<p style="text-align:center">**ADAPTATION, ASDAL, ATROPHY**</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**Keynote Address at 25th ASDAL Conference, June 20, 2006**</p>

Introduction

My first involvement with the organization of a club happened when I was 12 years old. Three of us of about the same age formed the Bush Rovers Club (BRC), complete with badges that we cut out of tin. Within a short time the club grew until it had 5 members – all male, of course – but the organization didn't last more than two years. We tired of bird watching in the nearby bush, and discovered cycling. So the club died a natural death of disinterest. It was a case of atrophy, because it couldn't survive the changing interests of growing boys.

Organizations and Change

There are several theories about organizations, and what happens to them over time. They are not always nice reading. One of the more controversial theories was proposed by Kenneth Boulding – he contended that organizations have a life cycle characterized by birth, maturation, decline, and death. BRC never did get to the maturation stage. It died in infancy.

But ASDAL has survived. And matured. It has lived through two-and-a-half decades of change. And the ASDAL of today is different from what it was 25 years ago. The Personal Computer & the Internet have seen to that. ASDAL has adapted to new technologies, new ways of doing business, new opportunities for collaboration and cooperation. Our association is an example of a very successful organization.

According to David Segal, one of the roles of a professional association is to be a change-agent. It should facilitate change, help make it happen. He warns, though, that as a professional organization matures, the role of change-agent becomes more difficult. With the passing of time, there's a danger of focusing inward, of navel-gazing, and struggling to maintain current structures rather than developing new ones.

It may be that ASDAL is about now at the stage of facing some possible changes, and struggling to decide what to do. The future of ALICE as a cooperative for sharing information resources is currently clouded because it is competing with large state or regional consortia that have more attractive offers. The SDA Periodical Index faces some new challenges due to free web access to its database, and in the longer term the trend towards online full-text of denominational periodicals may reduce the need for a current indexing service. For these and other reasons ASDAL may be at a crossroads in its growth and development.

How the World Has Changed

The world in 2006 is different from the world of 1981.   The landscape in which we operate our libraries has changed in many ways during the last 25 years. It's a New World out there. There are many facets to the landscape change, but I want to briefly talk about three that have already impacted ASDAL and will continue to do so.

## 1	The Changing Information Landscape

Who, in their wildest dreams, could have envisioned the awesome changes that technology has brought to information storage, retrieval, and sharing?

-	The world had just given birth to the Personal Computer when ASDAL emerged in 1981, but it was not yet a reality in our libraries.
-	Electronic mail was still a communication tool of the US Defence Department and it would be nearly ten years before it became popular in the workplace.
-	And the World Wide Web was not even a dream.

Our libraries have adapted well to the powerful new information technologies, and it has revolutionized our processes of ordering, cataloguing, indexing, collection building, and public services.   ASDAL itself has become a sponsor of shared resources.

Yet our libraries now survive in a world of competition. Every day there are new information providers dotting the landscape. Some services that we have traditionally provided to our users are now better performed by Google. We now live in an information-rich age. Some would say it is super-saturated.

Yet libraries will continue to have unique roles. Three years ago I was with a tour group staying overnight at the tiny community of Watson Lake in the Yukon Territory, an isolated village on the Alaska Highway, 350 miles from the nearest town or city. We were on our way to Whitehorse where our tour group had been asked to provide the Sabbath School program at the church there.   One man in our group had a fine baritone voice and would sing "The Holy City" *if* he could find the words to the song. I said I could accompany him on the piano, *if* I had the music. But where do you find that in a small village that has nothing but a small supermarket?

Well, our hotel had a computer terminal with Internet access, so I did a search for the words and music of The Holy City.   To my surprise and delight I discovered that the National Library of Australia had an image file of the complete score of The Holy City, and in a few minutes I was able to print it.   We had the complete thing – the piano accompaniment and the words.   We were set. Now, I did not need a library to find that item -- Google and a hotel computer enabled me to do that -- but I depended on a library for the product we needed. Our libraries will continue to be the repositories of knowledge, and it will continue to be our responsibility to manage that knowledge well.

One relatively new technological development that offers great possibilities for us is the Web Portal. When I connect to the Internet at home, I have an MSN home page.   That page contains dozens of information links to news, weather, and so on, but what is

important to me is that I've been able to personalize the home page with my own links to Canadian news, local weather, business updates, travel links, links for retirees, health links for seniors, etc. So my page always comes up with a "Welcome, Keith" and draws my attention to new items that match my profiles of interest.

Portals provide exciting possibilities for library service to our clients. When a student or faculty user can personalize a library website with their own subject links, and be automatically aware of new publications in their specific field of interest, we will have provided a valuable tool for our users. Will ASDAL have a role in providing this new technology to Adventist libraries, whether in North America, or beyond our shores?

