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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	92065178
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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**  
**BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD**

Philanthropist.com, Inc.

Petitioner,

v.

The General Conference Corporation of  
Seventh-Day Adventists,

Registrant.

Cancellation No. 92065178 (Parent)

Cancellation No. 92065255

**PETITIONER’S REBUTTAL NOTICE OF RELIANCE**

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 2.122 and Chapter 700 of the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board Manual of Procedure, Petitioner Philanthropist.com, Inc. (“Petitioner”) intends to rely on the following documents, Internet materials, and printed publications in support of its Petition to Cancel and in rebuttal to the evidence and/or testimony submitted by Registrant The General Conference Corporation of Seventh-Day Adventists (“Registrant” or “GCCSDA<sup>1</sup>”). See Dkt. Nos. 47-67. Petitioner specifically intends to rely on Rebuttal Exhibits 1-14 in support of its Petition to Cancel and in rebuttal to the evidence and/or testimony submitted by Registrant in its Notices of Reliance and Testimony for Defendant. See id.

**REBUTTAL EXHIBITS**

**REBUTTAL EXHIBIT 1:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Adventism Confronts Modernity* by Robert Mayer. The book was published by Pickwick Publications in 2017. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members

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<sup>1</sup> As used herein, “GCCSDA” is concurrently used to refer to “Seventh-Day Adventists” to the extent necessary and/or applicable.

of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit 1 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Jennifer Gray Woods, Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 48, 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 1 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 1 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism). Rebuttal Exhibit 1 is further specifically relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to both the “Advent Christian” and “Seventh-day Adventist” denominations and/or groups and/or bodies.

**REBUTTAL EXHIBIT 2:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *William Miller and The Rise of Adventism* by George R. Knight. The book was published by Pacific Press Publishing Association (publishing house for GCCSDA) in 2010. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit 2 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 2 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 2 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism).

**REBUTTAL EXHIBIT 3:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Melton's Encyclopedia of*

*American Religions* (Eighth Edition) (Including 1<sup>st</sup> Half of “Adventist Family” Section) edited by J. Gordon Melton, et al. The book was published by Gale, Cengage Learning in 2009. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit 3 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Exhibit 3 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 3 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism). Rebuttal Exhibit 3 is further specifically relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to the “Adventist Family” including “Sunday Adventists,” “Seventh-day Adventists,” and “Church of God Adventists” among other Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies.

**REBUTTAL EXHIBIT 4:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions* (Eighth Edition) (Including 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of “Adventist Family” Section) edited by J. Gordon Melton, et al. The book was published by Gale, Cengage Learning in 2009. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit 4 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 4 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic.

Rebuttal Exhibit 4 is further specifically relevant as to the general public's understanding of the word "Adventist" as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism). Rebuttal Exhibit 4 is further specifically relevant to show that the word "Adventist" refers to the "Adventist Family" including "Sunday Adventists," "Seventh-day Adventists," and "Church of God Adventists" among other Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies.

**REBUTTAL EXHIBIT 5:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Seventh-Day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Second Revised Edition) (Letters A-L) edited by Don F. Neufeld, et al. The book was published by Review and Herald Publishing Association (publishing house for GCCSDA) in 1996. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit 5 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 5 is relevant to show that the word "Adventist" refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 5 is further specifically relevant as to the general public's understanding of the word "Adventist" as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism).

**REBUTTAL EXHIBIT 6:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Seventh-Day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Second Revised Edition) (Letters M-Z) edited by Don F. Neufeld, et al. The book was published by Review and Herald Publishing Association (publishing house for GCCSDA) in 1996. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such

as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit 6 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 6 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 6 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism).

**REBUTTAL EXHIBIT 7:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Student's Source Book* edited by Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer. The book was published by Review and Herald Publishing Association (publishing house for GCCSDA) in 1962. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit 7 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 7 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 7 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism).

**EXHIBIT 8:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *The Edges of Seventh-day Adventism* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) by Lowell Tarling. The book was published by Galilee Publishing in 2012. The book is available to the general public in libraries and is of general circulation among members of the public. It is available for purchase at major booksellers such as Amazon.com. Rebuttal Exhibit

8 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 8 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 8 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism).

**EXHIBIT 9:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Adventist Heritage, A Magazine for Adventist History* (Vol. 1 No. 2). The magazine was published by Adventist Heritage, Inc. in July 1974. The magazine is available to the general public. It is published online at <https://adventistdigitallibrary.org/adl-400928/adventist-heritage-july-1-1974> and accessed on April 5, 2020. Rebuttal Exhibit 9 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 9 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 9 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism). Rebuttal Exhibit 9 is further specifically relevant to show that the word “Adventist” was frequently used prior to 1860 by multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA.

**EXHIBIT 10:** A true and correct copy of excerpts of *Adventist Today* (Winter 2020) (Vol. 28 No. 1). The magazine was published by Adventist Today Foundation in Winter 2020. The

magazine is available to the general public. Rebuttal Exhibit 10 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Bill Knott submitted as Dkt. No. 59 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 10 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 10 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism). Rebuttal Exhibit 10 is further specifically relevant to show that the word “Adventist” is used by a periodical distributed in the United States and this periodical is not owned by GCCSDA.

**EXHIBIT 11:** A true and correct copy of Declaration of Eve. J. Brown including its attached Exhibit A (February 26, 2020 Steve Lawson Email to Eve Brown). Rebuttal Exhibit 11 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Jennifer Gray Woods, Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, George R. Knight, and David Trim submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 48, 49, 50, 56, and 58 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 11 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 11 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism). Rebuttal Exhibit 11 is further specifically relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to both the “Advent Christian” and “Seventh-day Adventist” denominations and/or groups and/or bodies. Rebuttal Exhibit 11 is further specifically relevant to rebut Exhibit 4 (August 22, 2019 Letter from Steve Lawson) attached to the testimony of Jennifer Gray Woods submitted as Dkt. No. 48 by GCCSDA.

**EXHIBIT 12:** A true and correct copy of printouts of the Adventist Today website, published online at <https://Atoday.org/contact-us> and accessed on March 13, 2020. Rebuttal Exhibit 12 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, and Bill Knott submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 49, 50, and 59 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 12 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 12 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism).

**EXHIBIT 13:** A true and correct copy of printouts of the New York United Sabbath Day Adventist Church website, published online at <http://NYUnitedSDA.org/Watch-Live> and accessed on March 13, 2020. Rebuttal Exhibit 13 is relevant to rebut the testimony of Jennifer Gray Woods, Clinton Wahlen, George W. Reid, and Jonah Perry submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 48, 49, 50, and 57 by GCCSDA. Specifically, Rebuttal Exhibit 13 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 13 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or generic for the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism).

**EXHIBIT 14:** A true and correct copy of printouts of the International Association of Free Seventh-day Adventists website, published online at <http://FreeSDA.org/benefits.html> and accessed on March 13, 2020. Rebuttal Exhibit 14 is relevant to rebut the testimony of George Reid and Bill Knott submitted, respectively, as Dkt. Nos. 50 and 59 by GCCSDA. Specifically,

Rebuttal Exhibit 14 is relevant to show that the word “Adventist” refers to multiple Adventist denominations and/or groups and/or bodies, not merely GCCSDA, and is generic. Rebuttal Exhibit 14 is further specifically relevant as to the general public’s understanding of the word “Adventist” as generic for the goods and services at issue in this proceeding and/or the Adventist category of religion (or Adventism). Rebuttal Exhibit 14 is further specifically relevant to show that the word “Adventist” is used by a newsletter distributed in the United States and this newsletter is not owned by GCCSDA.

Dated: April 6, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

/C. Alexander Chiulli/

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, C. Alexander Chiulli, hereby certify that a true copy of the foregoing document has been served this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020 by electronic mail on:

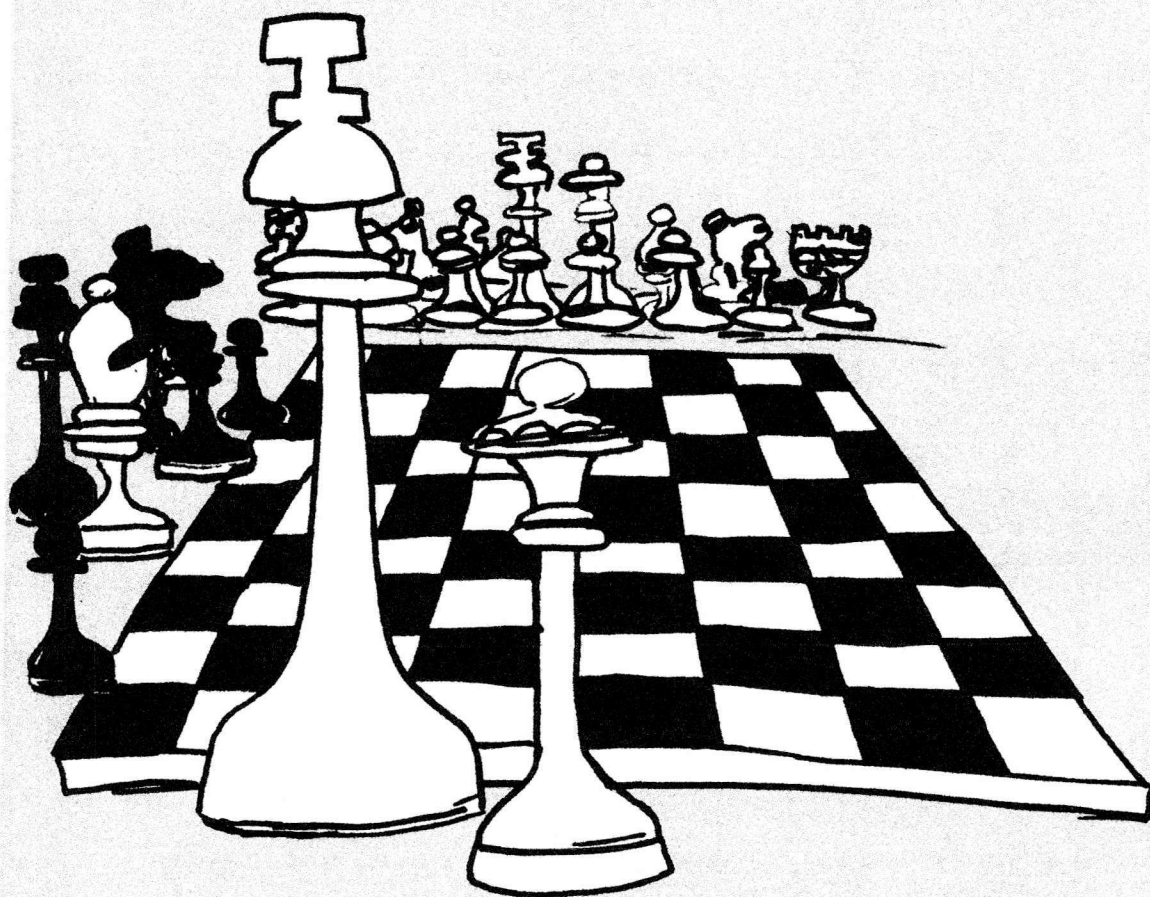
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# Exhibit 8

# The Edges of SEVENTH-day AdVENTiSm



**A Study of Separatist Groups Emerging from the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1844-1980) including the Worldwide Church of God, the Ford and Brinsmead controversies, as well as movements leading to the carnage exacted on David Koresh & his followers at Waco Texas**

**Lowell Tarling**

# The Edges of Seventh-day Adventism

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History/Religion/Institutions & organisations

A copy of this book can be found in the National Library of Australia

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*Linda Brooks*

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## Introduction

*The sum of the parts of the offshoot movements  
is equal to the corporate identity of the mainstream church.*

This book examines the history of the Seventh-day Adventist fringe movements. An understanding of these movements provides a deeper understanding into the Seventh-day Adventist mind.

The history of the Seventh-day Adventist church is the story of its transformation from sect to Protestant denomination. When it began in the 1840s it had all the earmarks of a sect but 140 years later, it has almost achieved respectability.

Within Seventh-day Adventism there has always been a tug-of-war between elements wanting to remain sectarian and elements wanting to be denominational. Similar movements at its fringes reflect the battle which is taking place within the church itself. Some fringe movements want to retain the characteristics of a sect, others want the full acceptance of being a denomination in the Protestant sense.

I have grouped these fringe movements into three major categories. They are:

1. **Separatists** – groups disinterested in Seventh-day Adventism and its church-sect process.
2. **Perfectionists** - groups that have idealised a particular period of sectarian Adventist history and have chosen to remain there.
3. **Protestants** - groups that have tried to throw off the thinking of a sect and move towards the more sophisticated attitudes of a denomination.

While this three-way classification is convenient, it can also be deceptive. The reader should remember that there is a wide gulf between the three classifications, and great differences between groups within each classification. At times the only real similarity between the groups is that they derived from the same source. Furthermore, within categories, most splinter groups would find greater affinity with the parent body than with each other. More often than not they accuse groups similar to themselves of being delinquent, suggesting they would do better to disband and rejoin the mother church.

While the study of a single Seventh-day Adventist off-shoot can help observers understand one aspect of the mother church, it does not paint a big picture. However, a study of all the breakaways can give a very clear understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist mind. It is a case of being able to learn a considerable amount about church central, without having gone to the heart. That is because - the sum of the parts of the offshoot movements is equal to the corporate identity of the mainstream church.

During the mid-nineteenth century when Adventism surfaced in America, it bore all the traits of a conservative millennialist sect. This was not the first time in history that millennialism had broken out.

In *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, Norman Cohn describes the phenomenon during its outbreak in the Middle Ages. Typically, millennialists have these four characteristics:

1. They believe in the infallibility and inspiration of the Bible, which they interpret literally.
2. They look to the imminent return of Christ. This, they believe, will be cataclysmic.
3. They are ascetic in lifestyle and tend towards perfectionism.
4. They arise when other secular and religious thinkers believe that major upheavals of social order are probable.

The year that William Miller said was the end of the world, 1844, was in a sense the start of a new world.

Evolution, Marxism, Fascism and Seventh-day Adventism all trace their origins to that specific year. In 1844, from his journals, Charles Darwin completed his first major draft of *Origin of Species*. In 1844 Karl Marx published his first major work. In 1844 Friedrich Nietzsche was born, the man whose philosophies spawned the Nazi Movement. And after 1844 the world became increasingly industrialized.


In the years immediately after the Great Disappointment, the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church saw themselves as an exclusive community of the saved. They believed the Shut Door Theory which taught that only those who had passed through the Millerite experience could be saved. This made them the most sectarian of all sects. Today all Seventh-day Adventists agree that the saved are found in all religions, and they prefer not to be reminded about the Shut Door Theory. This is one example of just how far-reaching the change has been in the transformation from early Adventist sectarian churches into a modern corporate-style denomination.

Most, if not all, of our modern denominations had the characteristics of a sect when they started. Over the years these movements gradually lost their sectarianism and transformed into denominations.

As I see them, the basic differences between a sect and a denomination are both sociological and theological.

