

It was 10:15 a.m., Tuesday, March 16, 1897, when the General Conference (GC) Committee convened in Battle Creek, Michigan, for their fourth meeting of the spring session, with General Conference President G. A. Irwin as chair. Besides 12 members of the committee, six invitees were present, an unusually large number, including G. W. Caviness, president of Battle Creek College, and W. E. A. Aul, a mathemat-

the board. The GC Committee regarded this as a crisis, and now as “guests” of church leaders, Caviness and Aul were being called to respond to allegations about a rigged election.<sup>3</sup>

Two years earlier, in 1895, reform-minded delegates to the GC session directed the college administration to re-engineer the school so it would better fulfill church leaders’ understanding of Ellen White’s testimonies. They wanted greater emphasis on agriculture, more-

democratic integrity.<sup>4</sup> The failure to achieve closer cooperation with the sanitarium was particularly irksome to Dr. John H. Kellogg, who wielded no small influence in the community as well as the church at large.

The meeting that March morning was not pleasant. A. T. Jones, a newcomer to the GC Committee, spoke first. A 47-year-old former United States Army sergeant, he employed unvarnished rhetoric. In his view, the issue was of concern



Stained-glass window, college church, Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

# WHO'S IN CHARGE?

## OBSERVATIONS ON GOVERNANCE

### IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION

BY FLOYD GREENLEAF

**HOLSER'S QUESTION OF WHO HAD AUTHORITY OVER THE CHURCH'S EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS HAD BEEN LONG IN THE MAKING, AND SOME WILL PROBABLY ARGUE THAT IT HAS NEVER BEEN TRULY RESOLVED.**

ics teacher at the college. Also among the guests were W. W. Prescott and W. C. White.<sup>1</sup>

This meeting immediately followed a series of gatherings by the stockholders of the Educational Society. Usually this group met twice in quick succession to conduct their annual business: first to hear reports and then to elect a board of trustees for Battle Creek College.<sup>2</sup> Events went awry in 1897, and they had to meet several times. Prior to the election of trustees, which was ordinarily a perfunctory exercise, Caviness and Aul had collected sufficient proxy votes to replace some of the regularly nominated candidates and secure seats for themselves on

effective worker-preparation courses, and closer cooperation with Battle Creek Sanitarium. Church historian E. K. Vande Vere suggests that church leaders thought Caviness, with Aul's support, was dragging his feet on the expected reform. In Vande Vere's opinion, Caviness and Aul believed that the changes outlined by the GC committee would compromise aca-

to the entire church because problems at Battle Creek College were demoralizing the church's educational program.

Caviness defensively responded that the stockholders' meeting in question was “no worse” than some others, including one the previous year with voting “irregularities” on changes in the Educational Society's constitution. No one

had objected at that time. Jones could not have missed Caviness' implication. Why raise questions now? What would this accomplish?

H. P. Holser, a member of the GC Committee and president of the Central European Conference, was unconvinced by Jones' attempt to make this a church issue rather than an institutional question. He asked why the GC Committee should be discussing this matter. Irwin, Prescott, and White all jumped in, explaining that "there was a difference between the Committee assuming authority over matters outside its jurisdiction, and giving counsel when solicited by individuals or institutions."<sup>5</sup>

Since Holser's was a minority opinion, the meeting proceeded despite his protest. Like Caviness, Aul refused to back down, claiming that his actions were justified and that no one had influenced him to act as he did. This, in effect, denied any collusion between himself and the college president. The GC Committee was not making much headway.

**A**fter learning that the next meeting of the GC Committee would deal with education more broadly, Holser suggested that they spend some time studying Ellen White's testimonies relating to schools. After doing so the next evening, they decided that on the following Monday they would visit the college.

The recording secretary did not say whether the committee members intended their visit to be a *tour de force*, but its net effect was to administer the

## BY THE TIME OF THE 1897 CAVINESS EPISODE, CHURCH LEADERS . . . REALIZED THAT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE NEEDED MORE THAN MORAL SUASION TO CREATE ANY SEMBLANCE OF A SYSTEM AMONG THE SCHOOLS.