2   **The Changing Adventist Landscape**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church today is radically different from the Church of 25 years ago. Let's look at membership growth during that period:

SDA Membership 1980-2005

1980 Statistics	2005 Statistics	% Increase
Global: 3,383,000	Global: 14,400,000	325
IAD: 637,000	IAD: 2,608,000	310
SAD: 471,000	SAD: 2,492,000	430
Ghana: 36,000	Ghana: 307,000	753
NAD: 593,000	NAD: 1,012,000	70

Note that most of the growth has been occurring offshore. Within the NAD much of the growth has been with Hispanic and other cultural minorities. What we have seen and are continuing to see is the **Internationalization** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Now let's look at the same pattern happening in the growth of Higher Education in the church during the same 25-year period.

SDA Higher Education 1980-2005

1980 Statistics	2005 Statistics	% Increase
Global Institutions: 72	Global Institutions: 101	40
Universities: 2	Universities: 42	2000
Global Enrolment: 32,800	Global Enrolment: 92,500	182
NAD Enrolment: 19,602	NAD Enrolment: 23,297	19

Notice the huge increase in the number of church-owned universities, almost all of it outside North America. Notice too the enrolment statistics. In 1980 the NAD enrolment represented 60 percent of the global enrolment. In 2005 North America's enrolment represented only 25 percent of the world total.

Not only are higher education institutions in developing countries expanding, but significant changes are occurring, or have already occurred, in the nature and characteristics of these universities:

- Adventist education in most Third World countries carries **the stamp of quality.** I've see this first hand in several countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- Many of these institutions are seeing rapid growth in the number of **non-SDA students.**
- **Access to technology and the Internet** is rapidly becoming the norm in Adventist universities overseas.
- Many Third World nations are seeing the **emergence of local and national library consortia,** especially for academic libraries.
- Increasing numbers of faculty and librarians in developing countries are finding funds for **study or travel abroad**.

During the last ten years or so, ASDAL has reacted boldly to the **internationalization** of the Adventist Church.

- ASDAL has a significant number of members from outside of North America.
- ASDAL has developed standards for collection building at schools overseas.
- Libraries in North America have provided a range of help to libraries overseas -- cataloguing assistance, site visits, consultations, gifts of books and periodicals.
- ASDAL chapters have formed in regions such as Europe and South America.
- ASDAL has conducted its conferences in places as far away as England, Mexico, and Argentina.

In these and other ways ASDAL is contributing to global needs. Are there new challenges for ASDAL service to a world church that is becoming increasingly international in membership and education?   We've already stepped outside our North American comfort zone. Will the ASDAL of the future be a truly global association?

### 3	Global Changes

The World in 2006 is different from what it was a quarter century ago. In 1981 we rarely heard of terrorist acts. Yes, just one month before the 1981 meeting at PUC someone planted a bomb in a toilet at JFK Airport and one person was killed. That event was rare enough that it made big news. Prior to that we were familiar with guerrilla movements – we knew about the Mau Mau in Uganda, and guerrilla movements in Columbia and Peru, but all that was happening in faraway places. It was something we didn't have to think much about. The world was basically a safe place. You could travel almost anywhere on the planet without fear of being shot or taken as a hostage. How that has changed in 25 years! Terrorism came home to us in September 2001.

Our daily work as librarians has been affected by terrorism.   We encounter new and sometimes uncomfortable restrictions on access to information.   But by and large we go on with our work and don't think a lot about how the world has been changing while we go about our daily grind of ordering, cataloguing, and checking out materials.

But while we go about our work, there are some global trends that we as librarians must think about because they help to explain why there are so many angry young people in the world.

Two years ago the International Labor Organization (ILO) published these statistics.

- 18% (1.1 billion) of the world's population are young people, ages 15 to 24.
- 85% of these youth live in developing countries, and mainly in rural areas.
- 60% of the population of the Middle East and Africa are below 25 years of age.

Now put all that alongside these findings published in the UN World Youth Report 2003:

- Half the world's jobless are young people
- Youth unemployment is skyrocketing worldwide (88 million in 2002)
- Youth in developing countries are 3.8 times more likely to be unemployed than adults
- 250 million youth worldwide live in less than $1 per day
- 133 million youth are illiterate
- 110 million youth are malnourished
- 7,000 become infected with HIV every day

There is no scarcity of published material dealing with the issue of youth poverty and unemployment.   Here are excerpts from a 2004 report of the Draeger Foundation:

> The youth employment time bomb: … the dramatic proportions of global youth unemployment; in the next ten years, around a billion young people will reach employment age and crowd the world's labour markets.

> Youth unemployment in the countries of the Third World is threatening social peace and economic development across entire regions of the world.