In summary, they can be expressed as follows:

1. A sect's followers are largely drawn from the poorer classes; a denomination's followers tend to be higher on the socio-economic scale.
2. A sect is a small unstructured group; a denomination is institutionalized.
3. A sect sees itself as the exclusive community of the saved; a denomination believes the saved are also in other fellowships. Pioneers of the sect are


- seldom schooled in theology; a denomination runs theological seminaries.
4. A sect is almost always against the establishment; a denomination draws on the establishment for support.
  5. A sect owns little or no real estate; a denomination has a wide diversity of properties and investments.
  6. A sect groups itself around a charismatic leader; in a denomination, charismatic personalities often clash with church leadership.
  7. A sect's members adhere to a unified (though not necessarily written) code of beliefs; a denomination tolerates a wide range of beliefs among its followers (even though it may have a creed.)
  8. A sect has an extra-Scriptural source of authority; a Protestant denomination does not.
  9. A sect devalues the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith; a denomination, in theory at least, does not.
  10. A sect is usually non-Trinitarian; a denomination believes in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as equal in the Godhead.
- 

In applying these points to the Seventh-day Adventist church, the year 1860 appears as the gateway through which the movement passed when it started dropping the characteristics of a sect. 1888 is also important. And 1956 another gateway through which it shed some other sectarian features. Other points to be considered include the naming and structuring of the church, education of the second-generation Seventh-day Adventists (some of whom had formal qualifications), the role of Ellen White, institutionalising her charisma after Ellen White's death and the battles over the doctrine of justification by faith and the nature of Christ.

The fringe movements in this book will be seen to be either clinging onto the elements of a sect, or moving towards the characteristics of a denomination. Some fringe groups have dropped off *because* the church has progressed towards a denomination, leaving sectarian views behind. Initially they may have tried to call the church back to the old landmarks, but when the church failed to respond, they formed their own sect. Some of these sects will themselves evolve into denominations. But those that do not are modern examples of a former era of Seventh-day Adventist thinking.

Another type of breakaway is led by a charismatic leader with leanings towards Protestantism. They run ahead of the Seventh-day Adventist church in its transition from a sect-to-denomination and find themselves so far ahead that they become isolated from the mainstream. They are usually expelled from the church and may even have a small following for a time. But with no real ambition to form a new group, they may quickly be absorbed into mainstream Protestantism. Within a decade or two the church may itself reach similar theological conclusions. However, it will not give credit to these individuals nor try to win them back.

Despite attempts by the mainstream church to suggest evil intent on the part of the divisive movements, the motives this book ascribes to them are in the main contained in the above paragraphs. After all, if the fact that one broke away from a mother church necessarily meant that one was treacherous, then every church in



Christendom (all off-shoots of Judaism) has been conceived in sin. Their legitimacy is therefore beyond question, the freedom of worship belongs to every individual and Seventh-day Adventism is certainly not unique in having spawned a large number of sub-groups.

On breaking away from a parent church, I see nothing to condone and nothing to condemn. If a believer, or a group of believers, feel that separating from an existing group improves their lot, that in itself should satisfy its critics.

For this reason I have not made much of the theory that Seventh-day Adventism is a Methodist, Baptist, or Seventh Day Baptist offshoot. Neither have I dwelt on the theory that the Church of God was the true church with the true name, and Seventh-day Adventism was their offshoot.

Because Seventh-day Adventism is the larger group, and because I do not hold to denominational pedigrees, I have gone along with the convenient view that the Church of God is the first offshoot of Seventh-day Adventism, rather than Seventh-day Adventism being the first offshoot of the Church of God.

A brief overview of this manuscript is this. From the Millerite Movement there came four groups - the Advent Christian Church, the Life and Advent Union, the Evangelical Adventists and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At first, the differences between the four became increasingly apparent, but out of sheer necessity the Life and Advent Union and the Evangelical Adventists united with the Advent Christian Church. Had they not done so they would have entirely vanished.

I have treated Seventh-day Adventist history in three periods.

Firstly we have the groups that emerged when Ellen G. White was alive (1844-1915). Although this period covers some seventy years, her will was invariably the guiding force behind the church. A word, a vision or a letter from her was usually enough to reverse the decision of a committee of some twenty administrators. Separatists in the times of Ellen White usually reacted against her authority and the distinctive Adventist doctrines. Having left, these separatists tended to drop their Seventh-day Adventist connections, preferring instead to concentrate on maintaining a separate identity in a pluralistic society. Most Seventh-day Adventists would regard the early members of the Church of God as liberalisers who tried to cast off the 'binds' of the church and its prophet.

The second period of breakaway history is 1916-1956. It is during this period that the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had to establish a means of continuing to lead without the appointed prophet. At this point two kinds of leadership emerged:

- *Bureaucratic leadership*, as evidenced in the formal church structure all the way down from General Conference, to local church level.

- *Traditional leadership*, as seen in the Ellen G. White Estate. Her charisma was institutionalized then monitored through a flow of compilations in book form,

bringing her words to the attention of church members. During these forty years the authority of the General Conference and the Ellen White books was strong. It was an attempt to remain static - almost as if the prophetess had not died and her brand of Seventh-day Adventism could be forever preserved.

Having broken with the mainstream group and formed their own, separatists then tended to follow the same sect-to-denomination path as the Seventh-day Adventist leadership. First the church administration talks to them, when the talks fail the group is expelled for a bureaucratic reason - like not agreeing with 'accepted church order'. Next, the breakaway group attempts to influence the entire church body. When that fails, they organize themselves into a new and equally authoritarian force. They too expel non-conformists, declare themselves to be the one true church, and denounce their heretics. Noteworthy in this category are the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement (c.1914) and the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists (c.1930).

**After 1956** four major social factors brought about a new kind of Seventh-day Adventism and, in turn, a new kind of Seventh-day Adventist breakaway.

These points are:

1. A general increase in the standard of education.
2. A desire to befriend the Protestant world.
3. An increased secularization amongst sectors of the church, which had previously been staunchly conservative.
4. And a general reaction to authoritarianism and hierarchies.

Rather than attack, denounce or criticize the church, post-1956 dissidents had a tendency to simply wander off. Those with natural leadership abilities might win a few (perhaps many) supporters, but rather than starting anew, most preferred to join an existing church or start a group fellowship. In a sense, the church leaders of 1916-1956 had strong supporters and strong detractors, whereas after 1956 a growing section of church members regarded them as a power to be at best tolerated, or even ignored.

The simplest example is the existence of at least one hundred listed house-churches in 1981. Most have neither severed their connection with the Seventh-day Adventist Church nor acknowledged it. To such groups, church membership is so meaningless that they have not dignified it with resignation.

In the 1930s the church would have regarded each of these groups as a threat. The groups would have fired this up by attacking the mainstream church, issuing tracts, proselytizing, and even setting up their own General Conferences. In the 1980s none of these activities are usually pursued by the new separatists. This explains why, after the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Adventism has no significant breakaway *denominations*. There are, however many breakaway congregations, and in the early 1980s the numbers are increasing.

From the point of view of the General Conference, the concept of Seventh-day Adventist sympathisers forming other allegiances need not be troublesome. Very few are spiritual anarchists, and they tend towards being almost as conservative as their former church. Other than a difference over minor doctrinal points, the major difference is that the new separatists seem to enforce neither unity nor unanimity. They just don't care.

My history of separation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church stops with the de-credentialing of leading theologian Dr. Desmond Ford. I leave Seventh-day Adventism at the crossroads - the point at which the movement can choose to proceed as if nothing has happened or else it can change direction. Undoubtedly some members will change and others will not. But the fate of the movement as a whole cannot be as easily speculated upon.

Finally, I believe that my index of breakaway groups is complete from 1844-1981 not necessarily in case studies, but in types. Some readers have enjoyed producing the name of some little-known group not included in this manuscript. When asked to outline the characteristics of the group, without exception it fits neatly into one of the three categories which I have outlined: separatist, perfectionist or Protestant.

It is true that when I set out to write this book I intended to present the reader with a complete index of every known Seventh-day Adventist breakaway group. I quickly realised that such a task was not only mammoth, but pointless. A study of groups and types is more useful.

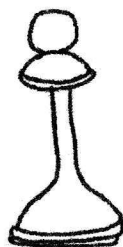
I offer *The Edges of Seventh-day Adventism*, not as a definitive study. I simply offer it as the first-ever book on a neglected subject, as an ice-breaker to further reading, and as a truly objective study.

Although I have my own strong persuasions, I can honestly say that I do not care whether the reader is a supporter of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference, Robert Brinsmead, Desmond Ford, the Davidians, the Reform, the Branch, the Church of God, or any sibling, breakaway, independent or affiliated congregation on the assorted, vague and sometimes eccentric, edges of Seventh-day Adventism.

**Lowell Tarling 1981**

## SECTION ONE

### Separate Movements



Prior to the closing years of Ellen White's life, the trend among those who separated themselves from the Seventh-day Adventist church was to deny the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the Sanctuary and the veracity of Ellen White's visions. Some, like Moses Hull and Dudley Canright, may be considered as liberalisers, for they tried to free themselves from the 'binds' of the church. These initial separatists were attempting to shake themselves from the church's distinctive beliefs.

X

The Advent Christian Church should not be considered an 'off-shoot' from the Seventh-day Adventist church. It is a sibling congregation which grew out of the Millerite Movement in parallel with the sabbatarians. The Advent Christians are probably the truest movement to William Miller's beliefs. The Church of God groups have a case to suggest that they also were a parallel Millerite movement.

Seventh-day Adventist historians have indicated otherwise, but the Seventh-day Adventists have the advantages that come with size. They have written their own histories, whereas the very earliest Church of God publications have been lost or destroyed. In favour of the Church of God historians is the fact that Seventh-day Adventists who joined them were neither prominent members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, nor prominent leaders of the Church of God. That suggests it was a grassroots connection that drifted into existence, arising from the ashes of what was already there.

Significantly, two of these leaders, R F Snook and W H. Brinkerhoff, penned the first anti-Ellen White booklet. (1) Whereas, in the main, adherents of the Church of God were disinterested in Seventh-day Adventism from the first, those who were former Seventh-day Adventists wrote many polemics against them. It is for this reason that denunciations of the Church of God appeared in the *Review and Herald*.

A crude simplification of Church of God theology is to regard them as Seventh-day Adventists without Ellen White and without the Sanctuary doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. But they also have a vastly different missiological concept. They do not see themselves as any type of final remnant to be thrust into prominence at the end of the world. Rather they just see their work as a small part of what God has wrought among the Christian churches.

This outlook has made the Churches of God among the most tolerant of denominations. In fact, tolerance seems to have brought with it some problems; they are finding it increasingly difficult to swing the axe against factions which have arisen within themselves.

Somewhat of an embarrassment to the Church of God, the Worldwide Church of God has outgrown her parent group and is now the second largest Christian Sabbath-observing organisation in the world. Due to its growth and the publicity that it attracts I have given this controversial movement a separate chapter rather than including it as a subsection of the Church of God.

At the time of writing (1981), the once stable Worldwide Church is undergoing the most dramatic period in its history. The failing health of the aging patriarch, and the 'son of the prophet' cutting loose, are causing serious concern. In view of the controversy which surrounds his private life, there are many who feel that Garner Ted Armstrong would have done better to retire from public life to play a more supportive role in the organisation - if indeed he is to have a place at all! Garner Ted's new church holds no major doctrinal differences from groups already in existence. It is leadership for leadership's sake.

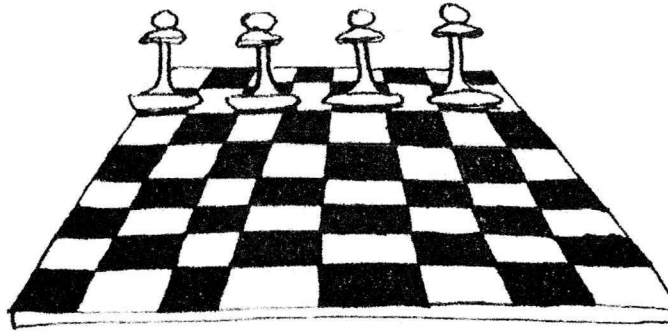
At the time of writing, the Worldwide Church and its sub-groups must all be considered as unstable. There is no knowing which groups have any measure of permanence.

There are many who regard the Seventh-day Adventist Church as responsible for having influenced all Saturday-keepers in this book on their Sabbath doctrine. But there is another side to this coin. It reveals a deeper influence, that of the Seventh Day Baptists who have been sabbatarians for four centuries. It was Rachel Preston, a Seventh Day Baptist, who impressed early Adventists that they should re-examine their reasons for Sunday observance. So, in a sense, the edges of Seventh-day Adventism are even more the edges of Seventh Day Baptism.

It is for this reason that a chapter on the Seventh Day Baptists is a notable omission from this book. They are neither an out-growth of the Adventists, nor are they a parallel group. They stand completely apart, the only real connection being the fact that the Seventh-day Adventists owe them their sabbatarian heritage.

- (1) Snook B.F. and Brinkerhoff W.H. The Visions of E.G.White. Not of God. Cedar Valley Times Book & Job Print, 1866. 27p.

## 1 - Advent Christian Church



On 22 October 1844 the Great Disappointment left 100,000 Millerites stunned. Most of them dwindled away, leaving only a dedicated core. William Miller was resolute in defeat, he stated, "Although I have been twice disappointed, I am not yet cast down or discouraged." (1) "Brethren, hold fast; let no man take your crown. I have fixed my mind upon another time, and here I mean to stand until God gives me more light. And that is Today, TODAY, and TODAY, until He comes, and I see HIM for whom my soul yearns." (2) (emphasis his)

The post-Millerite experience, the abject desolation of its failure and the mockery of society, left many Millerites incompatible with their former congregations. Would their former churches would have welcomed them back? Yes, but they would probably never take those people seriously again. (Better to break free than remain a second class citizen.) Although Miller regretted the separatist tendencies of many of his followers, Millerism itself was extremely separatist. (3) The climax of the anti-Protestant and antiorganisational attitude was Charles Fitch's article entitled *Come Out of Her, My People*. (4) In an article titled *Millenium*, David Arthur clearly catches Fitch's central message: "...Fitch was saying that in order to be a Christian, it was necessary to be an Adventist." (5)

As far as the secular world is concerned even today, William Miller is a big joke. His name occasionally pops up in magazine articles and books about 'cranks, crackpots and fanatics'. But Miller really wasn't an eccentric, he was a Freemason, a Justice of the Peace and a Baptist preacher. The only thing extraordinary about him was that he convinced a huge number of people that the Second Coming of Christ was 22 October 1844. (I suppose that is pretty extraordinary.) Either way, the name William Miller still remains synonymous with fanaticism of the highest degree. (6)

After the Great Disappointment, Miller admitted his failure and left the scene. Some scattered Millerites hung together, searching for identity and purpose. Uncertain of their immediate goals, they didn't even have a name. Many were not convinced they had been totally wrong. Still uncertain which way they were headed, a large number remained committed to the movement. "...by a combination of circumstances within and without, over which we had no control, we find ourselves as we are. We have been called out of the churches, and thrust out of the churches. The churches have

refused to fellowship us; and what shall we do? *We cannot go back* and give up our blessed hope." (7) (emphasis mine)

After the Disappointment came the factions. The prominent Millerites quickly realised that unless some structured, clear position was adopted by the core group, everyone would disperse. So an attempt was made to turn the loose informal Millerite fellowship into the equivalent of yet another denomination. On 26 March, 1845, *The Advent Herald* published a call for a delegate meeting in the House of Prayer, Albany, New York. From this conference, four main post-Millerite groups emerged.

