Special Cluster: Under the Southern Cross

Adventism in the Antipodes

by Norman H. Young

The declaration of American independence in 1776 terminated Britain's custom of banishing her convicts to the New World. The habit, however, remained ingrained. Faced with the problem of the overcrowding in their prisons, the British House of Commons, after some debate due to the cost, voted to transport the wretched human contents to the recently charted east coast of New Holland (as Australia was then called). Captain James Cook had mapped and claimed the area for His Majesty's government only a few years previously in 1770. The aborigines who dwelt in the land had not developed the weaponry to defend it against the Europeans, and the logic of the day concluded that that gave the modern powers the right to take possession of the land.

The 11 ships of the "First Fleet" with their cargo of "scarcely human creatures" initially anchored in Botany Bay, but the surroundings were less than enticing even for a penal colony, so within a week the whole fleet had relocated to "Sydney Cove." The Union Jack went up, a salute was fired, and Captain Arthur Phillip, the new governor, and his officers drank to King George's health. Thus, 200 years ago on Saturday afternoon 26 January 1788, the nation of Australia inauspiciously began as a British penal colony.

Three years short of a century later, the first official contingent of American Adventists arrived in the still-fledgling nation of Australia. In fact, Australia was not yet even a nation, but rather a group of independent and jealous colonies. There had been some unofficial Adventist presence in Australia and New Zealand prior to the arrival of the 11 missionaries in 1885, but those efforts had not established the Advent faith in the new lands. The newly arrived Americans, including Elders S. N. Haskell, J. O. Corliss, and M. C. Israel, were destined to have that honour.

The American evangelists faced a daunting prospect: no black debris had blotted out the sun in the expansive antipodean skies in 1780, no falling "stars" had peppered the parched Australian land in 1833, and no saints had gathered in barns or in fields to await the Lord's return on 22 October 1844. The doyen of Australian historians, Manning Clark, has truly noted that "no prophets have come out of the deserts of Australia," and "unlike most other countries, we have no legends that the Christ figure ever wandered in our ancient continent." Thus, the American missionaries found no Millerite foundation in Australia upon which to build. Indeed, they had come to a colony with a tenuous Christian tradition.

Gains and Losses

It is a tribute to the early American Adventist missionaries that just over a century after their arrival, there are in the South Pacific Division (in round figures) 200,000 (54,456 in Australia and New Zealand) believers worshipping in 1,000 church buildings, sending 22,500 (8,000 in Australia and New Zealand) of their children to 300 schools and colleges, and running five hospitals, 16 retirement villages, 10 hostels for the aged, seven nursing homes, a

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publishing house, a media center, and a giant food-processing conglomerate.

The division budget for 1987 was $13.7 million; $7.3 million of which was allocated to the mission unions, the remainder to fund the division office and institutions. A substantial portion of the division's budget is generated by the Sanitarium Health Food Company's profits. Tithe in 1986 was $24.22 million dollars, and total offerings amounted to $12.95 million.

In the festive atmosphere of Australia's bicentennial, celebrating Adventism's successes may seem appropriate, but celebration must be tempered by the realization that the heirs of those intrepid Americans will need a vision as bold as that of the founders just to maintain the original achievements, let alone surpass them. Technology has partially tamed "the tyranny of distance" that challenged the Adventist pioneers, but new barriers to growth have arisen in modern Australia and New Zealand.

The South Pacific Division stretches from Australia's west coast southward to Tasmania, then eastward to South New Zealand and onward as far as Pitcairn Island, finally veering northward to the islands below (and some above) the equator. The change of the division's name from Australasian Division to its present title in 1985 is a recognition that the membership growth is outside the first-world countries of Australia and New Zealand, even if the wealth remains within their borders. The reduction in the home field's growth in membership has reached the point where it is barely maintaining the status quo.

The actual growth rate in Australia and New Zealand has been steadily waning from a 3.35 percent annual increase throughout the decade 1932-1941 to a 1.27 percent annual growth in membership during the 1980s. This compares with an annual growth in North American of 3.6 percent. The decline is not simply due to a post-Glacier View plunge, for it has been a clear trend during the past six decades. The major problem is not declining baptisms—though the eighties are experiencing a reversal of a 50-year upward graph—but increasing apostasies. Glacier View had a visible impact on this pattern, but it was an exacerbation of a trend and not its cause.

The calculation of apostasies as a percentage of baptisms indicates that in the three decades 1932-1961 one person left for every four baptized. For the next two decades, 1962-1981, one person defected for every three baptized. But in the period 1982-1987 one person seceded for every two that were baptized. (See table below.)

Apostasy Rate— South Pacific Division

1932-1941	24.6 percent
1942-1951	22.8 percent
1952-1961	21.6 percent
1962-1971	31.0 percent
1972-1981	34.9 percent
1982-1987	48.5 percent

Aftermath of Defrocking Desmond Ford

A loss of confidence in the self-understanding of the church and claims became manifest during the 1980s with the challenges of Desmond Ford, Walter Rea, and others. Such researchers merely expressed some of the incipient doubts that had lain below the surface of Australasian Adventism for some time. During the eighties it became increasingly difficult for many Adventists under the Southern Cross to affirm the faith in the form that the American evangelists had delivered it to their spiritual forefathers.

