

Neils-Erik Andreassen Out and In

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: Missouri's Proposed State Religion / Adventist Leaders Meet with U.S. President / Adventist Denomination in France Joins National Ecumenical Organization / General Conference Women's Organizations Urge "Gender Equality" at the UN / ADRA Sponsors a Rock Concert

MARCH 6—Having convened for its spring meeting on March 6, 2006, the Andrews University Board of Trustees went into "executive session" (i.e., only board members were present) and discussed a number of emergency matters. Discussions had earlier been held regarding these matters, of which the content has not yet been revealed. However, it was serious enough for three executives to be dropped.

We do know that, according to the Office of University Relations (*March 10 release*), "significant financial losses of the university during the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 fiscal years" were at the core of the problem.

We also know that concerns had earlier been expressed at "its October 2005 meetings, in which the Board had made clear its expectations for improved cooperation between the financial and academic areas of campus" (*Andrews University Focus*, Vol. 42, No. 1, p. 5).

Few seem to know what that enigmatic statement was all about.

At any rate, at this March 6 meeting, it was voted to request the resignations of Dr. Niels-Erik Andreassen, president of the university, along with the resignations of the two vice presidents (Patricia Mutch, vice president for academic administration, and Edward Wines, vice president for financial administration). Both had served in their respective positions for many years, Wines for 21 years and Mutch for eight years.

It was also stated that, "while improvements had been made, the board felt that the modest growth in revenue and student populations during these years did not match the scope and speed needed to equip the university for successful long-term operations and growth."

We do not know of what those "significant financial losses" consisted; however the "modest growth in . . . student populations" seemed to be unnecessary, in view of a more recent comment in the Andrews University magazine, *Focus*, which was mailed out in mid-April to the alumni:

"Currently the university is enjoying its third highest enrollment in history with more than 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students. —And its international student population makes Andrews the sixth most internationally diverse national university."—*Focus*, Vol. 42, No. 1, p. 6.

During that same day's meeting, March 6, the board requested and received the resignations of the president and the two vice-presidents. Accord-

ing to *Focus*, "the board made it emphatically clear that the resignations had not resulted from any moral, legal, ethical or doctrinal violations."

Focus added, "Andreassen's resignation was to be 'effective immediately.'" This was due to the fact that Andreassen submitted it immediately.

When the Andrews community—faculty, administration, and other supporters—learned what had happened, a minor explosion of protests occurred.

MARCH 9—So an emergency meeting of the board met three days later,—and asked him to stay on until June 30.

It was announced that a 13-member presidential search committee, composed of board members, university faculty, staff, alumni, and student representatives would be appointed to find someone to replace Andreassen. It was thought that such broad committee representation would satisfy the complainants.

But the protests only increased. Andreassen was much beloved by university faculty, administration, and supporters. They were not satisfied to have him only remain for merely another 16 weeks.

"Within days of the original action," the board received "a very strong 'vote of confidence'" for President Andreassen and his leadership from a majority of the deans and faculty of the university. They asked the board to reconsider their action. In addition, some "very influential individuals" made personal contact with board members.

MARCH 30—Once again the board met; and, under this continued heavy pressure from Andreassen's supporters, it rescinded its previous action—and asked him to continue on as the ongoing president of the university—a request to which Andreassen kindly assented.

At this board meeting, it was voted to appoint a search committee to locate someone to fill the position of "provost," who would manage the day-to-day operations of the university (in other words, do most of what Andreassen had been doing), along with a new committee ("The president's Advisory Council"), while Andreassen would continue on as president, maintaining good contact with faculty, students, and school supporters.

This will effectively provide the university with two presidents and a committee to guide them. At last report, everyone at Andrews University is happy again.

—vf

Missouri's Proposed State Religion

THE BEGINNINGS OF A STATE CHURCH IN AMERICA?

About the first of March, a bill was introduced by state representative, David Sater of Cassville (in the southwestern part of the state), into the Missouri legislature in Jefferson City. If enacted, it would name Christianity the state's official "majority" religion!

