

# The CHE October 2003 Report to the Annual Council

There are good men in high places in the Church. Unfortunately, there are not enough of them; and they fear to speak too openly. In the hope that they can somehow save the Church from its downward doctrinal and moral spiral, they try to work quietly, intercepting a committee vote here, instituting a slight reform there. Praying and hoping, hoping and praying; they work on, all the while fearing to speak too loudly, lest their influence be cut short.

Unfortunately, in a time of crisis, urgent actions and bold strokes are required. Patchwork will not solve the problem. Committee resolutions expressing concerns and mild, consensus measures are not adequate to meet the challenges now confronting the Church.

Tragically, year by year, the apostasy becomes more entrenched. It is aided by a continuing flood of new liberal-trained graduates from our colleges and universities which, upon entering the ranks of Church workers each year, are replacing older, wiser men who have become too feeble to continue the struggle.

Amid the increasing flood of worldly articles in our Church papers, every so often an expression of genuine concern is expressed. No worthwhile changes seem to result from these discussions; yet, in them, we sense the worry which fills the hearts of some of our leaders.

Seeing the effects of the deepening apostasy (although not always recognizing its causes), they feel incapable of turning the Church around. Frankly, they fear to initiate the strong—even drastic—changes which are needed.

But whatever reform measures are enacted are soon watered down by determined opponents in positions of great influence in those places where the changes must be made.

In this present study, we will examine one such expression of concern. Many have preceded it. Repeatedly, certain sincere Church leaders have attempted to reform our colleges and universities; but those efforts have repeatedly been watered down or thwarted by educational administrators and their liberal Ph.D. faculty.

“The concern that Adventist colleges and universities worldwide are moving away from the Church’s traditional Adventist values was described in a report presented by the Adventist Church’s *Commission on Higher Education* to the delegates of Annual Council October 14 at the Church’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.”—ANN release, dated October 24, 2003.

Notice in the above introductory statement that a small group of Church leaders and educators, who are members of the *Commission on Higher Education*, are not merely worried about downward trends in U.S. colleges and universities—but throughout the world!

“Take special note of indicators which suggest that as a whole our educational institutions and programs are slowly but surely sliding in the direction away from orthodoxy to secularism,” said Gerald D. Karst, a general vice president of the world Church, who chaired the commission. “Some major issues have surfaced in this report.”

We will assume (we hope) that by “orthodoxy” Karst means historic Adventism. (However, he may only mean the watered-down very brief summary of some of our beliefs given in our 27-point *Statement of Beliefs*, drafted by Andrews University Bible teachers and enacted at the 1980 Dallas Session, as a compromise to keep new theology pastors and teachers from being fired. Historic Adventism includes a lot more than is to be found in our *Statement of Beliefs*! For example, it includes Chapters 23-29 of *Great Controversy*. Thoughtfully read those chapters anew during forthcoming Sabbath afternoons and obtain for yourself a better understanding of our historic beliefs.

By “secularism,” Karst means outright worldliness! Hollywood movies, drinking parties, homosexuality, intercollegiate sports, reinactments of Broadway theatrical dramas by our students on campus, free sex, child abuse, increase of on-campus HIV; on and on goes the list.

“The report highlighted a number of issues including the Adventist faculty who are trained at non-Adventist institutions, as well as an increasing number of faculty and students who are not Adventist Church members. The commission estimates that by 2010 about 28 percent of the faculty and 46 percent of students at Church institutions of higher learning will not be Adventist.”

I had earlier reported that the great majority of medical and paramedical students at Loma Linda University are not Adventist, as well as a large number of the faculty. That is a tragedy in itself, since the school was supposed to provide us with medical missionaries to all the world; and, now, not only is it not training natural-remedy missionary physicians—but it is training non-Adventists, most of whom never become Adventists! Yet a significant portion of all offerings given by Church members go—through the “General Budget” allocation—to keep Loma Linda financially afloat. It takes

a great deal of money to pay the expenses of a medical school. Why are we doing it, if we are primarily training non-Adventists—who have no intention of ever becoming Adventists—in that school?

I will tell you the reason: Once an institution is started, it grows and, in the process, gradually leaves the foundation principles for which it was established. Eventually, it exists only to perpetuate itself, not to fulfill any particular purpose, other than to keep its personnel employed.