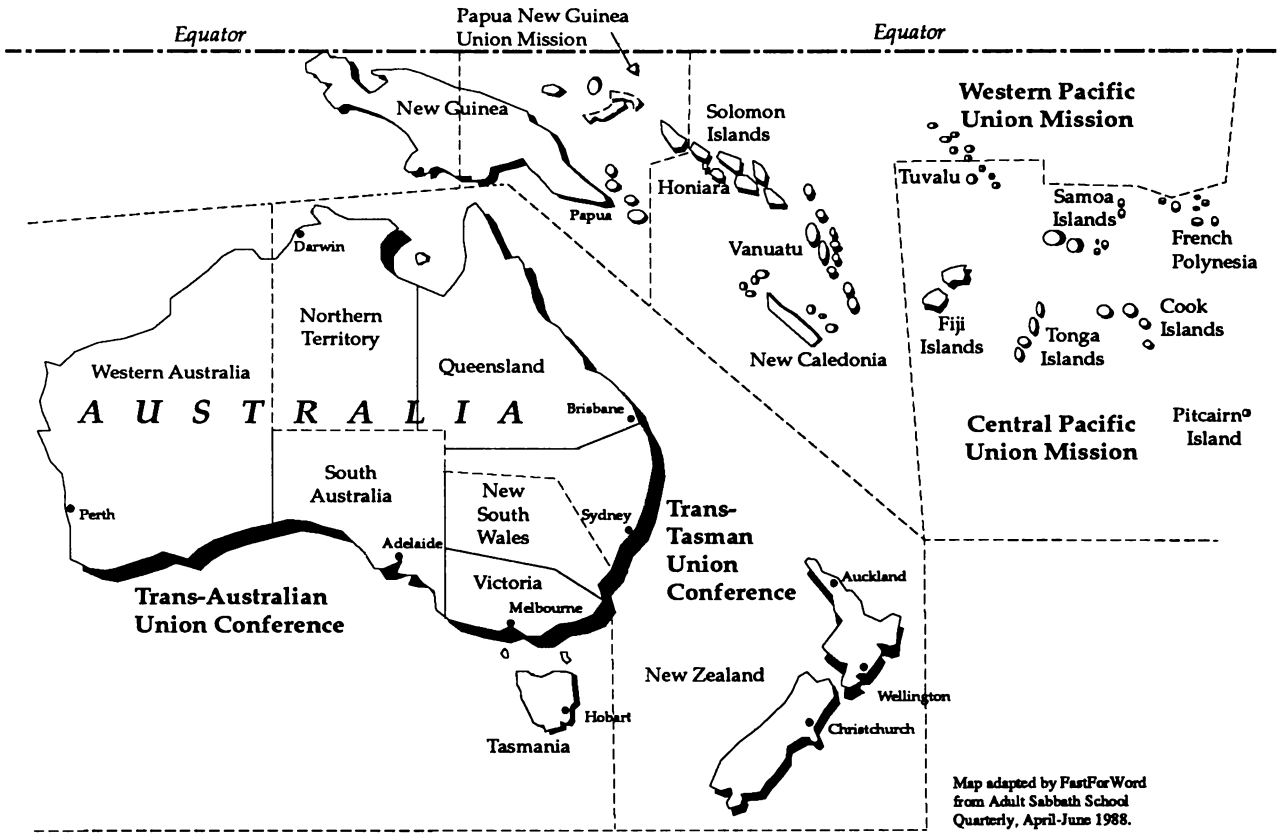
The institutional church reacted conservatively and required the doubters to affirm the orthodox view. Those who could not accept that the Adventist church was a holy remnant with a unique hold on divine truth and destined to trigger the *Parousia* felt alienated as the church reemphasized the traditional formulae. The apostasy rate in the home unions leapt in 1982 to a staggering 62.7 percent. In 1981 New Zealand experienced a net loss in membership for the first time in

the history of the Advent mission there. Besides the number involved, the quality of the people lost in the carnage added to the tragedy. The younger ministerial workers were decimated. Of 170 who graduated from the theology course in the period 1973-1982, 75 either did not enter or have left the ministry.[2] This is a significant loss in the home fields where only 206 ordained ministers are currently active as church pastors.

There is consequently a shortage of experienced young pastors in the home conferences. In North New South Wales (one of the largest conferences in Australia), of 26 ministers in the field, only one is under 30 years of age, whereas of 100 teachers in the same conference, approximately 25 are under 30. This is probably similar to the situation throughout the division where 44.3 percent of the 587 teachers (excluding national teachers) are in their first five years of service. Thus there appears to be a generation gap between the teaching and pastoral branches of the ministry.

New graduates will not remedy the shortage of trained ministers, since student enrollment in the ministerial course at Avondale College is at its lowest for decades, with only 65 ministerial students at Avondale this year (1988) compared with

The South Pacific Division Today



Map adapted by PastForWord from Adult Sabbath School Quarterly, April-June 1988.

Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	Sabbath School Members
Central Pacific	1,193,081	197	21,719	23,195
Papua New Guinea	3,267,646	479	88,451	93,945
Trans-Australian	8,387,400	182	18,962	15,679
Trans-Tasman	10,285,354	272	33,916	28,586
Western Pacific	612,200	169	19,816	20,278
Division Totals	23,745,681	1,299	182,864	181,683

an average of 115 throughout the 1970s. Presently the theology students are generally more mature than students in other courses, the average age being 28 years. It is not true that only dull men are applying for the ministry—though many bright Adventist students go to university—but the younger Adventist men do not seem to be much attracted to it.

