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Update - September 2004

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Update

Volume 19, Number 3 (September 2004)

A Statement on Racism

This public statement was released by the General Conference president, Neal C. Wilson, after consultation with the 16 world vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on June 27, 1985, at the General Conference session in New Orleans, Louisiana.

One of the odious evils of our day is racism, the belief or practice that views or treats certain racial groups as inferior and therefore justifiably the object of domination, discrimination, and segregation.

While the sin of racism is an age-old phenomenon based on ignorance, fear, estrangement, and false pride, some of its ugliest manifestations have taken place in our time. Racism and irrational prejudices operate in a vicious circle. Racism is among the worst of ingrained prejudices that characterize sinful human beings. Its consequences are generally more devastating because racism easily becomes permanently institutionalized and legalized and in its extreme manifestations can lead to systematic persecution and even genocide.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church deplores all forms of racism, including the political policy of apartheid with its enforced segregation and legalized discrimination.

Seventh-day Adventists want to be faithful to the reconciling ministry assigned to the Christian church. As a worldwide community of faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church wishes to witness to and exhibit in her own ranks the unity and love that transcend racial differences and overcome past alienation between races.

Scripture plainly teaches that every person was created in the image of God, who “made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). Racial discrimination is an offense against our fellow human beings, who were created in God’s image. In Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Galatians 3:28). Therefore, racism is really a heresy and in essence a form of idolatry, for it limits the fatherhood of God by denying the brotherhood of all mankind and by exalting the superiority of one’s own race.

The standard for Seventh-day Adventist Christians is acknowledged in the Church’s Bible-based Fundamental Belief No. 13, “Unity in the Body of Christ.” Here it is pointed out: “In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation.”

Any other approach destroys the heart of the Christian gospel.

Editorial

In United States, where the value attached to the concept of equality is so important, it is surprising that universal access to basic health care remains elusive. In our past we faced similar issues revolving around equality of access and care within the realms of education and security. We decided, as a nation, not simply to provide but to insist that our children be educated and that our communities maintain a public police force. Today our citizens have basic rights to be educated and to be kept safe. This is true regardless of where one lives.

I have lived in Native Alaskan villages where tax dollars have built multi-million dollar educational facilities for the children of the village. Such facilities built in areas like Southern California would be overflowing with students, but in most of these Alaskan villages precious few students make the entire trip from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Many today argue that it is time to establish a similar right to health care for our nation. Of course the questions abound, not least of which is how to afford it. We can't possibly afford an equally equipped and staffed facility for each and every village, town, and city. Even establishing regional facilities would prove difficult and costly. None of the options before us will be easily accomplished, yet, as a nation we must move toward some sort of universal coverage. We have no other acceptable alternative.

Moving forward toward universal health-care coverage should not just depend on the conceptual development of a "right" for all our citizens. Good arguments can be made both for and against a right to health care. The concepts of equality and social justice are widely enough established to help move our society forward on this matter. At least two issues currently push this agenda. First is the reality of tens of millions of our people with no health-care coverage and at times little or no access to health care. Second is the poor financial condition of the many hospitals and clinics that extend themselves to help those without insurance coverage.

THE DATA

Those who argue against universal access do not bother to dispute the data. Members of our society who are marginalized by racial or economic factors simply do not receive adequate access to health care. Those who suffer from poverty, homelessness, and racism have significantly lower chance of getting the health care they need to get and remain healthy. Among the white population of America 13.6 percent go without health insurance and this rate increases to 19 percent for blacks and a staggering 33.2 percent for Hispanics (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002a). Additionally, the problem of caring for illegal immigrants in so many regions across the nation is an issue that completely eludes compilers of census data. Yet there little doubt that illegal immigrants are a part of the equation that cannot be ignored. It is true that lacking insurance does not necessarily mean these people cannot get care; there are public clinics where help can be found. But these facilities are sorely inadequate to the task of covering the 40 million plus people who are uninsured.

We could spend a staggering amount of time detailing the data and the nature of the problem of the lack of access. Rather, in this issue of *UPDATE* we offer two official statements from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on the topics of homelessness and poverty, and racism. The General Conference generated these statements as a broad means of positioning Seventh-day Adventist belief and practice regarding these issues. Andy Lampkin, PhD, teaching at Oakwood College, addresses his analysis to the document on racism. Paul Dybdahl, PhD, from Walla Walla College, writes to the issue of homelessness and poverty.