You cannot have these vast numbers of unemployed troubled youth, crowded together in poverty, and not expect outbreaks of violence. Several recent books and reports make the connection between youth poverty, unemployment and terrorism.

Kamala Sarup (a Nepalese journalist who has been quoted a lot in North America) writes (2006)

> Corruption, poor government and political instability are some of the causes that turn youths into a frustrated lot. It encourages them to engage in terrorism. Falling educational standards along with high incidence of unemployment serve as breeding grounds for terrorism.

Jordan is a good illustration of what is happening.   Jordan has been and is still officially pro-western, an island of stability is a sea of upheaval.   But something is happening in Jordan. A recent CBC program highlighted the increasing poverty of the masses (who

are mainly young people and second-generation Palestinians) and these youth are <u>not</u> pro-western – they are increasingly anti-American and anti-Western.

There is yet another reason why the poor of Africa and Asia have become angry and bitter. Professor Michel Chossudovsky of University of Ottawa in his well-reviewed book *The Globalization of Poverty*, uncovers some disturbing information. Consider these disturbing facts:

- 250 million young people in developing countries survive on less than one dollar per day.
- Wealth of private individuals managed in offshore tax havens was estimated in 1996 as totalling 3,300 billion dollars.
- The offshore assets of mainly North American corporations and individuals: 5,500 billion dollars (equals 25% of total world income).
- The Wealth of Third World individuals in numbered bank accounts: 600 billion dollars.

Consider the meaning of those figures. Chossudovsky concludes his study by saying,

> Expansion and profitability for the world's largest corporations is predicated on a global contraction of purchasing power and the impoverishment of large sectors of the world population.

Let me paraphrase that statement in our vernacular:

> **We in the West have become rich at the expense of the more than one billion poor in our world.**

In my view, this is a scandal of global proportions. Is it any wonder that millions of young people in the Third World are angry with America and Western Europe? Perhaps we are seeing a modern fulfillment of the conditions in the ancient nation of Israel which the prophet Joel wrote about:

> "Hear this, you who trample the needy
> And do away with the poor of the land. …
>
> > Skimping the measure,
> > Boosting the price,
> > And cheating with dishonest scales.
>
> Buying the poor with silver,
> And the needy for a pair of shoes.
>
> > Selling even the sweepings with the wheat.
>
> Will not the land tremble for this,
> And all who live in it mourn?"   (Joel 8:4,6)

Dare I just shrug my shoulders and say, OK, what can I do about it? Well, I suppose ASDAL could organize a march on Washington. But we can do some things that are relevant to the real needs out there, and unique to what ASDAL is all about. Virtually all reports that I have read recently, highlight education as one of the urgent needs of the developing world. Here lies at least a part of the solution to the problem of the world's young people. Here are just 3 recent statements:

- "Almost half the world's population are people younger than 25 who need **investment in education**." (UN Secretary-General, 2004)
- "**Education is the key lever** in dealing with youth unemployment." (Draeger Foundation, 2004)
- "There is a strong and urgent need to scale up our **investment in education**." (ILO, 2004)

As an organization of Seventh-day Adventist librarians, individuals who care as Christ did for the needy and downtrodden, we **can** do something through our support for education of youth in developing countries. I think it's one way of integrating our faith with our profession, in a practical way. For Christian librarians it is a double imperative.

We know very well that libraries are critical to higher education, and through our support for the libraries of Adventist universities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we can do something tangible to educate young men and women to be leaders in their society. Many of them are not Adventist young people, but young Muslims, Hindus, and others who attend our schools. **We <u>can</u> change the world, one life at a time.**

Some Dreams About a Future ASDAL

I've talked about just three areas where the changing world has messages for ASDAL:

- The new technologies
- The internationalization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- The incredible and urgent needs of youth in the Third World

I'm a bit of a dreamer, and a few days ago I had a dream. I was carried away on a magic carpet to three different Adventist institutions, and fast forwarded to some year in the future to see what ASDAL is doing.

First Stop: La Sierra University

My carpet lands at a place that looks rather familiar. I recognize some of the buildings as belonging to La Sierra University. LSU is one of just 8 Adventist universities in North America (some have closed or been amalgamated with others). LSU is now a mainly Hispanic university, and Spanish is the language of instruction. It has around 5,000 students attending. I find myself talking with the recently appointed ASDAL Manager of Global Library Services. Her name escapes me, but from the conversation I

learn that ASDAL has finally scored the ultimate level of institutional collaboration, and now there is almost no duplication of database subscriptions between the 8 NAD institutions.

I meet Raul, a Spanish-American graduate student, who is eager to show me how the library supports him in his study program and research in fresh-water biology. He takes his iPod and it opens to a very sophisticated ASDAL-designed portal.   Stan Cottrell launched it just before he retied.