This is the inherent flaw of churches, schools, institutions down through the centuries. Everything eventually tends to become corrupt.

But it need not be. To preserve the Adventist Church so it could be the final church, the remnant which would fulfill Revelation 12:17 and warn the world to keep the commandments of God by faith in Jesus Christ,—God gave this special Church the precious Spirit of Prophecy writings to provide it with ongoing counsels and warnings to keep it on track in the fulfillment of its mission.

However, as a people, we can only please God and remain His special people—to the degree that we remain in humble obedience to our Bible / Spirit of Prophecy heritage.

The tragedy is that every year we move further away from those inspired counsels and closer to the world. We are doing what King Solomon did. And we are going to reap the reward that he and his kingdom did. It is inevitable—unless, that is, unless we return in deepest repentance and full obedience to the books from which we have departed.

But now, back to the article. Repeating the above quotation:

“The report highlighted a number of issues including the Adventist faculty who are trained at non-Adventist institutions as well as an increasing number of faculty and students who are not Adventist Church members. The commission estimates that by 2010 about 28 percent of the faculty and 46 percent of students at Church institutions of higher learning will not be Adventist.”

“The number of faculty who are trained at non-Adventist institutions.” In our educational institutions, nearly ALL the faculty received their doctoral training at non-Adventist universities. The only Adventist doctoral programs I know of in the U.S. (and I may not be accurate on this) is in the field of education at Andrews (Ed.D.) and several medical fields at Loma Linda (M.D., D.D.S. etc.). If you get a doctorate in a medical field, you can teach that medical specialty; and if you obtain a doctorate in education, you can teach teachers. —But all the Bible teachers, and nearly all the other teachers in our colleges and universities must go to secular, Protestant, or Catholic universities to obtain their doctorates. Like the Israelites at a certain time in ancient Israel, we must go to the Philistines to get our equipment. The only teachers without doctoral degrees in our colleges and universities are temporary fill-ins who, by

special dispensation of the accrediting association, are permitted to teach for a short time; or perhaps some agree to keep working toward their doctorate.

“An increasing number of faculty . . . who are not Adventist Church members.” That is a new problem which we had not heard much about before! According to this revelation, not only at Loma Linda, but throughout our schools, an increasing number of our faculty are not Adventists!

“The commission estimates that by 2010 about 28 percent of the faculty and 46 percent of students at Church institutions of higher learning will not be Adventist.” It appears that the crisis has already passed the point of no return. Knowledgeable men are here telling us that within six years, nearly a third of all the teachers in our colleges and universities will know little or nothing about our beliefs. This seemingly incredible fact is totally attributable to the accreditation / doctoral degree cesspool.

For over thirty years, our Church workers on every level (with the exception of colporteurs, office secretaries, and mechanics of various kinds) have received their educational training under men and women molded in outside institutions which despise our historic beliefs.

“The statistics in the report are a serious concern for Adventist education according to Church officials. The fear is that the report now places some Adventist colleges and universities at a crossroad as they gradually move further away from the Adventist philosophy of education.”

We have long since passed the educational crossroad. My book, *Broken Blueprint*, documents when we came to the fork in that educational road and how, through a succession of bad decisions by educational committees in high places, one by one our colleges deliberately took the wrong path.

*(Broken Blueprint, 432 pp., single copy \$5.00 ppd. Boxful price: 49 cents in the box, 28 to the case, \$13.72 + \$10.00 = \$23.72. Buy boxfuls and hand them out to every Adventist you know. Do your part to awaken the Church to the crisis it is in.)*

“As they gradually move further away from the Adventist philosophy of education.” In place of big words, such as “philosophy,” which tend to confuse more than clarify, what is here meant is our principles, our beliefs, and our standards.

And this is being done, not by an isolated institution here or there,—but by all our denominational schools. (An outstanding exception are some local Church schools, where deeply dedicated teachers are working for souls!)

“Dr. Garland Dulan, education director for the world Church, who explained the findings, said the report refers in many instances to the published work of three education experts who have studied the effects of secularization on faith-based institutions. ‘By observing indicators pointed out by these authors, we can see a trend toward secu-

larization in the Adventist education system,' Dulan said."

