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### Seminary Heritage Sabbath

Merlin D. Burt

*Andrews University*, [burt@andrews.edu](mailto:burt@andrews.edu)

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# SEMINARY HERITAGE SABBATH

By Merlin D. Burt, Director of Andrews University Center for Adventist Research

September 12, 2009, marked the 8th consecutive year that the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University has conducted an all-day Heritage Sabbath at Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, Michigan. Each year has been a great blessing to the students, many of whom look back to Seminary Heritage Sabbath as one of the high points in their Seminary experience. Attendance year-by-year is significant, ranging from 250 to 400 students and families. Speakers over the years have included key church leaders including the General Conference president, Division president, Lake Union Conference presidents, and other significant speakers. This year Don Livesay, Lake Union President was the speaker. Many students and faculty expressed appreciation for his message as he asked the question, "What are you doing here?"

The weather was stellar; warm and sunny. The day began with Sabbath School introducing the students to early Advent hymns with stories. Usually Jim Nix, AHM Board Chair and Director of the Ellen G. White Estate, leads in this program but due to flight problems this year Merlin Burt stepped in at the last

minute. Space is always a problem at the worship service so for the past few years we have opened the barn and set up a speaker to enable the overflow crowd to hear the service. Sabbath school and church is also provided for children in the schoolhouse. This year we had about 35 children with able Andrews University students, Jonathan and Marlene Burt leading out. Hannah DeLuca, and Celesta Burt also assisted.

Following a fellowship lunch, alternating tours were provided for the Village and the Oak Hill Cemetery. Jim Nix and Duff Stoltz, Village Director, led out in the Village tours with Merlin Burt leading the cemetery tour. For students who had visited the Village in previous years and preferred something new, a presentation was made in the 1857 Meeting House by seminary church history professors Nick Miller and Gerard Damsteegt who presented a seminar entitled "Ellen White, 1844, and Final Events." About 30 attended each of the two sessions.

A 'haystack supper', organized by Sue Moon and Sarah Burt together with help from the church history department faculty, was provided by the Seminary.

After supper the highlight of the day is always a Communion Service led by the dean of the Seminary. Jim Nix joined Denis Fortin, Seminary Dean, in telling stories of sacrifice and commitment together with appropriate songs. The service concluded with a candle lighting ceremony as the congregation sang "I'll Where You Want Me to Go, Dear Lord."

The Seminary and Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University would like to particularly express appreciation to Duff Stoltz and his wife Joyce for hosting us at the Village, and to Jim Nix for coming so faithfully each year to provide a blessing to the students who attend. Adventist Heritage Ministry makes a significant contribution to the education of Seventh-day Adventist pastors through the annual Seminary Heritage Sabbath. God is using the historic sites together with dedicated leaders to change many lives. To rekindle and brighten faith in the mission and message of the Seventh-day Adventist church at a time when many are uncertain is a work of greatest importance. Again, thank you for the ministry of Adventist Heritage Ministry. ■



Seminarians and their families are warmly welcomed to Historic Adventist Village by Duff Stoltz, Director.



Merlin Burt's introductory remarks give guidance to the special Sabbath day activities.