

Contextualising Recent Tensions in Seventh-day Adventism: “a constant process of struggle and rebirth”?

Short Title: Recent Tensions in Seventh-day Adventism

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Abstract

Between 1844 and 1863, fragments of disappointed Millerism developed the landmark ideas, the denominational name and the basic structure of what is now the Seventh-day Adventist Church with fifteen million members (2007) in 203 countries. This article contextualises the struggle of recent decades between continuity and change in Adventist teaching, suggesting that a score of doctoral theses/dissertations and other studies offer a coherence that is deeply disturbing for some believers, insufficient for some others, but satisfying for many. The demands in Western culture for faith to be shaped by evidence and to offer existential meaning have elicited three stances in relation to traditional Adventist thought: reversion, alienation and transformation. While the consequent tensions may be viewed as evidence of “growth, vitality and increased understanding,” they also constitute an urgent call for effective internal and external dialogue.

Introduction

As *The Journal of Religious History (JoRH)* was celebrating its first quarter century, founding editor Professor Bruce Mansfield was facilitating an article on Seventh-day Adventist historiography as “the first in a new, occasional, series” on sources for the study of religious history in Australia. The article claimed the sources were already in hand for “substantial and accurate Seventh-day Adventist history to be written” that would “expose increasingly the inadequacies of numerous viewpoints current both within the denomination and beyond its borders.”¹ Two decades later it seems appropriate to revisit the burgeoning discipline of Adventist Studies to identify trajectories and interpret their nature and significance.²

Long ago Paul Johnson, an acclaimed Catholic journalist, described Christian history as “a constant process of struggle and rebirth—a succession of crises, often accompanied by horror, bloodshed, bigotry and unreason, but evidence too of growth, vitality and increased understanding.”³ Marilyn Westerkamp states that during the 1970s, religious history in the United States that had been “replete with apologetical positions,” “a poor stepchild to historical scholarship,” tending “toward anecdotal, often uncritical celebrations,” engaged with a transforming process.⁴ Three typical responses that occur when a social or religious group is confronted by a large body of new information are aptly depicted by Theodore Ludwig as reversion, alienation and transformation.⁵ The growth and transformation well depicted by Johnson, Westerkamp and Ludwig are unlikely to proceed without imposing significant stresses upon Christianity as a world religion and the particular denominations that it embraces. This article suggests the insights of these three authors illumine recent, often painful and sometimes destructive conflicts within Adventism.

What Johnson describes as “a constant process of struggle and rebirth” has always been evident in Adventism. However, for a complex set of reasons the struggle became acutely apparent during the last half of the twentieth century. Within the 1960s and 1970s and particularly in the subsequent decade, Adventism felt a need to marginalise or dismiss some of its historians and other researchers, as well as scores of its clergy—the latter especially in Australia and New Zealand.⁶ However, by 1979 it had also published its first history textbook written by a trained historian⁷ and it was becoming aware of the professionalisation of its historiography.⁸ The evident

struggles invite careful assessment to determine whether they are signs of serious malaise⁹ or growing pains that signal maturation.¹⁰

Adventist Studies

Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) established their first college during 1874 in Battle Creek (Michigan, United States of America) and now operate 106 senior colleges and universities worldwide.¹¹ Graduate study offered intermittently in the 1930s developed into the church's premier institution of its type, the SDA Theological Seminary, housed at the Washington (D.C.) headquarters until 1960 when it relocated to the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs (Michigan).¹² A range of accredited PhD degree programs allowing the option of a specific focus on Adventist history and thought have developed since the 1970s within such disciplines as biblical, theological and historical studies.¹³ During 1993 the seminary announced a PhD program in Adventist Studies and academic offerings at other church institutions have also moved to include the study of Adventism more intentionally. For instance, when in 2006 the Government of New South Wales accredited Avondale College to offer PhD studies in history, education, health and theology, the college advertised the possibility that students in such disciplines might consider Adventist Studies as a thematic option.¹⁴

Contemporary Seventh-day Adventism cannot be understood adequately without due attention to its nineteenth-century origin and development in the United States, even though only a million of its members now live in North America. Further, Adventism may be interpreted as one of many religious communities that emerged in the United States between 1787 and 1919.¹⁵ Even more specifically, it should be compared and

contrasted with other nineteenth-century movements that developed in the United States, have a continuing presence there and, like Adventism, have spread to other parts of the world—especially the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Christian Science and the Jehovah’s Witnesses.¹⁶

Sociologists and historians rightly use the term *Adventist* to describe various movements that have flourished throughout the Christian era up to and including the present. However, in this article the term *Adventist Studies* refers only to the background, history, thought, polity and practice of *Seventh-day Adventism*.

Adventist Antecedents and Emerging Beliefs

The fact that emergent Sabbatarian Adventism may be compared usefully with other millenarian impulses throughout Christian history is well recognised.¹⁷ Older SDA explorations of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic and prophetic literature, expressed conveniently in four volumes by LeRoy Edwin Froom,¹⁸ have been restated in popular books as well as qualified and extended by scholars such as Charles Scriven and Bryan Ball.¹⁹ Ball’s research is available from reputable publishers and has been reviewed approvingly by specialists;²⁰ it has also been challenged by those who wish to highlight the specific Millerite provenance of the SDA movement.²¹

Studies of SDA origins in the northeastern United States often explore the complex influences of restorationism, revivalism, millennialism, charisma and other impulses. Millerite historiography, especially the examination of the role of William Miller and his principal ministerial and lay colleagues, has moved through three phases since the “Great Disappointment” of 1844. Approving “memoirs by the movement’s

participants” were followed by a long “debate between detractors and apologists.” A more constructive “academic interest” reached a high point in the 1980s and is ongoing.²² Consequently, Adventist and other authors are more comprehensively exploring the American fascination with the millennium and the transition from Millerism to Sabbatarian Adventism.²³