*coup de grace* to the Caviness administration. Two days later, Irwin announced the resignation of the college president. While the college board had already invited E. A. Sutherland, president of Walla Walla College, to replace Caviness, Irwin felt that the General Conference Committee should confirm the decision.<sup>6</sup>

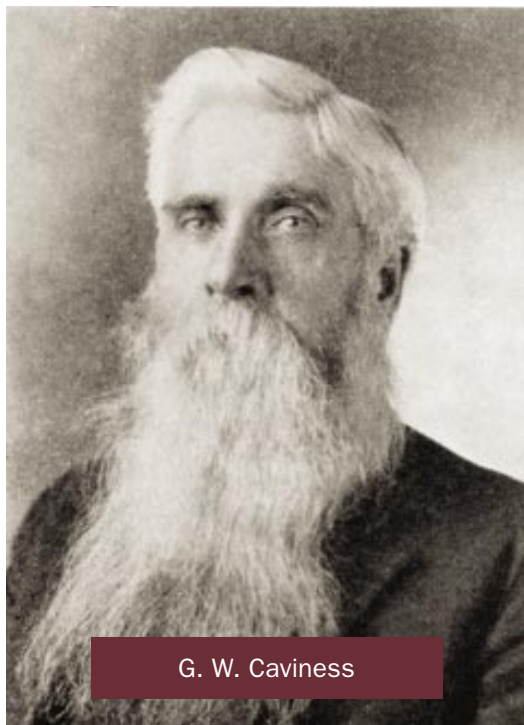
The GC Committee was far from unanimous about these events. One member declared that he did not want to hear

anything about the "adjustment of the difficulties connected with the college." Jones bombastically declared that it was a question of whether God or Satan was going to control the work. However, by adjournment, the secretary noted that "there seemed to be unanimity . . . in regard to the general course to be taken."<sup>7</sup>

Holser's question of who had authority over the church's educational institutions had been long in the making, and some will probably argue that it has never been truly resolved. It had commenced 24 years before the 1897 scenario with Caviness, at the time the GC Committee recorded its intention of establishing a denominational school and creating an Educational Society. When actually formed, this group consisted of stockholders who raised money for the school.<sup>8</sup> Legally, this body controlled the college.

As long as Battle Creek College remained the sole denominational school, things went reasonably well. But between 1884 and 1897, throughout the United States, a number of new church colleges were established, none of which came under the jurisdiction of the Educational Society. And there was talk of more.

The GC Committee had not discouraged the founding of any of these institutions, but to whom did they ultimately answer? In 1887, the



G. W. Caviness



Washington Foreign Mission Seminary (now Columbia Union College), Takoma Park, Maryland, between 1905 and 1913.

General Conference revised its constitution to include a secretary of education who would serve as the liaison between church headquarters and the institutions. For 10 years, W. W. Prescott held this position, depending mostly on moral suasion to promote the views of the General Conference in the expanding education movement. For most of that time, he was also president of Battle Creek College, and thus in theory, an employee of the Educational Society.

### Problems and Reforms in Control of Education

By the time of the 1897 Caviness episode, church leaders were becoming painfully aware of weaknesses in the church's control of education. They realized that the General Conference needed more than moral suasion to create any semblance of a system among the schools. The problems were deeply rooted and serious.

First, the Educational Society had outlived its usefulness. As the constituents of the college, the stockholders chose the board of trustees, or directors as they were occasionally called. Sometimes the society designated some of its own members as a nominating committee to appoint the college board; at other times, the nominating committee at General Conference sessions selected board members. In either case, when they approved the slate of proposed board members, the stockholders reflected the will of the GC Committee.

Critics could argue that this action was as thoroughly rigged as the trick that Caviness and Aul had pulled off. What the two men had done was legal, but it thwarted the desires of the GC Committee, from which the Educational Society derived its authority. With other denominational schools sprouting up all over North America, the Educational Society controlled only a fraction of the field, and the events of 1897 showed that even that hold was tenuous. By appealing to a higher authority to resolve the impasse, the Educational Society effectively relinquished its power.

Also, church leaders had come to view as unsatisfactory the stockholder system of founding and maintaining schools, on which the Educational Society was

based. While the system had enabled the young church to establish a college, the Educational Society had become a legal buffer between the GC Committee and the school. Caviness and Aul had demonstrated that, barring crisis intervention, the stockholders could keep the school one step beyond reach.