The church has attempted to reassert the validity of its self-claims by emphasizing in the schools those aspects of its structure that have been challenged: the role of Ellen White, the sanctuary, the uniqueness and divine origin of the Adventist church. It has been only partially successful. The focus on the church's doctrine has bred considerable cynicism among students, for many of them perceive the church as placing the perpetuation of its own institutional identity above the nurturing of persons and community. Symptomatic of this is the widespread attitude of students toward Ellen White: she is not attacked, just largely ignored. The field secretary of the division wrote in the *South Pacific Record* of 19 July 1986 that the years have seen the disappearance of the clouds of Glacier View. It is true that the clouds have dissipated, but certain effects remain.

One in five Australians was born overseas, making Australia one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. That diversity is reflected in church membership.

Partly to assure the constituency that its teachers and administrators believe in a six-day Creation, a short chronology, and a universal flood, the division invited the Geoscience Research Institute to run two field conferences this summer (January-February 1988) at a cost of $150,000. The first group was composed mainly of science educators, and the second was mostly administrators. A statement of affirmation was put to the second group only. There was one dissenter—an Australian scientist who was present to give a lecture. There is little doubt that the discussion would have been more lively if the statement had also been presented to the first group. The emphasis in these conferences augurs ill for those who cannot affirm a totally fundamentalist interpretation of Genesis.

Innovations

In an effort to reverse the trend in membership loss the church is attempting to introduce changes in evangelistic methods, pastoral care, ethnic outreach, use of the media, and the like. One response to the rapid social change has been the commissioning of a small task-force committee with the significant title "Toward 2000" to explore new evangelistic approaches.

In 1986 the division founded the Institute of Church Ministry and Evangelism on the Avondale College campus. The institute provides demographic studies (120 churches have already used this service), long-term consultations, workshops, and various resources in all aspects of church growth and evangelism. The director, Alwyn Salom, has organized two church-growth study tours for pastors to the United States.

Five ministerial conferences for workers were held in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji in 1986 and 1987. The issues addressed were those raised by the ministers themselves in a preconference survey. Don Reynolds of the General Conference Christian Leadership Seminars was the featured speaker. He addressed the issues of conflict management, problem-solving, and administration. Other speakers were George Reid, director of the Biblical Research Institute, and Werner Vyhmeister, head of Asia Adventist Theological Seminary.

For the first time some of these conferences were held in the island unions. However, only expatriates and nationals with advanced degress were included. In 1988 several three-week seminars will be held involving a broader spectrum of national workers.

The church ministries department, directed by Alf Birch, is in the process of holding another series of short seminars in both Australia and New Zealand (the "home unions") and in the island missions. Already, 7 of the 11 home con-

ferences have been visited. The purpose of these conferences is to assist the pastor to become skilled in a relational model of ministry stressing a cooperative style of working with members. The seminars encourage the pastors to adopt a facilitating role within their congregations. The authority figure model is eschewed.

There is, according to the Church Ministries department, a "cry for openness" among the ministry: openness to change, to dialogue, to fairness, to innovation in worship and mission, to the centrality of the local congregation, to the needs of the year 2000. The department believes that unless the church becomes more democratic, secular Australians and New Zealanders will dismiss it as irrelevant, if they have not already done so.

The church ministries department is also running family-life seminars to assist the ministry in their professional standards of pastoral premarital and marriage counseling. The four-year program in family life education that the church ministries department has arranged with Loma Linda University commences in July 1988. Already 33 pastors and laity, including several women, have enrolled.

More than one in five Australians was born overseas, making Australia one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. That diversity is beginning to be reflected in church membership and evangelism. Within the two home unions there are 3,300 ethnic Adventists worshipping in 25 church buildings. Among the ethnic groups represented are Russians, Finns, Greeks, Italians, Poles, Yugoslavs, Chinese, Samoans, Fijians, Cook Islanders, Hispanics, and Portuguese. A seminar in professional awareness will be held early in 1989 for the 28 ethnic pastors. For Australian Adventism to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, it need only enter its own cities. The ethnic portions of Australian society offer the best potential for both Christian services and membership growth.

Adventist film and video production in Australia is of a high quality at a relatively low cost. An Adventist, Russell Gibbs, received the "Angel Award" in 1966 for the best religious music. Another member, Babe Reynaud, won a National Tanget Award for his video promoting a theology course.

The "Focus on Living" TV series is screened without cost on 32 of a possible 40 stations. However, the program's classification forbids the mentioning of religion, or the use of the church's name, and allows only limited discussion of controversial social issues. The church buys commercial time to advertise its Bible courses during the program. Many believe that a better result would be achieved if the $400,000 budget was spent on producing top advertising to screen on prime-time TV and save the bother of producing the program. However, the program is gaining a following among daytime viewers, and hopefully in the future the church will be permitted to publicize its association with the series.

