

# Centennial Moments

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## The Faculty of Religion

A core component of the wholistic educational philosophy of Loma Linda University has been a blend of the physical, mental, and spiritual. From the earliest years, the clinical component of medical education has been motivated by the need to glorify God through the combined medical-spiritual ministry. Loma Linda University historian Richard Schaefer states that, "Bible classes were among the first courses taught at the fledgling institution." Even Ellen White herself, another founder of LLU, counseled early school administrators to combine "the healing of the sick and the ministry of the Word" as ministries that were to go "hand in hand" with each other.

John Burden in an early letter to Ellen White wrote that one-quarter of the faculty were to teach Bible. The original members of the Faculty of Religion here at LLU were known simply as "Bible instructors" or "Bible teachers." Loma Linda prided itself on their commitment to biblical



*Roderick S. Owen*

instruction. In one place, Ellen White wrote that this school demanded the very "best Bible teachers we can supply."

The original Bible teachers included the president of the institution, its manager, and several ministers. No one person was identified as the Bible teacher until the appointment of Roderick S. Owen, who served for about 20 years. Before his conversion he had been a prospector in Colorado.

After becoming an Adventist he served as a teacher and was recognized while he was here at the College of Medical Evangelists, as it was then called, as a brilliant scholar. He was remembered by Harold Shryock for making his students memorize Bible texts, sometimes even two a day. Owen's teaching career was augmented only by brief evangelistic stints. While away, his classes would be taught by F. M. Burg with help from Luther Warren, Clarence Santee, and John Burden.

Clock hours during the 1909-10 school year reveal that for a three-year medical evangelistic course, students would sit through 552 hours of Bible and pastoral training, complemented by 496 hours of anatomy, 334 hours of physiology, and 330 hours of chemistry. Such was the high regard that the founders of LLU placed upon Bible in our early curriculum. Some of the religion courses included advanced doctrines, New Testament epistles, and Old Testament.