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A Tribute to Frank Holbrook, JATS Editor, 1993-1997

Norman R. Gulley, President
Adventist Theological Society

It is a pleasure to dedicate this issue of the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* to my friend Frank Holbrook in thanks for the eight years he has devoted to the journal—three as Associate Editor and five as Editor, all unpaid. Few realize the thousands of hours he has spent in his study considering each article, editing, polishing, turning it into something as close to perfection as possible. Given his humble character, Frank may take little pleasure in this tribute, but the officers of the Adventist Theological Society think it important that the truth be known and our appreciation publicly attested.

Frank Holbrook began his ministry in 1950 as an evangelist in the Potomac Conference. He was the tent master, led song service, and played his violin.

One of Frank's first sermons was on the four horsemen in Revelation 6. The tent they were using for the evangelistic meetings was old and rotten in places. While Frank was preaching, a storm came up and the wind started to howl—a proper setting for his topic. Frank looked around for his colleagues, wanting help with the tent, but they were nowhere to be found. Finally he asked some of the men in the audience to drop the sides and help tighten up the tent. The winds increased, and they finally had to abandon the tent and cancel the meeting. After Frank had taken his carload of people home, he stopped by his little apartment and changed out of his one good suit, then went back to the tent. The tent had collapsed. He found his colleagues hammering in pulled-up tent stakes. He asked them where they had been, and they told him they were under the platform praying the Lord would stop the storm. There is a time for action as well as for praying.

In the summer of 1953 Frank was given his first district, in Winchester, Virginia. Over the next five years he pastored in various districts in the Potomac Conference. In 1958 Frank's brother offered to send him to the Seminary, which was located in Takoma Park, MD, at that time. When the Seminary moved to

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Berrien Springs, MI, he moved his family there to continue his studies. In four years he completed three graduate degrees: Master of Archeology and History of Antiquity, Bachelor of Divinity, and Master of Theology. Upon graduation he was offered his first teaching position: at Shenandoah Valley Academy, where he taught from 1962–64.

During the summer of 1964 Frank moved his family again, this time to Southern Missionary College, where he spent the next seventeen years teaching in the Religion Department. Over the years he taught many courses: Old Testament, Church History, Prophets, New Testament, Pauline Epistles, Sanctuary, Teachings of Jesus, Adventist Heritage, Bible Doctrines, Methods of Bible Study, and seven years of Greek I, II, and III.

Frank Holbrook was a colleague of mine when he taught at what is now Southern Adventist University. His classes were famous as in-depth biblical studies of important doctrines like the Sanctuary, and he was well versed in Hebrew and Greek. He gave evidence of a great grasp of biblical truths. Those taking classes from him always got their money's worth, receiving insights into Scripture which carefully grounded them in Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. Religion majors were well prepared for the ministry.

While at Southern he served as acting head of the Religion Department for two years. He also represented the college on the large committee of the Biblical Research Institute. He taught during three administrations: those of Dr. Rees, Dr. Wilber Schneider, and Dr. Frank Knittel.

As a teacher Frank's home was always open for students. There were many lively Sabbath dinner conversations, and Saturday night it was common to have the smell of popcorn in the air and a group of students around the dining room table playing games.

Frank always tried to make his classes practical. Many of his students were theology majors, and he wanted them to be able to make the Bible meaningful to their parishioners. Many of his Greek students have commented that He had a way of making this ancient language practical—it wasn't just verbs, nouns, and tenses.

Frank was also "known" for his tests. Probably his most famous test was in his Pauline Epistles class. It was the first test of the class, and it was over Paul's three missionary journeys. It was such a factual test that it was a disaster for those students who had difficulty memorizing. However, though his tests were hard, he was always fair, and he helped his students in any way he could.

In addition to teaching, Frank also developed another talent, writing and editing. Elder Kenneth Holland, who was then editor of *These Times*, published in Nashville, invited Frank to write a column for the magazine answering Bible questions. This was the beginning of an eighteen year commitment. Frank answered Bible questions from all over the world. He not only wrote his column each month, but he answered each person's question individually.

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In the summer of 1981, Frank and his wife Donna moved to Washington, D.C., where he served as an Associate Director of the Biblical Research Institute until 1993. Frank spent most of this time defending the Seventh-day Adventist Church all over the world, though his primary task was editing and writing.

Over the years he edited or wrote eight books, including the seven volumes of the Daniel & Revelation Committee Series—a ten year project. It was his duty to reconcile contradictory views and make sure each article followed the positions agreed on by the committee. The writers gave him the articles—sometimes in rather rough condition—and he did the rest. What we read as we use these valuable books is not only the work of the scholars who wrote the articles, but Frank's work. The scholars trusted him to do it right. He also wrote six Sabbath School Lesson Quarterlies, six sets of lesson helps, and numerous articles. One notable contribution is his book *The Atoning Priesthood of Jesus Christ*, published by the ATS.

In 1993 Frank retired from the BRI and moved to Dalton, GA. There his dear wife Donna died, but sunshine returned to his life when he remarried. Oddly enough, his new wife, Bonnie, had been a college sweetheart of his back at Washington Missionary College who had never forgotten him. Frank wanted to stay active. He taught a Sabbath School class in Dalton, but he wanted to do more. He and his son and church members who lived in Murray County started holding services in a storefront in Chatsworth, GA. The group has grown with the Lord's blessing, and they now have their own facility and have been organized as a Company, with fifty or more people attending each week.

Frank Holbrook worked on *JATS* from its very first issue, including his five years as editor. He performed a yeoman's task in meticulously working over manuscripts. We always knew that after Frank had finished with an article, its biblical and theological accuracy had been checked and it was ready for publication. With his retirement an era of great scholar-editors comes to an end—Frank Holbrook, Gordon Hyde, Leo Van Dolson, Gerhard Hasel, Mervyn Maxwell—and a younger generation picks up the mantle as best it can.

On behalf of the Adventist Theological Society I want to express our deep gratitude to you, Frank, for the excellence you put into your work of editing the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*.

We wish you God's continued blessing as you retire from being editor, and we will always be grateful to you for your excellent contribution to the Society. You served with distinction.