This editorial seeks to place these two issues within the more limited context of social justice and equality of access to

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Update

Volume 19, Number 2 (June, 2004)

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Editorial, continued...

health care. One of the ways that Seventh-day Adventists can help our society to deal with the problem of inadequate health-care coverage is to maintain existing ways and develop new ways of helping these marginalized groups attain the care they need.

THE RESPONSE

Nationally, Seventh-day Adventist health-care facilities fit into the routine structures of providing health care to the people of America. Our nation has developed some means of addressing the problem of failure of access. Public clinics that require little or no fees for service do exist. Medicare and Medicaid do provide a great deal of help. Additionally, federal legislation requires medical facilities to treat anyone in an emergency situation (the so-called EMTALA legislation). But these systems are not enough. America must do more to provide access. We must establish some minimum standard of care available to every citizen of the United States. There must also be some level of medical response available in times of emergency for non-citizens. Beyond these universal coverage standards, additional levels of care should be available to those who can purchase insurance for coverage that is considered non-elective. Beyond this, those who can afford it should be able to spend their money on the type of health care they wish.

The comparison to education in this country can provide some modeling for what many are calling a “two-tier” system of health-care coverage. In fact, what I have just described is a three or four-tier system but the idea is the same. We do insist that our society offer public schooling for our children. We all pay for it with our tax dollars whether or not we have children to educate. As parents we have no choice but to educate our children. We do have choices as to how we proceed to educate them. We can home school if we wish; and we have developed high quality private schools. Not everyone can afford private school; those who can have every right to use their money as they see fit in the education of their children.

Seventh-day Adventism has invested itself heavily in the private educational system in this country. Similarly, we have invested ourselves in the provision of health care in this country. As such, we are relatively free to adjust our provision of health care in ways similar to our provision of education. Every church school that I have ever been associated with accepts some students who cannot fully pay for their education. Similarly, our hospitals, if they are not already doing so, can and should provide some health care to those who cannot afford it. Obviously, this would be one small step toward resolving a giant issue.

In this issue of *UPDATE* we have also included a statement from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists that is designed to help hospitals develop appropriate administrative operating principles. As a faith-based, not for profit, institution we are in a unique and difficult position. While we seek to hold on to our altruistic and medical missionary ethos we must also operate in a business world of bottom lines and budgets. The balance necessary to fulfill both needs is no small task and our hospital boards and administrators need all the help and encouragement we can give them.

Our medical institutions can and must work within the health-care coverage system, as it exists today. Within the existing structures we can extend ourselves to helping those marginalized by homelessness, poverty, racism, and immigration laws. But we must also push our nation to face the issues of lack of universal coverage. We should push our legislators and policy makers to do the hard work required to come up with a standard level of care available to all citizens. As a country which values social justice and equality we are morally responsible to do no less. Additionally, we should push for a system that demands emergency health-care services to illegal immigrants. Some argue that this coverage should be extended to basic care because in the end it will cost us less to provide care for such people. This debate should be a part of the overall discussion our nation must have in order to face and resolve our health-care crisis. I don't like the word crisis and typically don't use it, but it does describe the current health-care system in America. It is time now, to do something about it.



Mark Carr, PhD, MDiv
Co-director, Center for Christian Bioethics

CORRECTION

The Center for Christian Bioethics wishes to correct a huge oversight from the last issue of *UPDATE* (19.2). The article “Examining the Ethics of Praying With Patients” by Gerald R. Winslow and Betty Wehtje Winslow was originally published in *Hollistic Nursing Practice*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2003. We apologize for the oversight. We greatly appreciate the permission granted by publishers Lippincott Williams and Wilkins to reprint the Winslow's article in *UPDATE* and regret the credit oversight.

Review and Critique of “A Statement on Racism”

Andy Lampkin, PhD
assistant professor of religion,
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“... now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is the time to make justice a reality for all God’s children.”

**Excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,
“I Have a Dream” speech at the march on Washington, August 28, 1963.**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its leadership are to be commended for addressing, in the form of a social position statement, one of the most disruptive issues in North American society—racism. Racism is not exclusively a North American phenomenon; it is a global phenomenon that is closely akin to nationalism, tribalism, religious sectarianism, xenophobia, and other related intolerances. These “isms” and other intolerances lead to destructive and exploitive patterns of human relationships, which frustrate human fulfillment, spiritual development, and threaten world stability.