Several issues confronted the delegates at Albany. What to call themselves was one. And, because Seventh-day Adventism kept the records and the smaller groups dwindled away, these are five of the issues that stood out:

1. **Sabbath.** Seventh Day Baptist, Rachel Oakes Preston, put the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath question to the Millerites but they were too focused on the Second Advent to be sidetracked. Preston had plenty of Adventist supporters – at least in theory. Eventually the Sabbath group centred around James White and (later) his wife Ellen, and others.
2. **Sanctuary.** Another key event was when Methodist-Millerite, Hiram Edson, had a famous vision in a cornfield, showing that Miller was correct in his calculations, but the event was wrong. He saw the 2300-day prophecy, on which Miller had based his calculation of the Second Advent, as now pointing to a special phase of Christ's ministry in Heaven.
3. **Visions.** By the end of 1844 Ellen Harmon (White) at seventeen years of age, claimed her first vision and claimed to be a prophetess. Her visions were being questioned by many.
4. **State of the Dead.** A small group believed in conditional mortality. They taught that immortality was not a condition inherent within men, it could be obtained only as a gift of God.
5. **Shut Door.** But of all the controversial issues there was none which so divided the Millerites as the Shut Door Theory. The Shut Door Adventists believed that, to be saved, one had to have passed through the Millerite experience. It was essentially this point which the delegates tried to harmonize at the Albany Conference. (8)

The general Advent hope shared by all sixty-one delegates was not enough to totally unify them. The Millerite hope was the only thing they all held in common; they had always been free to believe anything else. After Albany four distinct groups emerged, all with 'Advent' in their name. They are: Advent Christian Church, Evangelical Adventists, Life and Advent Union, and Sabbath & Shut Door Adventists (later known as Seventh-day Adventists). All groups rooted their name in the Second Advent of Christ.

The names 'Adventist' and 'Second Adventist' became their unofficial designation. Later, when the James White group adopted the Saturday Sabbath, they put the Sabbath-word in their name to distinguish Sabbath Adventists from First-day Adventists.

What's in a name? This seemingly unimportant matter became another controversial point. A name would mean that they were an organisation, which would put them on a par with the Protestant churches which they had rejected. (9) Some believed that all names were anathema. Others believed all names were anathema *therefore* the 'Church of God' should be used, as it not really a name – but what the Early Christians were called 12 times in the New Testament.

It was during this period of Second Adventist history that Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, came in contact with the Adventists. He first heard their teachings while attending a meeting held by Jonas Wendell. Russell's end-of-world view and eschatological teachings are both indebted to the Second Adventists of his time.

However, despite his indebtedness, Russell's movement should not be seen as an outgrowth of Millerism. Neither should it be seen as being a direct relation of these Adventist bodies. Neither the Russellites nor the Adventists would welcome any sort of connection. (10)

Shortly after the Albany Conference, Miller published his *Apology and Defence*. (11) In this he explained his beliefs and experiences. But he also made allusions to the various Millerite factions which were developing. He wrote his 36-page treatise in the hope that it might weld together the broken bits of his movement, now making their own way in the world. One of the most commonly-read quotations from this work has been used by critics of the Seventh-day Adventist church to indicate that Miller opposed their doctrine. (12)

This is quite true. There can be little doubt that if William Miller were alive today, he would not be a Seventh-day Adventist. Of the four Millerite groups, Miller would probably find most in common with the Advent Christian Church.

Despite Miller's refusal to endorse any of the movements that he had spawned, in the last five years of his life he was still a unification point for those who carried the Advent hope. When he died in 1849, he was the only person who might have united the various Adventist groups. Neither J.V.Himes, Sylvester Bliss, James White nor any other spokesperson - no matter how eloquent - could hold them.

Miller never sided with any party and never rebuilt his thinking in respect to his 2300-day theory. Something had gone wrong and he could not put his finger on the spot. Of William Miller's experience, Seventh-day Adventist prophetess Ellen White said in 1858, "He failed in not receiving the message which would have revived his exhausted energies, brightened up his hope, and led him to glorify God. But he leaned to human wisdom instead of divine, and being broken with arduous labour in

his Master's cause, and by age, he was not as accountable as those who kept him from the truth." (13)

After Albany, the main body of Adventists linked under the banner of The American Millennial Adventists. They eventually changed their name to Evangelical Adventists. This group differed from the other Adventists by their belief in an eternally burning hell, and consciousness in death. At first, Joshua Himes associated with this group but, following their steady decline in numbers, he left in 1864. It was strange that this group should carry the name evangelical, for they added very few to their number, and when the original membership died off, the group became extinct. By 1916 their name had vanished from the United States Census of Religious Bodies.

(14) The one advantage that may have launched the Evangelical Adventists ahead of the other Adventists was that this group held the presses. *The Advent Herald* (later called *Messiah's Herald*) was their most prominent publication, and the *Signs of the Times* came from the same press. (15)

In 1842 George Storrs established a small paper entitled *The Bible Examiner*, which was dedicated to teaching conditionalism and related doctrines. In this he had been strongly influenced by his associate editor, John T. Walsh. Although Storrs rejected the idea at first, he later became a principal advocate of this teaching. In 1863 Storrs broke with the other Adventist bodies and formed The Life and Advent Union. In 1964 this group merged with the Advent Christian Church.

After 1844, for six years in succession, some Adventists kept updating the termination date of the 2300-day prophecy (16) but in 1854 a serious hope was resurrected by Jonathan Cummings. Cummings had worked with the other Millerites towards the 1844 date and now, one decade later, he maintained the calculation was precisely ten years out. In order to promote his views, Cummings started a paper called *The World's Crisis*, but when 1854 passed without event, the paper admitted its error and became the organ of Cummings' other tenet of faith - conditionalism. Publication has continued ever since. In 1954 its name was changed to *Advent Christian Witness*. It is now an official organ of the Advent Christian Church.

Whether the Cummings group, awaiting the Second Advent in 1854, was the main group which later became the Advent Christians is arguable. Historians have tended to regard the crisis of 1854 as the precursor of the Advent Christian faith. However, the Advent Christians explain the matter another way. They hold that the Cummings group and the Advent Christian group were both conditionalists and both refused space in the *Advent Herald*. After the failure of 1854, the dowry offered by Jonathan Cummings to the Advent Christian brethren was his publication, *The World's Crisis*. "Although the two groups had little in common, the believers in conditional immortality joined with the 1854 group in founding a paper, the *World's Crisis*, in which both their convictions could be proclaimed. Within a few months the 1854 group had faded, and the *Crisis*, after conceding its error in this area, became the organ of conditionalism. Publication has continued ever since..." (17)

After this turbulent period of Adventist history, the churches busied themselves in organisation and consolidation. An Advent Christian state conference was organised

in Maine, in 1854. This became the first of similar moves made by members in Ohio, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

In 1858 the Evangelical Adventists completed their separation from the Advent Christians. And in 1860, at a conference in Providence, Rhode Island, the Christian Association was organised. At this conference the hesitancy in adopting a denominational name caused some unrest. Later the Advent Christian Church took an official name, and in doing so caused some prominent leaders to withdraw their support. (18) This fear of organisations was not confined to this group, for the Millerites, Seventh-day Adventists and the precursors of the Churches of God all faced the same problem.

The objectives set by the Christian Association at Providence are outlined by Isaac Welcome in his book, *The History of the Advent Message*, "The promulgation of Bible truth and the promotion of vital piety by:

1. Formation of a Christian Publication Society for the issue of books, tracts, and periodicals.
2. The organisation of churches and other means of preaching the Gospel.
3. The recognition and support of an efficient Gospel ministry". (19)

In 1861 the Advent Christian Church was officially formed. With the exception of the Seventh-day Adventists, it is the largest and only institutionalized Advent church still in existence. From this time, the Advent Christian faith produced the most prominent lecturers among the First-day Adventists. Many left the smaller groups and joined them, and of these none was more prominent than Joshua Himes.

Shortly after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Advent Christians gained a boost from the dispersion of the Evangelical Adventists. This had not been a sudden collapse for the numbers dwindled as their members aged. The problem was amplified when they measured their insignificant contribution as compared with the Advent Christians, who were not so very different doctrinally.

After this came the establishment of the publishing houses. The Advent Christian Publication Society (now Advent Christian Publications Inc.) and the Western Advent Christian Publication Association (now the Central Advent Christian Mission Society) were both established to cater for the steady demand for church literature. (20)

The next stage in Advent Christian history was the missionary period, when a solid attempt was made to evangelize the world. Missionaries such as T. W. Smith, D. D. Reed, Miles Grant, W. McCullough, D. R. Mansfield and William Sheldon established many churches. Churches were built and after a decade of unsystematic pastoral care, they accepted a settled clergy. This mushrooming growth of the Advent Christian Church appears to have been its most exciting period. Of this period an Advent Christian historian records: "The New York Times (November 17, 1873), quoting the U.S. Religious Census, gives the 1850 Advent Christian membership as

6,250. In 1860 this had grown to 7,120. According to the Adventist Handbook (1881) there were 34,555 members in 1879 and the enrolment had 'since increased enormously'. *The Times* also quotes the 1870 census, 'The largest increase for the last decade was the Second Adventists, who have doubled'." (21)

However, over the last century, the figures have not improved. And, if population growth is factored in, the Advent Christians are now badly behind. In his correspondence with C.H., Hewitt (former president of the Advent Christian Church), F.D. Nichol, in his book *The Midnight Cry*, cites Rev. Hewitt as offering a figure of 32,815 members for 1942-43. The 1975 *The Yearbook of American Churches* records the figure 30,713 worldwide, with at least ninety-three percent of the church membership residing in the United States of America. In view of the initial spurt shown by this movement and their obvious sincerity, this is quite puzzling.

There appears to be a certain reticence among the leaders of the movement to come to terms with the Millerite understanding of the 2300-day prophecy. Whereas they do not accept the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation, they are at loss to provide an alternative, and perhaps this partly accounts for their lack of growth. Their distinctive contribution amongst First-day Adventists is conditionalism, which is hardly enough to give them a separate identity within Protestantism. (22)

The indecisiveness of the Adventist Christian stance on the 2300 days is clearly stated by Rev. Hewitt in a letter to F. D. Nichol, "We realize that Miller's interpretation of Daniel 8:13,14 (the 2300-day prophecy) was proved incorrect by the passing of the time; also that the interpretation was probably based upon a wrong premise and should be abandoned. It is doubtful; however, if there is any unanimity among us with respect to an alternative interpretation. I think we feel that the key to a correct understanding will sometime be discovered, but it would not be correct to represent that as a group we are vitally concerned with this particular item of prophecy today." (23)

In 1885, the General Conference President of the Seventh-day Adventists rather cheekily reminded the readers of the *Review and Herald* that only the Seventh-day Adventists had built on the foundations of the Millerite interpretation of the 2300 days. Although his intonation implied a certain sectarian spirit, nevertheless his point is well made, "We have before us at the present writing, a large pamphlet with double columns of 48 pages; called the *Advent Review*, published in 1850 by Hiram Edson, David Arnold, Geo. W. Holt, Samuel W. Rhodes, and James White (publishing committee), at Auburn, N.Y. It is almost entirely filled with articles and extracts from the leading ministers of the Adventists, Wm. Miller, J. V. Himes, S. Bliss, A. Hale, J. Marsh, J. B. Cook and many others. As stated in the introductory remarks, this was issued to show who had 'left the original faith.' And it is clearly shown from their own words as compared with their positions then taken, that all these leading men excepting Mr. Miller, who was dead, had left that 'original faith,' and that the believers in the third message were the only ones who clung to that old faith." (24)

The truth of George Butler's analysis is clearly seen one hundred years later in C.J. Kearney's book, *The Advent Christian Story*. In his treatment of William Miller, he plainly states that Miller was a 'remarkable man,' but the writer leaves the reader guessing as to what was actually remarkable about him. The Millerite interpretation of the 2300 days seems to hold little significance for Kearney. (25)

And so, in the 1980's the Advent Christian Church faces the serious problem of lack of church growth. How it resolves this problem depends on how it comes to terms with the history of the church and what is distinctiveness about it.

A second problem for this movement is an unwillingness, or an inability, to break out of America and become a worldwide denomination. (26) Should it strengthen in these two areas, its image in the world would be similar to that of its parallel group - the Seventh-day Adventists. Both have embraced unpopular doctrines, and both are minority groups. Both have suffered the backlash of the Great Disappointment, and both have spoken for William Miller in their own way. Even a description of the Advent Christian people sounds like their sabbatarian counterparts, "...we are middle class, with adequate but slightly subaverage incomes. We are industrious and thrifty, with little class-consciousness. Culturally and politically we lean to the conservative." (27)

The Advent Christian Church publishes four periodicals. They are, *The Advent Christian Witness*, *Advent Christian News*, *Advent Christian Missions* and *Maranatha*. In 1981 there are 418 Advent Christian churches, in thirty states of America and four Canadian provinces. The ordained clergy numbers 493.

The Advent Christian Church runs two institutions of higher education, a liberal arts college at Aurora, Illinois, and a Bible College at Lennox, Massachusetts. They also operate a retirement home and a nursing home. Growing concern with American society has caused them to become involved in social issues through their Board of Social Action. Contact with the Seventh-day Adventists is limited except for the *Footsteps of the Pioneers* tour which incorporates a visit to William Miller's chapel at Low Hampton, this being owned by the Advent Christian Church.

There appears to be a distant respect between the Seventh-day Adventists and the Advent Christians, but little contact has been made on any official level. (28) It seems that these two bodies are destined to grow further and further apart.

Whereas a merger between the groups is obviously unthinkable, there is still room for mutual fellowship and sharing between these two sibling congregations.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

(1) Miller, Wm., Letter, Nov. 10, 1844, in The Midnight Cry, Dec. 5, 1844, p. 19. Cited by F.D. Nichol in The Midnight Cry, p. 282, Review and Herald Publishing Assn. 1944.

(2) Miller, Wm., *ibid.*

(3) Separatism and the Millerite Movement is examined in an article by David Arthur, "Millerism", (Gaustad, E.S. [editor] The Rise of Adventism, Harper & Row, 1974.) This article traces the development of the Millerite attitude to other churches and also to its own identity. Signs of developing a sense of corporate and separate identity include setting up a Millerite General Conference, issuing a statement of belief (which at one stage was sufficiently restrictive as to alienate two of the most prominent of the early Millerite preachers - Henry Dana Ward and Henry Jones), publishing independent papers, leaving the churches, and in many instances, being the aggressors in the conflicts within local congregations. See pp. 154-172.

(4) Fitch, C., Come Out Of Her, My People, Rochester, J.V. Himes Publisher, 1843.

(5) Gaustad, E.S., *op.cit.* p. 167.

(6) One of the very few modern books wholly dedicated to the subject of Millerism is Days of Delusion by Clara E. Sears (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924). This book is very readable, and often quoted on this subject. The inaccuracies of this study are exposed by F.D. Nichol in The Midnight Cry (loc.cit.) Appendix I, pp. 515-518.