Aborigines

In 1980 the division took over the administrative responsibility of the church's work for Australia's 150,000 aborigines. Until this change the work for aborigines had depended on the spasmodic efforts of individual pastors and conferences. It had not previously enjoyed the concentrated effort of the island work. The division's aboriginal office is in Kempsey where there is a significant aboriginal population and where the Adventist work for the aborigines belatedly began in 1910 or 1914. There are presently 2,000 aboriginal Adventists and about 15-30 are being baptized annually. Two of the six men assigned to this ministry are themselves aboriginal. The success of the work is partly due to the aboriginal community being encouraged to work out their own spiritual life.

The church is involved in two schools for aboriginal children: Karalundi in Western Australia with 100 pupils and Mirriwinni Gardens in New South Wales with 60 pupils. The schools have an aboriginal majority on their governing boards. Both schools are dependent on government funding, though they are operated by Adventists. The government has invested $1.2 million in the capital development of Mirriwinni

Gardens. The principal is Fay Oliver, an aboriginal woman dedicated to the betterment of her people. Karalundi is a large property that was once owned by the church. The government recently purchased the estate for $230,000 after the church had declined the offer.

Publications

Another encouraging event was the recent assigning of two youthful and talented editors (James Coffin and Gary Krause) to the task of upgrading the two journals published by the division. The South Pacific Division *Record*, a monthly magazine somewhere between the *Adventist Review* and the union papers in the United States. The other publication is the Australian version of the *Signs of the Times*, edited for a non-Adventist readership. The Signs Publishing Company has annual gross sales of $3.8 million with a small profit margin, but its two journals were in trouble. The new editors have recaptured a wide readership for the *Record*, including younger members. Subscriptions for the *Signs* had declined from 69,436 in 1977 to 42,249 in 1986. To restore the *Signs* to its former evangelistic role, the editors modernized its style and contents. This revamping lost as many subscribers as it gained. The innovations are a "do or die move," according to management. If they do not save the moribund *Signs*, nothing will.

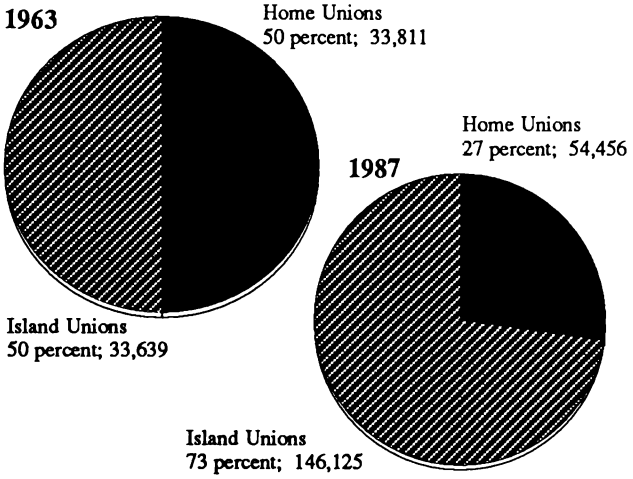
A significant book emerged from a history symposium conducted by the division in 1986 at Macquarie University. Both Adventist and non-Adventist scholars attended and presented papers. The papers were published as a monograph (*Adventist History in the South Pacific, 1886-1915*, Wahroonga, 1986), which has been well received by institutions around the world. A second symposium, studying Adventism between the first and second world wars, will be held in 1988, with a volume published later.

Oceania

The picture in the Pacific Island regions is generally dramatically different from the home unions. Even allowing

Burgeoning Membership in the Island Missions

According to growth projections, the island unions will represent 82 percent of the South Pacific Division by the year 2000. The membership in Papua New Guinea alone now accounts for 50 percent of the division totals.



Adventist Membership per 1,000 Population

Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides) Mission	51.5
Central Papua Mission	46.3
North Solomon Islands	31.6
Samoa	24.5
Fiji	16.5
South N. Z. Conference	2.4
Greater Sydney Conference	2.1
Victoria Conference	1.9

for the fact that only a tithe or less of the apostasies are recorded, the growth in the mission fields is dramatic. Based on 1986 figures, Papua New Guinea Union is growing at the rate of 8.8 percent annually, the Central Pacific at 6.9 percent, and the Western Pacific at 4.9 percent. This growth has brought its own problems. The economies in these unions are generally poor and rely heavily on overseas aid. In the South Pacific Division, 73 percent of its membership is in the mission field, but 88 percent of its tithes and offerings come from the home field. The membership growth in the three mission unions and the stagnation in the two home unions have brought enormous strains on the resources of the division. (See box, opposite page.)

The Stretching of Resources

The resources of the church, both in personnel and finances, are severely stretched in the South Pacific Division. The growth in the Adventist school system has been a significant factor in this. There has been a swing from state schools toward private schools in the Australian community for a number of years now. Currently, some 27.6 percent of Australia's primary and high school students are in private schools. The trend is expected to continue and some researchers estimate that as many as 40 percent might be in private schools by the year 2000. The reasons for the increasing dissatisfaction with the state system are multiple, being both perceived and real, but the situation has reinforced the desire of Adventist families to have their children taught in Adventist schools.

The Adventist school system in Australia and New Zealand has experienced an average annual growth of five percent since 1930. Currently, total enrollment represents approximately 14.7 percent of the membership. The parallel percentage in the three mission unions is 9.7 percent (1986 figures). The number of teachers employed by the church has increased phenomenally over recent years. This growth in numbers of pupils and teachers is taxing the church's ability to meet the school system's needs, and the difficulty is exacerbated by the church's struggle to hold its teachers.