The manifestations of racism in the form of hatred and prejudice toward another are dire enough to frustrate human fulfillment. Nevertheless, when racism takes on an institutional form, it not only frustrates human fulfillment on the individual level, but threatens the very stability of a society, which can further lead to international instability. For instance, the racism and nationalism of the Nazi party led to the hysterical destruction of more than six million Jews, a world war, and years of political and social instability. Even when the consequences of racism are not global, they nevertheless wreak havoc in human communities. This is indeed the case of apartheid in South Africa, Jim Crow in America, and ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in the world. In all these situations, racism caused death, sickness, poverty, humiliation, and segregation relegating certain persons to second-class citizen status, oppressed by social convention. It is in light of the many great harms of racism that the position statement of the Church should be interpreted.

A careful reading of the Church’s position statement reveals four basic movements. First, the statement presents a description of the nature of racism. Racism is described as “an age old phenomenon based on ignorance, fear, estrangement, and false pride...” Although the statement itself does not explore the meanings of ignorance, fear, estrangements, and false pride in light of racism, these

terms are nevertheless instructive. The ignorance of racism is coupled with false ideology—a sense of racial superiority. Its fears are devoted to a distorted worldview of tribal superiority in the spheres of morality, intellectual development, and technological advancement. Its estrangement is confused by a deep sense of abandonment and longing for authentic community with the human family. Its false pride is confounded by a distorted sense of the communal self.

Second, the statement appropriately recognizes the demoralizing consequences of racism, which can range from systematic discrimination and maltreatment to mass subjugation and genocide. There is also recognition of the systemic and institutional character that racism takes. Third, the Church clearly states its strong position toward racism: The Seventh-day Adventist Church deplores all forms of racism, including the political policy of apartheid with its enforced segregation and legalized discrimination. This position is to be commended in its rejection of all form of racism, subtle and blatant—institutional and individual.

Fourth, the statement provides biblical and theological warrants for the position adopted. The basic biblical and theological position the paper captures is that all humanity is created in the image of God. This theological warrant leads to a long held Christian theological commitment that all humanity belongs to the family of God. As a theological consequence, racism and its destructive cousin racial discrimination are an offense and affront to the family of God. This is why the statement rightly concludes that racism is “heresy and idolatry,” because racism rejects the “fatherhood of God through its denying the brotherhood of all [humankind].”

Fundamental belief No. 13, of Seventh-day Adventists, Unity in the Body of Christ, is offered as further theological support. This statement affirms the oneness of humanity in Christ, and stipulates that all distinctions of nationality, race, ethnicity, educational achievement, eco-

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Review of “A Statement on Racism,” continued...

conomic status and other arbitrary distinctions among the human family lose their persuasiveness in light of the ministry, message, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When fundamental belief No. 13 is considered in light of the statement on racism, it helps to illuminate the repugnant quality of racist ideology.

It is important to note that despite the 1985 statement on racism, racism and its cousin racial discrimination, and other forms of intolerance still remains entrenched within human communities. Intolerance is not easy to eradicate, yet the human cost of racism and intolerance can be reduced within the human family. It is important to note that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not alone in addressing racism. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights “solemnly affirms the necessity of speedily eliminating racial discrimination throughout the world in all of its forms and manifestations....” However, this same body remains challenged and perplexed by the complexity and density of modern racism in its efforts to advance its... “faith in the fundamental human rights and dignity and worth of the human person” and as it continues to promote peace, justice, equality, and works toward the elimination of racism. Taking into consideration that others are engaged in the struggle to eliminate racism, it is imperative that Seventh-day Adventists partner with others in this significant struggle.

Reflecting on this position statement, in principle, is sufficient; but what it lacks is an adequate programmatic component, a complementary social policy that corresponds to its ethos. The position statement meets an important purpose by providing an ideal starting point for careful discussion, on the one hand. On the other hand, the statement is excessively descriptive and explanatory, lacking persuasive power for social change—the statement has a limited ability to call persons to action and responsibility. The statement fails to help church members exercise their religious duty not providing guidance on how to work toward the eradication of racism and/or lessen the social cost of racism. Finally, the statement fails to call the Adventist community to responsibility in dealing with its own discriminatory past.

