

NEWS

ANALYSIS

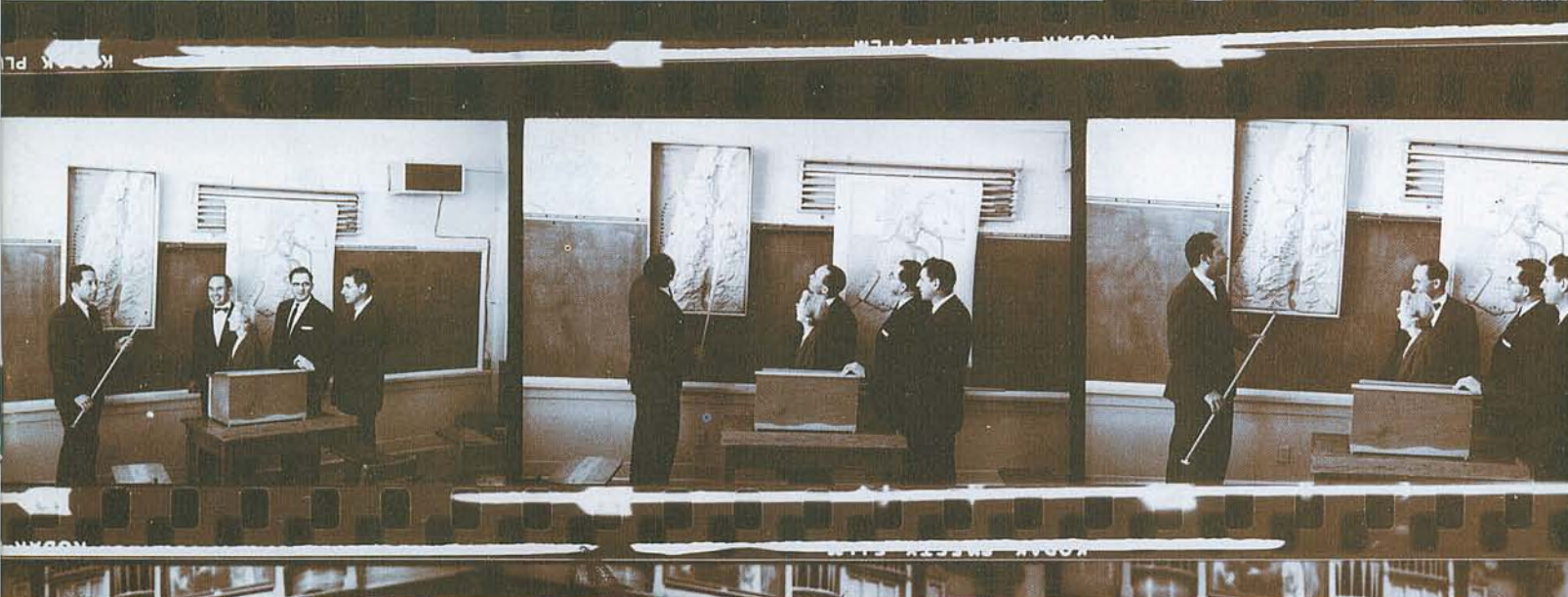
OPINION

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# adventist today

VOLUME NINE | NUMBER THREE | MAY, JUNE | 2001

## Hard Jobs in Adventism



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## NOTES from the editor

### Hard Jobs in Adventism

■ JOHN MCLARTY

I've never personally met anyone who has grown old and happy supporting a family on the income they earned as a colporteur. I've met more successes among teachers in small Adventist elementary schools, but their position, too, is often tenuous. Every time a parent sneezes, the teacher gets clobbered. The slightest budgetary surprise in a small school turns into a full-blown institutional crisis, and the teacher is first to suffer. A supportive family moves away. There is a large graduating class, leaving fewer students for the next year. The local church has an unexpected repair bill. Any of these things puts the teacher's continued employment at risk. Sometimes personality conflicts jeopardize a subordinate's position, and by and large the church lacks a mechanism for redressing grievances. Of course, there are many who find satisfaction and fulfillment in working at such jobs, despite the risks. They are heroes of the church. However, because of the unrelenting stress of these jobs, I sometimes question whether we are morally right to urge people with families to take them. The system owes its most loyal employees better treatment.

Asking hard questions about the Adventist system is central to the mission of *Adventist Today*. AT exists to serve the Seventh-day Adventist Church through responsible, accurate journalism and wide-ranging exploration of policy, theology and the dynamics of spiritual life among its members. We are obligated to ask hard questions in a church that has specialized in giving confident answers.

Our goal is not to destroy or diminish the church but to help it do a better job of serving as a house of prayer for all people. We continue to affirm God's presence in the church while pointing out that many aspects of Adventist culture and thought are better explained sociologically than theologically.

We like to think of ourselves as a voice of Progressive Adventists—an informal fraternity (or sorority or whatever would be the inclusive equivalent) of people whose thinking and way of life is distinctly Adventist, but who have been shaped by

higher education, the passage of time and a deep Christian humanism. While we look for the speedy return of our Lord, we advocate policy and practices that may foster a vital and healthy church two hundred years hence should time last. We give careful attention to theological inadequacies and inconsistencies, systemic flaws and human error within the church in hopes of helping to shape a better future.

How can we do better at our job of providing quality journalism for the church? Ideally, all leading positions at AT should be held by people who love the church but are not employed by any of its institutions. We need editors who can devote at least half time (and preferably more) to following stories, cultivating writers, developing contacts and contacting donors. I dream of the day when *Adventist Today* will be able to employ a full-time editor. I dream of the day when we will have a network of reporters spread across North America and beyond, ready to pursue stories as they develop.

The publication of *Adventist Today* over the past eight years has made a difference. It may have affected church policy. For sure it has touched lives. People tell me AT is their connection with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They are more at home in the church because they know others share their questions, see the problems and still claim it as home.

Money alone will not help us find the balance between loyalty and opposition, between hard, critical thinking and warm faith. But a million dollars would help the magazine achieve the kind of independence that is needed to do the most credible job of serving as an independent journalistic voice for the church.

As you read in this issue about some of the hard jobs in Adventism, we ask you to consider as well the hard job of reporting on Adventism.

Maybe you could serve as an editor or reporter. Maybe you could help the magazine achieve a greater degree of financial independence. We appreciate your interest. We invite your support.







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## The Black Box

I find John McLarty to be a wonderfully gifted writer. His insight and generous spirit are manifest in his articulate style. Perhaps the best piece he has done is his latest "the heart of true Adventism" in the Jan/Feb 2001 issue of *Adventist Today*. Imagine my disappointment when he came to the absolutely central reality of the Cross and all he could (or would?) muster was an anemic "his death somehow reversed the irreversible effects of evil." Yes, I agree the sentence is true. But it sits there like a "Black Box" an "entity which accomplishes something by means that are not understood." Are we forever doomed to keep the Cross and its meaning clouded in mystery and cliché? God was trying to tell us something at the Cross and went to great personal cost to do it. What was it? Please, John and *Adventist Today*: shine some light into that "Black Box." Surely no topic could be more important.

**Bob Rigsby | Altamonte Springs, FL**

## The Cross a Mystery

You continue to stimulate and sometimes infuriate AT readers with your insightful, committed and artful prose. Keep up the flow of excellent words.

The cross is indeed a mystery, a black box as it were, and may it ever be as it has been for two thousand years. The day we come to unanimity of this issue, that is the day worship becomes rote school, and God is reduced to the human mind.

**Jim Via the Internet**

## Newbold Experience

I read with great interest Ted Swinyar's account of his time in England at Newbold College (AT Jan/Feb 2001). ... As a young adult, I too spent two years in England and later in life, spent five years in the Arabian Gulf, with my husband Roy, in ... Bahrain. It wasn't until I returned to the United States that I realized how living abroad

had enriched my life. It was a wonderful experience to read newspapers that had a different slant than American newspapers and hear news reported differently than what one hears here... Every American should spend at least one year abroad to... have a greater perspective of the world.

**Barbara Gravesen | Ellicott City, MD**

## Boston Medical Center

This letter is in response to the lawsuit filed by the creditors against the Board of Trustees of Boston Regional Medical Center. It is not unreasonable to be alarmed over the loss of an asset that had been owned by the church for 100 years. How did this disaster evolve and what factors played a major role? Four major factors are readily apparent: the organizational structure, self-serving conflict of interest, incompetence, and heavy debt.

The organizational structure consisted of multiple interlocking corporations, including, but not limited to, Atlantic Union Conference, Atlantic Adventist Healthcare Corporation, Boston Regional Medical Associates, Atlantic Health Resources, and Boston Regional Medical Center, all controlled by a central core of individuals. A cash resource for these corporations was Boston Regional Medical Center. There is nothing illegal or inherently immoral about the structure itself or the transfer of profits from Boston Regional Medical Center to other church owned corporations. However, when debt is incurred to a third party, the moral obligation of the debtor shifts from the affiliated corporations to the creditor. The continued transfer of millions of dollars from Boston Regional Medical Center to other

church owned corporations in the face of rising indebtedness without a repayment plan was immoral.

The president and chief executive officer of Boston Regional Medical Center, Charles S. Ricks, was also a member of the Board of Trustees of Boston Regional Medical Center and a member of the Board of Directors of Atlantic Adventist Healthcare Corporation.

