

DAVID LIN

WRITES THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH

A missionary who served time in a Chinese jail when the Communists took over his country, loves his church and wants what is best for it. There is no question about his love for his denomination. Like Jesus, he cries over it. Are we crying over it?

Here is his letter to (at the time) our new General Conference president:

Shanghai 200020, China
September 6, 1990

President R.S. Folkenberg
General Conference of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland
20904-1608

Dear Brother Folkenberg:

Greetings and congrats to you from China! At PUC, I remember an Elman Folkenberg, who could have been related to you. Anyhow, your name is familiar. May the Lord's wisdom, grace, and power be with you as you assume the duties of your office, is my prayer.

I am writing today with a purpose. The enclosed article reveals what has been on my mind for many days. Developments in the land where the Advent movement had its beginnings are truly disturbing. Now I feel it my duty to voice my concern over the "Celebration" movement which threatens to undermine our faith. Some months

ago a group of conference men came to Shanghai and I asked them about it, and they seemed to sense nothing serious. This attitude is all the more alarming. Could it be true that the General Conference has given this new trend its approval? If so, that was the Wilson administration. What is your stand on this? You can't ignore it. If you feel it's here to stay and should lend it your support, then you stand to loose the confidence of a large number of members who stand for true godliness. The present polarizing process will be accelerated, and the end will be disastrous.

None should set himself up as a criterion, but neither should one be so "meek" as to remain silent in the face of glaring apostasy. This new device to increase church attendance amounts to what the Chinese say, "Let the swollen face of a beaten-up fellow pass for a fatty." It requires time, money, and patience to fatten a skinny. But if you want him to look fat pronto, just punch him in the face, and it will swell up overnight. Pastors worrying over empty pews and dwindling offerings are resorting to just such foolishness. "Celebration" will fatten your church overnight! Pity such poor pastors! They have sunken to a new low.

As president of the General Conference you must be aware that our duty is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. Do you honestly believe that the drums, cymbals, and clapping in the

Celebration church can accomplish such a task? As a SDA minister in China I am ashamed of some of the things happening in the American churches. To let our people here know of them would certainly cause discouragement. American Adventists should stand for high spiritual standards instead of what we hear is that you are endorsing—jewelry, dragging fellow Adventists to court, selling junk bonds, gambling in the stock market, and indulging in Pentecostal excitement. Wilson used to talk of leadership morale. I pray you will think first of membership morale.

So you are faced with the stupendous task of reviving true piety in the remnant church. Only thus can you restore the respectable image which every American missionary should present to our people in mission lands. If you fail here and let unconverted preachers continue to lower our spiritual standards, the day may come when American missionaries will become a byword in heathen lands.

In 1844, the Adventists first sounded the cry of the second angel: “Babylon is fallen! This fall has continued to our day. Now we are faced with the fearful prospect of a fall within our own ranks, but we are not to call ourselves Babylon. Then to be sure, “Israel is fallen.” Or am I too pessimistic?

Since 1950, the Chinese Adventists have been separated from our American brethren. Now it is becoming increasingly clear that our organizational ties were severed by the hand of Providence. In His mercy God has quarantined us from the spiritual decay that is afflicting our American brethren like the leprosy. We don't claim perfection. Far from it! We too have our problems and ailments. But we try to hold on to the faith once delivered to the saints. We repudiate Fordite doctrine and

believe Ellen White was a true prophet of God. The Chinese government still arrests and imprisons homosexuals. Our video programs may be classed as decent by bourgeois standards. The divorce rate and crime record is much lower than in the U.S. In a word, we enjoy a healthier environment than our American brethren. That is why we shudder to think how, in America, after the fall of Babylon, Israel should also be headed for a fall! We ask you in all sincerity, What can we do to help? An honest appraisal of the situation indicates that we are faced with the inevitable sequel to the spiritual decline which started in 1956, followed by Glacier View. Then Water Rea ground his axe: Davenport did his bit to ruin us, and so on. These were so many steps in our spiritual decline. More recently, various writers and speakers have surreptitiously attacked Ellen White, so that a Celebration pastor dared publicly to throw her books into a trash can in church. It is clear that whatever measure a new president of the General Conference may adopt, it certainly will not turn the evil tide, unless God intervenes miraculously. Now I inclined to hope and believe that God will one day do something out of the ordinary to save His cause. It may not be what we humans might imagine or expect. But I believe He will not suffer His word to return unto Him void. Perhaps your coming to the presidency may be part of just such a miracle. You must remain humble and pray as you've never prayed before. Who knows but that God will use you as a modern Phinehas.

Yours most hopefully,

(Signed)

David Lin

Shanghi, China