

The Adventist Theological Society: An Open and Shut Case

To the Editor: Your brief news report in Vol. 19, No. 5, seemed accurate enough, but perhaps gave the impression that members of the Adventist Theological Society are more exclusive than they intend to be. Though I have never received an invitation to join the Adventist Theological Society, I did receive a personal invitation from a member-friend to attend their September 9-10, 1989 meeting at the Mid-American Union Conference office in Lincoln, Nebraska. I rearranged my schedule so that I could attend because most members are friends of mine, because I want to foster unity, and because I hope to both learn and be inspired.

I still have not been invited to join the society, and was therefore excluded from the business meetings of the Adventist Theological Society. However, my attendance at the public meetings was rewarding. I renewed friendship with individuals from Southern College, the seminary, and the General Conference (the primary institutions represented). I sensed my participation was greeted with a positive spirit of unity. And I was both edified and inspired (the occasion reminded me of a mini-campmeeting). I found leaders of the Adventist Theological Society to be sincere and gracious. I take them at their word that they eschew political activism in favor of dialogue, from conservative presuppositions, on Adventism's fundamentals.

The only negative thing about the whole experience was the decision of the Adventist Theological Society to have their next meeting in November in San Diego, during the precise days the Andrews Society for Religious Studies, (till now the principal annual gathering of the Adventist religious teachers) was already scheduled to meet in Anaheim. I think this to be most unfortunate for the Adventist Theological Society, the Andrews Society for Religious Studies, and the church. Such a course of action, if continued, will confirm *Spectrum's* prophecy, "At this point, it appears that most Adventist religious teachers and scholars in North America will belong to one of these theological organizations, not both."

What is to be gained by forcing Bible scholars to make

such a choice? Do not both groups have something both to teach and to learn? I appeal to all sides not to hasten a schism, but rather to work toward the unity in Adventism for which Christ prayed in John 17.

Lawrence T. Geraty, President
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To the Editor: On behalf of the Adventist Theological Society I wish to express my appreciation for your coverage of our organization in your recent issue. Two points of clarification:

(1) Our meetings are open to anyone; it's the business meetings that are for members only. (2) There are religion teachers and scholars who belong to both societies.

Hope this will help to answer inquiries that might come to you.

God bless you in your ministry.

Jack J. Blanco, President
Adventist Theological Society

A Two-Term Limit For Elected Officers?

To the Editor: I think the Adventist church would benefit from a policy that limited the service of elected officers to two terms in any one position. This period is long enough to allow each leader to contribute fully to a developing program, but short enough to prevent stagnation.

This plan would circulate those with outstanding talents so that many sectors of the field could profit from their ministry. It would also insure that we have a constant influx of new ideas and leadership to keep the church invigorated and on the cutting edge.

It would be well to implement this policy at all levels, from the local conference to the General Conference administration, beginning with the General Conference session in 1990.

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