(7) Bliss, S., Memoirs of William Miller, 21 p. 320, Joshua V. Himes, Publisher, Boston, 1853.

(8) Bliss, S., *ibid.* p. 300, 314-324.

(9) Bliss, S., *ibid.* p. 315-316. William Miller is quoted by Bliss as stating: "The name 'Adventist' is objected to as a sectarian name; and it is claimed that, instead of being called an Advent Church, we should be called 'The Church of God'. This is, in my opinion, a misconception of terms. I should oppose being called, in an associated capacity, a church with any name... To call any denomination the Advent Church, the Church of God, or any other name, I regard as contrary to the usage of the apostles." (emphasis his).

(10) Russell, C.T., The Time is at Hand Vol. 11, 1891: "We have great sympathy for both the First Adventists (the Jews) and the Second Adventists, though only a few of either realised the truths they so nearly apprehended, yet failed to grasp, each being blinded by false expectations." p. 29 (emphasis his). See also p. 31-33, 240. Also The Finished Mystery Vol. VII, 1917: "Among other theories, I have stumbled upon Adventism. Seemingly by accident one evening I dropped into a dusty, dingy hall in Allegheny, Pa., where I had heard that religious services were being held, to see if the handful who met there had anything more sensible to offer than the creeds of the great churches. There, for the first time, I heard something of the views of Second Adventism, by Jonas Wendell, long since deceased. Thus I confess indebtedness to Adventists as well as to other bible students."

(11) Miller, Wm., Apology and Defence, Boston, Joshua V. Himes, Publisher, 1845. 36pp.

(12) Miller, Wm., *ibid.* p. 28. "I have no confidence in any of the new theories that have grown out of that movement." One of the first critics to use this statement against the Seventh-day Adventist Church was D. M. Canright in Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 77.

(13) White, E.G., Spiritual Gifts Vol. 1, p. 167. Battle Creek, Michigan, Publisher, James White, 1858.

(14) Spalding, A.W., Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists Vol. I. p. 166. Review and Herald Publications, Washington, 1961.

(15) Joshua Himes headed the Evangelical Adventists until 1864 when he was sincerely convinced to join the Advent Christian Church. He transferred his paper, The Voice of the Prophets, renamed it The Voice of the West and Second Advent Pioneer, and used it to promote the cause that he had newly adopted. In 1875 he was dissatisfied with some aspects of the movement, and so joined the Episcopalian Church. In 1878 he was ordained an

Episcopalian minister. He finished his life entertaining cordial relations with the Seventh-day Adventists and he entered the Battle Creek Sanitarium where he was much respected. He died 27 July, 1895 and is buried at Elk Creek, South Dakota.

(16) Butler, G.I., "Advent Experience" (a ten part series on the Shut Door Theory) Review and Herald, 3 March, 1885.

(17) Kearney, C.J. The Advent Christian Story, p.20. Published by the author, 1968.

(18) Kearney, C.J., ibid, p.23.

(19) Welcome, I.C., History of the Advent Message, Yarmouth, Maine, 1870. This extract is taken from a citation by C.J. Kearney in The Advent Christian Story, p.23.

(20) Kearney, C.J., op.cit, p.21.

(21) Kearney, C.J., ibid p.28

(22) Moses C. Crouse, Professor Emeritus of Religion at Aurora College, refutes this observation in a letter to the author, dated from Aurora College, 28 August, 1978." (Your) attempt to account for the lack of growth on the part of the Advent Christian group... betrays a lack of an intimate grasp of the problems of our group. May I suggest that the anti-institutional sentiment of our people (a heritage from the Christian Connection which supplied the Millerite movement with so much leadership) and its concomitant suspicion of organisation; the conviction of our people that its mission was to advocate and spread "true doctrine" and to refute theological errors (this led to the adoption of debating as a primary tool, oblivious to the probability that after making a group look like unbiblical fools they would not be too kindly disposed to one); the strenuous effort to plant Sunday Schools and preaching points throughout the countryside, but fail to adequately nurture them - itinerating evangelists and preachers proved insufficient for the task; the fact that many of the churches that were planted were one-family churches and all too often became ingrown and cliquish; the apologetic stance in contrast to a fervent witness (as when a beggar tells another beggar where food may be found); a failure to emphasize the positive truths that there is life only in Jesus Christ rather than to insist upon the nature of the intermediate state, of the composition of the soul, or some other secondary teaching; all combined in one way or another to diminish the effectiveness of our outreach. Add to this the sociological fact that we were a rural church and (along with the many Protestant churches) did not learn well how to adapt to the increasing urbanisation of the church. Along with these facts one should assess the validity of the questions raised by Dr Dean in his doctrinal dissertation (i.e., Echoes of the Midnight Cry: The Millerite Heritage in the Apologetics of the Advent Christian Denomination, presented to the Faculty of the Westminster Theological Seminary) concerning whether or not we were faithful in interpreting the biblical proclamation - all these factors have a distinct bearing on the question you are raising.

(23) Hewitt, C.H., Letter to F.D. Nichol dated 24 May, 1944. This extract is quoted by F.D. Nichol in The Midnight Cry, p.476-477, Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1944.

(24) Butler, G.I., "Advent Experience" Review and Herald, 24 March, 1885.

(25) Kearney, C.J. op. cit. P. 7-12.

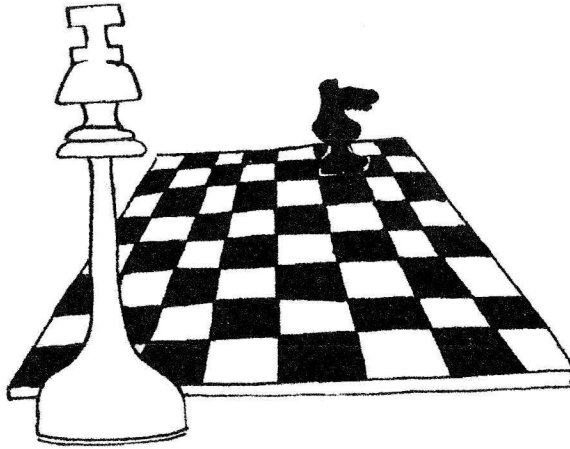
(26) According to the 1976 Advent Christian Manual there are 381 Advent Christian churches, 503 ordained ministers, and 31,324 members. Outside America there a fifty-five churches, these being situated in India, Japan, Nigeria, Philippines, Malaysia and Mexico. There is only one significant splinter which has emerged from the Advent Christian Church, and this is the Primitive Advent Christian Church, and their numbers were 551 in 1975. They were formed from a few small congregations in West Virginia.

(27) Kearney, C.J., "In most respects we are in accord with the evangelical or conservative wing of American Protestantism. Advent Christians rest their authority squarely on "sola scriptura", the Bible our only guide in faith and practice. Advent Christians are literalists - they base their findings on statements which are semantically sound with words interpreted in figurative or allegorical ... It is not our areas of comity with other churches that give Advent Christians their mandate for corporate existence. It is, rather, its divergences. These may be

summarized as Christ's return, conditional immortality, the sleep of the dead, and the restoration of the world."

(28) Webster, F.C., Assistant to the President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, dated from the Church World Headquarters, Washington, 3 August, 1977. "I am not aware that any special overtures have been made toward these Adventist groups."

## 2 - Churches of God



### Church of God (Seventh Day) and Church of God (Adventist)

Unlike all other movements which have grown out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Church of God is prepared to contest that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the parent body. In *A History of the True Church*, A. N. Dugger and C. O. Dodd, two Church of God historians, argue that between 1844-1860 James and Ellen White used the term 'Church of God' to refer to the corporate body of Advent believers. They go on to suggest that, when the Seventh-day Adventist Church became officially organised, it was they who broke away from the main Church of God group. Thus, when the Church of God consolidated during this same period, it claimed no changes to its beliefs. They alone, they say, remained true to the original message, while the group which formed the nucleus of Seventh-day Adventism was sidetracked with visions. (1)

On the other hand, the Seventh-day Adventist Church traces the progress of the Church of God right back to the Messenger Party who, they claim, were troublesome members of the post-Millerite community. As there are no impartial accounts of the period, one can only assess the various reports by the writers of the respective churches.

The Messenger Party was organised by H. S. Case and C. P. Russell. Case was an Advent preacher in 1844 who operated from the Wisconsin-Michigan district. In 1853 both men clashed with Ellen White when she chided them for their judgemental attitude towards a female member of the church community. Prior to this they had been in accord with Ellen White and her visions. As a result of the disagreement they broke with her supporters and published a paper called *The Messenger of Truth* (2) in which they opposed the visions. The paper was circulated between 1853-1858 from Jackson, Michigan. No known copies exist today. We can only deduce its emphasis through material written to counter its slant.

The movement gained strength from two former First-day Adventist ministers, J. M. Stephenson and D. P. Hall. Although these men were generally in harmony with Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, they added to this the belief that during the millennium mankind would receive a second chance for salvation, which Ellen White refers to as the Age-to-Come Theory". (3) For a little time there was a conflict between Stephenson, Hall and James White, for White refused to give the theory any space in his *Review*. Eventually James White made a compromise with Stephenson and Hall, whereby he published nothing against their ideas, provided they remained silent on the divisive subject.

For a little time the arrangement worked well, but in late 1855 Stephenson and Hall publicised their doctrine, and White accordingly used his press to counteract them. By this time Case and Russell's *Messenger of Truth* paper was well established and some sort of rapport existed between them and Stephenson and Hall. When James White attacked the Age-to-Come Theory in his *Review*, Stephenson and Hall withdrew from their former church and aligned with the Messenger Party. The ill-feeling against the Whites was so strong that one of the stated objectives of these men was to kill the circulation of the *Review*. As their stronghold was Wisconsin, they achieved some success. Ellen White denounces them in *Testimonies for the Church*:

"They have stumbled over the 'Age-to-Come' and they are ready to take any course to injure the *Review*... And while they were professing sympathy and union with husband they (especially Stephenson) were biting like an adder behind his back. While their words were smooth with him, they were inflaming Wisconsin against the *Review* and its conductors." (4) In 1858 *The Messenger of Truth* published its last edition. Seventh-day Adventist historian, J. N. Loughborough, claims that Stephenson and Hall both died insane. (5)

For five years their press remained idle, until Gilbert Cranmer, a former Millerite, and sabbatarian since 1845, broke with the Seventh-day Adventists and purchased the press in order to publish his own paper. The Church of God claims that Gilbert Cranmer defected because he could not accept the visions of Ellen White, but the Seventh-day Adventists dispute the claim suggesting it was because he would not give up tobacco and they would not give him a preaching license until he did. (6)

By 1860 Cranmer had organised his group. He had also gathered to his cause the unattached members who previously had joined the Messenger Party, and by 1864 the name of the group had settled on the Church of Christ. In 1863 a paper called *The Hope of Israel* was circulated. From a small group of forty subscribers the paper extended its influence over eighteen American states and Western Canada by the end of 1864. The Hope of Israel Party went by a series of names in the different locations and whereas Cranmer's main group used the name the Church of Christ, others were known as Church of the First Born and Church of God. Despite initial support from these fragmented sabbatarian groups, lack of financial support forced *The Hope of Israel* to close in 1865. No doubt the disunity among the subscribers produced a conglomerate identity which finally reached no real audience.

The following year, the *Hope of Israel* was revived by Henry Carver who bought the press, types and fixtures which he arranged to be transported to Marion, Iowa. The Iowa congregation had developed a fraternal relationship with the Michigan publishers during the years when Cranmer was in charge, and that the editor of the 1865 editions of the *Hope* was an associate of Carver's from Iowa gave them a good understanding of each other. This Iowa group of Adventists had also divided over the visions of Ellen White, and by 1865 were known as the Church of Jesus Christ. It was in Iowa that this party came in contact with two Seventh-day Adventist ministers - B. F. Snook, the president of the conference, and his secretary, W. H. Brinkerhoff. Snook was an ex-Methodist preacher who had come to the Adventists as a poor man. They helped him financially and also gave him a job. (7)

Through his association with the Adventists Snook progressed to a position of leadership in Iowa. However, both he and his secretary disrupted the Seventh-day Adventists in that area with criticisms of James and Ellen White. In 1865 George Butler replaced Snook as president. Snook and Brinkerhoff had just returned from the Battle Creek General Conference which, on their own admission, they had only attended in order to find some cause for criticism. They then admitted that their opposition against Ellen White was ungodly, and published retractions in the *Review*. (8) For a few weeks they remained loyal to the Seventh-day Adventist cause, then they separated once again - this time permanently. (9)

By 1860, the Iowa segment of the Church of God began to take a definite shape. In 1862 they made a serious attempt at organising a conference. In 1869 they changed their name from The Church of Jesus Christ to the General Conference of the Church of God, and although *The Hope of Israel* was circulated from this centre, and a strong point of contact was established with other groups sharing the same beliefs, the name and organisation was, at this stage, only applicable in Iowa.

In 1875 at the second conference meeting the name Church of God was adopted. Although the Messenger Party and The Hope of Israel Party were the predecessors of this newly formed organisation, they do not appear to have been as emphatic about the name of the church as the church is now. More to the point may be the Dugger-Dodd suggestion that a main cause of division between the Advent people were the visions of Ellen White, which is probably correct.

Argument over the significance of the name does not appear to be a real issue until the 1870s, and if groups similar to the Messenger Party were emphatic about using the name Church of God, they left little traces of it in the pages of history. Personality clashes were more likely the reason behind the separating of the two groups. (10)

In 1871, at the third meeting of the Church of God General Conference, Iowa, the name *The Hope of Israel* was changed to *Advent and Sabbath Advocate and Hope of Israel*. By 1874 this was considered too verbose, and it was abbreviated to *Advent and Sabbath Advocate*. This paper is still published today, although the name has been through a few more contractions. (11)

In 1884 at the annual conference session, every one of their local conferences accepted the name 'Church of God', which was a first. From this came a desire for closer unity within the movement. Officers were elected and a General Conference was made up from the state conferences of Michigan, Iowa and Missouri. Despite the general organisation of the movement, local congregations still retained considerable liberty on many points of doctrine. (12)

For a short period in the 1920s there was a possibility of the Church of God uniting with the Seventh Day Baptists. With a decline of Seventh Day Baptists in America, they stood to gain a resurgence in the ranks, while the Churches of God stood to gain a historical pedigree which was good for 400 years. In a series of meetings held in September 1917, three Church of God congregations, comprising the Michigan Conference, voted to be known as Seventh Day Baptists as soon as their property could be legally transferred. In 1922 conferences from both churches met to consider the advisability of a union of the two denominations. Despite a series of fraternal visits, literature exchange and mutual respect, nothing concrete came from the joint conferences which were discontinued in 1926.

During the late 1920s there was a tightening of the Church of God position. In 1929 the conference instructed its ministers against the use of tobacco and eating 'unclean' meats. The financial policies of the movement were also tightened, so that tithes ceased to be paid directly to ministers. Doctrines were also re-examined, including the new birth, the Lord's Supper, the Third Angel's Message and the work of the Holy Spirit.