Elsewhere, as well, the stockholder system was in trouble. In 1889, only seven years after its founding, South Lancaster Academy (Massachusetts) was on the verge of bankruptcy. An ad hoc committee recommended, among other corrective measures, that the stockholders surrender their holdings to the General Conference so the "Academy may be controlled by the trustees elected by that body."<sup>9</sup> A couple of years later, the GC Committee discussed the need to bring "all institutions and enterprises connected with the work under the direction and control of the denomination," a less-than-subtle reference to the quasi-independent corporations and societies (which included the stockholder system) that ran church institutions and ministries.<sup>10</sup>

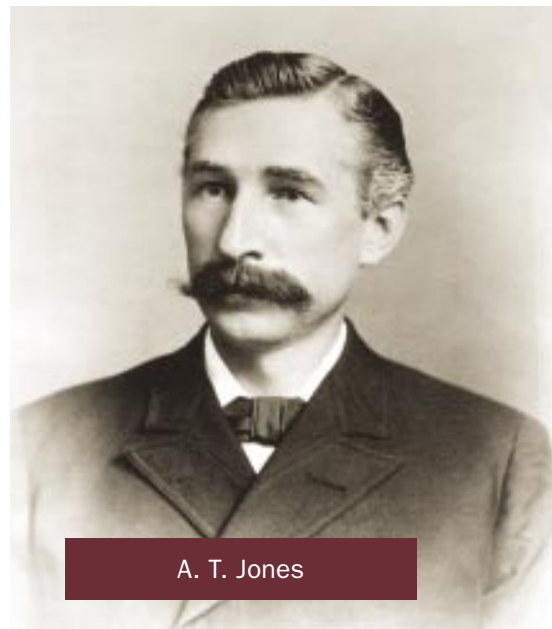
Another issue was the poor financial footing of most Adventist schools. Whether controlled by stockholders, conference associations, or some other authority, almost all of them faced economic woes. To extricate themselves, they typically relied on, or at least desired, General Conference assistance. Church leaders found themselves investing money in institutions over which they had little control. The church needed centrally administered policies to guide conference presidents and other leaders in establishing schools, to avoid financial embarrassment, and to clarify the relationship between church headquarters and institutions.

Still another problem arose from the lack of systematic curriculum at lower levels, which produced uneven norms for academic performance. Many students were inadequately prepared for college. The denomination also lacked a centrally administered credentialing system so teachers could readily transfer from one campus to another.

During the years he held the office of

educational secretary, Prescott attempted to systematize Adventist education. He was only modestly successful. When responding to Holser that March morning in 1897, Irwin and his colleagues portrayed the question of authority as a less complicated matter than the facts suggest. The GC Committee was not just offering advice to an institution that had asked for it. For years, church leaders had involved themselves administratively in affairs of the larger schools.

Matters came to a head at the 1895 General Conference session, just before a vote on the resolution for reform at Battle Creek College. One delegate dubi-



A. T. Jones

ously asked how the resolution would be carried out. The General Conference president assured the questioner that it was the "duty" of the GC Committee to care for all aspects of the "cause."<sup>11</sup> Two years after the Caviness affair, the recording secretary noted that the GC Committee wanted everyone to know that it had oversight of all Adventist schools.<sup>12</sup>

No one knows precisely what Holser was thinking that March morning, but he was not merely trying to confuse the issue or escape a sticky problem. He was likely trying to pick his way through a maze of conflicting precedents in order to define the line of authority for Battle Creek College and church institutions in general. To whom did Battle Creek College answer? Who was really in charge?

Watershed moments in history are not



always easy to identify, but arguably, the actions by the GC Committee in March 1897 constituted a pivotal point in the history of Adventist education. They set in motion a train of events extending through the 20th century that eventually provided some answers to Holser's question about authority over institutions, particularly Adventist colleges.

**F**ollowing that March morning, the GC Committee lost little time dealing with the problem. As might be expected, the first target was the Educational Society, which they dismantled. Divesting the stockholders of their role involved ownership of property, which made legal counsel necessary. By 1901, the Educational Society was dead, and the property had reverted to the General Conference.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, church leaders were experimenting with a committee to supervise denominational education. However, the line of authority remained blurred until delegates to the 1901 General Conference session created the Educational Department consisting of seven members headed by a secretary. This body was viewed as a branch of the GC Committee.<sup>14</sup> This action was part of the historic organizational overhaul voted by the church at that session.