Furthermore, taking the position statement seriously,

the Church must commit its resources to addressing racism. It should take immediate steps to tackle racism within its powers and influence. This can easily be done through the Church’s proclamation, teaching and educational ministries. For instance, the Christian message of the oneness of humanity is now affirmed by technological explorations and mapping of the human genome. Science has confirmed what Christians have always known, that humanity constitutes one human family. Consequently, through education and curriculum, we can teach the oneness of humanity, reminding us of the horrors of racism and its modern crimes against humanity such as slavery, the Jewish holocaust, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, traffick-ing of persons, and other ethnic conflicts which can prove beneficial in the eradication of racism. Also in the educational context, difference and diversity can be taught as strengths and serve as a starting point for exploration into the human spirit. Moreover, an informational campaign could be advanced and geared toward the elimination of racial discrimination and prejudice; such a campaign could seek to promote understanding and tolerance among racial and ethnic groups.

What is necessary is a shift from the tendencies of theologians to remain excessively descriptive and explanatory, toward working to improve social conditions that frustrate human fulfillment and destroy the image of God in human beings. What is fundamentally necessary as complementary to the statement is a programmatic approach to the elimination of racism and the promotion of reverence for the universal value and dignity and worth of all persons. As the framers of the position statement so eloquently articulated in the postscript, *any other approach destroys the heart of the Christian gospel.*

“Science has confirmed what Christians have always known, that humanity constitutes one human family.”

Andy Lampkin, PhD, is an assistant professor of religion at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama.

Homelessness and Poverty

This public statement was released by the General Conference president, Neal C. Wilson, after consultation with the 16 world vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on July 5, 1990, at the General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In a world ravaged by sin, the bitter fruits of greed, war, and ignorance are multiplying. Even in so called “affluent societies” the homelessness and the poor are growing populations. More than 10,000 people starve to death every day. Two billion more are malnourished, and thousands more go blind annually because of dietary deficiency. Approximately two-thirds of the world’s population remains caught in a cycle of hunger-sickness-death.

There are some who bear liability for their condition, but the majority of these individuals and families are destituted by political, economic, cultural, or social events largely beyond their control.

Historically, those in such circumstances have found succor and advocacy in the hearts of the followers of Jesus Christ. Caring institutions are in many cases begun by the church and later assumed by government agencies, or vice versa. These agencies, aside from any ideological altruism, reflect society’s recognition that it is in its own best interest to deal compassionately with the less fortunate.

Social scientists tell us that a number of ills find fertile ground in the conditions of poverty. Feelings of hopelessness, alienation, envy and resentment often lead to antisocial attitudes and behavior. Then society is left to pay for the after-effects of such ills through its courts, prisons, and welfare systems. Poverty and misfortune as such do not cause crime and provide no excuse for it. But when the claims of compassion are denied, discouragement, and even resentment are likely to follow.

The claims upon the Christian’s compassion are not ill-founded. They do not spring from any legal or even social contract theory, but from the clear teaching of scripture: “He has showed you, O man, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 7:8 RSV).

The fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah is precious to Seventh-day Adventists. We see our responsibility in this chapter as those raised up to be “The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in” (verse 12). The call is to restore and “to loose the bands of wickedness...to deal thy bread to the hungry...bring the poor that are cast out to thy house...when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him” (verses 6, 7). So as repairers of the breach, we are to restore and care for the poor. If we carry out the principles of the law of God in acts of mercy and love, we will represent the character of God to the world.

In effecting Christ’s ministry today, we must do as He did, and not only preach the gospel to the poor, but heal the sick, feed the hungry, and raise the downcast (see Luke 4:18, 19; Matthew 14:14). But verse 16 explains that it was so that “they need not go away.” Christ’s own example is determinative for His followers.

In Christ’s response to Judas’ feigned concern for the poor: “For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me” (Matthew 26:11 RSV), we are reminded that it is the “Living Bread” that people most desperately need. However, we also recognize the inseparables between the physical and the spiritual. By supporting those church and public policies that relieve suffering, and by individual and united efforts of compassion, we augment that very spiritual endeavor.