There were other issues too - nothing threatening - but mostly reflecting individual interpretations of Biblical passages. The following statement expresses the Church of God position, "An example of the growing concern which the membership of the Conference expressed over the disunity of the church is exemplified in its 1927 meeting. In this meeting at Rich Hill, Missouri, the conference amended its by-laws stating: 'No member of the conference shall teach any doctrine in public which is not believed by the conference body, without clearly stating that such belief has not been endorsed by the Church of God, but that it is his own individual opinion'. Speaking in tongues had become a problem in some quarters of the conference so the 1927 session passed a resolution stating its position on the subject: 'Resolved that the Church of God believes and teaches the Baptism Holy Spirit with the evidence of a life that bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit, but denies that speaking in tongues is 'the evidence'".

The moves to strengthen the bond that held the movement together met serious opposition and by the 1930s, they debated whether these moves, coming from the top, were restricting the personal convictions and liberties of the individual members. In 1933 at Stanberry, Missouri, the conflict reached a crisis. In the election for the presidency there was a tied vote between A. N. Dugger (former editor of the *Bible Advocate*) and A. S. Christenson. The chairman broke the tie by casting his vote against Dugger.

Prior to this conference Dugger had taken a trip to the Holy Land, and had warmed to the idea of moving the church headquarters to Jerusalem. He also had his heart set on a church structure which he saw as 'Bible organisation'. This meant that twelve should look after the finances, and seventy should go in pairs as the missionaries. Disappointed at not winning the presidency, Dugger did not keep these ideas to himself for long.

On Friday, 3 November 1933, Dugger organised an all-night prayer vigil at Salem, West Virginia. There he asked the Lord to guide his church as He had in days of old. One hundred and forty names were placed in a box, and selection was made by lot. The names of the twelve were drawn first. Then came the seven, and then the seventy. One young man drew special significance from his being the fortieth name drawn. His name was Herbert W. Armstrong and like Dugger and all the people present at the all-night prayer vigil, he too had separated from the Church of God.

This meeting lasted right through the night and ended the following Sabbath afternoon. In this way, and under the leadership of A. N. Dugger, in 1933 the Church of God was divided into two groups. The original group held their headquarters at Stanberry, Missouri, and the new group centred at Salem, West Virginia. (There was talk of their intended move from Salem to Jerusalem at a later stage.) Shortly after this break the new group started to publish their own *Bible Advocate*, carrying on where the original left off, and bearing the same volume number as the Stanberry edition. They discontinued this practice when a court injunction was taken against them.

The original movement added 'Adventist' to their name so that their name now became The Church of God (Adventist), and as a point of differentiation the Dugger-group called themselves The Church of God (Seventh Day).

With the passing of time and replacement of the original leadership, younger people who had no memory of the quarrel filled the ranks of the two movements. By the 1940s plans were laid to reunite the two sibling churches. In 1942 an unsuccessful attempt was made. In 1947 they tried again, with each side appointing a three-person "unity-committee". They met on 7 November 1947, a moderator was appointed and as a result of this series of meetings, a merger was effected in 1949. (14)

The system of church government was modified so that - with minor modifications - the Stanberry party accepted the 'Bible organisation'. As the Stanberry group had no statement of doctrinal beliefs, and the Salem segment had written forty points, both accepted a revised form of the Salem code. The merger church published thirty-eight articles of faith which suited both parties. One important condition for reconciliation was that the headquarters of the combined church should be neither Stanberry nor Salem. In 1950 the new headquarters opened at Denver, Colorado, where it is now situated.

Although the majority were in favour of merging, others felt this would be a let-down of their principles. A. N. Dugger was again prominent, this time starting a

Back-to-Salem Movement in an attempt to encourage his former associates to withdraw from the new group and return to their own Church of God (Seventh Day).

Dugger eventually established his own church in Jerusalem but after his passing two of his associates, M. L. Bartholemew and F. L. Summers, continued his Salem Movement. After a little time Bartholemew separated from the Salem group and took with him a small following. Another prominent personality in urging the group back, the late A. C. Olson, also split from the Salem group and formed his own church.

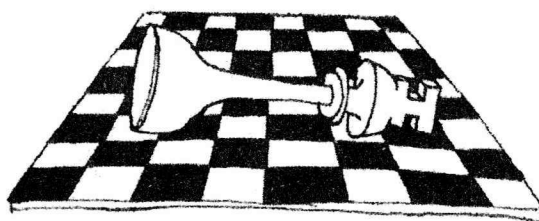
Of those who wanted the Stanberry group to remain separate under the name the Bible Church of God - Seventh Day, the most prominent established their headquarters at Meriden, Idaho. They settled the bickering over clean/unclean meats by taking no official doctrinal position. In 1963 they adopted the name the General Council of the Churches God - Seventh Day. (15)

Since then The Church of God has divided and kept dividing into many other small movements or congregations. Some may regard this as having a factious spirit, but they would not see it that way. They feel the looser organisational ties of the movement accommodates a reasonable amount of diversity within a framework of agreement. Many of the newer congregations have a good rapport with each other.

1980 X  
X  
In 1980, the Denver branch of the Church of God had a membership of about 30,000 and growing (including affiliated congregations worldwide). In the rest of the America they have a membership of over 6000 and in 1979 they had 102 meeting places.

In America the Church of God operates two tertiary institutions, Spring Vale Academy and Midwest Bible College. As well as their *Bible Advocate*, they publish four monthly papers. These are *The Harvest Field Messenger*, which reports on the church progress and programmes, *Aim*, a magazine for young people, *Footprints*, a publication for children, and *Wand*, the official organ of the national women's association. The Church of God also prints a Sabbath school lesson pamphlet for adults, Bible study guides and a wide range of tracts. They operate a number of radio broadcasts, and Elder R. A. Straub is the speaker on the *Faith for Our Time* program.

In the earlier days of the movement they drew much publicity from their advertised reward of \$10,000 for a scriptural citation authorizing any Sabbath day other than the seventh. They also offered \$500 for a contrary proof text to the doctrine of the unconscious state of the dead. (16)



## Afterword

*To spot the theological difference between an offshoot and the mainstream usually takes a powerful magnifying glass.*

The past has a way of returning. You can run and keep running, but unless you assume another identity, there it is - your past, saying hello again.

More than 30 years after its publication, because eBooks have made it convenient and because there has been a constant trickle of demand for this book, I have given *Edges* a light edit and put it back into general circulation. It was an awkward task.

Awkward because, other than occasional funerals and Robert Wolfgramm events, my wife Robbie and I have had little contact with Seventh-day Adventism for a long time. When I started this book in 1976, I was simply picking up the threads of dissent and categorising them, I had no idea the SDA Church would decredential Dr Des Ford! That was enough for our family - we resigned and have never looked back.

\*

I wrapped up this manuscript at a particularly good time, because after 1981 the edges of SDA-ism exploded into whole new directions. Independent ministries sprang up everywhere, racial minorities formed their own churches (usually within the jurisdiction of their local conferences) and sexual minorities also formed their own congregations (invariably rejected by their local conferences). As far as I can tell, the new edges of Adventism have little to do with the Reform, Perfectionist, Traditional and other categories within these pages.

Anyway, I found re-reading this book to be an awkward task. I kept thinking, *Most of these people are nuts! Why the hell am I writing about them?*

And then I remember why I wrote it. It was because I always attracted to deviants, non-conformists and eccentrics. Nothing especially to do with Seventh-day Adventism, not at first. Initially it had more to do with singer Bob Dylan, poet Allen Ginsberg and artist Salvadore Dalí.

Then, John Webster, a speaker at Sydney's Domain. Next, Arthur Stace, the *Eternity* guy. Marcel DuChamp, the Dada artist. The singer, Tiny Tim. Those were the seeds of my interest in non-conformists in general.

The Seventh-day Adventist angle grew on me partly out of convenience and a lot out of curiosity. Actually, 'curiosity' because the early-1970s was a religious era. I met a string of Hippie 'prophets' and one hermit, weirdly babbling about the sort of thing my Seventh-day Adventist grandfather used to talk about, like 666, the Mark of the Beast, which in hippie terms meant Bankcard (credit cards). Cults were popping up everywhere, the i-Ching was big news, eastern religions were in fashion and then Jesus was drawn back into popular culture as a hippie, a communist and an outlaw.

\*

I was born in London where I spent my 1950s. My mother's French-Mauritian Mason side was Seventh-day Adventist. My father's side was agnostic, atheist and Anglican. The Tarlings thought my mother's side was pretty odd – speaking French was weird enough, even without the strange *American* religion. And so in England, I learned to keep my head down where race and religion was concerned. Sometimes I told my primary school friends that I was Jewish, because that seemed to explain the Sabbath thing more easily than explaining what the heck Seventh-day Adventism was.

My parents and I attended Wood Green Church, which seemed like a barn to me. Everyone else went to a 'proper' church or no church except for births, deaths, marriages and Christmas. That was my idea of what a normal family should be. Why were we different? We talked about things no one else discussed. Like, vegetarianism. Although no one at church was actually vegetarian, it was idealised and I had no idea why? The only vegetarian I knew was my Uncle Les who reckoned Sister White had something to say about it. I didn't understand this 'Sister White' stuff. I thought she was a nurse or something. My wife Robbie, who lived in England about the same time reckons the same. Mum said Ellen White wrote great books, like *Steps to Christ*. That's all she said about Ellen White.

My parents and I migrated to Australia in 1959 and Seventh-day Adventism no longer drew a total blank amongst my classmates. They knew all about *Weet-Bix*. I belonged to the Weet-Bix Church. A couple of years later, my parents sent me to a Seventh-day Adventist high school. There were lots of vegetarians and Sister White was much more than a nurse! I spent those bleak years developing a deep interest in Pop culture, reading Graham Greene novels and George Bernard Shaw plays. I never was religious at all.

In fact, I had little interest in religion until the 1970s when Jesus made the cover of *Time* magazine and the Jesus Movement - an outgrowth from the Hippies - captured my interest. Jesus had become as fashionable as the Maharishi Mahash Yogi. As a newly married man I was responding to a voice deep within me calling my attention to the 'proper running of a family' and – I thought – a man must have a religion. It's

okay to jerk around when you're a teenager but some day Robbie & I are gonna have kids and what am I gonna tell em? There was all that...

So that's when I started believing. My wife Robbie reckoned she was too busy raising kids to get into all that Justification by Faith stuff - but I kept it up for a good five years. I thought Des Ford was inspiring and Robert Brinsmead exciting. I loved seeing Brinsmead carve up Standish and his ilk. Ford didn't do that. Gentlemanly to a fault, sometimes thought Ford didn't have enough mongrel in him.

It was the mid-1970s, I was a schoolteacher, more interested in religion than my previous obsessions, and looking towards an MA thesis, or something to write. Sociology maybe? Church history? I didn't really know what I was doing. I always got top grades for every paper I'd written about deviance and deviants in my undergraduate years. And I didn't get top grades for much else. So I got curious about all sorts of non-conformists and extremists. Like people who were *too* religious.

The church didn't like anyone being *too* religious. One guy at church prayed so much that he missed meals and suffered malnutrition. The church folk called him a fanatic whereas I thought, *how can anyone be too religious?* Isn't that what we're supposed to be!? The odd thought struck me, that churches probably didn't really like really religious people. They only want Normie-normals. And I wasn't interested in 'normals'.

I was interested in 'Brinsmeads'. I recalled way back in about 1964, sitting in a church pew with Colin Rampton - probably a well-respected SDA pastor now - telling me about this guy 'Brinsmead' who was upsetting the church. That was about the only interesting church news I'd heard, ever. I was curious. Somehow it also reminded me of the Shepherd's Rod, giving out tracts outside SDA churches and people - like my tough cousin Ken - wanting to beat them up. Now what was that all about?



No one seemed to know much about 'heretical' groups arising from the SDA Church, they just knew they were bad. So in 1976, I called on a friendly minister, Pastor Claude Judd, who agreed to answer a few questions on tape. He was as helpful as he could be but he didn't even begin to answer my questions. However, Pastor Judd did provide me with a series of leads, so that I could pursue the Rod, the Branch, the Shoot, the Root and the Voice of the Turtle. *Great names*, I thought. Imagine filling in your Census form and writing the word 'Turtle' where it asks 'Religion'?

I wrote to Pastor Robert Parr, editor of the *Australian Record*, a publication received by all members of the Australian Seventh-day Adventist Church, and asked whether he would consider publishing half a dozen articles on oddball church history subjects if I were to research them. Yes, he said, love to. I thought I'd begin with Waggoner & Jones. (I didn't know whether they were oddball or not, just that they sounded newsworthy.)

There is no way I would start there now, I'd go straight for the jugular – the period immediately before and shortly after the Great Disappointment of 1844. That's where all the real action lies. That's where you get the essence of whatever else followed.


Either way, even the 1888 General Conference session was too lively a topic for the then-Australasian Conference president, Parmenter, who told Parr not to run my articles. Parr wrote me a letter saying sorry, but he had been pressured into changing his mind.

That half a dozen short articles about a handful of non-conformists should pose a significant problem suggested there was something to hide. Why shouldn't this be discussed? Turtles and Branches and Rods - why would anybody care? How could such eccentrics pose such a threat? How had these dissidents embarrassed the mainline church and got under its skin? I sensed insecurity amongst the church leadership. Of course, I just had to dig deeper.




I began writing letters to the Advent Christian Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, the Worldwide Church of God, Robert Brinsmead, D.D. Smith, the Bashan Movement, the Root of Jesse, the Isaac Branch, Calendar Research International, the Independent Non-Conformist Seventh-day Adventist Church, and so on, after which I compiled this book.

Now, I simply can't explain why I wrote this book. I think I could, in 1981 but I can't now, except that I look around my library and there's a wall of books about eccentrics, anarchists, dissidents, pirates, non-conformists and heretics. Personal favourites include, *Social Anarchism* by Giovanni Baldelli, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* by Erving Goffman, *Folk Demons & Moral Panics* by Stanley Cohen, *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg and *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson.



I wrote *Edges* at an ideal point of time. Generally speaking, after 1981 the off-shoots – perhaps offspring would be a better word – of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have tended to form independent congregations rather than centralised organisations. From the Seventh Gay Adventists to Sabbath-keeping 'Hillsong-style' congregations, splinter groups have popped up everywhere.

I guess most people in church-central still feel they unnecessarily lost members over the *Justification by Faith* issue of the 70s and early-80s, especially now that the church is saying 'we always taught it, it was nothing more than an emphasis'. Yet in those times, young ministers were sacked, regular members in good standing weren't welcome in certain churches, and the best minds of the Seventh-day Adventist Church walk out in droves – friends of mine who have had significant careers in architecture, education and science, their places easily filled by migrants looking for some kind of identity.



There were other issues too in the 1980s, plenty of them now that the Seventh-day Adventist agenda had caught up with that of the western world. There were feminist

concerns, gay rights, business ethics, social conscience issues and issues like living together before marriage. Furthermore, congregations were no longer shy about flagging their particular ethnicities, for example, the *Spanish, Russian or Chinese* Seventh-day Adventist congregations proudly express their cultural differences which creates a different type of diversity. Add to this a wave of Pentecostalism that sees Pentecostal Adventists having more in common with Pentecostal Protestants and Pentecostal Catholics than with their own congregations, and the task of bringing *Edges* up-to-date would have completely different concerns. I certainly cannot keep up with it.