Avondale now awards degrees with state recognition, which has given Adventist teachers wider employment options. Many of them are exercising their prerogative to teach outside the Adventist system. Young teachers often consider the mission field detrimental to vocations and frequently refuse calls. Six of Avondale's 1987 education graduates turned down mission calls compared to two who accepted. Overall, 35 teachers declined mission service compared to 16 who accepted an appointment. It would be easy to attribute this to a loss of vision, but the causes are more complex. The church may have to review the conditions and treatment of missionaries, especially on return, if it wishes to improve the acceptance level for mission service.

The recent tragic murder of one of the author's former students, Peter Knopper, in Papua New Guinea will cause some hesitation in going to certain areas. The thousands of nationals who lined the road for his memorial service, though moving, may not be enough to assure would-be missionaries of their safety. Pacific Adventist College (PAC), just outside Port Moresby, is surrounded by a high protective wire fence and a patrol car circles its perimeter throughout the night. This justified security costs the college $7,500 annually. However, few other expatriate workers in Papua New Guinea can be given the same protection.

The demands placed on young teachers in small rural schools and in the mission field are often inordinate. The situation of David Rogers, principal of Aore School in Vanuatu during 1985-1986, is not atypical. The school has 286 elementary and high school students. Besides being principal and teacher of upper French for external exams, Rogers managed the copra and cocoa plantations, the market garden, and the dairy and beef herds (200 head). Since he was mechanically minded, he also carried the major responsibility for maintaining the equipment, which included an irrigation system, pumps, three tractors, two diesel launches and a slipway.

Hospital and Health Food Company

The staffing of the impressive and prestigious Sydney Adventist Hospital (300 beds) places an enormous demand on the comparatively small Adventist population base. The Sydney Adventist Hospital employs 1,200 persons, 90 percent of whom are Adventists. Its annual budget of $30.8 million is generated entirely by its own services. Indeed, it pays a very substantial tithe to the division on its earnings, the balance being ploughed back into hospital budgets. The hospital is about to rebuild its maternity wing at a cost of $5.7 million. The 2,000 babies that are born there annually will soon be ushered into Australian life in an idyllic domestic setting with the hi-tech medical back-up discreetly blended into the decor.

The Sanitarium Health Food Company employs 1,300 full-time staff, the majority of whom are Adventists. With estimated gross earnings of $126 million, the *Business Review Weekly* ranks Sanitarium 425th (from 367th in 1986) among the 1,000 Australian companies with the largest turnovers. The profit to earnings ratio in the food industry is not high, but even on a low 10-12 percent, the tax-free profit is substantial. Again this large enterprise is drawing its expertise from a relatively small Adventist population base.

Despite the needs of such corporations as the hospital and the food company, Avondale's Bachelor of Business graduates frequently go elsewhere for their careers. The reason for this is not generally a lack of dedication. Many of Avondale's business students accept the offers of private industry, not primarily because of the church's inability to match the remuneration of big business, but because the church lacks a professional approach to potential top management. Career paths in the church are not well defined, in-service training is minimal, incentives are lacking and equal opportunity for women—more than half of Avondale's business graduates are women—has yet to be fully achieved in church employment.

Women

Women in the South Pacific Division remain the great untapped human resource. There are between 20 and 25 percent more women in the Adventist church in Australia and New Zealand than men, yet their role in the church seldom proceeds beyond the Sabbath school (especially the lower divisions), nursing, and teaching (mainly elementary level). In a recent random survey conducted among nine churches in the North New South Wales Conference, five favoured the ordination of women, two by a narrow margin. The four opposed were also by small margins. The South Pacific Committee on the Role of Women decided in its March 1988 meeting to recommend to the General Conference that no decision be made on the matter of the ordination of women until further study had been undertaken, since the church in Australia and New Zealand "remains unsettled." The ordination of women could have the salutary effect of enhancing their participation in an increasing variety of roles throughout the institutional church. Unfortunately, the only immediate hope for women in this part of the vineyard is that the shortage of men for ministry might force the church to turn to women on the unflattering wartime premise that female ministers are better than none.

Administration

The fact that one in 13 of Australian and New Zealand Adventists is also a denominational employee is an evidence of the strain on personnel in the division. However, the personnel who interface with the people are becoming fewer. In 1977 there were 303 ordained ministers in the two home unions, compared to 32 in the division office and institutions. In 1987—despite a membership increase in Australia and New Zealand over the decade of 6,867—the ratio had become 280 to 50. If Parkinson's Law follows (administration increases to fill the space

available), the current $3 million expansion of the division's office space in Wahroonga will intensify the imbalance. Of the 280 ordained men in the two home unions, 74 are not pastoring a congregation. Thus the shortage of trained pastors in the field is being exacerbated by a growing administrative hierarchy.

Wage structures in the church favour the burgeoning administrative body. The concept of a basic equitable wage filled out by needs-oriented benefits is no longer an equitable arrangement. The major losers are teachers, but local pastors are also disadvantaged.[3]

Someone of the Avondale College staff tired of this dual standard and appealed to the Trade Union for Lecturers in Independent Tertiary Education. The college is currently engaged in a costly legal defence of its right as a religiously autonomous body to pay below union wage levels. Few college staff are demanding union wage levels; most simply wish the church's claims of equality to become more of a reality. Out of this pain has come some gain: after July 1988 the more senior lecturers at Avondale will receive the full car allowance.