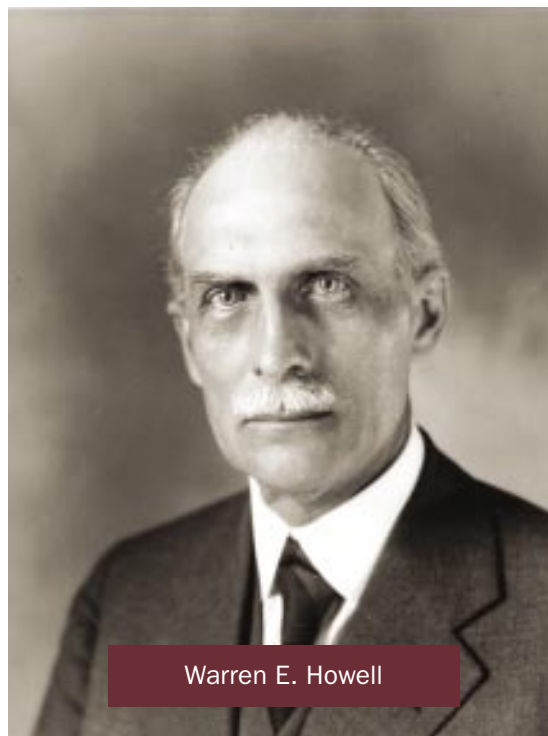
Choosing the members of this committee was easier than defining their authority. Soon after the process of reorganization began in 1897, an ad hoc group recommended that all Adventist schools should function on an equal footing, but the idea that the General Conference should operate a model training school for workers persisted. Early discussions by members of the Educational Department led to the conclusion that the General Conference should jettison all direct control over schools and leave ownership and control in the hands of the newly created union conferences. Emmanuel Missionary College would assume the role of a model training school, but it would not function under immediate General Conference control.<sup>15</sup>



Frederick Griggs

This decision agreed with the arguments of A. G. Daniells and W. C. White two years later during the 1903 General Conference session, who urged the continuation of the union conferences that the delegates had authorized in 1901. "Our General Conference is to leave institutional work alone, and let Union Conferences attend to the work of their Union Conference," White bluntly told the gathering.<sup>16</sup> Two years later in 1905, when Frederick Griggs, secretary of the Educational Department, unveiled his plan for a comprehensive system of schools from grade one through college, complete with denominationally approved curriculum guides, operational manuals, and credentialing, the pattern of union control over colleges became standard procedure in Seventh-day Adventist education.

**[IN 1891] THE GC COMMITTEE DISCUSSED THE NEED TO BRING "ALL INSTITUTIONS AND ENTERPRISES CONNECTED WITH THE WORK UNDER THE DIRECTION AND CONTROL OF THE DENOMINATION," A LESS-THAN-SUBTLE REFERENCE TO THE QUASI-INDEPENDENT CORPORATIONS AND SOCIETIES (WHICH INCLUDED THE STOCKHOLDER SYSTEM) THAT RAN CHURCH INSTITUTIONS AND MINISTRIES.**



Warren E. Howell

All schools answered to church authority at one level or another—in the case of higher education, it was the union conferences whose presidents chaired the college boards.<sup>17</sup>

The delegates unanimously approved Griggs' proposal, which gave Adventist education its basic shape that has endured to the present. Essentially, the unions and conferences would control the immediate administration of schools, but they were expected to carry out the will of the parent body—the General Conference—which would provide basic policies and parameters of operation. It was a plan of shared

authority between the General Conference on one hand and lower levels of church administration, including officers of higher education, on the other.

During the century that has passed since that action, debate has focused on the questions of which aspects of authority are shared and how they should be shared. This article will review three of the major issues relating to shared authority: voluntary accreditation, ministerial education, and general institutional policies.

### **Challenge A to Systematic Control: Accreditation**

The struggle over voluntary accreditation consumed the better part of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>18</sup> Although this controversy focused on recognition of Adventist schools by regional accrediting bodies, the problem involved numerous aspects of denominational education.

At the vortex of the struggle were the two personalities who dominated Adventist education from 1903 through 1930: Frederick Griggs and Warren E. Howell. Both men intensely believed in thorough organization and a true Adventist system—not just a network—with centralized control. Control did not mean micro-management, but rather the

authority to establish a systematic infrastructure of standards, curriculum, and governance policies to which the schools would conform.

The two men parted ways over the question of accreditation. Griggs supported the idea of official recognition by universities or state departments of education, while Howell believed that to seek recognition from accrediting associations would compromise the founding principles of Seventh-day Adventist schools. In 1918, he succeeded Griggs as General Conference secretary of education, which allowed him to urge the development of a unique Adventist system of education, leaving no room for secular accreditation.