Looking back I feel that many of the church's offspring were refreshing. The idea of someone declaring himself the prophet Jezreel *plus* the prophet Elijah is not something one hears every day. Australian writer Bob Ellis depicted the Shepherd's Rod in his film *The Nostradamus Kid*. Had they been colourless, he wouldn't have bothered with them.

Regrettably, there is a direct link between the Shepherd's Rod (i.e. the Davidian Seventh-Day Adventists) and the Branch Davidian Movement made famous by David Koresh whom the FBI incinerated at Waco Texas in April 1993. I have not attempted to update the Branch Davidians, I have left their escapades where they lay in 1981, assuming that anyone interested in researching this massacre will have ample opportunity through various books, magazine articles (including major publications like *Time* and *Newsweek*) and of course the Internet. However, Koresh is the most conspicuous charismatic leader to emerge over the last 30 years from the edges of Seventh-day Adventism (using 'charismatic' in the sociological sense). He left his sad mark on history.

With the passage of time, every group has seemed to gradually conform to trends in the broader Christian community. For example, in the modern Seventh-day Adventism that I've seen - drums are now allowed in churches, casual clothes are okay as church wear, it's fine for churchgoers to swear a bit - not too much - and it is also okay to now drink a little bit of alcohol - again, not too much. I assume the edges have moved in a similar direction, probably liberalising their respective strict anti-divorce codes, allowing members to watch TV and not being overly strict about pop music.

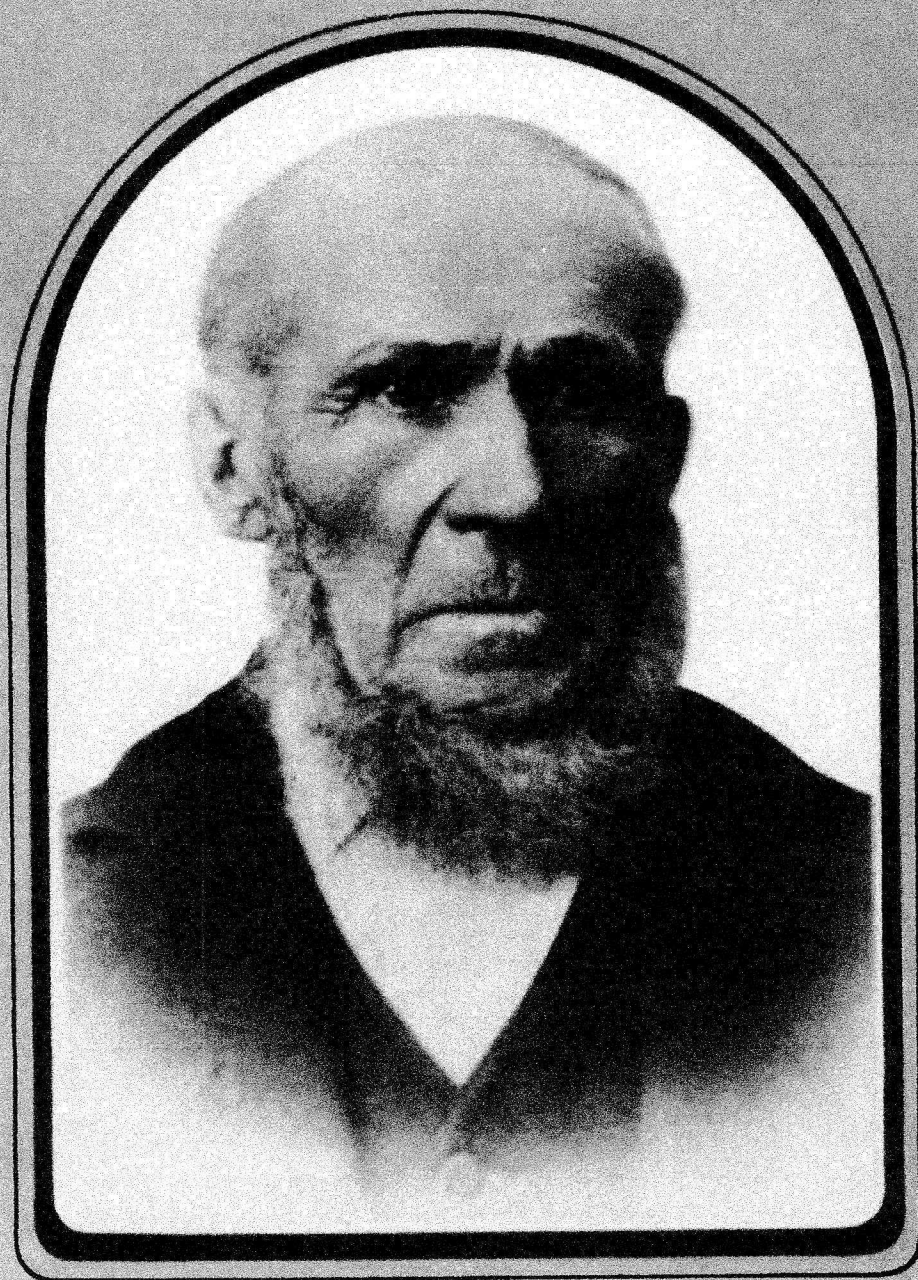
Nowadays everything is in moderation - and how I miss extremists like Fred Steed, who lived on 200 acres in a place he called the Garden of Eden where he built a pink, yellow and pastel blue tin-clad castle. Steed, as you would almost expect, had a long white beard and huge *Shepherd's Rod* prophetic charts on easels in his healing centre. I chuckled lots when he picketed his local church for constructing a spire which he claimed was a phallic symbol. It is still there today, at Coffs Harbour Seventh-day Adventist Church pointing skyward like a sharpened copper-clad codpiece.

Within the church, I recall firebrand Pastor George Burnside who vituperated against the Pope in the 1960s, naming him as the Mark of the Beast whose number was 666 and telling us that under the direct control of Satan, the Pope would direct all his

# Exhibit 9

# *Adventist* **Heritage**

A MAGAZINE of ADVENTIST HISTORY Vol. 1 No. 2



*John Byington*

**D**ENOMINATIONAL NICKNAMES were often derogatory labels. Shakers were named for their dance, Quakers for the alleged "quaking" of a Spirit-filled life, Methodists from a penchant for organizational method. The term "Millerite" was considered somewhat derisive, so early Sabbathkeeping Adventists preferred the simple designation "Adventist."

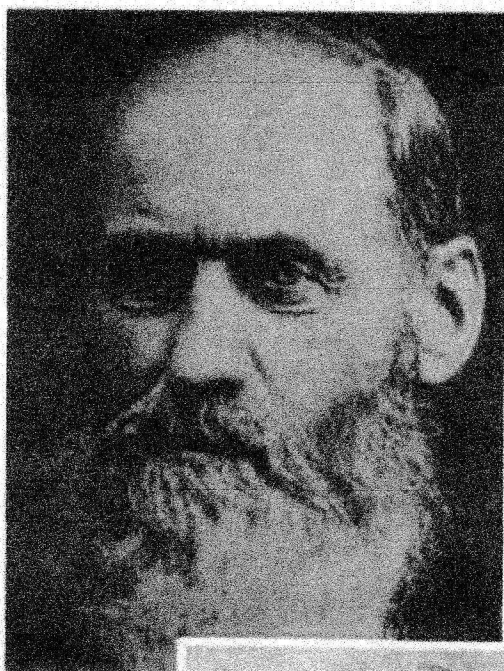
Before the Great Disappointment of 1844, the name "Adventist" was applied to those who followed William Miller's preaching on the imminence of Christ's second coming. The editor of the *Advent Herald* is credited by one popular writer on Adventism as the originator of this term for believers in the second advent and pure Bible interpretations. The name also appeared frequently in the early issues of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* after it began publication in November, 1850. The fact that Sabbathkeepers did not remain with the larger body of followers of William Miller — the so-called "nominal Adventists" — may be a further reason they preferred "Adventist" over "Millerite."

The term "nominal Adventists" was used with some consistency by Sabbathkeeping Adventists to describe those who rejected their interpretation of the "third angel's message" (Revelation 14:9-11) along with the Sabbath teaching, but continued to espouse the advent hope. They are also referred to in this period as "First-day Adventists." In a *Review and Herald* editorial entitled "We are the Adventists" James White affirmed that the class of believers with which he was identified held to the doctrine of the second advent as proclaimed by William Miller regarding the judgment hour, and the message of the second angel which took them away from the different churches to which they had belonged.

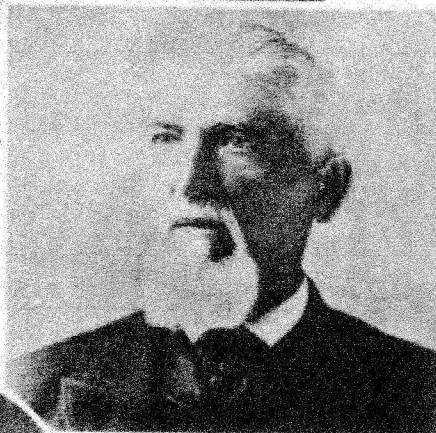
# "Make Us Name"

Godfrey T. Anderson

*Godfrey T. Anderson is university archivist and research professor of American history at Loma Linda University.*



▲ A former Seventh day Baptist, Roswell F. Cottrell, strongly opposed what he called "making us a name."  
courtesy Pacific Press Publishing Assoc.

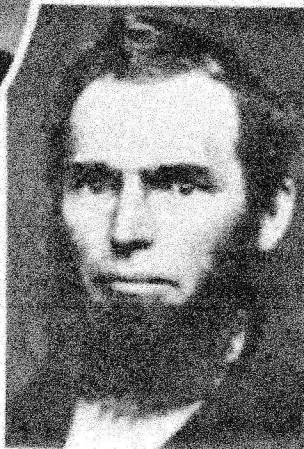


► M. E. Cornell believed that choosing a name was "a matter of propriety and necessity."



James White supported the name 'Church of God' because it was "scriptural" and "appropriate."  
courtesy Review and Herald Publishing Assoc.

'Church of God' was the name J. B. Frisbie publicly advocated in 1854.  
courtesy Review and Herald Publishing Assoc.



Before Sabbathkeeping Adventists officially chose the name "Seventh-day Adventists," they were referred to in a variety of ways, some of them almost anticipating the name finally chosen. There were references to them as "the remnant," "believers," and "the scattered flock." They were called "Seventh day people," "Sabbathkeeping Advent Believers," "Sabbathkeeping Adventists," "Seventh-day Brethren," "Advent Sabbathkeepers," "Seventh-day Doorshutters," "Church of God," "Seven Day Evangelists," "Sabbathkeeping Remnant of Adventists," and "Shut-door Seventh-day Sabbath and Annihilationists."

The sentiment against choosing a name, or "making us a name" as R. F. Cottrell referred to it, was deep and widespread among both "nominal" and Sabbathkeeping Adventists at this period. It went along with the strong feeling that any type of organization was Babylon, a return to the fallen state of the churches from which they had come. A "nominal" Adventist writing in the *Advent Harbinger and Bible Advocate* under the heading "Christian versus Adventist" argued that the term "Christian" was adequate to cover all who believed in Christ and his imminent return to earth. "A Christian is a follower of Christ," he wrote. "Are you something else? Then have another name: such an one as suits your profession and faith. . . ." He pointed out that if one were a little more or a little less than a Christian he might need another name. But if neither, then why, he asked, is another name needed? "But it is argued, 'We need some name to distinguish us.' Distinguish us! from whom pray? From the world? 'Christian' stands ever as a distinguisher from all classes of the world. . . . Here lies the mischief. This result — schism in the body — always did, does, and will follow the adoption of names unauthorized by the Bible." The writer then stated his objection to the name "Adventist":

I object to the name "Adventist," because, 1st it is unscriptural. . . . 2nd, I object to it because of its tendency to raise and perpetuate a party in the body of Christ. . . . 3d, I object to its use among us because of priority of use. . . . Elder Himes and associates, years ago, adopted the name as an appellation [sic] of those who engaged with Wm. Miller in proclaiming the coming of the Lord, and certain other doctrines advocated by him; and out of it has grown an "Advent church," pledged to the "original doctrines of the Advent as taught by Bro. Miller," or as set forth in the Albany conference. . . . If you must have the name Adventists, at least use an adjective to distinguish you from those already in use of the name. It might be "the second second Advent Church," or The "N. Y. Adventists," or "the Hartford Adventists" — any thing to distinguish you.

For similar and other reasons, Sabbathkeeping Adventists opposed with vigor the choice of any name. To the very last there were those who objected to choosing a name. So strongly did some feel about this and the larger question of church

order and organization that they withdrew from the body when these steps were taken in Battle Creek from 1860 to 1863.

There were precedents dating from the early 1850's which suggested a name like "Seventh-day Adventist." One historian has written that when the name Seventh-day Adventist was proposed in 1860, this name "indeed had been applied to them as much as any other." With such terms as Seventh-day Baptists and First Day Adventists in common use, it appears likely that the designation Seventh-day Adventist might have suggested itself to some.

In 1853 the Seventh-day Baptists communicated with the editor of the *Review and Herald*, and came close to using the very term that was finally adopted as a name seven years later. The communication ran: "At the sitting of the Seventh-day Baptist Central Association in Scott, last month, it was resolved that we instruct our Corresponding Secretary to correspond with the Seventh-day Advent people and learn of their faith." This identical term was also used on a handbill to announce some meetings of the Adventist Sabbathkeepers in Hillsdale, Michigan, in 1856. J. N. Loughborough, who reported this at a later date, said, "This name [Seventh-day Advent people] I suppose was used in the handbill because everybody would know at once who it meant."

A letter from a believer in Vermont to the editor of the *Review and Herald* indicates that fourteen months before the name was adopted in Battle Creek in the fall of 1860, the precise name was in use by some. This writer stated, "I found no difficulty in deciding in favor of the seventh day Adventists."

A source of confusion about the first use of the name Seventh-day Adventists as applied to these early believers stems partly from the fact that almost all who have written about this period, including those who were participants and later reminisced about these early days, used the term Seventh-day Adventist as though it were an accomplished fact before the formal adoption of the name. This use does not establish that the name was widely used before 1860, but it does contribute to the impression that the name was in use before its official adoption by the group. J. N. Loughborough, for example, recalling his first contacts with Sabbathkeeping Adventists in 1852, wrote at a later time, "I had become prejudiced against the Seventh-day Adventists . . ." In another place, referring to the publishing work in 1852, he stated that the *Review and Herald* "was printed on the press and with type owned by Seventh-day Adventists."

The *SDA Encyclopedia* explains its use of the term in this way: "For convenience, this book employs the term 'Seventh-day Adventist' . . . for in-

dividuals and groups who even before 1860 were developing and holding in common the doctrines that were to characterize the body now called by that name."

As the membership grew and the Sabbatarian Adventist cause matured, the need was increasingly felt, not only for some general plan of organization, but for a name for the developing body. The twenty-six members of the Parkville, Michigan, church early in 1860 took legal steps toward organizing a "Religious Society" so that they might in a lawful manner hold property. This group, in the Articles of Association which they signed, stated, "We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together as a church with the name of Parkville Church of Christ's Second Advent; taking the Bible as the rule of our faith and discipline."