This arrangement, whereby the president and chief executive officer of the Medical Center is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Medical

**The organizational structure consisted of multiple interlocking corporations, including, but not limited to, Atlantic Union Conference, Atlantic Adventist Healthcare Corporation, Boston Regional Medical Associates, Atlantic Health Resources, and Boston Regional Medical Center, all controlled by a central core of individuals. A cash resource for these corporations was Boston Regional Medical Center.**

Center, obviously creates the potential for mischief. This arrangement provides the potential for members of the Board of Trustees to dine and socialize with, play golf with, or partner in financial investments with the Medical Center Administrator. Dispassionate accountability is thereby sacrificed. In this case the potential for disaster became a reality.

How can a healthy tension be maintained between the Board of Trustees and the Medical Center Administrator when [he] is a member of the Board of Trustees? How can the Board of Trustees effectively monitor the performance of the Medical Center Ad-



ministrator when [he] is a member of the Board of Trustees?

If the events as depicted are accurate, the case for self-serving conflict of interest and incompetence is irrefutable. The Board of Trustees and the Atlantic Union Conference could not have failed to recognize the obvious. Has there been disciplinary action? Has the Board of Trustees assumed any culpability? Have there been any changes in organization or policy?

**Stewart W. Shankel, M.D.**

**George M. Grames, M.D.**

**Richard Sheldon, M.D.**

**Members for Church Accountability, Inc.**

## Answered Prayer

I just read the story about answered prayers (AT Jan/Feb 2001). I used to wonder about things like this too because I had read and personally met some individuals who seemed to have rather dramatic answers to prayer. . . . God generally cannot do anything for us here unless asked by us to do something. . . . We are to pray for the needs of others, as that gives God "permission" to intervene personally. . . . But of course, this requires that the prayers be somewhat aligned with the genuine needs of the person and the needs of advancing the kingdom of God on earth. Where they intersect, you can expect that God will do something, maybe even something rather dramatic. . . . There are some individuals that God has given a special prayer gift to and they will always have interesting events in their life because of it. I cannot explain why it is this way, but it is and I guess we need to learn something from it.

**Wendell Slattery | Via the Internet**

## Ethnic Churches

With reference to your publication "Ethnic Churches in North America" March-April 2001, you missed the point. I believe we must love each other regardless of ethnic or cultural heritage. . . . Because of these variations there is a general feeling that we do not love each other. No way. I be-

lieve the animosity comes from one culture unsuccessfully attempting to infiltrate another culture. . . . As long as the culture does not jeopardize or infringe on the basic fundamental truths of the remnant church so be it. Other than that let each culture worship by itself. But when some worship cultures, in which I cannot harmonize, come into my church and attempt to worship in their culture destroying my worship then the line must be drawn. My worship hours have been circumscribed and compromised.

**Stephen Yost | Apopka, FL**

## Ethnic Churches and New Immigrants

The subject of ethnic churches (March/April) cuts me to the quick. In 1957 I arrived in Takoma Park, Maryland as a young immigrant from South America, expecting, as most immigrants, to be accepted as an integral member of a society I had long admired from afar. Unfortunately, most of the people of the United States and Canada—nations of immigrants—have no social welcome mats for their newcomers to walk on.

This is particularly true of our churches. Soon after my arrival, a nice sister in the Sligo Church told me to "go to the Hispanic church." Adventist immigrants and other ethnic persons opt to ensconce themselves in linguistic and ethnic enclaves not so much "to be with their own 'kind'"—are there really "kinds" of Adventists?—but because they are neither helped to learn English (French in Quebec) nor treated as social equals.

The secular world, I am sorry to say,

was more ready to accept me rather than focus on differences. When I re-joined the church in 1978, I was pleased to find harmonious multiethnic Adventist churches in the Vancouver area. But even here ethnic people have felt the need to spin off into separate churches.

As I see it, the answer to this situation is fourfold:

1. Teach English to Adventist immigrants to our shores. This is their most urgent, unmet need. And extend this teaching into a form of evangelism for non-Adventists. Why do our young people go all the way to Korea, Russia and Japan to teach English (and the Bible) but ignore that linguistic/evangelistic need and opportunity right here in North America?

2. Treat everyone according to their character and abilities, not race or national origin. As soon as they can

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manage to express themselves in English, immigrant brothers and sisters in good standing should be encouraged to participate in church activities, including holding church offices.

3. When it comes to race—the common denominator of numerous English-speaking ethnic churches—keep in mind recent genetic findings:



all human beings are 99.9 percent the same, and of the 300 (out of 30,000) genes that underlie individual differences, only a few have anything to do with race. Is such a small difference a valid reason for pride or shame, for inclusion or exclusion, or for establishing separate churches?

4. Promote multiethnic churches such as the Westminster Good Samaritan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Orange County, California. In such churches, a variety of cultural customs can flourish as long as they are not unbiblical. Since in heaven there won't be ethnic neighborhoods and churches, shouldn't we start practicing heavenly sociability and equality here on earth?

**Hector Hammerly | Vancouver, B.C. Canada**

## CUC and Government Money

It seems to me that many of our institutions have lost their mission. I do not see how the Lord can possibly bless this action by CUC to get government funds to run our school. If there was adequate trust in God, there would be no need for other funds. God owns "the cattle on a thousand hills." Our schools have tried too hard to become like the world. If CUC met the criteria for the money, then they very well may not be religious enough to make a difference.

**Jan Miller | Via the Internet**

## Wall Between Church and State

Increasingly the Supreme Court, as well as state courts, have been little by little eroding the wall between church and state, but I never thought a Seventh-day Adventist college would be aiding and abetting them. Whatever happened to our principle of keeping church and state separate? If we say one thing and do another, what does that say about us?

**Warren Adams | Via the Internet**

## Gifts of the Spirit

I am Seventh-day Adventist and it has always been my belief that if we are the true church we should also possess the gifts of the Spirit which are outlined by Paul in Corinthians.... I am sick and tired of hearing Adventists speak out against charismatics such as Benny Hinn for their ministry.... Shouldn't we who claim to serve the one true God be able to glorify our God by being endowed with gifts such as these?

**Paul Jamaica | Via the Internet**

## Filling the Void

AT fills a void regarding emerging theology of the church, as well as finance and organizational structure and practice. Thanks.

**Harold R. Phillips | Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida**

## Gospel Without Strings

The subject of the article "The Gospel Without Strings Attached" (AT March/April 2001) is so pertinent that it deserves more attention. The doctrine of justification by faith is, as Luther said, the summary of all Christian doctrine.

Like the apostle Paul (Eph 2:8,9), Luther taught that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous in God's sight when we confess our sins and believe that for Christ's sake, we are forgiven.

To Luther the sanctified life, or sanctification of the person justified by faith, is evidenced by his subsequent good works, but such good works are the result of justification and not a component of it. The Christian is declared to be righteous in the sight of God by grace alone through faith in Christ's merit and not because of any personal merit resulting from the action of that grace. Justification and sanctification are two distinct entities in Luther's theology.

The Catholic Church also teaches

that the repentant sinner is justified in God's sight by faith in Christ's merit. But, in Catholic theology, justification includes a necessary work of sanctification in which the person justified cooperates with the grace imparted to him by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is therefore a requisite component of justification in Catholic theology.

The Adventist Fundamental Beliefs do not specifically state the relation of sanctification to justification. But they

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do contain statements that indicate the Adventist position. FB10

"Through Christ we are justified ... Through the Spirit we are sanctified ... and are given the power to lead a holy life." FB23 describes an investigative judgment which will determine who has used this power so well that they are ready to enter into eternal life.

These fundamental beliefs, together with statements by Ellen White that only those who have perfected their character will be permitted to enter the kingdom of heaven, indicate that Adventist theology makes sanctification a requisite component of justification in the same way that Catholic theology does. In any case, the Adventist teaching is certainly not in agreement with the theology of Luther.

**Richard Goyne | Via the Internet**

## Send Letters to the Editor:

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# Ronald Numbers and the Quest for the Historical Ellen White

◆ JOHNNY A. RAMIREZ, JR. AND EVA PASCHAL

**S**eventh-day Adventists, like most churches, have not only distinctive doctrinal beliefs but a “master story” that reaffirms their distinctiveness to themselves. An essential part of that story for Adventists is the life and work of Ellen G. White, whom most recognize as not only one of the founders of the church but also as a prophet of God.

Dr. Ronald Numbers, one-time history professor at Loma Linda University, challenged parts of that story when he spoke May 26 at the youth chapel of the Loma Linda University church. He had come by invitation of the Association of Adventist Forums and Adventist Today to deliver the second Richard Hammill Memorial Lecture. Numbers has been known as the author of *Prophetess of Health*, a work that described Ellen White’s teachings on health reform as being strongly influenced by popular ideas of her time.

Numbers said that historians typically begin their study of prominent characters and happenings by examining the social milieu in which these occurred, looking for original manuscripts, newspaper accounts, letters, and similar documents. Many of the current ideas held by church members about Ellen White are the product of carefully nurtured idealistic myths that contribute to the representation of her as very closely resembling Biblical prophets. But in the past thirty years Adventist church historians, with access to some 20,000 pages of manuscript material, have found that she had a very human side as well. Their discoveries and publications have not always been welcomed by church administrators.

Numbers questioned the oft-repeated statement that Ellen White had a scanty education, terminated by an accident that occurred to her in the third grade when a classmate threw a stone at her. He pointed out that she had a large library and read widely, and was asked at one point to teach reading to a group of young children. She was intelligent and scholarly and devoted countless hours to study and reflection, laying a solid foundation for many of

the church’s beliefs and practices.

