



A Tradition of Leadership

In front of Pioneer Memorial Church on the campus of Andrews University stands a sculpture by artist Alan Collins. It depicts J. N. Andrews and his two children departing the United States for mission service in Europe. When the university accepted Andrews's name for itself, it also accepted his legacy—a legacy of leadership. What kind of leader was J. N. Andrews?

He was a pioneer missionary, a single-parent missionary, entering a mission field whose languages he did not yet speak. That alone shows both leadership and courage. What is more, correspondence reveals that he did not always follow closely the advice of the church officials who sent him. They were anxious for him to preach, raising up new Adventist churches in Europe, and he did that. But he also took time, a lot of time, to publish a magazine, write a book, collect a library and learn several languages. A recently acquired letter from Andrews to church officials throws further light on his independence. In 1864, ten years before his departure for Europe, church officials asked him to move from Rochester, New York to Battle Creek, Michigan to take up a new assignment. He respectfully declined to move, citing as a reason that so many questions were raised about the Adventist beliefs that he needed the resources in the University library in Rochester in order to prepare well-reasoned answers to these questions.

Now Andrews University is preparing its students for leadership like that demonstrated by Andrews—to serve both the church and society. This kind of leadership is demanding and lonely, and it carries some risk of opposition, for it does not set out along familiar paths, improving what has been done before and what is expected by most. Rather it redefines traditional goals, strikes out along new paths, answers questions that have not yet occurred to others, and proposes solutions that are difficult, but bear considerable promise. J. N. Andrews died nine years after arriving in Europe, but in those few years he defined church leadership in strikingly new ways, and eventually gave his name to this University and his legacy to those students who graduate from it in order to lead.



Wm. Smith Green