Government Financial Aid

The first strategy employed by the church to ease financial pressures is to accept—contrary to the ideals of the American founders—massive amounts of state aid. A whopping 45-50 percent of the budget of the Adventist school system in Australia comes from state grants (the state and federal grants are based on complex needs formulae, but $7.5 million is a fair estimate of the extent of the government's investment in the operating and the building, of Australia's Adventist schools). The rest of the budget is raised through fees (40-45 percent) and levies on the local churches (10 percent).

The cost of education for the conferences is thus virtually limited to the wages of the education director and his secretary. However, the church has demanded that conferences establish a buffer fund against the possible cessation of state aid. This is being accomplished by allocating 15 percent of the tithe to the buffer fund until an established amount is reached ($3 million in the case of the North New South Wales Conference). The buffers would give conferences no more than two years to adjust to the new situation if they lost the government funds. The alternative is either higher fees, which would mean the end of the phenomenal growth of the Adventist private school system, or higher church subsidies for an already stretched budget, which would mean less for the ministerial work. This is a classic Catch-22 situation.

Avondale College relies on the government for $1 million of its $5 million operating budget. Furthermore, many of its students are dependent on government living allowances. A group of "friends" known as the Avondale College Foundation, have established enterprises whose profits support the college. Since its inception in 1978 the foundation has assisted the college development with grants of $1.1 million. However, the foundation could not replace the government's funds. Unlike the conferences, the college has no buffer fund. Should government aid cease overnight, so would the college—at least in its present form—unless fees were raised and/or the church increased its allocation to the college dramatically.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Australia is listed by the government as the third most important Australian body involved in overseas aid. In 1987 ADRA/Australia administered $4.5 million in aid to projects outside the country. Only 15 percent of that was directed to disaster relief, for ADRA is increasingly becoming oriented toward development aid. Furthermore, as a recipient of $900,000 direct form the public and $400,000 from the government, ADRA has felt obliged to become less sectarian in its largess. ADRA recently took over the administration of Asian Aid, which raises $600,000 annually. The Asian Aid fund was begun in 1966 by an Adventist laywoman, Maisie Fook. The original founders are still very active in the organization, which follows the lines of support-a-child programs. The more successful ADRA is, the more money it attracts from governments, and the less dependent it becomes on

the church.

Sopas Regional Hospital (60 beds plus aisles) in New Guinea is a nurse-training institution that is completely funded by the Papuan New Guinea government with a grant of $360,000. Atoifi Hospital (100 beds) in the Solomons, also a nurse-training center, is not dependent on government grants. Such grants are tenuous, as ultimately governments prefer to fund their own hospitals. Aore Hospital in Vanatu (formerly New Hebrides) closed when government funds ceased, and the church opened several clinics instead. Adventists operate 50 clinics in the Pacific Islands and in many ways these are more cost-efficient and less duplicating of government facilities than regional hospitals.

Nationalization

The second strategy embraced by the church to help solve its economic problems is nationalization. The church is not only nationalizing for noble Christian motives, but also for pragmatic economic ones. National workers cost a tithe of an expatriate's wage. The church pays nationals only a third of what they could earn as experienced medics or teachers in their government's institutions. One missionary described the sacrificing nationals as the "unsung heroes" of the island work. As part of the church's austerity policy, the Papua New Guinea union has been asked to eliminate 15 expatriate budgets over the next five years. The other two Pacific Island unions are to surrender a similar proportion.

Part of the pressure on the church to nationalize is secular in nature. Nationalism in the third-world countries of the Pacific is politically active and socially important. The church cannot continue to operate in defiance of these forces. It is quite predictable that in the future the presidents of the three mission unions will be nationals.

Rationalization

The third strategy aimed at relieving the pressure on resources is the rationalization of the education system. The division has declared that the work in the islands is to operate according to its own economic levels. The disparity between urban incomes and village economies in the mission countries means that in many areas Adventist schools are too costly for the people. Consequently there is a high closure rate of schools in the poorer areas. Papua New Guinea is closing seven schools a year: it is expected that only about 45 of the 105 schools that operated in 1983 will survive. Government education is cheaper and of a better standard than the Adventist schools, hence most Papuan and New Guinean Adventist children are in government schools. This is also true at tertiary level where two-and-a-half times more Adventists are in the university than the 100 students enrolled in Pacific Adventist College located near Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

Pacific Adventist College is a large institution that was built with little consultation with members in New Guinea, at a cost of $9 million. Not only were the buildings originally designed for construction in Sydney by an Australian architect, but the facilities are too grand, given the weaknesses of the feeder system. Expatriates seem not to have grasped that Pacific Adventist College's graduates are destined to replace them. They urge the merits of the humble Omaura Bible Training School because, in their experience, it produces better and cheaper field workers than Pacific Adventist College. It is hoped that Pacific Adventist College will supply the trained persons greatly needed for national leadership. With persons of the caliber of John Geheno, who was foreign minister in Prime Minister Somare's Papua New Guinea government; Nigel Angonia, a senior public servant; and Oma Nombe, premier of the Eastern Highlands Province in New Guinea, who has seven Adventists in his cabinet, the church cannot continue to place most of the administrative control in white expatriate hands.