Continuing W. W. Prescott's practice of moral suasion, Howell brought the full weight of General Conference influence to bear on the need to reject "worldly" trends. The debate pitted college administrators, who faced the problem of delivering competitive education for professionals—among them physicians, teachers, and nurses, all of whom the church desperately needed—against church leaders who believed Howell's warnings that accreditation would destroy the identity of Seventh-day Adventist education. Walking the middle

of that tightrope were the chairmen of college boards. They sought to cooperate with college educators in promoting viable professional education programs. At the same time, they were expected to function as loyal members of the GC Committee, where the opposition to accreditation had reached policy-making levels.

In the end, denominational leaders, including the General Conference president, gave in to the momentum of higher education. In the process some board chairmen—presidents of union conferences—collaborated quietly with college presidents to achieve the inevitable, a general acceptance of accreditation. After the dust had settled in the late 1930s, it was apparent that General Conference authority over Adventist higher education had weakened.

**D**espite his opposition to regional accreditation, Howell was convinced that colleges could not be laws unto themselves. He correctly saw accreditation as a self-policing process, and held it in high regard. During the final two years of his term as secretary of education, he led the movement to establish an association of Adventist colleges and secondary schools, accompanied by an accreditation process administered by a board of regents. In 1930, this plan went into effect. On the strength of General Conference authority, education departments at union and conference levels would enforce these regulations on both Adventist secondary schools and colleges to demonstrate that the church's schools could maintain competitive educational standards on their own.

Because the unions and local conferences bought into the program, the idea of denominational accreditation succeeded, but contrary to what Howell had hoped, the plan did not eliminate the need for secular recognition. Thus he did not avert what he and others saw as intrusive practices by secular accreditation. To the credit of Howell and others who conceived the plan, the concept of denominational recognition has endured to the present and remains the single most effective tool for exerting church influence on denominational postsecondary



Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

institutions around the world. In this sense, Howell succeeded, probably far beyond his expectations.

### **Challenge B to Systematic Control: Ministerial Education**

Another issue that figured in the debate about authority over Adventist colleges was the question of ministerial education.<sup>19</sup> To understand this issue, we must remember that the dual purpose of Adventist education was to prepare denominational workers and to educate for the salvation of students. Church leaders typically associated worker-preparation courses more with postsecondary schools, and educating for salvation with the lower levels of education, but the two purposes were inextricably bound together at all levels.

The first several generations of Adventist ministers were either converts who were already clergymen, or people who simply emerged from the pack as leaders but who lacked formal theological training. Mentoring was the primary method of training ministers. Through the first two decades of the 20th century, Adventist colleges designed their own ministerial training programs. Almost immediately after his appointment in 1918 as General Conference secretary of education, Howell introduced a plan that would make theological training the central activity at all Adventist colleges.

The proposal laid out specific curricular requirements and stipulated that students completing the program would earn a bachelor of sacred theology degree. To lend prestige to ministerial education, all theology programs would become schools of theology headed by a dean, not just ordinary departments presided over by a chairman. These instructional units would not be autonomous, but rather the hubs around which everything on campus revolved. Planners anticipated that all Adventist colleges in North America would become Bible schools. Later, Howell said he viewed North American colleges as world institutions that produced workers for the world field. It was beyond dispute, he said, that their policies “should be determined by the responsible body of the whole,” meaning, of course, the General Conference.<sup>20</sup>

This idea encountered immediate resistance. As a group, ministers were probably the least educated of any denominational professional workers. Everyone agreed that ministerial education was a critical issue for the church. However, as the church grew, it needed increasing numbers of people trained in many different professions. The accreditation movement, which was just heating up, sought to assure students that the church’s schools provided competitive education for all degrees offered by the colleges, which meant that the entire gamut of class offerings and major fields of study met basic quality standards.

All of this meant that the Bible school model was not feasible for Adventist colleges. Students, along with church leaders seeking employees, expected professional education in a growing number

graduate program.<sup>21</sup> This development occurred under the direct supervision of the General Conference. Colleges continued their ministerial training programs, but they never achieved the standardization recommended in the 1918 proposal. After the debut of post-baccalaureate ministerial education, the primary academic outcome of the 1918 proposal was that colleges had to ensure that their ministerial graduates qualified for seminary admission.

**T**he issue of ministerial education rested on the assumption that the denomination had an inherent right to shape and direct the education of its clergy. The model worker-training school envisioned by 19th-century church leaders eventually became a reality in the



**Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.**

of fields. The conclusion was unavoidable: While ministerial training could be central on Adventist campuses, it could not achieve this status at the expense of existing programs or future offerings that might be needed. Consequently, although the ministerial training program retained its stature on Adventist campuses, it functioned as one of a number of programs and departments.