Review and Critique of the Seventh-day Adventist Policy Statement Titled “Homelessness and Poverty”

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From the 1980s to the present, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has periodically developed position statements on specific issues of general public concern. These non-creedal statements address a wide range of topics such as birth control, AIDS, human cloning, gambling, literacy, racism, and the environment.¹

At the 1990 General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana, the Seventh-day Adventist Church released such an official public statement titled “Homelessness and Poverty.”² This brief statement begins by citing statistics that demonstrate the pervasive reality

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Review of "Statement on Homelessness," continued...
of global poverty and its disastrous effects. Second, the statement notes that the poor themselves are seldom to blame for their poverty, but rather, suffer because of events beyond their control. Third, the statement argues that, based upon Scripture, Christians must compassionately work to "restore and care for the poor." Finally, the statement attempts to establish a connection between care for physical needs and care for spiritual needs.

These four points are key, and thus, the statement should serve as a helpful introduction to the issue. One could wish that all religious organizations would see fit to address such real-world issues in such a direct manner.

There are, however, several rather minor changes which would strengthen the statement. Perhaps most obvious is the need for a title which better reflects the content of the statement itself. "Homelessness and Poverty," despite its title, focuses almost exclusively on world hunger. The problem of homelessness is largely ignored and the widespread effects of poverty in general are not addressed.

Another weakness lies in the dated and inaccurate statistics cited at the beginning of "Homelessness and Poverty." According to the statement, "more than 10,000 people starve to death every day." A more recent estimate from the United Nations (UN) indicates that 20,000 people die daily from hunger or hunger related causes.³ The "Homelessness and Poverty" statement suggests that 2 billion are malnourished, while the UN places the figure at slightly less than 1 billion.⁴ Not only should the current statistics be corrected, but other pertinent figures on homelessness (1.3 billion without adequate shelter, including 349 million homeless/family-less children) and poverty in general (more than 120,000 poverty induced deaths each day) could be shared.⁵

Beyond these simple editorial changes lie at least three additional areas where more careful reflection and greater emphasis is needed. First, the linkage between physical and spiritual ministry deserves fuller treatment. In "Homelessness and Poverty," work to relieve physical suffering is said to "augment" the spiritual ministry of the Church. This raises a number of questions which the statement does not answer, but which the Church must face. Does physical ministry augment spiritual ministry, or is the opposite the case? Is it even possible to separate the two? Should the Church focus more on minis-

tering to physical and social needs (through hospitals, schools, and disaster relief, etc.), or should such efforts be set aside for more direct spiritual ministry (satellite evangelism, for example)? Should the Church directly fund strictly "humanitarian" work, or must it insist on an overt spiritual component? In short, does the world need Bible studies or food and shelter? While full treatment of such questions is beyond the purview of the "Homeless and Poverty" statement, such questions demand consideration by any Christian or Christian organization that desires to communicate a wholistic gospel.

A second weakness in the statement lies in its emphasis on "compassion" and "care" for the poor through "acts of mercy and love." This pastoral appeal conjures up images of food and clothing distribution or basic health-care clinics in needy areas. Few would argue against such needed and worthy acts of com-

passion. Even non-Christians would agree that such activities are praiseworthy.

What is not included in the statement, however, is a more basic (and perhaps equally needed) appeal for Christians to be actively engaged in efforts to dismantle social and political structures which cause and perpetuate homelessness and poverty.

This emphasis on destroying the structures of sin which cause poverty is problematic for Seventh-day Adventism, how-

ever. Traditionally, the Church as a whole has been reluctant to employ its collective power to effect change in society. In the United States, Adventists have long insisted on the clear separation of Church and State, a stance with some obvious benefits. This position, however, has led many Adventists to shy away from political involvement and activism. Some within the Church are reluctant to cooperate fully with social service or government agencies, fearful that these "secular" agencies may begin to influence and even damage the spiritual work of the Church.

While this traditional perspective has its place, Seventh-day Adventists should also remember the example of the Old Testament prophets who did not hesitate to warn the powerful and wealthy of the consequences of ignoring the cries of the powerless and living in such a way that the poor were kept in perpetual want. Amos informed the rich and powerful in Egypt and Philistia that God knew of their oppressive practices, and as a result, "An enemy will overrun the land; he will pull down

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*"...does the world
need Bible studies
or food and shelter?"*

Review of "Statement on Homelessness," continued...

your strongholds and plunder your fortresses" (Amos 3: 11). Later, Amos describes wealthy women who oppress and crush the needy and compares these women to cows, which the Lord will one day take "away with hooks, the last of you with fish-hooks" (Amos 4:2). The prophet Micah likewise prophesies against those who, "because it is in their power to do it," pervert justice and "defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance" (Micah 2: 1-2). Clearly, God's messengers spoke to those in power and called them to cease oppressive practices and establish justice for all. Christians today must do likewise.

