
Parents	34	22	21	24
Local school board	42	31	48	31
Local conference	37	37	37	30
Local union	4	11	8	7
North American Division Board of Education	9	21	12	10
Church members in general	35	9	12	17
All of the above	16	15	11	18
Other	5	4	4	9
Don't know or can't answer	1	3	3	2
IN THE ACADEMIES (%)				
School administrators	30	32	41	31
Teachers	8	26	16	28
Parents	26	19	17	21
Local school board	32	32	42	30
Local conference	48	40	48	37
Local union	14	12	11	10
North American Division Board of Education	14	22	10	12
Church members in general	17	7	9	11
All of the above	16	14	11	18
Other	3	3	3	7
Don't know or can't answer	3	3	3	2
IN THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (%)				
College administrators	38	44	46	35
Teachers	8	25	16	24
Parents	15	10	9	11
Students	6	7	4	7
Board of the college	41	40	45	31
Union committee	33	28	31	26
North American Division Board of Education	27	32	25	23
Church members in general	12	6	7	10
All of the above	15	12	10	18
Other	6	7	7	9
Don't know or can't answer	5	3	5	3

Fig. 9 How Important Is It for Students to Attend the Schools of Their Choice, Even If Their Parents Prefer a Different Choice?

COLLEGE	% Extremely Important	% Important	% Not Important	% Undesirable	% Can't Decide
Church members in general (1121)	29	49	16	1	6
Parents of college/university students (98)	20	55	18	2	6
Students under 25 years old (102)	61	36	3	0	0
Educators (143)	39	41	15	1	4
Ministers (110)	28	50	19	1	2
HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL					
Church members in general (1121)	16	47	20	7	10
Parents of academy/high school students (132)	16	49	22	9	4
Students under 25 years old (102)	38	40	20	1	1
Educators (143)	16	53	22	3	6
Ministers (110)	8	60	22	3	7

cent, may have felt so strongly about the “absolutely essential nature of some of these aspects” that they were ready, like the correspondent to the *Pacific Union Recorder*, for a school or college/university not meeting these standards for religion to be shut down. The minority chose “absolutely essential” to describe their attitude toward the centrality of religion, after having received instructions that such a designation would be appropriate if they felt that a school that did not meet such a requirement should be closed. (Figure 6, p. 59.)

Many anticipated that finances would emerge from the survey as a central concern of members. Although the emphases on academic excellence and spiritual growth proved to overshadow finances in the minds of North American Adventists, finances remain a matter of vital importance to planning for the educational future of the church. The survey revealed that a majority of members felt that it is extremely important for the church as a whole to provide sufficient financial aid so any Adventist child can attend an Adventist school right through their college and university years. (Figure 7, p. 59.)

Strengthening the credibility of this survey result is another piece of data. The Seltzer Daley team were astounded that 23 percent of the survey respondents said that they provide direct financial support for a student not a member of their family.

Democracy in Educational Planning Is an Imperative

Faced with a future that is irrefutably precarious, how does Adventist education survive into the 21st century? How are necessary, sometimes dramatic, often painful changes to be made? The answer is the overall involvement of North American Adventist members in planning the revitalization of their educational system. The survey showed with clarity that most Adventists believe that decision-making about education should be shared among relevant groups. (Figure 8.)

One group particularly is perceived as deserving a voice in deciding the direction of Adventist education. The survey documented the extent to which North American Adventists are committed to students themselves having a strong say in which college—even which academy—they should attend. (Figure 9.)

Extending the franchise to students about the future of Adventist schools presents a distinct challenge. Students have a lower opinion than their elders of the academic quality of Adventist schools, have a higher opinion of public schools, and are less convinced of the

importance of Adventist education.

The Seltzer Daley analysis of their survey for the North American Division focused on democratization of decision-making: “The penalty for ignoring the fervent lay convictions would be severe.” They went on to say that,

A consensus cannot be composed, and change cannot be imposed, by fiat. A true consensus requires democracy. The leadership must reach down to the grass roots level, create a legitimate listening post, and incorporate it into the planning process. To do this requires deftness, ingenuity, and resources, as well as a planning effort that includes the entire Church.

One response to such blunt recommendations from highly respected consultants is to share the available facts with North American members through this essay, and others like it, in as many Adventist publications as possible. Only by widespread constituency involvement will answers be found for the renewal of Adventist education.