Meanwhile, the focus shifted from undergraduate ministerial education to advanced studies. In 1934, a program of advanced studies for ministers was begun. Three years later, it became a free-standing seminary offering a bona fide

General Conference-controlled seminary. In 1953, the Autumn Council approved an action that established the Master’s degree as the standard academic credential for ministers (this action applied only to North America). Conferences were to implement the measure “as quickly as possible, without damage to the supply of workers,” a caveat that led to prolonged delays in fulfillment of the action. In practice, it meant that conferences continued to employ as ministers those with only undergraduate degrees and even people who had not completed a college education.<sup>22</sup>

The net impact of this decades-long



development was to remove ministerial education from the jurisdiction of the colleges and place it under the control of the General Conference. By establishing a seminary with graduate programs, which in turn set academic standards of admission, the General Conference exerted implicit control over feeder programs at the undergraduate level. This control did not translate into micro-management of the college programs, but undergraduate institutions were to offer the necessary prerequisites to students seeking admission to the seminary.

As the 20th century closed, institutions in several divisions were seeking to establish graduate programs in theology. Consequently, church leaders felt they needed to restudy church control of ministerial education. In 1994, the GC Committee voted at the Annual Council that all graduate ministerial programs were the responsibility of “either the General Conference (for Andrews University) or the respective division.”<sup>23</sup>

Despite the explicitness of this action, it did not prevent some colleges from inaugurating their own post-baccalaureate programs, thus making the Master’s degree—the standard ministerial credential—available on campuses controlled by unions instead of the General Conference or a division.

In order to gain further control over the preparation of the denomination’s ministers, a new agency, the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) was formed in 1998.<sup>24</sup> Division boards of ministerial education, as branches of this body, had the authority either to endorse religion and theology teachers or recommend their dismissal based on standards set by the central international board. Response was mixed. Generally, the world fields accepted the stipulations, but North American schools erected a solid wall of resistance on the grounds that subjecting part of their faculties to requirements established by an extra-institutional body would jeopardize the institutions’ accreditation. In effect, the authority of the IBMTE would violate academic freedom and due process as defined by accrediting bodies.<sup>25</sup>

The reaction of the NAD colleges and universities was also influenced by a 1992 division vote declaring that boards

of trustees were the governing authority for each institution “in accordance with its articles of incorporation and bylaws.”<sup>26</sup> The contradiction between the 1992 action and the authority over religion departments assumed by the IBMTE was obvious. Although the IBMTE’s endorsement procedures sought to ensure theological orthodoxy, its conflict with North American colleges had more to do with

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Canadian University College, Alberta, Canada.

administrative control than theological philosophy.

**Challenge C to Systematic Control: General Policies**

Reflecting on the long tradition of union-operated colleges, one wonders why the NAD action in 1992 was necessary, but the history of Adventist higher education, especially during the second half of the 20th century, led to this vote.<sup>27</sup> Following World War II, North American colleges entered an era of unprecedented enrollment growth, necessitating building programs and expanded curricular offerings. With the complications of graduate programs, spiraling operational costs, and uncertain enrollments, survival became a pressing problem, creating rivalry among NAD postsecondary schools.

During the 1960s, church commissions on higher education and graduate programs attempted to control the

growth of tertiary education in the North American Division, but the colleges’ Darwinian approach to survival outstripped all attempts to manage Adventist higher

education. By the end of the decade, there was growing concern over the direction of denominational colleges, leading to the conviction that cooperation was vital to their future. A master plan evolved that would determine the role denominational postsecondary institutions should play in the church. A watchdog agency functioning as a kind of super board would prevent schools from duplicating graduate programs and require them to obtain permission before adding new degrees.<sup>28</sup>

This super board formed in 1971 as the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was invested with authority to administer a master plan for tertiary schools in the North American Division. But within a year, both Andrews and Loma Linda universities challenged the BHE by submitting requests to begin doctoral programs in professional education. An ad hoc committee assigned to scrutinize the proposals favored Andrews and recom-

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mended a rejection of Loma Linda's plan, but the BHE resolved the problem by approving both programs.