The church at Fairfield, Iowa, organized in mid-summer, 1860, "by adopting articles of faith from the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice" and "sur-naming themselves 'The church of the living God.'"

Influential leaders in the work such as M. E. Cornell were developing strong convictions that the choosing of a name was imperative. "I cannot find any scripture," he wrote in May, 1860, "that would forbid all the remnant being called by one name. . . . Other churches are Babylon and in a fallen state, not because they have chosen various names but because they rejected the message God sent them." He concluded that "to have an appropriate name for the advent, commandment-keeping, Laodicean people, I now believe to be a matter of propriety and necessity."

The person who was to become the first president of the General Conference, John Byington, after first favoring the name "Church of God," endorsed the name "Seventh-day Adventist." He wrote:

As to a name, I have sometimes thought the plain Scriptural term "Church of God" was all that was necessary. But in reflecting more on this subject, I see that God has given to his people and to individuals names suitable to the time and circumstances under which they were placed. . . . I would say to my brethren scattered abroad, I cannot see a reasonable or Scriptural objection to the name Seventh-day Adventist, as it is significant of the position the church of God must occupy at the end.

The historic conference which led to the adoption of a name for the church was called for the end of September, 1860. Prior to this the subject was discussed and debated at some length. In June, James White revealed his choice of a name. "We now suggest that we unanimously adopt the name *Church of God*, as a scriptural and appropriate name by which to be known." The term Church of God had been used for several years in the pages of the *Review*, presumably in a general sense, although at times it appeared capitalized as

a proper noun. J. B. Frisbie, writing on Church Order in 1854, said that the name "The Church of God" is "the only name that God has seen fit to give his church . . ."

The following year a statement signed by a committee of three which had been appointed to direct the operation of the *Review and Herald* sent out a message to the believers entitled "To the Church of God." It appears that not only James White but those at the *Review and Herald* office, and a number of others, were in favor of the name "Church of God" up to the very time of the conference in 1860.

In reporting a vision first published the year following the adoption of the church name, Ellen White wrote regarding the name "Church of God":

I was shown that almost every fanatic who has arisen, who wishes to hide his sentiments that he may lead away others, claims to belong to the Church of God. Such a name would at once excite suspicion; for it is employed to conceal the most absurd errors. This name is too indefinite for the remnant people of God. It would lead to the supposition that we had a faith which we wished to cover up.

Those who opposed the designation "Church of God" felt it meaningless, presumptuous, and too general. Also there were several other groups who were using this name at that time. In spite of this, certain individuals, like T. J. Butler of Ohio, held to the name "Church of God" even after it had been rejected. Eventually, Butler and several others withdrew from the company of believers, due to the name chosen and other reasons. There was some support for "Advent Sabbatharians" as "a name beautiful, significant, appropriate, natural and becoming."

The "general conference" which chose the name

was held at Battle Creek in late September and early October, 1860. Joseph Bates, who served as chairman for almost all the conferences through this period of church organization, presided. His views on organization favored such a conference, and this, as well as the fact that he was the senior member of the group and presumably competent at the job of chairing such meetings, no doubt led to his being chosen for this position. Uriah Smith served as secretary of the meeting and the succeeding conferences on organization.

Some indication of the importance placed upon this particular conference can be seen in the rather complete report of the meetings published in three issues of the *Review* during the month of October. The discussions reflect the troublesome fact that there were still vestiges of the concept in the minds of many of the delegates that organization was Babylon. The most adamant in opposition seemed to be the delegates from New York and Ohio, among the five states represented. Some, like J. N. Loughborough and a Battle Creek layman, Ezra Brackett, strongly supported the move in favor of choosing a name. Others came with open minds to consider the matter. In the discussion of organizing so that the *Review and Herald* could be incorporated under the laws of Michigan, T. J. Butler, a consistent opponent of all organization, invoked the "higher law" above the law of the land. This probably reflected the debate going on among the anti-slavery leaders of the North regarding the "peculiar institution" against which they likewise invoked the higher law.

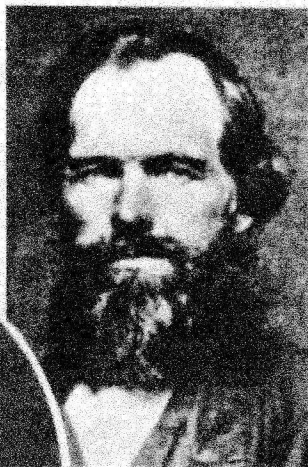
A committee of three (later enlarged) had been appointed to work out a plan of organization and to recommend a name, but they were unable to agree on a name. As J. H. Waggoner explained to the conference:

"The first business that we designed to bring to the Conference was the adoption of a name; one that we might recommend to the local churches. . . . But we have not been able to agree upon any name. Objections were raised in the committee to any name suggested. We shall have to leave that matter, therefore, to the Conference."

At the fourth session of the conference, on the morning of October 1, Ezra Brackett moved that a name be chosen. Another delegate touched on the objection that choosing a name would make of the group another denomination, but James White's response was: ". . . it is objected that we shall be classed among the denominations. We are classed with them already, and I do not know that we can prevent it, unless we disband and scatter, and give up the thing altogether."

James White further indicated in the afternoon session that at one time he had been fearful of adopting a name for the church. Earlier, he said, their numbers were comparatively few and there was no great necessity for such action. But now "large bodies of intelligent brethren are being raised up, and without some regulation of this kind will be thrown into

J. H. Waggoner was a member of the committee appointed to recommend a name.  
courtesy Review and Herald Publishing Assoc.



Consistently, J. N. Loughborough favored both organizing and choosing a name.  
courtesy Review and Herald Publishing Assoc.

confusion." He proceeded to review some of the experiences of the past decade, indicating that there were certain ones who opposed publishing a paper and pamphlets, and having an office for the *Review and Herald*. They were against church order and against having a power press. All of these things, however, were essential to the progress of the cause, and opposition to the choice of a name, he felt, was of the same character. One delegate in favor of choosing a name also suggested that to continue without a name would be like publishing books without titles, or sending out a paper without a heading.

When the question "Shall we adopt a name?" was brought before the members, the motion was carried without dissent, although several declined to vote. Then the discussion turned to the question of what name should be selected. The supporters of the name "Church of God" zealously advocated this as the name. In the morning session T. J. Butler of Ohio, who favored the name "Church of God," had said, "If God has named us as parents have a right to name their children, does it not denote a lack of modesty to try to slip out and take no name, or another?" The objections to the name "Church of God" were mentioned. Then the discussion turned to the desirability of having a name which would not seem presumptuous or objectionable to the world at large.

There were those who felt that the name should reflect the distinctive beliefs of the body. Seventh-day Adventist was suggested as a name that was simple and descriptive of the beliefs and position of the group. Eventually, David Hewitt, Joseph Bates' first convert in Battle Creek a decade earlier, offered the resolution: "Resolved, That we take the name of Seventh-day Adventists." After some discussion and for some unknown reason, this motion was withdrawn. In its place another motion was presented which stated: "Resolved, That we call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists." Following further lengthy discussion this resolution was adopted, with T. J. Butler dissenting, and four others, including J. N. Andrews, not voting. After some further explanation, Andrews signified his assent to this name. Final action was taken on the motion, recommending this name "to the churches generally," and the motion was carried with only T. J. Butler dissenting.

In spite of James White's earlier favoring the name "Church of God," he supported majority opinion, and Mrs. White gave it her endorsement:

No name which we can take will be appropriate but that which accords with our profession and expresses our faith and marks us a peculiar people. The name Seventh-day Adventist is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world. Here is the line of distinction between the worshipers of God and those who worship the beast and receive his mark. . . .

The name Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front, and will convict the inquiring mind. Like an arrow from the Lord's quiver, it will wound the transgressors of God's law, and will lead to

repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, after lengthy discussion and debate during the conference and prior to it, a name was chosen for the church, one that has continued without serious challenge to the present.

Roswell F. Cottrell, who had led out in a reasonable opposition to the whole idea of organization, accepted and supported the vote of the October conference on the choice of a name. Replying to criticism for his outspoken opposition to organization and a name, he wrote: "If any have been encouraged in a spirit of waywardness by what I have written, I am sorry for it. I did not intend it."

For the most part it appears that there was general support for the steps that were taken, including the selection of the name. Increasingly the new name appeared in the columns of the *Review* in connection with notices of meetings and of actions taken by various churches. Letters to the *Review* expressed satisfaction with the choice. One member wrote, "The



Joseph Bates chaired the Battle Creek Conference.  
courtesy Pacific Press Publishing Assoc.



name Seventh-day Adventist I dearly love. It expresses so eloquently the position of this people in regard to the Sabbath, and the soon coming of our blessed Lord."

One leading minister in registering approval of the church name cautioned the members to use it correctly.

... I wish to call attention here to an improper use of terms which seems to have become nearly universal with those in the world who speak of us, and which is encouraged, to a very large extent, by the practice of our own people. It is this: Very many of our brethren and sisters are in the habit of styling themselves Seventh-day 'Advents,' from which fact this custom has become general with those who do not belong to us.

The word "advent" signifies the event itself, while "adventist" refers to those who believe in that event.

There were pockets of resistance to the new name which persisted for some time. Referring to some of these James White wrote in the spring of 1861:

Because the body of believers in the third message do not egotistically assume the name Church of God, as though God had no other names in his great church book

been taken. "I think the name, 'Seventh-day Adventists,' is the most natural and appropriate name we could take."

When the General Conference was organized and a constitution drawn up in 1863, the first article stated: "This Conference shall be called the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists."

The ultimate endorsement of the church name came, at that time and in later years, from Ellen White. "We are Seventh-day Adventists. Are we ashamed of our name? We answer, No, No! We are not. It is the name the Lord has given us. It points out the truth that is to be the test of the churches." And in a letter written the following year she touched again on the subject:

We may claim to be Seventh-day<sup>1</sup> Adventists, and yet fail of realizing how exalted is the standard to which we must attain in order to deserve this name. Some have felt ashamed of being known as Seventh-day Adventists. Those who are ashamed of this name should never connect with those who feel it an honor to bear this name. And those who are Christ's witnesses, standing where the truths of the Bible have placed them, are worthy of the name they bear.

The choice of a name for the church, made in 1860, was a crucial one for a variety of reasons. Those who made the choice had no way of knowing at the time that it would in time be the official designation of a globe-encircling body of over two million members. World travelers today visiting the northernmost hamlets of the globe, find a Syvende-dags Adventkirken at Hammerfest above the Arctic Circle, and those touching at Punta Arenas on the Strait of Magellan at the southern tip of South America find an Iglesia los Adventistas del Septimo Dia. And in between, East and West, North and South, in 557 languages, the name is the identifying mark of the descendants in the faith of those who chose the name Seventh-day Adventists at Battle Creek on October 1, 1860.

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Battle Creek's second meetinghouse where the name was adopted and the General Conference was organized. courtesy Review and Herald Publishing Assoc.

in heaven but theirs, is no reason why a few persons in Gilboa [Ohio] or anywhere else, should stir up a secession movement to make the name Church of God a test.

Almost twenty years later a writer in the *Review* stated:

Wherever we go we find some persons who are great sticklers for the denominational name. They ask us why we do not take the name of Christian church, church of God, or some Bible name, and say they could go with us if we had the right name.

The almost euphoric expressions of leaders regarding the unity and harmony of the 1860 meeting suggested that the name, once it was adopted, was not a significant issue with the members in general. J. N. Loughborough, who had consistently supported both organization in general and the choosing of a name, summarized what probably was the general attitude of the believers after these various decisive steps had

# **Exhibit 10**

Our Quinquennial  
Papacy

Ethical Blind Spots  
and Sinkholes

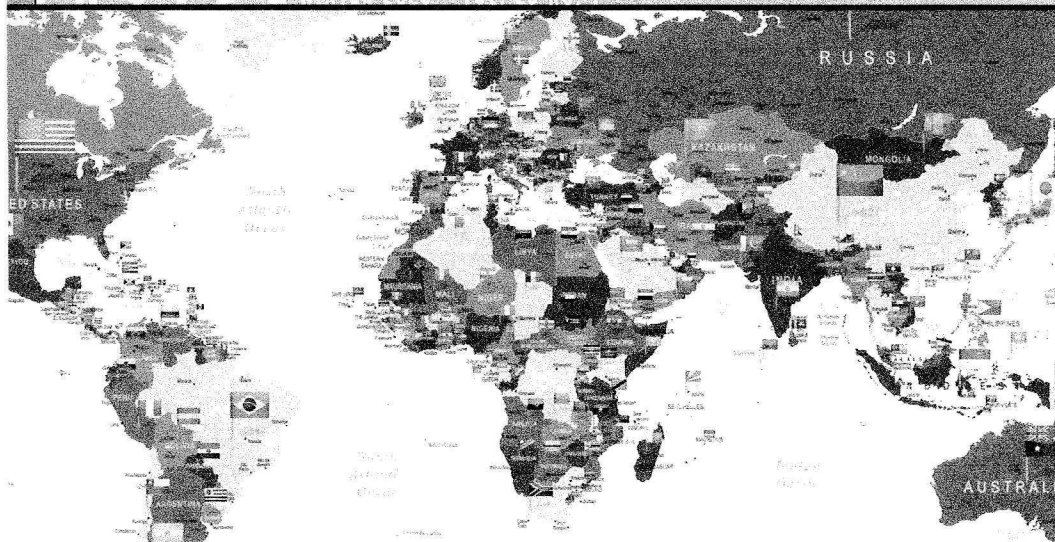
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## Our Quinquennial Papacy

By Loren Seibold

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM OF MY CHILDHOOD was obsessed with Roman Catholicism. I remember entire sermons preached about the Catholic Church, with Jesus entering the story only as an aside. To the prophetic horrors of Ellen White in *The Great Controversy* were added the fictions of Maria Monk: sex in nunneries, babies thrown in pits of lye, torture in basilica basements.

The Roman Catholic Church and the pope were important players in my childhood faith—more frightening than Jesus was comforting. I know that children have had to endure many things down through history, but making them suffer horror stories about how your Roman Catholic neighbors are going to report you to the police and torture you in their church basements is indefensible.

I have always maintained that our obsession with Roman Catholicism says far more about us than it does about the papacy, and that it can't but issue forth in an unhealthy faith. I vowed that as a pastor, I would never frighten people with such nonsense. And I haven't.

That doesn't mean I'm defending Roman Catholicism. It has all of the problems associated with every organized religion, and because of its hierarchical structure, extraordinary wealth, peculiar clergy, and unbending sense of itself as the only Christian church, often worse. Claiming a history going back to Jesus doesn't excuse abusive behavior in the centuries since.

### Our Alter Ego

If you shove aside the anti-Catholic nonsense, the foundational criticism of Rome is that it isn't biblical, flexible, evolving, or democratic. The pope has been seen as God's voice on Earth, a virtual spiritual dictator who could interpret the Bible as he wanted to, who didn't ask anyone for advice, and who ruled the church with an iron hand.

Since Vatican II that description may not be accurate, if it ever was. Still, I assume that most of us believe that a church shouldn't be run by one man, or even a team of them. That it should be based

on the Bible and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That it should be especially moral and ethical. That groups of believers adapt to the times and learn new things as we go along that bring us ever closer to God's will. That the church is at its best when it is local and responsive to individuals' needs. And that because much of one's faith is personal, between you and God, there is room for substantial doctrinal differences among us.