Ellen White was very much interested in health matters, but unlike popular preachers of her time she did not engage in public healings; people were not drawn to her public presentations by the prospect of cures for themselves or others. On the other hand, many came to witness the way in which she herself was healed of illness. Often she was too weak to mount the podium by herself, and had to have assistance. Once there, the Spirit would become manifest and she would miraculously gain strength for a vigorous sermon. She was often plagued with bouts of depression and wrote frequently about her physical ailments, which included five attacks of paralysis. She was free to describe the illness of other people as the result of

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their “violation of nature’s laws,” but she ascribed her illnesses sometimes to God’s ways of keeping her humble, or the result of intervention by Satan and his angels. In her early comments on health she referred to the use of wigs as leading to insanity, and she spoke of “cancerous humors,” which in later revisions of her work were called simply germs. The wigs-insanity link was deleted.

Ellen White was frequently described as being “in vision,” especially early in her work with the church. Historians have discovered that there were many

**Continued on page 9**



## Chaplain to the Police

◆ JAMES H. STIRLING

One of the most dangerous occupations in this country is that of the police. What can they do when they are called to the scene of a distraught, armed man, who is holding his wife and daughter at gunpoint and has barricaded his house? Police in Wayne County, Michigan, faced with this crisis, tried to talk to the gunman on the telephone, but he refused to communicate with them until they suggested a chaplain. When he agreed to this, they sent Felix Lorenz, chief chaplain for the County Sheriff's Department. Lorenz got his permission to enter the house and talk with him until he calmed down and turned over his weapon.

And what about the police themselves who face threatening situations and have to make split-second critical decisions? Who can they turn to when they are stressed out? The answer is, the police chaplain.

Felix A. Lorenz, Jr., police chaplain for 37 years, has many facets in his ministry. A lifelong Seventh-day Adventist who has spent most of his professional life in Michigan, he has pastored churches of several denominations, Adventist, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and others (See AT Jan/Feb 2000). Lorenz started his chaplaincy ministry as an extension to his pastoring in order to provide spiritual counseling to police officers, trauma victims, suicidal people, runaway teenagers, prison guards, and others involved in the criminal justice system.

Although he works with police and sheriff departments, he and others in the chaplaincy program are volunteers and not police officers and do not carry guns or attempt to enforce the law. Most are Christian ministers who, like Lorenz, do their chaplaincy work as if they were serving a larger congregation. Lorenz estimates that on average each may spend about 15 hours a month in their chaplaincy duties. For the most part they do not counsel prisoners, for that work is carried out by another organization, the Metropolitan Jail Ministry.

The criminal justice enterprise employs many people; in the case of Wayne County, which includes Detroit and 43 suburban communities, there are 1,600 employees in the sheriff's department, mostly deputies. For personal problems they often turn to police chaplains, to whom they feel closer than to any other counselor. The chaplains serve as good listeners, hearing out problems of job stress, family pressures, or personal quandaries. A chaplain may visit with the officer on the job, ride with him or her in a police car, or just join in lunch, and sometimes even conduct their wedding or funeral.

Much of the time police officers are called into scenes of personal crisis, where people are hurting—suicide attempts or marital disputes. The officer's uniform seems threatening. When a chaplain is at hand the people often are willing to listen to reason. When an officer has to break the news of an accidental death to family members, a chaplain at his side makes the task much more bearable. Sometimes people show their mental instability by threatening others, and the chaplain's appearance may serve to defuse the situation. Alcoholism may not be a crime, but police are often called on to subdue someone who has become violent to himself or to others. A chaplain who can spend some time with the drunk may

Since the criminal justice system has the potential for questioning the behavior of all people in society, professional police often feel somewhat excluded from the rest of the population. When pastors are willing to take time to get acquainted with these people in uniform and recognize their special needs, Lorenz says it represents a special opportunity for Christian ministry.

help him over his immediate problem.

Even though police chaplains are emissaries of peace and are not armed, they sometimes must face situations with an element of danger. Hostage takers sometimes shoot at anyone who tries to intervene, even chaplains. And chaplains often visit jail guards, walking from post to post in a jail to say a few words to the men on duty. These visits may at times occasion long conversations, and in some prison situations there is a potential for violence from the prisoners.

Since the criminal justice system has the potential for questioning the behavior of all people in society, professional police often feel somewhat excluded from the rest of the population. When pastors are willing to take time to get acquainted with these people in uniform and recognize their special needs, Lorenz



## Ronald Numbers and the Quest for the Historical Ellen White

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who saw visions in her day. In the small town of Portland, Maine, there were seven Millerite visionaries. Associated with such visions there were often other manifestations like fits, trances, and "mesmerism" spells. Dr. Fred Hoyt discovered an old newspaper story of a trial in 1845 of one Israel Damon in New England about this time. Damon and other witnesses testify to the ecstatic utterances and body movements manifested by Millerites, including the young Ellen Harmon and James White. This was also the milieu of the "shouting Methodists," who engaged in enthusiastic religious activities.

Comparatively little has been written about Ellen White's private and family life. One of the most notable findings was an old trunk filled with letters written by Ellen White to her "dearest friend" and confidant Lucinda Hall. These letters reveal that the White marriage had deteriorated in the mid-1870s to the point where Ellen and James had to be separated for extended periods. Ellen would apparently trump her husband by citing her direct inspiration from God, and therefore her superior understanding and authority in marital conflicts.

Numbers pointed out that Ellen White was a very complex person, with much that was admirable and some that was very human. Adventist historians through the years, however, have been apologetic, crediting her with only good things and disparaging everyone who crossed her path.

Numbers concluded that Ellen White received considerable attention from sources outside the church for her role in health reform and creationist thinking. Secular historians have termed her "one of the great trinity of American female prophets," along with Mary Baker Eddy and Anna Lee. Another called her "one of the most prominent women in American history," and

one who had played a key role in innovation in American religion.

What may be the overall effect of research like this into a key aspect of the Adventist story? For some Adventists who hold that Ellen White was very close

**What may be the overall effect of research like this into a key aspect of the Adventist story? For some Adventists who hold that Ellen White was very close to being divine, writing books that stand on a par with those produced by the biblical prophets, the first reaction may be denial or anger.**

to being divine, writing books that stand on a par with those produced by the biblical prophets, the first reaction may be denial or anger. A demonstrator in the back of the meeting hall May 26 exemplified this by his loud shouts of denunciation. Other Adventists, however, recognizing the concept of incarnation, partly divine and partly human, are likely to find the new information illuminating and an aid in interpreting her writings in contemporary terms. The story is amplified by replacing the mythological with the real. We'll all feel better when we know who the real Ellen White was.

## Chaplain to the Police

says it represents a special opportunity for Christian ministry. More pastors could extend their ministry if they would talk to the police; many more such chaplains could be used. Lorenz has helped organize chaplaincy programs for not only the police and sheriff departments, but also for county-wide emergency programs, to respond to crises such as airplane crashes.

Lorenz says he thinks Adventist pastors have been missing their opportunity to participate in police chaplaincy service. Among the many chaplains he has met at meetings of the county chaplains and the

International Conference of Police Chaplains he has seen very few Adventists. When chaplains join professional groups and attend meetings, they benefit from the education, fellowship, and accountability the associations provide. As John the Baptist counseled the Roman soldiers/police, and Paul and Silas the jailer at Philippi, so pastors today may widen their horizons of service by looking at chaplaincy needs. When in his picture of the final judgment Jesus commended the righteous by saying, "When in prison you visited me" (Matt 25:36), he may well have included the whole criminal justice system as recipients of the gospel message.



# the adventist pastor today

LAWRENCE DOWNING

**Pas•tor** *n.* 1.) A Christian minister in his capacity of having spiritual charge over a congregation or other group.  
2.) A shepherd.

**m**y generation was among the first to consider Seminary training to be one of the prerequisites for being a pastor. We men were expected to graduate from a college owned and operated by the Adventist denomination, marry a woman who played the piano or had other talents to enhance parish ministry, and make our way to Berrien Springs, Michigan to complete the requirements for the Bachelor of Divinity degree. Most of us had grown up in the American Adventist church and were nurtured in its history and traditions. How times have changed!

Prospective ministers still enroll in Seminary, but this is where the similarity ends. Chances are good that the Seminarian today is a woman. He or she

where leadership has become nationalized and we agonize over our loss of vision.

We who have been active in the church for many years have witnessed a demographic revolution. Those who traditionally made up the Adventist church have become fewer and fewer; the places of those who die or leave are filled by people who are of another culture or race and who speak a language other than English.

It is understandable that the ministers who fill the pulpits in North American Adventist churches reflect the dramatic changes that have taken place. What follows is one person's perspective on the current state of the Adventist ministry within the context of the changes that have whip sawed our denomination these past years.

**To my knowledge, no strategic plan exists to counter the trends toward separation and isolation based on language or race. It is time someone took the initiative to challenge the established practice, for it is counter to the gospel and does not benefit our church members.**

may have graduated from a parachurch college such as Weimar or Hartland, may be single, probably a first generation convert and very possibly was born in a country other than the United States.