This need to dismantle the structures of sin can be illustrated by exploring the issue of contemporary slavery. Today, there are approximately 27 million people "who are bought and sold, held captive, brutalized, exploited for profit."⁶ This means that "there are more slaves today than were seized from Africa in four centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade."⁷ In most cases, slavery is closely related to poverty in that "vulnerable people are lured in debt slavery in the expectation of a better life."⁸

While most Christians would be shocked and horrified at such information, how many would consider serious action to halt slavery? What is the Church doing about the problem? Apparently, it is easier to discuss the poisonous effects of past slavery than it is to combat current slavery. In fact,

the most common response to contemporary slavery may be simply to continue to cheerfully enjoy commercial products that may have been partly produced by slave labor—automobiles, sugar, cotton, fireworks, and chocolate, for example.⁹

Part of the reason for inaction is simply that bringing change to a global problem is difficult and will likely require unified efforts to bring economic and political reforms. However, it is this sort of activity that should be encouraged in a statement dealing with the Christian response to poverty.

Christians must acknowledge that compassion may best be expressed through activism such as speaking out at a town hall meeting, lobbying government officials, leading a boycott of a company because of its oppressive labor practices, starting a school in an urban slum, or establishing a cottage industry that trains and hires those trapped in a cycle of poverty. In the long term, such activities would likely do more to alleviate the problem of poverty than volunteering at a soup kitchen or delivering Thanksgiving baskets to the "less fortunate."

A third area where the "Homelessness and Poverty" statement could be strengthened is simply this: the call to compassion and care may too conveniently avoid biblical warnings on the accumulation of wealth. A statement on "Wealth" may be more necessary than a statement on "Homelessness and Poverty."

In 1995, the Seventh-day Adventist Church released "A Statement on the Environment." This helpful statement noted the connection between the "egocentric pursuit of getting more and more" and the destruction of the natural world. Instead, the Church advocated "a simple, wholesome lifestyle, where people do not step on the treadmill of unbridled consumerism, goods-getting, and production of waste."¹⁰

A similar, yet more forceful appeal would strengthen the statement on "Homelessness and Poverty." Many Christians meticulously avoid unseemly sin and hold orthodox theological

positions, yet, with clear consciences, live in wasteful opulence while others gradually die of malnutrition and exposure. The Old Testament bears sobering words to those who are intent on observing their "religious" duties, but who close their eyes and ears to social injustice. In Amos, God speaks to his chosen people and says, "I despise your religious feasts... Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them... Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the

music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-ending stream" (Amos 5:21-24). Clearly, even correct "spiritual" practices (such as the observance of holy days, sacrifices, and appropriate worship music) are of no value to God if worshippers have turned their backs on justice (See Micah 6:6-8).

In light of this Old Testament teaching, it should not be surprising to find a similar emphasis in the New Testament. Jesus did not merely ask his followers to feel compassion for the poor, he also gave the call to sell all and give to the poor. It was Jesus, who, after pronouncing a blessing on the poor and the hungry, said, "But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry" (Luke 6: 24-25). According to James, "Religion that God our Father accepts as true and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).

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"Part of the reason for inaction is simply that bringing change to a global problem is difficult."

Review of "Statement on Homelessness," continued...

The call for sacrifice and self-denial is perhaps what wealthy Christians (from a global perspective, this would include all who have food, shelter, and clothing) most need to hear. All such Christians must face the question of how they should order life so as to create time, energy, and money to bring relief to those who are suffering. This question is not a mere side-issue, but is central to what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

When Jesus described the coming of the Son of Man, he spoke of a King who gathers the nations for judgment and divides them as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. At that judgment, the righteous are declared as such, not because of their orthodox theology, but because they cared for the hungry and thirsty. They provided a home for the stranger, clothes for the naked, and ministered to the sick and imprisoned. In doing so, they served the King.

So, while "Homelessness and Poverty" is a good start, there is much more that could be said. To be more accurate, there is much more that must be done. God desires action which goes beyond periodic donations of canned soup and used clothing, or official statements on poverty from Christian churches. Instead, all Christians must acknowledge the awful reality of poverty in a sinful world. Then, individually and corporately, they must more clearly reflect the values and emulate the actions of the One who was anointed "to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). As the Church collectively works on behalf of the poor and oppressed, they will in fact be serving their King.