Some small isolated one-teacher schools in Australia and New Zealand are closing, doomed by the mounting costs and sophistication of modern education. Boarding schools are also struggling to survive. Many Adventist families have decided that it is better to keep their children

at home in the wicked city than to send them away from home to the salubrious countryside. The trend in the home unions is toward bigger schools in areas of Adventist population clusters, which are generally urban and/or institutional. For example, to keep Carmel College outside Perth in Western Australia operational, the Victoria Park High School was closed and Carmel largely became a day school. Some small schools have stayed the day of execution by increasing the number of non-Adventist students well beyond the recommended 10 percent maximum. Lilydale Academy, not too far from Melbourne, continues by taking in large numbers of day students and overseas boarders (43 percent). Longburn College in New Zealand exists by Sanitarium Health Food Company dollars and New Zealand pride.

Thus, the harsh realities of economics are changing the face of Adventist education in the Antipodes.

The Public Image of the Church

The church's medical and welfare work creates enormous public good will. Sydney Adventist Hospital is the most comprehensive private hospital in Australia. Its excellent reputation has enhanced the church's image in numerous ways. Its facilities have been enjoyed by celebrities and leading citizens including members of the federal government. The annual National Bioethics Conference that the hospital hosts joined with its Bioethics Center has made the hospital the focus of Protestant discussion in the field of medical ethics. A medical team of 52, under the auspices of the hospital, volunteered their time and skills to perform open-heart surgery in Tonga and attracted considerable positive and deserved media attention. Corporations and individuals contributed $450,000 to the venture. The hospital is considering a similar outreach to Nepal.

Fifteen years ago patients stayed for 10-15 days, whereas bed occupancy is now only five days. It is indicative of the quality of the Sydney Adventist Hospital that it has been able to maintain the full utilization of its facilities despite the shorter hospital stays. Australian medical services are of a high standard and cost-efficient and therefore attract many overseas patients. The Sydney Adventist Hospital is beginning to receive some of these overseas patients. Austrade, a semigovernment agency, has included the Sydney Adventist Hospital among those Australian hospitals to which overseas patients can be referred.

The smaller Auckland Hospital (64 beds) in the capital of New Zealand is operating successfully, employing some 200 staff of whom 50 percent are part-time. Its wages total $2.7 million. The Warburton Center near Melbourne (38 hospital beds and 70 health-care beds) is not as financially viable as the Sydney Adventist Hospital. Nevertheless, its work in alcohol rehabilitation receives warranted praise. The center is possibly the most successful facility in Australia doing such work, having assisted 500 alcohol-dependent persons to overcome their habit.

Despite Adventists being present in Australasia for more than a century, the Chamberlain case revealed how little-known Adventists were in Australia.

The Chamberlain murder trial exposed the church to saturation publicity beyond anything it had ever experienced. The church did its best to support the Chamberlains without uniting its own reputation with theirs. To the chagrin of some church officials, the media identified the Chamberlains with their church. The church was not always comfortable with the association. For instance, the communications department regretted Mrs. Chamberlain's media references to Satan, which meant that Mrs. Chamberlain was expected to distinguish between a public relations Adventism and the religion of her upbringing. After the Chamberlains were convicted, the previous editor of the *Australasian Record* was anxious to assure the world that "a church's integrity does not stand or fall on the record of one or two of its members" (November 27, 1982). He was

swift to deny the suggestion that the "church has fallen under condemnation and that its image has been damaged." The facts, according to a report prepared by the Anti-Discrimination Board, were otherwise:

> There can be no doubt, however, that the combination of the Chamberlain case and reports of theological schism in the church have had deleterious effects on its image in the eyes of the general public.[4]

To defend itself the church was obliged either to support the Chamberlains or distance itself from them. To its credit the church has supported the Chamberlains through the whole ordeal. Without the church's financial assistance the Chamberlains would have been hard-pressed to clear their names. It was in the Chamberlains' best interests that the public agitation not be a church-orchestrated lobby, thus the general approach of the leadership was wise. However, there were occasions when a less hesitant public assertion of the church's belief in the Chamberlains' innocence was warranted.

The church's anxiety to be seen as loyal to the state and its desire to support a wrongly convicted pastor and his wife posed a dilemma. It tried to do both, but concern for its law-abiding image took preeminence. After the Chamberlains lost their appeal to the High Court, readers of the *Australasian Record* were informed that "the church does not support such actions" as "confronting government authorities in order to help the Chamberlains" (March 31, 1984). The editor wrote on 14 April 1984:

> Now that the decision of that court [High Court] has been handed down...it would be improper for the church as a body to engage in any activity that could involve confrontation with the authorities appointed to preserve law and order.... the church cannot, must not, dare not be seen as a body that challenges or defies judicial procedures or civil authority, or engages in any activity that appears to discredit that authority.

The editor went on to say that if Adventists acted as individuals, they must dissociate themselves from the church and be very careful what they say lest it "in any way bring injury to the church or tarnish its name."