This failure to prevent duplication of graduate programs demonstrated the weakness of BHE. Its chairperson was the North American Division president, who represented imposed authority, while a large proportion of its voting members were representatives of the rivalrous institutions. Notwithstanding the fanfare and high-sounding rhetoric at BHE's inception, the ideal of a system of higher education based on a master plan and governed by a central authority had become even more elusive than ever. Despite the risks, college administrators preferred a competitive approach to survival rather than paternalistic guidance. By the 1990s, the irrelevancy of the BHE had become so obvious that the division was unsuccessful in filling the vacancy left by the executive secretary's retirement.

During a brief experimentation with a cabinet of higher education, institutional officers and board chairpersons tried to achieve some division-wide control of North American tertiary institutions, but it was never their intention for the cabinet to exercise the authority that church and education leaders had originally envisioned for the BHE. The meaninglessness of these exercises was clear. Colleges had already agreed to revise the rules of union territoriality that had helped to identify them for decades. In 1992, they also persuaded the North American Division to issue an official statement recognizing the boards of trustees as the ultimate governing authority of its institutions of higher education. The primary reason for this action was pressure by accreditation bodies for an assurance of institutional autonomy. However valid that reasoning, the timing of the action fit very neatly with the burgeoning resistance to efforts to build a genuine system

of higher education in North America.

On the threshold of the 21st century, higher education in the North American Division could look back on nearly

a hundred years of failed attempts by church leaders to a centrally controlled system. Yet, because NAD higher education administrators have realized that dialogue and collaboration are clearly beneficial for schools with shared goals and challenges, tertiary education in North America is currently experimenting with a consortial model that is independent of the NAD and General Conference.

### A Concluding Observation

So who's in charge of Adventist col-

## A North American Experiment

### Association of Adventist Universities and Colleges: Professional Interest Group, Political Action Committee, or Consortium?

In 2002, the North American Division colleges and universities formed the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities (AACU), which has been legally incorporated as a "501(c)3 consortium of the fifteen colleges/universities located in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church dedicated to fostering collaboration." The AACU represents an effort on the part of the colleges to cultivate cooperation on matters of mutual concern. Its board consists of the NAD college and university presidents, who conduct the business of the association. AACU's annual constituency meetings bring together the presidents and the chief academic and financial officers of the institutions. The 15 participating institutions share leadership of the association by electing a college president to be the association president for a deliberately short term. An executive director (currently one of the college presidents) also helps coordinate higher education in the North American Division. At present, the role and relationship of the NAD Office of Education and the GC Department of Education to the AACU remain undefined.

Within five years after its began, the AACU launched two initiatives seeking to achieve new understandings about two issues that had been both divisive and critical to survival—marketing and recruiting. At a constituency meeting attended by institutional board chairpersons, AACU thrashed out ideas of mission for Adventist education. Association members also agreed to visit each other's board meetings on a rotating basis, which, they hoped, would nurture a sense of fraternity and system in NAD higher education.<sup>29</sup>

Some six years after its inception, the AACU is still exploring new areas of mutuality among its members. It remains unclear how far the spirit of cooperation will take NAD higher education, especially as troubled institutions try to ensure their future in the face of survival problems that have historically plagued Adventist higher education in North America. AACU members are pledged to honor the principles of individual institutional authority, but will they be willing to carry their agreement to foster collaboration far enough to divide up the academic pie if this becomes necessary in order to perpetuate the traditions of Adventist education, to serve the college-age Adventist population, and to meet the professional education needs of the denomination? Will the weight of circumstances force Adventist higher education in the 21st century to resolve by cooperation the very issues that contributed to the demise of imposed control in the 20th?



leges and universities, anyway? Educators and church administrators face a very different global landscape than the one that existed in 1901-1905. The educational playing field around the world has become more level since Frederick Griggs, A. G. Daniells, and W. C. White proposed their system of shared power more than a century ago. Their plan functioned for most of the 20th century, although with mixed results. The vision of a ring of North American schools that would furnish workers for the rest of the world became passé as church administration around the globe underwent nationalization, and training schools evolved into institutions of higher learning with degree-granting authority. In short order, some of these newcomers established their own graduate programs; and today, 86 percent of accredited Adventist universities and colleges are located outside of North America. The functioning of North American tertiary schools has become more of an internal issue for the NAD than a global question for the General Conference to monitor. The same is becoming true in other divisions.

But it is helpful to remember that irrespective of how independent tertiary schools desire to be, or the division or union to which they are responsible, they retain an identity as Seventh-day Adventist institutions, which implies an accountability to and connection with the global church.