This ASDAL portal provides an impressive range of choices for making it personal.   To start with, you can choose your language of presentation. Choices include English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Korean, with more to be added soon.   Although Raul has a good command of English, he has selected Spanish for his personalized ASDAL gateway to the world of information. He has designed his portal with a wide range of options, including links to various databases provided by any of the 8 Adventist universities in America.

As soon as he opens his portal, he is presented with alerts for two new items in his chosen field of freshwater biology.   One is a new book recently acquired by Oakwood University, the other is a journal article which he can download immediately for a fixed fee which will be debited to his account. When he clicks on the new book title, he scans its table of contents, which he finds interesting, but the book has just been checked out by someone at Oakwood. However, all new academic books are now also available as full-text, available for 3-day online loan, one loan at a time, and Raul is fortunate to be next in line for this access.

Second Stop: Cambodia

I'm off again on my magic carpet, flying over continents, and find myself landing in the tropical country of Cambodia.   I'm on the campus of Cambodia Adventist University. – one of several new SDA higher education institutions in SE Asia.

The library director, Ms Mina Lim, is delighted because she has just received a message that her application to have an ASDAL mini-conference at her institution next year has been granted. Each year, in addition to its world conference, ASDAL sponsors one or two mini-conferences in local regions of the world.   Next year's mini-conference at Cambodia Adventist University will cover the SE Asia region (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and the Philippines) – the first ever meeting of Adventist librarians in SE Asia.

The other mini-conference next year will be organized by the Peru Chapter of ASDAL and will be held at one of the six campuses of the Peru Adventist University.

Ms. Lim will receive funding for the conference from two sources: The SE Asia Division of the Church will support the ASDAL initiative with some funding and the Division Education Director will attend the conference.   There will also be a grant from

ASDAL which will pay the cost of bringing a guest presenter to the conference. Ms. Lim has her sights on an outstanding presenter from the University of Manila in the Philippines.

Another valuable service from ASDAL is a web-based manual for the organization of mini-conferences, providing step-by-step guidance in planning and hosting the conference.   Ms. Lim anticipates a conference attendance of about 20 librarians representing the 10 post-secondary institutions in SE Asia which serve a total enrolment of approximately 16,000 students. More than half the students are non-SDAs and non-Christian. She wants the conference theme to be about providing information services to these young people after they graduate and take up jobs.

Ms. Lim hopes that one of the outcomes of the conference will be the establishment of a SE Asian Chapter of ASDAL.

Third Stop: Sierra Leone

I'm up, up and away again on the carpet, and seconds later I'm landing somewhere in West Africa.   The Adventist University of Sierra Leone is a new and struggling institution in a small West African nation that has been a closed country for several years due to internal violence and terrorism.   It is a poor country, with high unemployment and a low standard of living, but the nation has recently begun moving toward political stability. The new president of the country is a Seventh-day Adventist with a graduate degree in economics from a prestigious Adventist university in West Africa.

The library director at AUSL is Solomon and he is very excited that his library has been adopted by Midwestern Adventist University in Nebraska. It is part of an ASDAL initiative that encourages each of the libraries of North American institutions to adopt a needy library in Africa or Asia.   Solomon has just returned from a trip to America, his first trip outside West Africa. He spent a couple of weeks on the campus of Midwestern Adventist University, which helped substantially with his travel expenses

Two of the librarians from Midwestern visited Sierra Leone last year to assess the needs of the library, and they made some recommendations that Solomon has found useful. Although his library has a very inadequate print collection, it does have access to the web and a few good databases. Until recently, though, the library had only three or four outdated computers which were almost useless for Internet access.

However, Solomon is excited to show me a public area with a dozen brand new computers, all purchased with funds donated by the librarians and staff at Midwestern. The new computers are fast, and Solomon is proud to tell me that his library has the fastest computers of any school in Sierra Leone.   This may be one reason why many Islamic students are now transferring here from the country's main public university.

I am about to take off again on my carpet, when I wake up.   It is just a dream after all.

Conclusion

I began my talk with the story of the Bush Rovers Club, which failed to meet the changing needs of its five members. Several years later, when I was a senior in high school, we organized a new club, a speleological society, with organized expeditions to explore and study limestone caves in eastern Australia. This time we peaked at around 20 members, both sexes, and had a lot of fun times.

Eventually, though, we ran out of caves to explore. But rather than disband the club, we broadened our field of interest to include rock-climbing and back packing. We adapted the club to fit our interests and needs. And later we changed its name to reflect the widened sphere of activity. And I can report that exactly 50 years later the club is still active, with dozens of members. It has succeeded in coping with change, and has adapted to the interests of its members.

Whatever the future of ASDAL, I'm confident that this association will meet the challenges, and will have an exciting future. Happy 25th, ASDAL! Go, Go, Go!

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