¹See "Official Statements," 2004, <www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/index.html> for a complete listing of the issues addressed.

²"Homelessness and Poverty," 5 July 1990, <www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main_stat!3.html>. (August 17, 2004).

³The Hunger Project, "Frequently Asked Questions," 2004. <www.thp.org> (August 17, 2004). This 20,000 figure is from 2002.

⁴Ibid.

⁵World Evangelization Resource Center, "Today's Global Human Need," <www.gem-werc.org/lgd/gd18.pdf> (August 18, 2004). These are 2001 figures compiled by David Barrett and Todd Johnson.

⁶Andrew Cockburn. "21st Century Slaves," *National Geographic* (Sept 2003),2. More information on slavery today is available from an organization such as Free the Slaves <www.freetheslaves.net/home.php>.

⁷Ibid., Table of Contents.

⁸Ibid.,9.

⁹Ibid.,20. It is a tragic irony that many Americans celebrate their freedom and independence with fireworks which have been produced by slaves.

¹⁰Seventh-day Adventist Church, "A Statement on the Environment," <www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main_stat9.html> (August 17,2004).



Paul B. Dybdahl, PhD, MDiv, is a religion instructor at Walla Walla College, Walla Walla, Washington. Dr. Dybdahl recently completed his doctorate degree in missiology. Prior to pursuing his doctorate degree Dr. Dybdahl worked as a pastor in the Oregon Conference.

News from the Center for Christian Bioethics

There are many events coming up in the future for the Center for Christian Bioethics please refer to the events list below. To help with all the planning and with the regular office work we've hired a new graduate assistant. Deanna Berger comes to us from the School of Public Health. She has completed her certificate of humanitarian assistance and is completing her masters in public health. In addition to her graduate work she is also finishing her nursing degree. She is a wonderful asset to the staff here at the Center.

We are also happy to welcome two new students into the masters of arts program for biomedical and clinical ethics, Sarah Gebauer and Divya Reddy. Ms. Gebauer comes to us from Vancouver, British Columbia. She received her bachelor of arts degree in 1999 from the University of Victoria in history with a minor in philosophy. She is anxious to begin her study in biomedical and clinical ethics having worked in administration in the department of medicine at the University of British Columbia.

Ms. Reddy comes to us from University of California, San Diego. She completed her bachelors of art degree this past June in third world studies. Ms. Reddy also has a diverse background and a clear sense of what she wants to do with her life. Both Ms. Gebauer and Ms. Reddy bring with them uniquely individual experiences which will unquestionably provide for thoughtful new perspectives to the program.

Welcome students!

Calendar of Center for Christian Bioethics events

Fall Quarter Bioethics Grand Rounds: All bioethics grand rounds are scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month beginning in October 2004, 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. in the A-Level Amphitheater, Loma Linda University Medical Center. (Due to seismic retrofitting the October grand rounds session will be held in Alumni Lecture Hall in the Alumni Hall for Basic Sciences Building.) All bioethics grand rounds are offered at no cost and are open to the public. One (1) CME credit is offered to physicians.

October 13, 2004
Division of Neonatology
“How Young is Too Young”

November 10, 2004
Wil Alexander, PhD
“The Nature and Nurture of Spirituality in Human Being and Becoming”

December 1, 2004
Gerald Winslow, PhD
“Access to Dental Care”

Contributor’s Convocation: Saturday November 6, 2004 at the Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. This year we will be celebrating the 20th year of the Center for Christian Bioethics.

2005 National Bioethics Conference: This year’s national bioethics conference will be February 28, 2005, to March 1, 2005, in Wong Kerlee International Conference Center and held in conjunction with the Columbia Union College. This conference will explore the sociopolitical dynamic of Seventh-day Adventism in the United States, particularly as it relates to the practice of law. Seventh-day Adventist lawyers, politicians, physicians, academics, students, and ethicists will gather and explore issues revolving around law, social policy, ethics, and medicine. Attention will be given to both the questions of just access to health care generally and to the questions arising in a disaster or terrorist events from the tension between the rights of citizens and the need to protect the health of a community. Seventh-day Adventist medical and educational institutions have been involved in the distribution of the health-care goods of our society. Has this involvement been mindful of the legal and social aspects of public policy that shapes how our citizens gain access to health-care services? More and more Adventists are practicing law and devoting their careers to forming public policy. What is the relation of the values and vision of Adventism to the issues Adventist attorneys and policymakers face in their work?