In addition, the Joint Boards of Education of the North American Division sponsored a planning conference, January 5-7, 1988, on the Loma Linda University campus. The conference involved 85 people representing a variety of groups and experience from across the North American Adventist church. The purpose of the conference was to set in motion a process. The

process would involve key Seventh-day Adventist constituencies in translating the shared vision of Adventist education the survey found among North American Adventists into a master plan for renewing North American Adventist education. The first telephone call has been made. Now North America is moving from the first step of listening to the views and expectations of members as a whole to involving members in the next steps necessary to create a master plan.

On the last afternoon of the conference, the Joint Boards voted to establish four major task forces and a council to coordinate their activities. Subsequently, the General Conference and North American Division Committees approved and implemented this action by providing the staff and resources necessary to carry out the work of the council.

The task forces will coordinate a broad scale involvement of Adventist constituencies in four distinct areas:

- Youth concerns, spiritual values
- Quality education, valued educators
- Marketing and advocacy
- Financial strategies, options

Now is the time for that overwhelming majority of Adventist members, so strongly committed to the importance of Adventist schools, to commit the time and effort to make certain that Adventist schools are known for being religiously distinctive, academically excellent, and financially affordable.

Where Is The Seminary Headed?

To the Editors: The content of the article "The SDA Theological Seminary: Heading Toward Isolation?" (18:1) left this reader unconvinced of the appropriateness of the possible conclusion conveyed in the title.

First: A tendency toward isolationism can hardly be proved by merely pointing to an M. Div. curriculum that has become more practics-oriented unless you also produce the motivational reasons for the change. This is particularly pertinent in this case when other leading theological institutions have done the same and the seminary was mandated by the Association of Theological Schools to do likewise.

Furthermore, such a tendency to focus on the M. Div. curriculum alone, which is geared toward the training of ministers generally, is to ignore the other curricula for the M.A., M.Th., Th.D. and Ph.D. where the preparation for publishing and dialoguing with scholars can more likely be expected to occur. A scrutiny of those curricula in terms of content and general exposure to other theologians and their works, would have been a better approach.

Second: It is misleading to intimate that a comparison of the publishing records of teachers who were trained at Andrews University and those trained elsewhere could possibly be a reliable indicator of a trend toward isolation on the part of the Seminary. It is a known fact that scholarly productivity varies among individuals even from the same "outside" institution.

If it were believed that scholarly productivity was an index to isolationism then what must one conclude about such a trend, should it be found that scholars from Harvard and Yale have been less productive than those from Vanderbilt and Chicago? How reliable would a conclusion on isolationism be in such a case?

Third: Without supplying the facts with respect to the activities of all the Andrews University professors and more of the content of the theological training of students, any intimation of isolationism or academic stagnation in the article sounds like superficial and prejudiced conclusions. Information that should have been considered for conclusions on isolationism include:

- (a) Records of actual contact and correspondence with other leading scholars
- (b) Attendance at and level and quality of participation in meetings of professional theological societies
- (c) Record of the frequency of visits to the seminary of visiting professors or visiting speakers and/or examiners of theological stature as well as the record of seminary

student and faculty interaction with them

(d) Frequency of colloquia between seminary faculty dealing with significant theological trends and problems

(e) Frequency of colloquia or seminars between seminary faculty and seminary students.

Evidence of faculty turnover, hiring of an Andrews University graduate, a more practics-oriented M.Div. curriculum and the introduction of a seminary executive committee are not persuasive arguments for building up a case for a de facto state of isolationism in the seminary.

Fourth: If we should concede that isolationism is the defense mechanism of the timid, the mentally lethargic, the coward, or the overconfident who wishes to avoid contamination by that which is not truth, it would be better to focus on the nature and process of education itself that produces such results, rather than to intimate, for starters, that institutions that share the students' religious orientation necessarily produce students who are closed-minded and incapable of carrying on an intelligent theological dialogue with other theologians outside of the church system.

I guess what troubles me most in the article is the possible conclusion that a Christian university is inherently incapable of producing true theological scholars. I would hope that the historians and biologists and nurses to whom we give a graduate education, could be truly capable of interacting with other scholars in an intelligent way. If it is theoretically at all possible for a Christian to become a scholar, Christian universities ought to be able to produce them. More than that, it is imperative that the Christian university produce academically competent, open-minded, analytical, and informed students, who continue to desire to hear God's voice more clearly than man's voice, and who respond to God with their whole lives. Such scholars will be able to carry on an intelligent dialogue with other scholars in their fields. They will also make a significant and courageous contribution to the state of theological knowledge generally and that of the church in particular, while yet remaining fundamentally sound, conserving, and humble Seventh-day Adventists.