The resolution would recognize "a Christian God"; and, although it would not protect minority religions as it would its sole religion, it would "protect the majority's right to express their religious beliefs."

The resolution also states that "a greater power exists" and only Christianity receives that which the resolution calls "justified recognition."

House Concurrent Resolution 13 came as a complete surprise to most Missouri residents; yet few seemed upset about it. That is significant.

Most legislators, as well as Governor Matt Blunt, are saying little about this until they hear more from the public concerning what it thinks about the matter. Good politicians always know it is best to stay close to public opinion.

Meanwhile, Karen Aroesty of the Anti-defamation League (a Jewish protectionist organization), along with some atheist and anti-Christian organizations, have begun a letter-writing and email campaign to stop the proposed legislation.

Here is the complete bill:

"Whereas, our forefathers of this great nation of the United States recognized a Christian God and used the principles afforded to us by Him as the founding principles of our nation—

"Whereas, as elected officials we should protect the majority's right to express their religious beliefs while showing respect for those who object—

"Whereas, we wish to continue the wisdom imparted in the Constitution of the United States of America by the founding fathers—

"Whereas, we as elected officials recognize that a Greater Power exists above and beyond the institutions of mankind—

"Now, therefore, be it resolved by the members of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-third General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the Senate concurring therein, that we stand with the majority of our constituents and exercise the common sense that voluntary prayer in public schools and religious displays on public property are not a coalition of church and state, but rather the justified recognition of the positive role that Christianity has played in this great nation of ours, the United States of America."

Adventist Leaders Meet with the President of the United States

On April 4, 2006, key world leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination met for 45-minutes with President George W. Bush in the Oval Office of the White House.

Jan Paulsen, president of our denomination; Matthew Bediako, General Conference secretary; Don Schneider, president of the North American Division; and James D.

Standish, General Conference director of legislative affairs. A denominational news release said that this meeting was "at the invitation of President Bush."

"Speaking with Adventist News Network after the visit, Paulsen said he hopes for continued cooperation between the church and the nation in which it was founded."

ADVENTIST DENOMINATION IN FRANCE JOINS NATIONAL ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION

The Protestant Ecumenical Federation represents 900,000 French Protestants, in 17 denominations and 78 other organizations and institutions, along with 500 Protestant associations and organizational units. More than 1,200 local congregations and over 1,000 pastors are in it.

After 13 years of pleading for admission and two years of “probation,” our denomination in that nation was finally accepted as a full member of the French Protestant Federation.

“Now we can enjoy the same rights as traditional Protestant churches and we are considered theologically equal with other religious movements in our country,” said Jean-Paul Barquon, secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in France.

Many of our church members throughout that nation celebrated the fact that, doctrinally and politically, they have been accepted by the other Protestant denominations as orthodox.

We are not told what discussions or compromises were made during the preceding 13 years; but we can know that some kind of concessions had to be made in order to obtain such a broad acceptance, when for years it had been denied.

It was only by an ongoing series of concessions that, in the mid-1950s, our church leaders were able to obtain the favor of the evangelicals in America. The publication of the notorious *Questions on Doctrine* was the result. Teachings

in that book have greatly injured the Adventist Church ever since.

(For much more on this, see our 198-page *Evangelical Conferences and their Aftermath*, now in our 256-page *Doctrinal History Tractbook*.)

Our denomination was among five new members accepted during the recent General Assembly of the Protestant Ecumenical Federation, when it was held in Paris on March 11 and 12 of this year.

Adventist Church leaders are calling March 11 (the day the church’s membership became official) a “landmark” in their French interchurch relations.

The Federation was first organized in 1905 in order to negotiate directly with the national government, and influence governmental laws regarding churches and other matters in the nation.

“I am persuaded by my disposition but also by my conviction and reflection that we belong there [with the other churches] and that we have a role to play within the FPF,” said Jacques Trujillo, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in France.

It was also mentioned that the church has worked closely with the CPCV for 35 years. This is the French national Protestant organization for education and preparation of youth leaders.