Forty years ago the Adventist church was a North American church. North America called the shots. We had the votes and the money. We were the mother lode for leadership, theological truth and behavioral norms. We knew why we were here and what we were supposed to do. Today, North Americans are a weak numerical minority in the global Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our funds are helpful, but not essential in many places in the world,

The Adventist pastor in the North American church is well educated and is generally satisfied with his work. ("He" is the pronoun that accurately describes the gender for the minister in the vast majority of the churches. Southern California Conference and Southeastern California Conference can make a case that they have become gender inclusive.)

Satisfaction with the work of ministry does not mean we are free from professional concerns. Most of us feel we are underpaid for the expectations that are placed upon us and could not economically survive if our wives did not have jobs outside the home. Many pastors work in conferences that are not able



to fund the raises that have been approved by the North American Division. Southeastern California Conference, one of the world's largest conferences, is an example. The Conference, until this year, was in a "catch-up" mode. The Conference did not have sufficient tithe income to pay the North American Division-approved pay raises. Even now, the treasury department does not have direct payroll deposit. The employees have been told the Conference depends on the "float."

Surprisingly, the tight money situation has not seemed to harm pastoral morale. We readily acknowledge, when we talk among ourselves, that we receive peanuts compared to what others receive who have comparable education, and we joke that our kids just out of college are better paid than we are. But, then, we did not choose our profession to get rich. We do, however, want to survive economically. Tuition, cars, houses and other expenses associated with ministry place many of us on an economic razor's edge. Bankruptcy, once unheard of among Adventist clergy, is now a practiced option. Others are burdened with credit card debt that sucks dry a pastor's bank account.

Conference presidents acknowledge to us that significant numbers of pastors are in a financial bind. One president told a group of us that a significant number of us were in a debt crisis. He advised us to consider making investments that generate extra money. He recommended we buy apartments. He told us he himself invested in apartments and appreciated the extra income they provided. He also acknowledged that if his wife did not work, the family would not have sufficient money to pay the bills.

In southern California, at least, the pastors are more isolated and fragmented than in past years. We no longer come together at camp meeting and the divisions within the conferences along racial or language lines have created significant communication barriers.

The civil rights struggles of the '60s and '70s for a time brought the races closer together. There are those who suggest that whatever gains were made in race relations during those years have been lost over the past fifteen years or so. Most of us have little or no contact with pastors from different ethnic or language groups and no opportunity is provided for us to share common concerns. We are weaker because of this separation and alienation. Some of us wonder who is responsible for the isolation among us. Is it by design or default? Should lines of communication be established to circumvent the natural inclination to segregate and isolate? If so, who should make the first move? Who should see that the gulf is closed? In private conversation, some debate whether the leaders of the language and ethnic congregations emphasize the

need for language and ethnic churches to ensure their own employment and maintain a power base. The debates remain quietly in the background and do not emerge for public discussion. It's safer that way.

To my knowledge, no strategic plan exists to counter the trends toward separation and isolation based on language or race. It is time someone took the initiative to challenge the established practice, for it is counter to the gospel and does not benefit our church members. Our fragmentation sends a mixed message to the community and distorts the Gospel.

**In years past, the majority of the theology graduates had a job waiting. Today, there is high probability that half or more of the graduates will not find placement in parish ministry.**

Do not expect the pastors to take up this challenge. We are too occupied with our own insecurities and turf protection. Have we become so caught up in our power struggles and too preoccupied with our navel gazing to expend our energy on reconciliation? Where is our passion to pick up the moral mantle, wrap it round our pride and ego and boldly challenge the natural inclination to pull our private walls in around us?

The graying of the Adventist ministry does not bode well for the future. In contrast to previous times when an Adventist college might graduate thirty or forty theological students each year, an Adventist college today may graduate ten theology majors or fewer.

In years past, the majority of the theology graduates had a job waiting when they received their diploma. Today, there is high probability that half or more of the graduates will not find placement in parish ministry. Some colleges, accepting the reality of the situation, require theology majors to have a fallback major as insurance should a graduate not receive a call. With the risk of unemployment in one's chosen field a distinct possibility, significant numbers of the bright students chose to pursue other fields.

Adventism is in decline among North American Anglos, both numerically and economically. We in the parish ministry recognize that the churches we pastor need help. We see our membership decrease through death or apostasy. The people who take the place of those who leave are usually less educated and have less expendable economic resources. Significant numbers of the converts are first generation

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# an interview with a conference president

JOHN MCLARTY

**President** *n.* 1.) One appointed or elected to preside over and organized body of people, as in assembly or meeting. 2.) The chief officer of a branch of government, a corporation, a board of trustees, a university, or similar body.

In rereading my answers, they seem idealistic. They do not reflect the down and dirty work that a president has to do. But they are where my heart is, and what I tried to do, even if I was not always successful. They do not reflect the politics of pastoral ministry, the envy toward a rising star, the inner conflicts, the marriage problems, the evolution of idealism into reality that every successful pastor feels as he moves toward a presidency. It does not explain the frustrations of failure, the pain of dropping a pastor from ministry, the goals not met, and the agony over conflict between a congregation and a pastor, or, on a more personal level, the antagonism of pastors or entire congregations toward the president. It does not describe the worry about embarrassment at election time, or as we age, the desire of young turks for older leaders to step aside to make room for their own ambitions.

But the answers also do not, and can not, tell of the satisfaction of accomplishment, the joy of being surrounded by people who admire and respect you, the sense that your life has made a difference in the world. There are a hundred perks to leadership for every negative. I am not sure how you explain them, or if you did try, that they would be appreciated. Some people call it "fire in the belly," and if you have it you are driven. If you do not have it, the emotions can seem ugly, and even unchristian. The hardest issue I had to answer early in my ministry was whether I was doing this for God, or because of my own driving ambition. I finally settled that it was a partnership with God, and could not be separated.

Looking back over a lifetime I am convinced that God was in me, and I was for God, and together we made things happen that even now bring me satisfaction and fulfillment.

**AT: We would like a brief job description of a conference president. What does he do? What should he do? Are there things that he might be tempted to do which he should avoid?**

RM: The first priority of a president is have a core vision of what a Seventh-day Adventist Christian is and could become, and to inspire the entire organization to move the church toward that goal. The temptation is to allow that dream to become blurred through the daily routine of problems, policies and personalities. If the president is convicted that the Adventist church, and perhaps the Adventist church alone, can produce the best in human nature, he should "nurture the culture" with all his authority and influence. The temptation for him is to use the power of his position, rather than inspiration and influence, to make it

happen.

There will always be financial problems, personnel problems, and problems in congregations that have to be addressed, but a united conference vision will take care of many of these if members believe the vision and live with it.

**AT: What are the greatest challenges for conference presidents today and how have they changed over time? How are they different now from when you first began giving serious thought to the nature of the job?**

RM: The information age has changed everything! In earlier times information and experience were acquired over decades, and were highly valued. When culture changes almost overnight, experience means less, and knowledge can become outdated. Very few young pastors want to



hear a conference president tell how he did things in his younger years. While true theology remains constant, and people always remain true to human nature, the rapid changes in society, combined with instant communication of ideas, cause pastors and church members to depend less on conference leadership than in former years. Good conference leadership is still in demand, but now it is more concerned with empowering pastors and less with directing and programming.

**AT: Where does a conference president find satisfaction? When you look back at your work, what gives you the greatest satisfaction? How are the satisfactions of being a president different from the satisfactions to be found in the pastorate?**

RM: Without doubt, the success of colleagues I mentored and advanced is the richest reward of my presidency. The highest compliment I received was from a union president who said that I "put the polish on future conference presidents." Even before I became a conference president, I saw the need for future church leaders. Once in office I worked to surround myself with the strongest leaders possible and to advance their careers as quickly as they were ready. Now they are serving as leaders in almost every area of church life. The advantage a president has over

churches, but if people like him and know he cares, he can change the climate to one of grace and tolerance. That is the road toward success.

**AT: Do you think there is an ideal length of time for service as a president? What would be the pluses and minuses of term limits for conference presidents?**

RM: I am not in favor of term limits. I believe that there are different talents in ministry, and after about twenty years of ministry a person discovers where he/she fits best. By that time colleagues also make their judgment. The present system is imperfect and at times frustrating, but it does work. Most of the time the best leaders become recognized. The worst abusers of the system eventually get their proper demise. I still think God is working through this flawed method to get his will done most of the time. I do believe that when administrators reach normal retirement age they should make way for younger people with fresh ideas. It is easy to overstay our welcome.

**AT: When you were president, did you have a close friend or confidant, or did you feel pretty much alone?**

RM: I never felt lonely in the ministry. I was surrounded by good people whom I trusted and with whom I was comfortable sharing all my joys, problems and disappointments. I would not call a person I did not trust to be a close colleague. I

**In earlier times information and experience were acquired over decades, and were highly valued. When culture changes almost overnight, experience means less, and knowledge can become outdated. Very few young pastors want to hear a conference president tell how he did it in his younger years..**

other areas of ministry is the opportunity to develop professional leadership and to help other leaders reach their highest potential. Unfortunately, some presidents are afraid of strong leaders who might disagree with them, but there is a growing understanding that leadership must be trained, tried, and rewarded. Some of those I trained are now doing the same training with their associates.

**AT: If you were offering advice to someone just beginning his tenure as a conference president, what would you tell him?**

RM: Be serious about your work, but don't take yourself too seriously. The best leaders I have worked with wanted everyone to call them by their first name. They were willing to do what they asked everyone else to do. Building the confidence and skills of the pastors, and pulling them into a caring family, a team, is a top priority. A president cannot solve all the problems of the

also had a trusting and open relationship with peers at the conference and union level. I cherished the friends I made during a lifetime in ministry.