Fortunately for the Chamberlains there were individual Adventists and private citizens who did confront the authorities. There is no doubt that without the public agitation no amount of money or legal submissions would have forced the Northern Territory to hold an inquiry. This is widely recognized. Following the completion of Justice Morling's report of the inquiry, Senator Christopher Puplick stated in the Australian Senate that:

> at the end of the day, it was necessary to take political action to secure the protection of the rights of an Australian citizen. I was in the process of paying tribute to those—I include Senator Mason, my very old and dear friend William Charles Wentworth [a former parliamentarian] and members of the Seventh-day Adventist community in New South Wales and throughout Australia—who worked throughout the processes available in a free and open democratic society to expose the defects which exist in the Australian legal system and to have those eventually to secure some justice in this matter (April 6, 1987).[5]

Despite Adventists being present in Australasia for more than a century, the Chamberlain case revealed how little-known Adventists were in Australia. For example, the Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales referred to a journalist who enquired of a university professor of religion concerning Adventist books on child sacrifice. Adventists are still commonly thought to be opposed to blood-transfusions. The Chamberlain case has made Adventism more widely known in Australia, but less understood by the public.[6]

As part of a campaign to improve the identity of the church, the communications department has produced a pleasing logo to be used on all visual displays that incorporates a cross within its symbolic design. That has stimulated more letters of protest to the division paper, the *Record*, than has any other topic. The real issue is whether the small Adventist community is ready to incarnate the cross and permeate society with its effects.

Australia's bicentennial has caused as much national reflection as it has celebration. The 200th birthday has been the occasion for some serious heart searching in society concerning the aborigines, migrant groups, women's roles, the environment, poverty, and the family. The Adventist Church has accompanied Australia for much of its 200 year history. If it wishes to be true to its own heritage and to influence the nation into the next

century, the church must manifest great creativity and boldness in addressing those issues that disturb many of the other 99.7 percent who live on the Australian continent.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The figures were kindly supplied me by Dr. Alwyn Salom, Director of the Institute of church Ministry and Evangelism on the Avondale campus. Pastor Roy Clifford, the division statistician, was also most obliging with data. Some items were not freely available as policy puts certain aspects of the division's finances and statistics on the list. I am indebted to several of my colleagues and friends for helpful corrections and criticisms of this essay, though I alone am responsible for its remaining faults.

2. If non-graduates and those who graduated prior to 1972 are included, then the total number of ministerial workers who resigned for various reasons is much larger than this figure. Mr. Peter Ballis, a doctoral candidate at Latrobe University, is researching the sociological causes and implications of this enormous loss of workers. Ballis estimates that 135 ministerial personnel left the field in the post-1980 period. A large number of teachers also pulled out for various reasons of which doctrinal conflict was only one.

Elder Alan Sonter, the Academic Dean at Pacific Adventist College, is also engaged in a doctoral study in sociology with the University of New England. Drawing on three Australian conferences, Sonter has analysed a stratified, randomly selected group of 25-30 year-olds who were brought up in Adventist homes. His tentative results have identified four distinct clusters.

First, a group of 72 who have zero involvement in the church, of whom six percent consider themselves to be Adventists. Second, a cluster of 42 who occasionally attend church and have a strong Christian commitment and devotional life, but who repudiate the Adventist distinctives and authoritarianism. Of this group, 36 percent consider themselves to be Adventists. Third, a group of 122 who are lukewarm, attending church an average of 50 percent of the time, 61 percent of whom affirm that they are Adventists. Fourth, a group of 177 who accept most things and regularly attend church, 97 percent of whom state that they are Adventists, but who have a low interest in witnessing and personal piety.

The second group appears to be the tragic product of the distubances of the 1980s, and, judged by sociological criteria, seems in many ways more Christian than group, the orthodox Adventists.

3. Senior accountants, for example, receive a full car and telephone allowance, lecturers and teachers do not. The travelling *per diem* is not awarded to teachers, pastors or college lecturers, only senior administrators qualify for this "need." Many local pastors can pay up to two-thirds of their visitation mileage out of their own pockets (the general allowance in North New South Wales Conference is 600 miles per month). Senior administrators receive numerous other exclusive benefits that follow them into retirement: the "needs" argument is usually abandoned at this point and "responsibility" becomes the rationale. Present discussion indicates that the superannuation scheme which is soon to replace the old sustentation system will favour retired senior administrators.

4. New South Wales Anti-Discrimination board, *Discrimination and Religious Conviction* (Sydney, 1984), p. 197.

5. The Chamberlain legal saga is continuing, having reached its seventh judicial hearing in as many years. The Northern Territory government amended its criminal code in September 1987 to allow the Chamberlains to apply to the Court of Criminal Appeals to have their convictions quashed. The Appeal Court held a two-and-a-half-hour hearing in March, 1988. Chief Justice Asche adjourned the case until September 12, 1988. Michael Adams, counsel appearing for the Northern Territory, was granted until June 16 to make a written submission "drawing attention to sections of the Commissioner's [Justice Trevor Morling] findings that should be queried, further examined or rejected." John Winneke, for the Chamberlains, would then have two months prior to the September sitting to frame a written reply. If, after receiving the written submissions, the Court decided that there was not a reasonable doubt about the Chamberlains' convictions, Winneke would be permitted to make further representations.

6. Scholarly appreciation of Adventism is an exception to this as is clear from the references in A. N. Patrick's "Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific: A Review of Sources," *Journal of Religious History* 14 (1987): 307-326.