GENERAL CONFERENCE WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS URGING “GENDER EQUALITY” AT THE UNITED NATIONS

When the 50th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women convened on February 27, five Adventist women representing our denomination officially united with women from many other denominations and non-governmental organizations—to demand that women receive better recognition.

More than 6,000 women came to the meeting which lasted until March 10.

Officers in two departments at our world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, worked for

months to prepare an official statement which would be submitted to the United Nations—to show it that we too have our causes which we want it to consider.

This paper was first submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women in January. It was later modified; and about a thousand copies were distributed to UN officers, staff, and others in February.

It is considered important that we strive for a larger presence at the United Nations.

ADRA Sponsors a Rock Concert

According to a report in a German news source, ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency), our General Conference world disaster and relief agency, sponsored at least one major rock concert in Germany on June 4, 2005.

Officially known as the JPS Concert, it celebrated what is known as "JoNa Day," a term we were unable to obtain a definition of. The following paragraph, from the broken English of the German report, explains what "JPS" is supposed to mean:

"'JPS' - ever doesn't belong? 'Jesus Power Station' hides itself behind the contraction and the responsible persons goes it around nothing less, than that other humans are to experience that one can refuel with Jesus strength."—*JoNaDays, in staonline, May 27, 2005.*

In other words, intelligent people know that JPS means that those who attend the rock concert will be filled with power by Jesus Himself.

You might ask, "Is this what a department of our General Conference should be sponsoring?"

Someone emailed ADRA director, Charles Sandefur that question, and he gave a terse reply:

"Yes, as you put it, ADRA is involved in many 'outrageous activities' that are much more important to us than the concerts you mention."

In other words, yes, we know about that concert which we sponsored; but we have far too many other projects we are working on, some even more colorful than that little one.

This is the fourth year this rock concert has taken place. It is considered a raving success, because it attracts thousands of young people who typically conduct themselves in very strange ways during and after attending a rock concert.

(If you do not believe this, read our forthcoming book, *Inside Rock Music*. Watch for the announcement.)

In past years, the concert was held at Dortmund, but this year in the open air in the "city garden" square in front of the "gel churches."

If it had not been for this obscure German report, none of us would have known that ADRA is sponsoring rock concerts overseas.

"Beginning of the concert is presumably 19:00 o'clock, the end against 22:00 o'clock in the city

garden by the gel churches. The entrance is free, since by the JPS concert the relief organization, ADRA is supported."

In other words, ADRA paid for it. The next paragraph explains who "ADRA" is.

"'ADRA' is an independent organization of the Evangelists free church of the seventh tag [day] Adventisten independent of the state. As church mechanism, ADRA helps humans, independently of their political and religious opinion or their ethnical origin. 'ADRA' stands for: Adventist development and relief Agency."

At the end of the report, we find this paragraph:

"Organizer both the JoNa Days and the JPS concert is Adventjugend gel churches (youth organization of the community of the seventh tag Adventisten)."

Here are additional statements from this German JoNa Day report, which was issued on May 27, about a week before this major rock concert took place. Accompanied by pictures of the rock singers and players, the article names some of the rock groups which will present the concert:

"In order to lend to this request little reproduction, the JPS concert takes place on 4 June. Also with it this year is three of volume, which have side on still no high Bekanntheitsgrad, on which other side however against so some Mainstream positively stands out.

"The beginning those will make for volume 'Spark Plugs.' For 13 years, there is Spark Plugs, developed from the Big volume of the Gelsenkirchener school of music under the direction of Dietmar Schmahl.

"The music style moves between jaz skirt, Latin, Blues and Swing. Consisting of different music pupils, Spark Plug tries to remain nevertheless at the pulse of the time and play.

"Afterwards 'Sunrise' is entered from Moenchengladbach the stage. Funkig, popig, and in the wahrsten sense of the word something 'more cross-over' will then happen it: And to the instruments the singing came. A mixture from Akkustik Pop, Latin, radio and jazz, in addition of religious of texts. One may be strained."

What else is happening that we do not know about? Surely, it is time to pray, earnestly pray. —*vf*