

Organ Vision: Odyssey of a Nonfundraiser

Kenneth Logan

In 1993 I accepted a keyboard position at Canadian Union College, following an interim position at Walla Walla College and the opportunity to play on one of the finest pipe organs in Seventh-day Adventism, a ninety-two rank Casavant. While CUC's strong faculty, the creative opportunity the position offered, and the captivating natural beauty of the Alberta plains smoothed the transition, leaving that stimulating

instrument was a wrenching experience, one that created a gaping hole in my professional life.

The College Heights church organ at CUC was an uneasy medley of pipes from several decades. Some individual aspects were fine, but they meshed poorly. Full Organ impressed with coarse strength rather than refined vigor, and a plethora of increasing

mechanical problems jeopardized reliable performance.

Surprisingly, CUC Dean of Arts John McDowell had asked at my employment interview, "So when can you get for us a new \$400,000¹ organ"? Spurred on by my keen disappointment with the present organ, I early envisioned a new organ installed within five years.

This summer, five years after the interview, the installation of a



three manual 45 rank Casavant organ, Opus 3760, will be completed at CUC at a cost of approximately \$450,000. What follows are a few facets of the fascinating odyssey of its genesis - an initiative called *OrganVision*.

Who Needs It? We Do!

I realized that the existing organ needed to be replaced, but funds were limited and conflicting needs existed. How were we to make the case to others? The first major task was to get expert documentation of needs.

Two diverse evaluators wrote reports that converged upon estimates in the vicinity of \$250,000 to renovate and expand the organ. One spoke of spending "this enormous amount of money . . . that might make sense to us today, but in the long run makes not a lot of sense at all." Video footage of distressed organ components accompanied with pointed narration underscored the needs to the College Heights church board. The board declined to do a major organ rebuilding, and external fundraising began in earnest. A goal of \$435,000 was chosen!

\$435,000? But I'm Not a Fundraiser!

Further CUC board approval of focused fundraising unlocked

invaluable access to CUC donor records and other vital administrative strategic support. However, the major thrust of planning and executing the fundraising and other administration would remain with me.

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sold - vitally propelled forward by an energizing vision. Of some 200 local churches of many denominations, only two had pipe organs.

Yet the college had Wendolin Munroe's vibrant choral program, and the college was in proximity to several population centers. This created a "seller's market" for using the pipe organ in dynamic, unique applications.

Tools for the Field

Prospective major donors were our primary focus. We formed a *Report and Prospectus* of nearly

thirty user-friendly pages, organized to document present deficiencies, articulate a vision, and discuss realizing the vision. Left-margin summaries captured main points. Our message in essence: The *OrganVision* initiative is substantial in its planning base, not merely an unfocused dream. This document became a prime tool in a successful application for a \$100,000 USD grant for the organ from a foundation based in the United States.

We also created an abbreviated four-fold brochure and a four-page visually-oriented brochure with seven visual images (see illustration). A field book of professional-quality color photos of present organ problems was invaluable. Newsletters updated friends of *OrganVision*.

Moving beyond visuals, we produced several promotional cassettes, all using organ music that I had played on Casavant organs. One was hymn arrangements, and one mixed hymn settings with classical repertoire. The third was a half-hour-long narrated tour of organ tone colors to encourage sizable Designated Gifts for particular parts of the organ.

Success Succeeds and Givers Give

We needed an early success symbol to confirm further



fundraising. One early break resulted from a presentation to members of the college's Committee of 100, a project-oriented group of givers. Live narration and appeal, a homemade model, vivid video of need, and short examples of great organ sound formed our presentation. The request was for \$50,000, more than I thought the group would give, and its full success delighted us.

Over the following months, I noted that givers give! For example, college records showed support from a rural address in British Columbia. Driving there, I met a friendly young dairy farmer. The farm maintained about seventy cattle, and our discussions on the premises were among the most pungent that my nose encountered! Intuition would not call that farmer a prime prospect for support ahead of, for example, a music graduate who had never given to the college, but that dedicated farmer gave \$1,000

a year for two years--for a pipe organ!

Providence and Privilege

Another experience reasonably can be attributed to direct Providence. An organ committee member had mentioned a "vanity

twenty-five minute discussion over lunch as he hurried toward a golf date.


Additional dialogue with his wife by phone and with materials seemed unremarkable. Imagine our joy when their \$25,000 check for the organ arrived just before Christmas 1994!

What a great privilege it was to have had an integral part, through thick and thin, in the ultimate success of *OrganVision* at Canadian Union College. I urge colleagues with major music-program needs to be integrally involved in initiatives to transform vision to reality!


¹ All dollar figures are Canadian.

Organ Vision
An Initiative of
Canadian Union College

*Canadian Union College exists to serve students
from Newfoundland to British Columbia and abroad
as the only Adventist university college in Canada.*



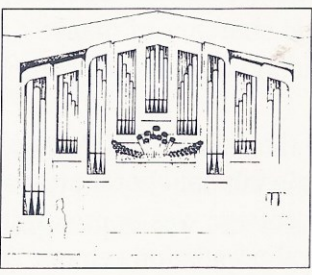
*Adventist schools for K-12 are adjacent to CUC.
Students from far and near number eight hundred.*



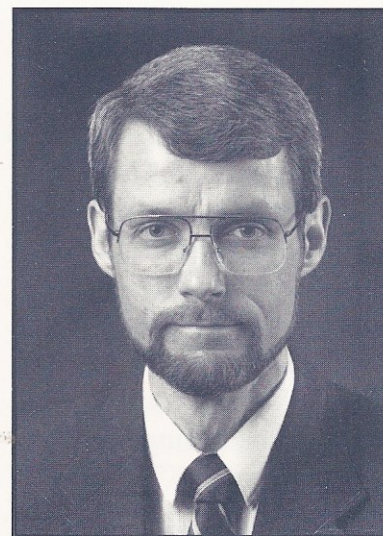
*College Heights SDA Church serves a large constituency and community as the church for Canadian Union College.
The church setting is vital to students' educational opportunity and for Canadian Union College's opportunity to serve its community.*

But how do Adventist education and community service relate to a pipe organ?

The organ will be expertly crafted by the Canadian firm of Casavant, custom-designed for renovated church surroundings and widely-varied functions.



license plate," belonging to a realtor outside of Alberta. Out fundraising, I saw a car with a similar license plate parked near a restaurant. Momentarily a man emerged from the restaurant to use the car phone. I introduced myself, and we shared a



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