Arthur O. Coetzee
Vice President, Academic Administration
Andrews University

Gary Land Responds

To the Editors: As to Dr. Coetzee's first point, editorial reorganization of my essay resulted in placing the discussion of the seminary curriculum within the context of the suggestion that the semi-

nary might be isolating itself. Unfortunately, I did not catch this implication when I approved the editorial changes prior to publication.

The other issues raised by Dr. Coetzee are worthy of discussion. My concern with scholarly publication lies in two areas.

First, an institution that offers doctoral education needs faculty who are actively involved in scholarship. Because we often pick up our concepts of scholarly endeavor from our teachers, an institution that produces relatively little scholarship is unlikely to pass on to its students a model that values scholarly publication. When those students are in turn hired as teachers at that same institution, the situation is compounded.

My second concern is that we need to publish our scholarly work in not only Adventist but non-Adventist publications. By submitting our work to people with different assumptions than our own, we are likely to find weaknesses, and possibly strengths, that we are unlikely to discover from an Adventist audience. There is nothing predetermined about the publication patterns I described, but I think that it will take a conscious effort to change those patterns.

The type of activities described by Dr. Coetzee in his third criticism, are some of the very things that need to be done to avoid the isolation that concerns me and is a topic worthy of internal, university study. I do not think that I was suggesting that a Christian university is unable to produce true scholars; rather, my concern is whether staffing the seminary with so many of its own graduates—exposed to many of the same teachers, books, and fellow students—will be good for the church in the long run. I would have the same concern if we followed the practice in fields other than religion.

Finally, on another issue, Richard Hammill, in a personal letter, pointed out to me that the denominational leaders promoting the statements of beliefs in the 1970's, were not asking that faculty sign such statements. I regret having perpetuated this misunderstanding.

Gary Land
History Department
Andrews University

On AIDS & Adventism

To the Editors: In the last issue of *Spectrum* (Vol. 8, No. 3) you published a letter from Robert Bouchard drawing the attention of your readers to the grave and growing needs of AIDS victims within the Adventist church. It pointed out that at least nine Adventists have died of AIDS and that some of their family members have suffered alone, unwilling to tell pastors or fellow members. The letter also indicated that SDA Kinship has

established a fund to help Adventist AIDS victims who have lost their jobs and homes. In some cases living space is being made available to those suffering from AIDS.

Thank you for publishing the letter. Unfortunately, no address was included. Any AIDS victim—or relative—who would like our help should feel free to write to: SDA Kinship International, Box 3840, Los Angeles, California 90078 or call (213) 876-2076.

Jeremy Young
Toronto, Canada

More About Mt. Vernon Academy

To the Editors: As a member of the Ohio Secondary Educational Task Force, I read with interest and appreciation Monte Sahlin's account of the work of the Task Force (*Spectrum*, Volume 18, No. 2) It was, however, misleading in one important respect. From his article, one might easily infer that the report sent to delegates prior to the constituency meeting amounted to a recommendation to close Mt. Vernon Academy.

Actually, the definite recommendation of the task force was to continue the operation of the academy. Printed recommendations given to delegates were as follows:

Plan A: The Secondary Education Task Force recommends to continue the operation of Mount Vernon Academy as mandated by the attached document (A). Plan B: Should the Constituency feel that this is not viable due to costs and other circumstances, the task force recommends that Mt. Vernon Academy end operation with the 1985-1986 school year and that the Ohio Conference subsidize secondary students in attendance at other schools as outlined in the attached document (B).

With modifications, the constituency voted to accept plan A and its accompanying set of recommendations.

Lynn R. Callender
Kettering, Ohio

On Harris Pine

To the Editors: I appreciated the facts and the chronology of how the Harris Pine problems developed. However, I am saddened by the fact that our academies were big losers. [The decision] of the General Conference to leave the contracts for free rent in place cost our school \$1 million in potential income from rental of our facilities. This is the yet untold story of the whole Harris Pine affair.

Fred Speyers
Monterey Bay Academy SDA Church
Watsonville, California

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