**AT: Are there two or three current presidents who are widely recognized as superior?**

RM: Herman Bauman has created a grace-oriented climate in Arizona that I admire. Steve Gifford has reclaimed people who have been damaged or discarded elsewhere and found a place for them. In most cases they have worked out great. I admire what he has done.

Most of the outstanding conference presidents have moved on since I worked with them, and I am not as acquainted with many of the new presidents. I like Dave Weigley very much, and he seems to be doing an outstanding job. I admire Tom Mostert as the most skilled pure administrator in the NAD. I think Chuck Sandefur is the brightest and most creative administrator.

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# stop strangling the goose

GREG TAYLOR

ONE PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

In one of Aesop's fables a farmer discovered that his goose had laid a golden egg and thereafter another one every day. Soon the farmer was fabulously wealthy. It wasn't long before he got impatient and decided to hurry the process by cutting the goose open. He found no golden egg inside, and the goose was dead. End of the golden eggs.

Unfortunately much the same thing is taking place in the Adventist church in North America, except that it is a case of strangling, not surgery. The goose is the local church and the owner is the church hierarchy. In meetings and official papers we hear much lip service given to the importance of the local church. But from

my perspective as a pastor, little is being done to change the denominational structure that is strangling its primary source of growth, vitality, evangelistic presence, and income—the local congregation.

Visit some of the smaller churches in your conference and you will see a dramatic demonstration. The carpet is old, the lighting terrible, the sound system inadequate; there is no video projector.

Usually the pastor is shared with one or two other churches. Morale is often low.

Now visit the local conference office. There you find top-notch computer systems, a paid secretarial staff, the best in video and technological support—all funded by tithe dollars from the local church. Why should those who supervise the work have better equipment than those who do the work?

I have talked with pastors from congregations of all sizes, with theological convictions ranging from the most conservative to the most progressive. Virtually all of them are frustrated and disheartened by their inability to do effective ministry in their local commu-

**Pas•tor** *n.* 1.) A Christian minister in his capacity of having spiritual charge over a congregation or other group. 2.) A shepherd.

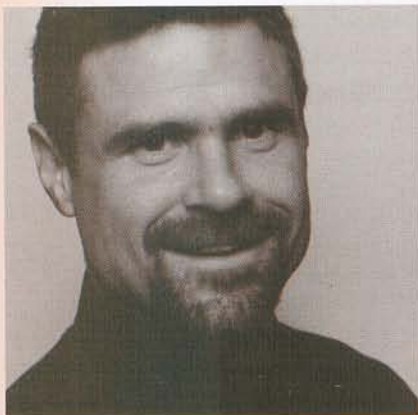
nity because of limited financial resources. They see the amount of money consumed by administration and think of the difference those dollars could make if they were spent in direct ministry.

The problem is that since we pastors are employed by the organization, it is not politically safe to deal with this issue. There is even very little likelihood that anyone who has been "promoted" from a pastorate to work in the conference office will do anything to change the system. So we keep our mouths shut and try to do our best and be team players.

I realize that our our system has some real advantages. 1) Salaries across the board are equitable. This is especially helpful for new pastors. 2) A congregation cannot fire a pastor, as can happen in some congregational systems. However, I have never seen where an Adventist pastor who has lost the respect of his or her congregation can last very long either. 3). We support a worldwide church and educational system. Our system is one of the best organized in the world.

As a pastor I benefit from the Adventist system, but I believe we can do better. I recently called the North American Division office and was informed that of 3,346 ordained ministers in our division, 2,598, or 78 percent, are in pastoring or evangelism, while 478, or 14 percent, are in an administrative office. The rest, 270, are in other fields such as hospitals and education.<sup>1</sup> Note that this counts only ordained clergy. It does not count the secretarial, service or professional staff who are not ordained. In our local conference, there are 37 office employees and 111 ministers in the field. This means that 25 percent of the local conference workforce is in the office.<sup>2</sup> And I haven't counted people employed by the Union or Division, nor have I taken into account the expenses involved in travel, meetings, mailings, equipment, office expenses, etc. Clearly, a sizeable percentage of the tithe funds goes for administration.

Although administrators would argue they are pro-





viding essential services for the local church, the fact remains that the dollars used in administration are taken out of the local church. How can we expect the local church to be strong and vibrant when such a high percentage of their financial resources are unavailable for local ministry? How can we expect to have growing churches when we don't have money for local programming? We are strangling the goose that lays the golden egg.

The appearance of a top-heavy administration creates special difficulties for those who pastor churches that target young adults. Many of our people are employed by organizations that have gone through massive restructuring. The world they live in forces businesses to be lean and efficient by cutting travel budgets, streamlining middle management, and eliminating certain positions, all for the sake of being competitive. With the world of computer technology and the Internet, meetings are often held by video conference. One person can now accomplish what three or four used to do because of these advances.

Our younger generation has trouble supporting a system that appears top-heavy and resistant to change. They would rather use their money to meet local needs. I am grateful that in my local church there is still a tithe gain each year, and people still basically believe in the system. But for how much longer? More and more church members are quietly diverting tithe to the local church or to other ministries where the cost of administration appears to be less.

So far I have focused on the cost of our denominational administrative structure. But there is another huge competitor for Adventist dollars: the SDA educational system. Currently 40 percent of the tithe dollar goes to support our massive educational system from kindergarten to college.<sup>3</sup> What about the percentage of local church budget that goes for local church schools?

While I believe in Adventist education, I believe we must ask hard questions about cost effectiveness. How can we expect local churches to grow, when out of every tithe dollar only 30-33 percent actually goes to support pastoral salaries? The rest is used for education, administration, world mission, special conference projects, etc.<sup>4</sup>

So what can we do? How can we improve our care of the goose so that it will thrive and continue to lay golden eggs for decades to come? Here is my suggestion:

Set a goal to reduce the tithe expense to the local church by 50 percent over the next 20 years. This means that 50 percent of all tithe will remain in the local church by the year 2021.

#### **How could this be funded without damaging the good parts of the current system?**

1. Do not replace retiring personnel, but restructure so that more and more work is done via

computer and video conferencing.

2. Require each minister in the conference office to take responsibility for one local church within driving distance of the conference office. This would serve two purposes. First, since many smaller churches are within a few miles of most of our offices, the need for several district pastor's salaries would be eliminated. Secondly, serving a local church would help these administrative ministers keep in touch with the real needs of the local church. If this policy were in force at all levels of administration there would be more pastors in the field, and the needs of the churches would be better met. Each of these ministers would be expected to have current results, not just past successes.

3. Allow more administrative processes to be handled by local ministerial groups. These local entities could handle much of the ministerial department duties, as well as conduct seminars for educating and empowering the laity, handle basic personnel issues in conjunction with the president, plan cooperative evangelistic efforts and community projects, and pool resources for service projects.

4. Look again at combining local and union conferences. At minimum, reduce the union conference to a skeleton crew with drastically reduced travel budgets. Have them share office facilities with a local conference.

5. Take a serious look at restructuring the educational system. In urban areas, instead of many small schools each trying to meet basic requirements, consider developing a more efficient centralized system with "super schools" served by a bus system. These institutions could be state-of-the-art facilities with highly qualified staff for less money than it takes to operate many struggling small schools.<sup>5</sup> This would mean becoming less territorial across conference lines, but the result would be a much more efficient system with better education for all.

Dysfunctional family systems do not allow problems to be discussed. They are highly resistant to change. Healthy systems, however, are open to dialogue and new ideas. Healthy families welcome change and are constantly looking for ways to listen, adjust, and make changes for the good of all. I believe our church likewise can move, listen, grow, and change. I believe we can feed the goose and do so without losing our strengths. When we by God's grace truly adopt servant leadership at all levels of denominational structure, our congregations will flourish and our church will grow.

<sup>1</sup> *Archive and Statistics reports of the year 2000, not yet published.*

<sup>2</sup> *Carolina Personnel Directory, 2/1/2001*

<sup>3</sup> *From a recent conversation with Monte Sahlin, Former researcher for the NAD and current researcher for the Columbia Union Conference.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid. See also Studies for the Commission on Mission and Organization, Report 13, NAD, 1996.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*





# on being a college president

DIANA FISHER

**t**he Adventist church has a heavy investment in its educational system, particularly its colleges and universities, and the success or failure of such institutions is commonly ascribed to the administrators, especially the presidents. The president is responsible for acquiring and retaining high-quality faculty, for keeping up the enrollments of students, for reporting to its board of trustees, and for generally making everybody happy. It's a tough job in any kind of college, and perhaps more so in a denominationally owned school where church members have high expectations for the spiritual tone of the school. A lot is riding on his shoulders.

The past year has seen repeated turnovers of college presidencies. AT wanted to get an insider's view on how a college president saw his job, so they contacted Clifford Sorenson, a retired college president living in Loma Linda, California. Dr. Sorenson had been president of three schools—Walla Walla College, Columbia Union College, and Atlantic Union College.

**AT: What features did you find the most rewarding about your work in Adventist school administration?**

Sorenson: I got the most satisfaction out of helping provide students with a quality experience, both spiritually and academically. I have also gained and developed some of the most wonderful relationships and friendships, which I expect to enjoy the rest of my life and through eternity!