Dulan is here saying that the Commission on the Higher Education Report frequently cites the findings of three educational researchers who investigated the rapid downward trend in non-Adventist denominational schools. As they observed the shocking apostasy in those institutions and how it occurred, Dulan and his associates were better able to see how our own schools are following in the same track.

Of course, comparing our schools (of supposedly "higher learning") with the Spirit of Prophecy writings would have provided a far more vivid exposé of our present educational crisis.

"The commission on higher education made six recommendations for 'immediate implementation.' The first group sought to strengthen the Adventist philosophy of education among faculty 'who have not been adequately exposed to these topics.'"

What misery. Trying to introduce liberal or atheist doctoral professors to our historic beliefs. I recall the medical student I knew in 1964, during my several months only a few miles from Loma Linda, while working on a *Great Controversy* publication project. He told me that during their last year of training to be medical doctors, the students at Loma Linda were instilled with professional pride by their professors. A "doctor," whether an M.D. doctor or a Ph.D. doctor, is a great man. That is what he was taught as an integral part of his training. He has plumed vast depths of educational knowledge and is above the common man.

(In reality, the poor man does not know as much as he thinks he does. His undergraduate (baccalaureate) work may have been in a different field; possibly his graduate (masters' level) work was as well. His doctoral research, the basis of the adulation he will later receive, is in an extremely narrowed field, such as The Cuneiform Tablets of the 8th Century B.C., The History of the Final Exile of Napoleon, or Variations in Elizabethan English between England and Scotland. The senior editor of the *Adventist Review*, since the late 1970s, obtained his doctorate from Vanderbilt University in this arcane topic: *Was the Author of the Book of Hebrews a Religious Man?* Any Junior Sabbath School scholar can answer that question.

A Ph.D. is highly educated on very little. Immense numbers of doctoral dissertations have already been written; yet each new one must be on something new. So the most narrowed, useless topics are covered on double-spaced 12-13-point typefont, 30-60 pages; this is equivalent to one of my tract sets containing 4 to 7 tracts (16-28 pages).

So we hire such men into our schools; and the only qualification is this: Have they earned doctorates? It matters not whether they believe our teachings, adhere to our standards, or believe the Spirit of Prophecy. —*Do they have that doctorate?*

You work on your doctoral study under the supervi-

sion of one man who, over a period of time, questions you closely—and will not let you graduate with a Ph.D. if your beliefs and outlook are not identical to his and those of the university's. (They only want Ph.D. graduates who "represent them.") In the final year, they mold you into their own image.

Returning now to the Commission recommendations: Can such partway measures, as are recommended, succeed in improving our colleges?

Recall how Walla Walla College resolved the crisis when Jere Patzer (a godly man heading up the North Pacific Union) attempted to eliminate the worldliness, atheism, and immorality at that institution of "higher education." Administration and faculty unitedly met the challenge—by placing an emergency phone call to the Northwestern Accrediting Association. Those secularists quickly sent a team down to visit the school and threatened to remove its accreditation, if the religious authorities in the Church attempted in the slightest to curb the "academic freedom" of the administration and faculty or remove its decision power in deciding what should be taught.

Church leadership gave in. What else could they do? Under the present accreditation / doctoral degree arrangement, there is nothing else they can do. They must serve their hidden masters,—and both college personnel and Church leaders know it. It may sound dramatic, but true, that they are chained to a cart and cannot separate. The teachers which are hired, the curriculum, specialized laboratories, even the number of books in the library—all must meet the approval of the non-Adventist inspection committee. If they do not like something, they make threats.

Is there no way out? Yes, there is. We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that if the school cannot pay its debts, it should close its doors. See *6 Testimonies*, 211, 617 and *15 Manuscript Releases*, 52. The same would apply to schools hopelessly embroiled in the apostasy of doctrines and standards. If there is no other way to correct the situation, then close down the school. See *Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, 88-89, and *5 Testimonies*, 25-26.

Yet there is still another way: The Church owns the institutional plant and its buildings. Fire the teachers and administrators who are not sincere historic believers; and hire men and women who will practice and teach that which fully agrees with our faith.

This would involve losing accreditation. In the process, we would also part with a lot of Ph.D.s who, in anger, would go teach somewhere else. We would also have less students, but they would be the dedicated ones.