**H**istorically, accreditation has strengthened tertiary education and ensured its accountability. Most schools have come to view it as an affirmation rather than a threat to their independence, often boasting of the number of accrediting bodies that approve their programs.

However, administrators may fail to recognize the value of peer review if they regard external oversight as a threat to their institution's autonomy and expansion. Regrettably, Adventist schools are as vulnerable to this temptation as other institutions.

Adventist accreditation concerns itself not only with academic quality but also with benchmarks for schools that claim

to educate in the name of the church. Achieving these benchmarks does not mean forced unanimity on a myriad of details but agreement on central issues. Evaluation does not seek to compel uniformity; it simply compares what is happening on a given campus to the established benchmarks in order to determine whether the school is living up to its claims to educate in the name of the global church. It is appropriate that a central accrediting body, as an agency of the global church, should administer the process of ensuring institutional consistency and quality.

In the egalitarian atmosphere of the world church, perhaps shared authority, as understood in its original form—a means of achieving and maintaining a system of education—has given way to shared responsibility. While this generalization is not axiomatic, it does provide some insight into the question of authority in contemporary Adventist higher education. Although the relationships may have changed, the idea of a system of Adventist education and the task of preserving the traditions of educating for eternity and preparing professionals for service to the denomination and community are still a sacred responsibility for Adventist schools. ✍



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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. GC Committee Minutes, March 16, 1897. General Conference Archives and Statistics.
2. See accounts of the Educational Society in *General Conference Bulletin* for 1893 and 1895.
3. See E. K. Vande Vere's account in *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ. Assn., 1972), pages 68 to 79.
4. Ibid.
5. GC Committee Minutes, March 16, 1897.

6. Ibid., March 21 and 24, 1897.
7. Ibid., March 16, 1897.
8. Ibid., March 11, 1873.
9. Ibid., November 10, 1889.
10. Ibid., August 8, 1891.
11. *General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 358.
12. GC Committee Minutes, March 15, 1899.
13. Ibid., September 29, 1897; March 20, 1898; October 13, 1899; October 23, 1900.
14. Ibid., April 1, 18, 19, 22, 1901.
15. Ibid., March 20, 1899; April 21, 24, 25, 1901. The original plan, to leave all institutions under the jurisdiction of unions, underwent some modification. Oakwood Industrial School, later Oakwood College, did not become a union-operated school. The General Conference began to participate in the management of the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University) in 1910; shortly thereafter, the school became a GC institution. In 1937, the General Conference established the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, which merged with Emmanuel Missionary College slightly more than 20 years later. The new entity, Andrews University, also became a GC institution.
16. *General Conference Bulletin*, 1903, p. 158. See also Daniells' comments on pages 100 and 101.
17. Ibid., 1905, No. 4, pp. 19, 20.
18. This passage about accreditation is based on Chapter 13, "Debate Over Accreditation," in Floyd Greenleaf's *In Passion for the World* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2005), pages 299 to 323.
19. Ministerial education is discussed in *ibid.*, pages 53 to 57, 345, and 346. Also see Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 2000), pages 387 to 400. Michael Campbell's "A High and Sacred Calling: A Look at the Origins of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Training," *Ministry* (April 2007), pages 20 and 21, also provides good background material.
20. *General Conference Bulletin*, 1922, No. 3, p. 76. This proposal did not include the College of Medical Evangelists which, at that time, offered nursing diplomas and medical degrees.
21. See Ronald Knott, "For a Beginning, 'Most Satisfactory': A History of SDA Graduate Education," *Journal of Adventist Education* 45:3 (February/March 1983), pp. 20-23; 38-41.
22. GC Committee Minutes, October 26, 1953.
23. Ibid., October 7, 1994.
24. See the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial and Theological Education* (Silver Spring, Md.: IBMTE, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2001). For comment on this agency, consult Bonnie Dwyer, "G. C. Approves Proposal to Control Theological Education and Theologians With 'Endorsement' Policy," *Spectrum* (Winter 1999), pages 70-76; and Douglas Morgan, "Targeting Higher Education," *ibid.* (Autumn 2001), pages 69 to 73.
25. *In Passion for the World*, pp. 504-506.
26. North American Division Committee Minutes, October 14, 1992.
27. For a discussion of this and related issues, see Chapter 20, "Challenges of Modernization," *In Passion for the World*, pages 491 to 520.
28. Ibid., pages 497-501, is the basis of this passage about the Board of Higher Education.
29. E-mail message from Richard Osborn to Floyd Greenleaf, November 9, 2007.