That's why the endless quotes about the General Conference (GC) in Session being God's highest authority on Earth<sup>1</sup> bother me so much. What it amounts to is that we, too, have a papacy—one that meets every five years and empowers our leaders to carry on in an authoritarian manner in the time in between.

### An Inevitable Problem

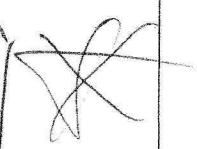
People blame GC President Ted Wilson for this slide into authoritarianism, but he's a symptom, not a cause. Getting the kind of leader who could have saved us from authoritarianism would have been the surprise. What we got was precisely what we should have expected, extrapolating from our history.

Adventism started out with strong theological opinions but little sense of organizational dynamics. I believe that people unconsciously take on certain qualities of their enemies, and our enemy was Roman Catholicism. Lacking an intentional ecclesiology, we developed a system not unlike the one we opposed.

And so we ended up being far more like the Catholics than we probably intended to be. Our terminology is different (conferences, unions, and divisions rather than dioceses, archdioceses, and episcopal conferences; presidents and secretaries rather than deacons, bishops, and cardinals; Sabbath rules and food restrictions rather than sacraments), but we are similarly hierarchical and identical in having a sense of ourselves as the only legitimate Christians.

The will to power is also similar. We see it every five years when the world church meets for the General Conference Session. There, it becomes the Vatican of the denomination and votes policies that

We, too, have a papacy—one that meets every five years and empowers our leaders to carry on in an authoritarian manner in the time in between.



the rest of the church must adhere to. Our leaders take the authority they've been given by the votes of the delegates and employ it for the next five years with the support of the pliable General Conference Executive Committee, which is composed mostly of church employees.

Since 2015 our General Conference president used the church's vote on women's ordination to make himself the Great Enforcer, becoming overbearing and demanding far beyond the remit of that vote, even creating a clumsy, top-down enforcement mechanism: the "compliance committees."

Yet I insist that our decline into authoritarianism didn't happen because any one person was especially perverse. It happened because as an organization we are sclerotic and bilious, no longer agile enough or healthy enough to adapt to a changing world. We are overloaded with things to protect, from our reputation to our employees to our theology to our real estate. We are terrified that the church

been pursued with such enthusiasm. Control is the last refuge of an unskilled leader.

## Democracy at the Session

It has long seemed to me that huge meetings of people who don't know one another, while lovely for fellowship and group identity, are fairly useless for making good decisions and workable strategies. The impossibility of such a large and diverse group working well together throws control to the leadership. The weakness of a large democracy is that it isn't necessarily democratic: the power belongs to those we rely upon to make the system work.

This wouldn't be a bad thing if you had an organizational culture that generated informed and progressive leadership and whose leaders were open-minded enough to identify what will make people feel successful and secure. But that's seldom the case with "legacy" leaders such as Wilson, who

**Even if an exciting new leader—one who could initiate the equivalent of an Adventist Vatican II—were out there, it would be almost impossible for that person to make it into the presidency.**

is going to fly asunder. We have little trust in one another—often for good reasons—and we doubt our ability to remain a viable organization in the face of pressures cultural, theological, and economic. We use too many resources at the top, in maintaining control, and not enough on the product, which is a local community. One of the biggest threats to the church is evidence of massive corruption in some regions, and there appears to be little will to correct it.

That is to say, we are aged and unwell and unlikely to improve on our own. Elder Wilson is a decent and spiritual man, but he hasn't been a good geriatrician for us. His diagnosis of insufficient theological unity was faulty, as was his treatment: a stronger hand in doctrine and policy, frequent scolding and fault-finding, and stifling of cultural differences. A wiser leader would have recognized such treatment as contraindicated for a church of such diversity, but Wilson missed all of that. He did what leaders at this stage of an organization's decline often do, which is to go on the defensive: protect, restrict, exclude, purify, and threaten rather than drawing the circle wider.

That's why the theme of the General Conference as God's highest authority on Earth has emerged so strongly and

get put in place because they and their families have spent their lives looking at the church from organizational offices.

Wilson wasn't trying to find common ground when for five years he prepared the church to defeat women's ordination. He'd already told us that he didn't approve of women's ordination. He telegraphed that to his friends in other fields, who prepared their delegates for how they should vote. The Theology of Ordination Study Committee wasn't a serious attempt at finding truth, but cynical misdirection, because in the end it was pointedly disempowered. And so when women's ordination went down to defeat, it shouldn't have been a surprise to anyone.

I say again that this happens not because these leaders are bad men, but because they're worried and afraid, and control is the primary tool in their toolbox. As much as they say they believe in a democratic church, they don't want that to actually work, because it seems likely to take us in directions they've already decided they don't want to go. Wilson decided early on that he didn't want to see women ordained, and he led the church to reject it. He could just as easily have led the church to accept it. In this case, democracy failed us.

## Be Careful What You Wish For

Many of my friends are hoping that Ted Wilson will no longer be the president of the General Conference after this summer. I'd be inclined to agree with them, except that those waiting in the wings to take up the job aren't necessarily better. The General Conference is incestuous in leadership development; it nurtures its own. And because the "God's highest authority on Earth" culture permeates this organization, those it nurtures also believe that our biggest problems require top-down enforcement.

There is an expectation that in Indianapolis, the church will at long last elect a General Conference president with some melanin in his skin, who hails from somewhere other than America or Europe. But other parts of the world church wouldn't necessarily provide a president who leads with a light touch. They might provide leaders who would double down on the agenda of demands and control.

Take for example the South American Division (SAD) president, Brazilian Erton Carlos Köhler, who has telegraphed his desire to take the top church job. He leads one of the most successful fields in the world church. Enough money comes to the GC from Brazil that a shift in exchange rates on the *real* (R\$) has made the GC treasurer's job difficult in some years. Köhler had never been a top executive in any conference or union before he was picked for his current position.

It would be unfair to Wilson to say that Köhler has followed the Wilson playbook. In fact, he's been even more strongly controlling, employing an old-fashioned "I demand it, and you do it" attitude toward his region. Judicatories in his territory say that he spends what he wants to, merely telling them to cough up the money. He has built up massive centralized institutions with hundreds of employees, such as the Adventist Institute of Technology, among whose rumored projects is a smart-phone app to monitor in real time the movements and activities of pastors.

Despite the division's large membership and solid infrastructure, only four of its 16 unions are actually union conferences. Most are union *missions*, in which the entire administration is chosen by the division board. Since Köhler has taken charge, three new union missions have been established, but it has been more than 30 years since the last union conference was organized in the SAD. This gives the president control of almost every aspect of

the work on that continent without having to answer to a constituency in most regions.

Köhler disapproves of women's ordination, though he cagily asserts that he only supports what the church wants. Ranieri Salles, Köhler's main competitor for the job and the leader many would have preferred, was hounded and criticized by Köhler until he relocated to Europe. A South American pastor I interviewed told me that pastors and educators in his division have been deeply disheartened. "The pastors are very excited about [the possibility of] Köhler's moving to the GC," he told me, "because that means he will be gone from here."

Move on to Asia, where the Southern Asia Division (SUD) is mired in corruption allegations. Which of those leaders now in a high position, some of whom are associated with the Hope Center debacle and Spicer Adventist University's many embarrassments, would you elect as the executive of the whole church?

Africa, which has more Adventists than any other field in the world, is riven by nepotism and tribal fights. Would putting an African in charge make the church more unified, or would it bring these problems right into the offices at 12501 Old Columbia Pike?

Please understand that I'm not saying there aren't good and honest men in these regions. What I am saying is that those good and honest men are unlikely to be the ones queued up for the job. Even if an exciting new leader—one who could initiate the equivalent of an Adventist Vatican II—were out there, it would be almost impossible for that person to make it into the presidency. While it would be an exaggeration to say that the next GC president has already been selected, it wouldn't be far off to say that those now in power have some idea of who they want and believe that the next GC president will come from their short list. And given how carefully the nominating committee is chosen, they might be right.

All of which leads me to fear that Wilson may yet emerge a better candidate than some others. As the old apothegm goes, better the devil you know.

## Organizational Changes That Could Matter

In a previous editorial, I listed leadership priorities<sup>2</sup> I'd suggest to a potential General Conference president. But inasmuch as we're now going to be meeting as a policy-shaping organization, here are some *organizational* changes

that might improve the denomination. Not all of them are achievable at this meeting, but they're part of a tapestry of changes that I wish could be addressed.

**Return to "chair of the board."** Back in the youthful days of our denomination, the leader of the General Conference was the chairman of the General Conference Committee. Somewhere along the line that morphed into "president," with all of the corporate and political overtones that accompany that title. Wilson expanded it beyond the General Conference, labeling himself "President of the World Church of Seventh-day Adventists." It is no wonder the holder of this office sees himself in imperial terms, expecting to travel and be feted and celebrated wherever he goes, and expecting to be obeyed whenever he speaks.

I know the change might be mostly symbolic, but what if we went back to the previous title, signifying that each president is merely chair of the board in his or her territory? That might even open the way for talented laypeople, rather than career administrators, to take these positions.

**Run the church locally.** Every time I talk to top officials at a local conference, union conference, division, or the General Conference, what I hear about is how much they travel. Sometimes it seems as if they are active everywhere except where they work.

Ever tried to make an appointment with a union conference or division president? If they're honest, these individuals will tell you that they're in Loma Linda this week, Orlando the next, Hong Kong the next, and London the week after that. They're members of dozens of boards where they aren't really needed, and their subordinates—the ones who aren't traveling themselves—are left to do the work.

I know a conference president, a good speaker and a fine man, who appears to accept every speaking appointment anywhere he is invited, and often his wife goes along. On their Facebook page, you can find pictures of them taken around the world. This man has a good reputation as a speaker. But back at home, important things are neglected, including pastors he's never talked to. Districts left open for months. Problems going unsolved.

It's time to insist that our leaders stay home and lead.

**Slim down the General Conference.** I suspect that much of what the General Conference does could disappear tomorrow, and 90 percent of the world church would never notice. I believe we should trim the General

Conference to the function of coordinating and auditing institutions for the world's work, and we should curb its aspirations to be the originator of all good ministry ideas, with its leaders traveling the world as figureheads. Putting the General Conference on a diet might not be as hard as you think. The headquarters building is teeming with men who should have retired a decade ago and whose primary contribution is to institutional inertia.

**Rethink ministry resourcing.** The GC has loads of resource functions whose usefulness isn't tested. Do the programs recommended by mission planners actually build the church? Is the ministerial department necessary? Are all of the magazines, pamphlets, and books, which are published by the organization and then sent out free of charge, really read by anyone? Most importantly: has anyone done an analysis to find out?

Not long ago when I was a pastor, I received a large box of books from the stewardship departments of the GC and the North American Division (NAD). I tried to get my congregation to use them. But no one wanted them, no one would take them, and no one read them. They ultimately went into the dumpster. I talked to other pastors who had hauled theirs to the trash, too. Church members would be astonished at the quantity of printing-for-the-dumpster that goes on in the offices of the church.

Please understand that I'm not saying that the people in the GC offices are lazy. On the contrary, they got these jobs because they are smart, self-motivated people who stay very busy. The question isn't whether or not they're capable and energetic, but whether they're actually accomplishing anything.

We don't need people in offices generating materials and services no one has requested. In fact, I'd suggest that much of what the GC, divisions, and union conferences produce could be developed, sold, and distributed by parachurch ministries. Most of our best programs have come from outside, from practitioners rather than administrators.

As for the General Conference: enough of the Biblical Research Institute, which has functioned like the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, looking down its nose at the church and blocking progressive thinking. Enough of the Geoscience Research Institute, which produces little that is ever seen by church members.

And why do we need a General Conference youth department or stewardship department—four stories

above where it matters? If leadership is needed in these areas, then let conferences keep their money and hire it.

**Up the auditing game.** I stopped by the General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS) last year and asked the people there about the corruption reports we hear from Africa and Asia. They made it clear that finding crimes and theft isn't their responsibility. Their job is to match up money, account books, checking accounts, and policies with actual activities by institutions.

One thing a centralized office can do better than anyone else is to monitor basic institutional integrity. So, whose job is it to end corruption in the ranks? It's time to make *that* the General Conference's main responsibility. We don't need the president and his wife flying around the world like celebrities, riding in limousines and receiving leis around their necks. Nor do we need the GC to be our orthodoxy monitor. What we desperately need is auditors who can assure givers that their money is being used honestly and that leaders are behaving responsibly.

**Put term limits in place.** I'll make a suggestion here, for what it's worth: elect the GC president for one term; give a division president two terms; allow a conference president three. Similarly limit other officers.

Require administrators to circulate back into parish ministry, not make a career of sitting in an office. (We have a GC president right now who was a pastor for about a year after college. Almost immediately, his surname put him straight into church leadership.) After church employees complete their elected term(s), they need to go back into on-the-ground ministry, to prove they can do what they've told others to do.

**Refine the selection process.** You are probably aware that when the General Conference nominating committee meets at the GC Session, it selects the president first, and then he comes in and selects the rest of his team personally. Thus, we ended up with some bad choices in 2010, such as an ADRA leader who quickly ran the organization aground, and a Southern Asian Division president chosen by Wilson who has let corruption flourish around him. Some of the more solid people in leadership were pushed out because Wilson didn't like them—or didn't find them orthodox enough.

Furthermore, I've been told repeatedly by those in the highest places of the church that wealthy donors have clustered around nominating committee members, offering significant donations for favored church projects

if their chosen candidates are nominated. That this has been attempted, even occasionally, is pretty good evidence that there's something wrong with the process.


## Don't Get Your Hopes Up

Sadly, I fear that a combination of inertia and self-interest will prevent any significant changes. For one thing, the church's committees and boards are made up largely of people working for the denomination. A friend from India sent me a list showing that the delegates to the 2020 GC Session from his region were mostly the wives and family members of administrators!

Laypersons are equally culpable. Studies have shown how much the church could expand local ministry with fewer administrative offices, but there's been an extraordinarily stubborn resistance to combining conferences, even when it means cutting back pastors and teachers. Instead, in many fields, unions and conferences proliferate.

I don't want to be a pessimist, but we may just need to accept that as a denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist Church can't change. It will get fatter and more inflexible until it collapses one day of its own weight. (My one hope is that the constant crises created by GC leadership might drive us to separate into more manageable entities, as appears to be happening with the United Methodists, but that's another discussion.)

If you're looking for anything substantial to happen in Indianapolis, something that will change the way the denomination works, I'd counsel you not to get your hopes up. Since the GC appears to think of *itself* as the church, it is accustomed to acting for its own survival rather than for the good of the church out here.

I firmly believe the church is at its best when it's *local* and *accountable*, and that's where you should invest your talents, your interest, and your resources. 

<sup>1</sup> A collection of these quotes can be found on the Pacific Union's website at [session.adventistfaith.org/god-s-highest-authority](http://session.adventistfaith.org/god-s-highest-authority).

<sup>2</sup> Loren Seibold, "My Advice to the Next General Conference President," *Adventist Today*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter 2019), p. 3.

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