We could return to earlier times, when we hired teachers because they knew the content; also they had a deep Christian experience. Only those Bible teachers were hired which had been successful pastors and / or foreign missionaries.

Someone will say, "Well, now, this is a terrible suggestion! Only men and women with the highest training

should be hired as teachers; and that could only be Ph.D.s!”

Not so. Such people are generally overtrained. They frequently do not know how to communicate effectively to students. They do not sense their needs.

While teaching in a school in northern Florida, I attended a one-day teacher’s meeting, dedicated to helping the teachers learn better methods of teaching reading skills.

One of the counties had hired a Ph.D. to instruct its teachers how to teach reading better. He had obtained his doctoral degree *specifically in reading instruction*. I was interested to see what he had to say. Surely, he must be filled with his subject.

After a lavish introduction (a highly paid man like that surely needs one), he strode to the podium and began to speak. Funny stories, irrelevant points, and impractical applications; that was all he had to tell the audience. Not one word was spoken that was worth listening to.

Then, after lunch, the teachers separated into smaller sections, under the guidance of experienced classroom teachers, to discuss and review better reading techniques. I must tell you I was astounded at what those teachers had to say! That afternoon, I heard the most practical, useful methods for gauging reading comprehension levels. This included the relative merits of phonics (sound) teaching, sight (eye recognition) reading, and why some students do best under one and not the other. Also how to identify each, advantages and disadvantages of the various readers on the market, why the older ones were far better, and a variety of other topics.

I recall a math Ph.D., when I was at college, who knew the subject thoroughly but had absolutely no awareness of how to teach it to the students. I never took a class from him. But I learned that he would spend class time berating students for not figuring it out.

With the exception of certain specialized scientific fields, it does not take a doctoral graduate to teach a college class. I recognize that statement will be laughed at by some, but I stand by it. Intelligent people do not need a doctoral degree to teach a subject; but they may need prior field experience, plus undergraduate work in a Christian school.

“I think it’s a matter of cultivating a culture on the campus where everybody is geared to what Adventist mission and thought is all about,” said Dr. Bertil Wiklander, president of the Church in the Trans-European region. “This is cultivated by devotionals, by the way the leadership relates to the staff.”

Wiklander may be sincere in his proposed solution to our educational problem. But the problem has gone too far to be solved simply by chapel talks and kindly

words to the staff. The entire accreditation / degree framework, which undergirds our present educational system, must be removed. This worldly system of enslavement to accrediting associations and non-Adventist universities must be eliminated.

The river of corruption that is flowing into our schools through the requirement that our college and university teachers must have doctoral degrees can only be stanchd by entirely eliminating the present degree requirement.

What is needed are schools under the direction of godly, historic Adventists. They instruct their students in ways, especially practical ones, which help them serve God when they leave the school. Some of those students are hired to replace retiring instructors. Thus all the teachers and students receive their training in our own schools under godly, experienced teachers. This is God’s plan. If you doubt it, read my book, *Broken Blueprint*. I started writing on that volume in order to show how our educational blueprint was done in the early days, when our Church was under the wise guidance and counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy. You will find a wealth of information here. This topic is dealt with here more than is in any other single book I know of; my bibliography at the back of my book lists a large number of them.

Because I was writing history in that book, as I carried the historical narrative along, the blueprint became a broken blueprint. In the book, you will learn how the blueprint was broken, detail by painful detail, over a course of several decades. You will never be quite the same after you read it. At last you will understand a major cause of our present denominational sellout to the world in our doctrines and standards—in our schools, leadership positions, and local churches.

“Other recommendations include seeking ways in which students, faculty, and board members can continually be exposed to the teachings of the Church and its education philosophy.

“The final group of recommendations called for a series of subcommittees to be formed to study the increased secularization of Adventist institutions of higher learning.”

These are still bandages placed over a festering boil. The body needs a cleansing program, so the poisons can be removed through all the channels of elimination.

You will note that not once in this entire investigative report by the members of the Commission on Higher Education, or the comments made about it by delegates to the Annual Council,—did anyone point a finger at the underlying cancer: *accreditation and degrees from outside schools*. Everything is an attempt to patch over the problem. It is like wrapping tape around a leaking pressure pipe, in the hope that this will solve the problem. But it never will. —vf