**AT: What features did you find the most challenging?**

Sorenson: I was concerned about two things in particular: First, I wanted to help students discover their worth and potential, not only for themselves but also for the cause of God and their service to

fellow humans. Secondly, it took a lot of effort to find the necessary resources for needy students and for the ongoing financial requirements of a quality educational institution.

**AT: As an Adventist administrator you often had to make hard decisions. Where did get your strength and wisdom? How did you make decisions?**

Sorenson: It would of course be nice to think that all my decisions were good and the best possible. This would be a delusion! However, even some agonizing and wrenching decisions turn out badly. I found prayer, of course, to be a great source of comfort and guidance. I also got much insight and direction from experienced colleagues, team members in administration, and friends who had served as college presidents in years gone by. When faced with new problems I always find it helps to draw on the solutions others have arrived at in similar situations.

**AT: Why did you choose a career in this field?**

Sorenson: I did not set out to become an administrator. I first choose to teach, because "it's the nicest work given to man." I enjoyed watching my students "discover," and it was rewarding to see them grow and develop. When I was asked in later years to join the administrative staff, I still took pride in watching so many of the graduates go beyond anything I had done. Others became immense assets to both their community and the church. I like to think that I had made some contribution to their achievements.

**AT: Are there any events in your career that really stand out as memorable?**

Sorenson: There are of course a great many experiences which warm my heart when I think of them—these often were what individual students



did for me. However, there are two vignettes that I would like to share. One has to do with providing special assistance to a group and the other with serving as advocate for a very deserving student.

When I became president at Walla Walla College I soon noted that in our wonderful student body there was little ethnic diversity. I also noted that there was considerable ethnic diversity within the North Pacific Union Conference, but potential students from some ethnic groups were not getting the quality educational experience that WWC offered. I discovered that two significant factors were at the root of the problem. The first and primary one was that young people in some of these ethnic groups didn't have money enough for college tuition. The second issue was related to the lack of ethnic diversity in the college faculty; students needed role models among their teachers. So the college undertook to change both of these. We set out to raise substantial new funds from a variety of sources to benefit ethnic students. We also made serious efforts to bring new faculty and staff to the campus with whom ethnic students could identify. It was a beginning, and I am pleased to note that a number of these students who attended WWC have achieved marvelous things and are today leaders in many professions.

The second vignette that comes to mind is the story of a very able student who was in several of my classes and aspired to become a physician. She had good grades and had done well but was not outstanding. Yet she had many commendable attributes. When she sat for her MCAT exams (an aptitude test required for applicants) she did not do

where she lives. How satisfying it was to have had a small part in making her life the richer and better.

**AT: Do you have any words of wisdom for incoming Adventist administrators, especially college presidents?**

Sorenson: Remember that David wanted to know after the battle if his son Absalom was safe. This was the foremost question in his heart! Is my son safe? It did not matter that he and his army had won the great battle of the day.

This same question is still asked by parents today. Is my son, my daughter safe? The mission remains as always, that students come to know a personal Christ and give their hearts to Him. Additionally it is critical that the academic experience be rich and challenging. This only happens when well qualified and committed teachers demonstrate with their lives that they care. It is imperative that each student should see in every instructor not only a mentor but a friend and companion. Selection of team members then becomes the all-important task, do it with ultimate care.

**AT: Now that you are retired and can look back on your career, is there anything you would have done differently-any regrets?**

Sorenson: Sure—lots of things. You get old too soon and smart too late! The key is that it's motive which gives character to an act. I can only say that my motive was always to only do good, and on judgment day I hope that my Maker will remember this. We all make errors in judgment along the way, but hopefully we won't make the same ones twice. Some things are painful to recall, but on balance the Lord and others were kind and patient with me.

**I was concerned about two things in particular: First, I wanted to help students discover their worth and potential, not only for themselves but also for the cause of God and their service to fellow humans. Secondly, it took a lot of effort to find the necessary resources for needy students and for the ongoing financial requirements of a quality educational institution.**

well. I felt the score was not representative of her ability and track record. The prospect of her gaining entrance to the School of Medicine at Loma Linda looked doubtful. I took it upon myself to intercede on her behalf. I sought out colleagues who had had her in class and asked for them to write a letter of support, which I also did. I also spoke to the admissions director of the medical school and provided other supporting material which I thought would be helpful. I'm pleased to say that she was accepted, largely due to our efforts. She went on to conclude her medical studies successfully and today is a major contributor as a professional in the community

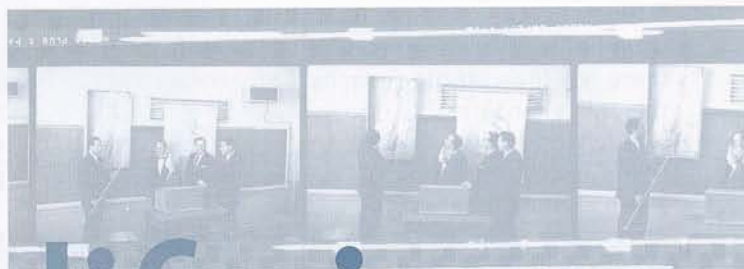
**AT: What do you see as the Adventist church's biggest challenges in the future?**

Sorenson: How do we pass on the vision? How do we stay on course and remain faithful to God's expectations for His children? We must not lose sight of our history and heritage. We must remain other-centered and not be drawn to self-serving. Hence, in my view the single biggest challenge will be to keep the church and its institutions relevant in an age and society that are changing, often for the worst. The youth of today must be allowed to feel ownership in the church and its operations if we are to have their commitment and involvement.



Pro•fes•sor *n.*

1.) a. A teacher of the highest rank in an institution of higher learning. b. A teacher or instructor 2.) One who professes.



# my life in loma linda

BRUCE WILCOX

**g**eorge Will has remarked that because of his profession as a social critic he tends to be regarded as a scold. Deservedly, I might say. As a faculty member charged with teaching biochemistry to freshman medical students I have acquired the reputation of a grouch. As such, I can expand at great length on the derelictions in attitude, policies and practices of Loma Linda University. Properly stimulated, I might even write such an article for *Adventist Today*. However, I find myself impelled to finish such diatribes with "having said all that, I must add that Loma Linda has been good to me". To that topic I now proceed.

When I moved from Boston to Loma Linda in 1965 I had the feeling that I was stepping back in time. Many of the faces were familiar from growing-up around Seventh-day Adventist academies and spending four years at Pacific Union College. The familiar Seventh-day Adventist jargon assaulted my ears. The administrative structure seemed like Newbury Park Academy, only bigger.

My feeling was wrong. Loma Linda inevitably shares much with my Seventh-day Adventist cultural background, but it is its own place. Loma Linda seldom looks to the future far more than it looks backward.

Any place derives its character from its surroundings and from the people in it. Surrounding Loma Linda is the "Inland Empire" half way between Los Angeles and Palm Springs, with the advantages and disadvantages of both. In 1965 I described it as con-

gested but not civilized. The atmosphere was smoggy enough to make my chest hurt while doing yard work. There were—and still are—no bookstores in the true sense of the word. Being a reading addict I was ready to start walking just to get to the Harvard Square. But in many ways it is better now. It is just that the drive can be longer. Instead of six or seven miles to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts it is 50 miles to the Palm Springs Desert Museum.

Redlands, which always had summer concerts in the bowl, is slowly pulling itself up by its own bootstraps. When you are in town be sure to try the new Italian Restaurant "Rosemarino's". And of course, the music at the University Church is consistently good and sometimes reaches the sublime. I get my books from Amazon.com. The smog is much abated.

For me the people have been more important than the surroundings. The university was smaller in 1965, and even as an assistant professor I had access to the School of Medicine deans, David Hinshaw, John Peterson, and Gordon Hadley. They were unfailingly supportive and ready to share their wisdom. The best piece of advice on teaching medical students I ever got was from David Hinshaw: "if the students see you as being on their side, you can do almost anything you want in the classroom". I have demonstrated that principle, sometimes to my sorrow and occasionally to my satisfaction.

John Peterson was chief of the Endocrine Section of the Department of Internal Medicine, and he immediately incorporated me into the weekly endocrine conferences, where I was welcomed by



Milton Crane, Jack Harris, Bob Rosenquist, and Jerald Nelson. Jerry Nelson and I joined in a research collaboration that continues to this day.

Several faculty from my PUC days had moved south, including Graham Maxwell, Paul Stauffer and Ivan Neilsen. PUC's loss was a distinct gain for Loma Linda, and for me.

My first department chairman was Raymond Mortensen. Of towering reputation, tall and erect of stature, stentorian of voice, dignity personified, he was the authority on the history of Loma Linda, the nuances of its culture, and most of all on teaching medical students. I followed him in that office, and of course had to endure the inevitable question from alumni: "are you the guy who has the unmitigated gall to try to replace Dr. Mortensen?" And of course I had my answer ready, adapted from Thomas Jefferson: "No one could replace Dr. Mortensen. I merely replace him."

In the late 1960s both internal and external forces were pushing LLU to add a liberal arts college to the existing health profession schools. The trustees responded by merging Loma Linda with La Sierra College—a simple solution, but as it turned out not so easy to implement. In 1970 the academic vice-president, Robert Cleveland, asked me to serve on a standing committee charged with curriculum innovation. I had the fun of working with people like Willard Meier, Fritz Guy, Walter Hamerslough, Gene Rathbun and Betty Stirling and Iris Landa. We started with grandiose ideas about a new approach to general studies for the whole university and ended up with a smallish program called Interdisci-

riculum committee. My ten-year stint in that position was not without interest. Making a friend of Leonard Werner is a major dividend. A side-benefit has been going to medical education meetings at places like Snowbird and Park City, Utah, Scottsdale, Arizona, and Asilomar on the Monterey Peninsula. Somebody had to do it.