2005 Annual Provonsha Lecture: The 2005 Provonsha Lecturer is James F. Childress, PhD. Dr. Childress is the John Allen Hollingsworth professor of ethics and professor of medical education at the University of Virginia. He also serves as the director of the Institute for Practical Ethics and Public Life. The Provonsha Lecture is open to the public at no cost to attendees.

Spirituality and Health Conference 2005: Last year’s collaboration with the School of Public Health for the Healthy People Conference 2004 was so successful that we are collaborating again on a new conference scheduled for May 17 and 18, 2005. Watch for more information on the conference as the date draws nearer.

Operating Principles for Health-Care Institutions

This statement was released by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council session in Nairobi, Kenya, October, 1988.

PRINCIPLES

1) Christ ministered to the whole person. Following His example, the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church includes a ministry of healing to the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. The ministry of healing includes care and compassion for the sick and the suffering. It also includes the maintenance of health. Teaching the positive benefits of following the laws of health, the interrelationship of spiritual and natural laws, man's accountability to these laws, and the grace of Christ which assures victorious living are integrated in the ministry of healing.

2) Health-care institutions (hospitals, medical/dental clinics, nursing and retirement homes, rehabilitation centers, etc.) function as an integral part of the total ministry of the Church and follow church standards including maintaining the sacredness of the Sabbath by promoting a Sabbath atmosphere for staff and patients, avoiding routine business, elective diagnostic services, and elective therapies on Sabbath. These standards also include the promotion of an ovo-lactovegetarian diet free of stimulants and alcohol and an environment free of tobacco smoke. Control of appetite shall be promoted, use of drugs with a potential for abuse shall be controlled, and techniques involving the control of one mind by another shall not be permitted. The institutions are governed as a function of the Church with activities and practices clearly identified as the unique Christian witness of Seventh-day Adventists.

3) In harmony with Christ's reaffirmation of the dignity of man and His demonstration of love, which forgives and cares regardless of the past and maintains the right for individual choice in the future, Seventh-day Adventist health-care institutions give high priority to personal dignity and human relationships. This includes appropriate diagnosis and treatment by competent personnel; a safe, caring environment conducive to the healing of mind, body, and spirit; and education in healthful habits of living. It also includes supportive care of the patient and family through the dying process.

4) Health-care policies and medical procedures must always reflect a high regard and concern for the value of human life as well as individual dignity.

5) Seventh-day Adventist health-care institutions operate as part of the community and nation in which they function. In representing the love of Christ to these communities, the health of the community and the nation is a concern of each institution. Laws of the land are respected and the regulations for the operation of institutions and licensors of personnel are

followed.

6) The institutions welcome clergy of all creeds to visit their parishioners.

7) The mission of institutions in representing Christ to the community, and especially to those who utilize their services, is fulfilled through a compassionate, competent staff which upholds the practices and standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the development of the staff institutions regularly schedule classes which assist the staff in keeping up to date professionally, growing in understanding, and in sharing the love of God. Long-range staff planning supports formal education of prospective staff including utilizing an institution for clinical practice for students.

8) Institutions must operate in a financially responsible manner and in harmony with the working policy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

9) Primary prevention and health education shall be an integral part of the health emphasis of health-care institutions.

10) The administration and operation of individual health-care institutions shall be conducted in consultation with the health and temperance department on a regular and continuing basis. Communication shall include the mission/conference, union, division, and General Conference health and temperance departments as circumstances and occasion may indicate.

ESTABLISHMENT AND CLOSURE OF HEALTH-CARE INSTITUTIONS

1) When consideration is being given to the opening of a new institution, building a major addition, or evaluating the continued operation of an existing institution, consideration shall be given to:

a. The long-range plans of the Church in that area and whether the institution facilitates the mission of the Church.

b. The health-care needs of the area.

c. The available resources, especially finances, personnel, and equipment, to operate the institution.

d. Government regulations for the operation of the institution.

e. Government regulations for closing an institution.

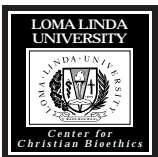
f. The impact which the opening or closing of the institution will make on the Church in the area and on the community at large.

g. The educational needs of the Church.



**In Memory of Jack Provonsha
1920-2004**

Next issue of UPDATE: a tribute to Dr. Jack W. Provonsha



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