As I write it strikes me that my friends are too numerous to mention, but I won't stop. There are George Lessard and Ray Gonzalez, who share my view that the really important things are somehow connected to an internal combustion engine. Ray also shares a taste for P.G. Wodehouse and Patrick McManus. Dick and Ardis Koobs were neighbors in the early years and are still friends.

Central to everything are the students. With my shocking memory for names (I am no Gordon Hadley or Bill Hooker) the number of faces that I recognize but can't quite place is very large. Dean and Roger Hadley, Phil Roos, Berneva Adams, Carl Sandberg and Elmar Sakala were in the group that broke me in during the '70s. I am far beyond the point where the freshmen look younger every year, but they always look very good.

There have been changes, the most striking being the much larger proportion of women in the medical and dental classes. In the laboratory, slide rules were replaced by pocket calculators and laptops. Chalk and blackboards were replaced by overhead projectors followed by PowerPoint presentations.

Alongside the onrush of medical and dental students has been the leisurely trickle of graduate students. From Bill Kersey from Southern California

**The best piece of advice on teaching medical students I ever got was from David Hinshaw: "if the students see you as being on their side, you can do almost anything you want in the classroom." I have demonstrated that principle, sometimes to my sorrow and occasionally to my satisfaction.,**

plinary Studies, or "Interdip" for short. It was a short and happy venture into the academic life.

Interdip lasted a few years, and the merger a bit longer. In 1990 La Sierra and Loma Linda split. Norman Woods, soon to leave his post as president of the university, asked me to help restructure faculty governance. With my characteristic lack of good sense I accepted the chair of what became the Interschool Faculty Advisory Council. That placed me as an observer at some of the historic meetings of the constituency and the trustees as Loma Linda made the transition to a health science university. After our successful re-accreditation by WASC I gratefully shuffled off the coil of campus politics.

As Lyn Behrens, another good friend, was moving from her position as dean to president she asked me to assume the chair of the School of Medicine cur-

riculum committee. My ten-year stint in that position was not without interest. Making a friend of Leonard Werner is a major dividend. A side-benefit has been going to medical education meetings at places like Snowbird and Park City, Utah, Scottsdale, Arizona, and Asilomar on the Monterey Peninsula. Somebody had to do it.

Loma Linda is my children's home, but not my home. I just don't feel at home here. That bothered me for years. It bothers me no longer. Loma Linda is part of the Christian tradition, which as G.K. Chesterton pointed explains how I can feel homesick at home.

When I welcome newcomers to our university, I tell them "Loma Linda is a strange place - but it is a good place".

*Bruce Wilcox, PhD, received his doctorate from the University of Utah in 1962. He is Professor of Biochemistry in the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University.*



# making house calls

Col•por•teur n. 1.) A peddler of devotional literature.

JAMES H. STIRLING

**Z**ephaniah Ncube has been selling religious and health books for 17 years. He is one of some 400 Seventh-day Adventist literature evangelists helping distribute books for the Pacific Press Publishing Association, located in Nampa, Idaho. They are a rare breed.

A long time ago I spent two years selling the same kind of books, and when I heard of Ncube I wanted to find out how and why he does it and stays with it so

long. While some of the time he goes door to door, most of his work involves following up on leads, generated by promotional response cards, coded with his number and left in churches, medical offices, and other places. People who find the card appealing write on it their address and their request for more information and mail it to the Pacific Press. The Press notes the code and mails the card back to him. All he has to do is

called "the literature ministry." He told me that most of the people he talked to there were hospitable and freely expressed their appreciation for the religious literature. However, they were poor, and if they ordered the books at all it was with a payment plan running to many months. Here in America for the past two years, he has found people with much more discretionary money but with much less interest in religion. "Too busy," they say. "Not enough time to read." They show little interest in discussing religion. Wherever possible, however, Ncube tries at least to say a prayer for their welfare before he leaves.

That interest in the spiritual welfare of his prospective clients is what keeps Ncube going. He says that if money is the chief concern of people doing his kind of work they will be disappointed. Literature evangelists, once called "colporteurs," must be driven by a search for souls. In his prayers in the homes of prospects as well as in his own home before going out, and at every step of his work, he expresses his feeling of dependence on God. As he talks to people about the books and Bibles in his display he calls their attention to themes many had never considered or had forgotten about. He confronts them with their need to give God a place in their life.

As a literature evangelist Ncube does what he considers to be equivalent to the work of a pastor in the pulpit, except that he is more personal and reaches people who do not go near churches. I asked him what he thought his standing was in the eyes of other church members. "Ah," he said, "that is the hardest part." Although Ellen White declared that all church members should be involved in the distribution of gospel literature, and that colporteurs were doing work equivalent to that of other ministers, people don't see it that way. The church as a whole is not concerned. One minister told him he was wasting his time. He gets no support from the church. He is set up as an independent businessman who gets a business li-

pointment for a personal visit, then go to the home and make his sales presentation. If the prospective customer likes the books and wishes to order, Ncube accepts their check for a deposit and arranges to deliver the books later. Then he sends the order to the Pacific Press and gets a shipment delivered by United Parcel a few days later. He takes this to the customer and collects the balance, or arranges for an installment payment plan.

## Does this sound easy?

Deceptively so. Ncube spent 15 of those years in Africa, in his home state of Zimbabwe and in other states as well. He attended Solusi College and got a bachelor's degree in religion before taking up what is





cense from the city and pays sales taxes to the county. He buys at wholesale from the publisher and sells at retail to the customers. He must make his living off the difference, his profit margin. What would happen, I asked him, if by some stroke of fortune the conference should decide to take him on as a salaried employee and guarantee a monthly stipend? He wasn't so sure that was a good idea; there was something about the uncertainty that gave him the incentive to get out and explore the leads to customer interest.

I had talked to an officer of the local Adventist conference about their involvement in the colporteur ministry. The officer told me that many years ago the conference did support literature evangelists, and their subsidies ran to half a million dollars annually. When conference funds generally began to run short they started looking at the cost-benefit ratios of their different operations, including the colporteur work. Their analysis concluded with the recommendation that since there were few identifiable returns from what the colporteurs were doing, the subsidy should be stopped. Another of the challenges to the colporteur.

So then why do people like Zephaniah Ncube continue year after year in this line of ministry? He is convinced that God has ordained this line of work, and that if he puts forth his effort God will do his part. If he prays hard enough God will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing.

Ncube has ambitious plans for his life. He has a family including his wife Sithembiso and two school-age daughters. He has a part-time hourly paid job, works part-time as colporteur, and studies full time at a nearby university in a graduate master's degree pro-

**As a literature evangelist Ncube does what he considers to be equivalent to the work of a pastor in the pulpit, except that he is more personal and reaches people who do not go near churches.**

gram. He expects to return to his native Zimbabwe with a doctoral degree to serve as a marriage and family counselor.

He faces a very challenging life, but he has had practice in meeting challenges in the past 17 years. He admits that the literature ministry is not for everyone. Only those who can dedicate themselves to a spiritual task and can live in an atmosphere of prayer will succeed at it. But whoever does it will face a very challenging task.

## an. interview with a conference president

**Continued from page 13**

Jere Patzer is the most visionary president in the NAD, and what he and Bruce Johnston have done for missions is remarkable. Don Schneider is the most likable administrator in the NAD. His message is very simple, but he lives what he preaches.

**AT: What kinds of criteria do administrators (conference presidents, union and division officers) use to evaluate other conference presidents?**

RM: Presidents are so different that comparisons are probably not valid. Conservative traditionalists love people of that persuasion, but others think they are too rigid and narrow-minded. Some presidents emphasize growth and evangelism to the exclusion of almost anything else. They have a great reputation with those who have the same priority. Among my peers, I think the most highly respected attribute is the ability to motivate pastors and still be loved by them. In a group of leaders, some leaders emerge as outstanding, and usually are recognized. That quality is not always definable, it is just there. It comes in many shapes, skills and colors.

**AT: What is the greatest contribution a conference president can make to the Church?**

RM: Creating a unified vision for both pastors and congregations of what the church could and should become. The days of growth for its own sake are over, and pastors and church members are asking "growth into what?" Members want a church that is loving and fulfilling, a place where their needs are met. My goal as president was to call, train, inspire, and unite pastors who will grow churches that meet current and eternal needs in a grace-filled atmosphere. When that happens both God and members are happy, and pastors love their work.

*Ralph Martin, now retired, pastored for 20 years before serving as a ministerial secretary in Oregon and Northern California. He was the president of Nevada-Utah and Potomac conferences and the Columbia Union Conference.*



# the adventist pastor today

Continued from page 11

immigrants who do not speak English as a first language and do not contribute the amount of money needed by the church to support its expensive infrastructure and educational system.

Administrators and those who sit on Conference Executive Boards seek ways to counter these trends. Our leaders implement programs that are supposed to make us pastors more effective. We travel about the country to study successful Sunday churches. Too often the pastor returns to his parish, implements what he has learned in the megachurch and is rewarded for his creative efforts by being fired.

Some suggest that if we pastors were more dedicated, more spiritual, better preachers, worked harder, then things would improve. Others think the answer lies in accountability. Accountability! That's the answer. One can defend this statement to a certain degree. The Adventist pastor is theoretically accountable to the conference president. The reality is that the conference president knows little or nothing about what happens in the local church, unless there is a significant problem. In congregational systems, the pastor is accountable to the local board. In the Adventist system, the local church technically neither hires nor can it fire the pastor. There have been times when a church board voted that the appointed pastor cannot preach on Sabbath and will have no official function within the church. But they could not fire him. There have been some who suggest we have the worst of both worlds. We have neither a congregational system nor do we have a classic hierarchical structure, despite the sworn testimony that a former General Conference president once gave in court.

In order to increase pastoral effectiveness, conference and church leaders have attempted various evaluation techniques. Most have ended in failure. Until there are measurable sanctions, both positive and negative, I predict no evaluative process will be successful. Why should we endure an evaluation procedure if nothing will change? However, if there is a meaningful incentive associated with evaluation, it would change everything.

If three negative evaluations resulted in probation or termination, this would catch our attention. If a fifteen or twenty percent salary increase came after three positive evaluations really have our attention! Until church leaders become serious about evaluation and demonstrate they are serious by establishing meaningful penalties and rewards, don't waste your time or ours attempting to impose some new gimmick.

A case can be made that we have a system that rewards mediocrity rather than excellence. We affirm stability and consistency. We value predictability. We are low risk takers and do not take well to rocking the boat. Until these attitudes change, expect stasis.

Adventist pastors are not immune to family problems. We have over the years separated from and divorced our spouses. In the past, when a pastor separated or divorced, his church employment ended. Today, there are significant numbers of pastors and church leaders who have divorced and remarried, and not been terminated. Our church members accept that their minister has broken relationships like anyone else. Congregations are willing to forgive him or her when divorce occurs and continue to accept his pastoral leadership.

Despite technological changes and the growing role of distant learning, satellite communication and downlinks, the local church continues to have an important role in American society. There is need for skilled, dedicated women and men to fill our pulpits. But these pastors must not pretend they live in the same world I did when I entered the pastorate.

Globalization is a term business uses to describe our market place. The church ignores globalization at its peril. It is here to stay and it is as important for us pastors to strategize with the global market in view as it is for General Motors or Microsoft. Pastors today who cannot work with multicultural communities with diverse people and backgrounds will operate from a distinct disadvantage. Those who affirm and seek ways to incorporate diverse people will succeed.

It is essential to have pastors who are competent preachers, youth ministers, and evangelists. It is equally important that these people understand the forces that affect our society. Some of them buffet the church and its members; others provide opportunity for God's kingdom to expand. Our center is the gospel and Jesus' love for people. The Adventist minister today has the greatest opportunity in history to minister to the largest diversity of people ever assembled on planet earth. Our challenge is to attract and keep those who are willing and who have the expertise to address these opportunities. Success in this venture comes not by accident, but by intention!

*Lawrence Downing, D. Min. is Senior pastor of the White Memorial Church in Los Angeles. He is active in the Distance Learning program in the School of Business and Management at La Sierra University and serves as a member of the White Memorial Medical Center Executive Board.*



# The Healdsburg Incident

MARYAN STIRLING

In the summer of 1885 Ellen White was living in Healdsburg, California, four blocks from the little school that later became Pacific Union College and relocated to Angwin. James White had been gone about four years.

Healdsburg College needed a revival. Ellen White prayed earnestly for revival, but it didn't happen. She left for Europe in July but kept in touch with affairs in California's "wine country" on the Russian River.

W. C. Grainger was president of the college, and he invited E. P. Daniels to preach at a Sabbath service. (Don't confuse him with A. G. Daniels; no relationship.)

Daniels was a good speaker, warm and winning, but not much of a manager of financial matters. He had asked to be excused from the ministry for awhile to get his affairs in order. He established a little school for stenographers in Oakland, and that's how things stood when he went to Healdsburg to visit relatives and Elder Grainger invited him to "take the service" on Sabbath morning. The way Arthur White describes him, Daniels was "a man of somewhat unstable character, but a good speaker and an earnest man."

During the sermon Grainger could see something unusual. He said, "I noticed that the people seemed greatly moved." He asked Daniels to speak again Saturday night.

The blessing continued, so he agreed to speak twice on Sunday. At an altar call nearly everyone came forward, and they all knew the meetings shouldn't end. For five weeks the interest—and the meetings—continued.

There began to be some fanatical elements. Some private ideas were brought in. Some odd people pushed their way to the front. Daniels unwisely accepted financial help from enthusiastic hearers. It wasn't perfect, but the Lord was still using it.

Well into the autumn term, two men came from the conference office in Oakland to check out what was going on at the college. They asked questions and listened and were afraid and said the meetings should end. So of course, they ended, but people were unhappy. Ellen White, somewhere in Europe, was distressed. Her letter to the California conference leadership is a gem.

"I wish to say," she began, with uncharacteristic diffidence. "I wish to say some things in reference to the revival at Healdsburg. I wish to say (There it is again! She's being careful not to hurt anyone.) I wish to say I am not in harmony with your treatment of this matter. That there were fanatical ones who pressed into that work I will not deny. But if you move in the future as you have done in this matter,

you may be assured of one thing, you will condemn the work of the latter rain when it shall come. For you will see at that time far greater evidences of fanaticism." The letter went on, in the same kind, cautious tone.

This story seems not to be in the six-volume biography by Arthur White. It's in an article he wrote: "Revival—the Time When God and Satan Work." (Review and Herald, April 21, 1972. Letter 76, 1886.) It shouldn't be lost; we need it. I need it.

Adventists are being swamped with ads and invitations and excited stories that tell us a great revival has come. Prayer conferences, prayer summits, Prayerworks, prayer retreats.

I've been to five of these conferences, and I've heard reports that troubled me. ("An angel was in the aisle. A woman waved to him and he waved and disappeared.") Stories of great outpourings of power.

During the sermon Grainger could see something unusual. He said, "I noticed that the people seemed greatly moved." He asked Daniels to speak again Saturday night. At an altar call nearly everyone came forward, and they all knew the meetings shouldn't end.

I personally experienced a great wave of joy in a "prayer summit." And I've been blessed and comforted. And sometimes bored, and often confused.

Well, it's a mixture, as a dear lady long ago told us a revival would be. Some gimmicks (as I see them) are used. Many long prayers can be tedious. I haven't seen any disorderly moments. No speaking in tongues. No dramatic healings, shouting, or loud weeping or "holy laughter." Nobody "prostrated by the power of God." But many quiet tears. Moments in the healing presence of God. Some healings, I think. Some life-changing experiences. Some dullness.

I have, after two years and many miles, a tentative opinion: We may very well be seeing something that could be "a refreshing from the presence of the Lord," with some silliness thrown in by the enemy to confuse us. It would be a terrible mistake to throw it all out because there's a strange element or because not every speaker has "power from on high."



## A Note From the Publisher June 2001

It has been some time since I shared with you what is happening behind the scenes at *Adventist Today*.

We are well into our ninth year of publication. Building on the foundation laid by Ray Cottrell, Jim Walters, and Ervin Taylor when they established our magazine, we have been able to take Adventist journalism to new heights.

John McLarty's editorials are a must read for every thinking reader. "The Essence of Adventism" in our January-February 2001 issue, and "Changing Churches" in the March-April issue are some of the best examples. There is more to come, not only from McLarty's pen but also from others who will explore the issues of hard jobs in the church, Sabbath School Quarterly management of doctrines, structural changes in church administration, the health system, new trends in missions, spirituality in the church, the General Conference session in 2005, and others.

Yes, there are those who are not comfortable with the cutting edge of Adventism. It seems they would much rather consider Adventism from the point of view of Uriah Smith's Daniel and Revelation than try to understand their neighbor's problems, or discover whether their adult children see relevance to the religion of their parents.

Francis Bacon said, "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk or discourse, but to weigh and consider." *Adventist Today* seeks to examine issues that are relevant to present-day needs. When we understand these issues fully, we can become better examples to both our neighbors and our children.

In our annual survey, subscribers generally described themselves as "middle of the road," with a number who have found themselves separated from their usual church affiliations.

Regardless of which group they came from, those who took the time to describe themselves and their needs all expressed a hunger for news, information, and ideas which our regular church periodicals do not carry.

Of significance to me, as I have reviewed the comments, are the number who signed their names. They represent a cross section of ministers, teachers, and others of prominence in Adventism over the years, as well as "ordinary" members. Of course, no one is ordinary; all our readers are special.

Our paid subscribers continue to number just over 2,000. While many addresses are from the west coast, there is a remarkably good geographic distribution, particularly where major colleges or other institutions are located. We would like to see more readers, and would appreciate your telling your friends about us and inviting them to join.

Someone has said that every new generation must redefine the faith of its fathers. I believe *Adventist Today* articulates a vision of church and spiritual life that will recommend itself to our children. It is only beginning to make its mark, however, and we hope it will play a crucial role in shaping the future of Adventist thinking and help make the church a healthy, happy spiritual home for thoughtful people from all backgrounds.

To do so, however, we will need help. We appreciate your subscription support, and hope you will continue to renew. But if you could go beyond this to make an additional gift, large or small, it would help us to make our vision come true.

Your ongoing support makes *Adventist Today* possible, and we thank you. Your comments are invited.

Elwin Dunn, M.D.  
Publisher/Board Chair, *Adventist Today*