Influential persons in the early Adventist period were mostly devoid of formal theological education. William Miller was a farmer, army captain, deputy sheriff and justice of the peace in Vermont and upstate New York. Hiram Edson was a farmer in the “burned-over district” of western New York. SDAs identify three individuals as their principal cofounders. Of these, Ellen Gould White (1827-1915) enjoyed little beyond three years of primary-school education; Joseph Bates (1792-1872) was a retired mariner; James White (1821-1881) received 29 weeks of education and training to equip him as a teacher. These self-educated pioneers and others like them remain in the focus of recent study and publication. It is remarkable that a handful of landmark ideas they proposed in the formative early years were embodied during 1980 in the first expression of SDA fundamental beliefs voted by a General Conference in world session. It is unremarkable that such SDA fundamentals have been at the centre of successive controversies, beginning in 1844 and flourishing into the twenty-first century.

Controversies Relating to SDA Landmark Ideas

While SDA conflicts are much broader than the church’s 28 fundamentals and their specific implications, they often surround five landmark concepts. In believers’ terminology these core doctrines are known as Sabbath, Sanctuary, Second Coming,

State of the Dead and Spiritual Gifts.²⁴ For a hundred years, debates about which day of the modern week corresponded with the biblical seventh or holy day usually focused on a cluster of related SDA claims: that the Sabbath was introduced in Genesis 2, enshrined in the Ten Commandments at Sinai and observed by Christ, the apostles and the early Christian church. Then, as more Adventist authors earned doctorates in biblical studies, historical and systematic theology, a new emphasis was added, focusing on the meaning or spiritual significance of the Sabbath. However, in recent decades, older debates between SDAs and other Christians have flared anew in the writings of former Adventists like Dale Ratzlaff (1990, 1995, 1996).²⁵ In turn, polemical publications tend to stimulate updated historical and exegetical treatments.²⁶

Hiram Edson's experience on the morning of 23 October 1844 is still a subject of debate, as is his application of Hebrews 8 and subsequent SDA teachings about the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. SDAs have proposed that the atonement may be best explicated as having phases, such as sacrificial, mediatorial, judicial and executive. The claim that a heavenly judgment began in 1844 has on the one hand been categorised as the distinctive SDA contribution to Christian thought or, on the other hand, as "the most colossal, psychological, face-saving phenomenon in religious history."²⁷ A huge volume of publishing has explored the linguistic, contextual, historical and theological issues.²⁸ The church's official position is best expressed in the consensus statement achieved during a representative conference held at Glacier View in Colorado (1980); it is defended in multiple publications from the Daniel and Revelation Committee that worked under the auspices of the headquarters Biblical Research Institute.²⁹

Less divisive but ever crucial has been the discussion of the SDA teaching of a literal, pre-millennial Second Advent of Christ. In doctoral studies by Ralph Neall³⁰ and Rick Ferret (2006, see footnote 15) such themes as imminence and delay are explored. The church's understanding of the Second Coming shapes its concept of conditionalism or Christian mortalism. Froom's 1960s review of the antecedents of this doctrine has, in the main, stood the test of time, although it is now refined by Bryan Ball's recent research.³¹ The fifth landmark concept that has evoked enormous effort is SDA Fundamental Belief 18, expressed during 1980 by the General Conference world session under the title "Gift of Prophecy." This fundamental, in constant focus since December 1844, entered a new phase of debate 55 years after Ellen White's death. Currently, an effervescent literature relating to it is expanding rapidly.³²

Ellen White Studies

The life and writings of Ellen White and the substance of Fundamental 24 ("Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary") have combined throughout Adventist history to form the movement's most-discussed issues.³³ An inter-related cluster of ideas are at stake: historicism as a method of interpreting biblical apocalyptic literature,³⁴ the Old Testament prophetic office, the New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts, the doctrine of revelation/inspiration, the primacy of biblical authority in Protestantism, SDA identity and mission, and many others. Issues that seemed resolved in the golden age of Adventist apologetics flared anew in the 1960s and beyond. Matters as diverse as origins and eschatology helped to cause the termination of scientists and biblical scholars, some of them employed by the Geoscience Research Institute and Andrews University. When historian Ronald Numbers of Loma Linda University was writing

his controversial volume about Ellen White (published in 1976) the church could not provide him with a doctrine of inspiration that adequately embraced his findings. However, it deemed it necessary to dismiss Numbers for not applying its dynamic concept of inspiration in his historical enquiry.³⁵ The doctrine of inspiration and such related matters as biblical hermeneutics were flagged at Consultation I and Consultation II (early in the 1980s). The issues came into greater prominence during 1991 with the publication of Alden Thompson's *Inspiration* and the spirited rejoinder to it published privately by the Adventist Theological Society (1992). Subsequent research by Adventist scholars, such as Ray Roennfeldt, has the potential to resolve many of the tensions, were it applied effectively in the Adventist discussion.³⁶ However, conflict is ongoing: for instance, during 2006 the White Estate and the Biblical Research Institute publicised negative categorisations of Graeme Bradford's volumes that attempted to describe the role of Ellen White.³⁷

As early as 1980 at the church's headquarters, a comprehensive agenda was developed for the study of Ellen White's life and writings.³⁸ Groundwork for such objectives was creatively started by Arthur White's papers on inspiration developed during the 1970s, Ronald Graybill's and Robert Olson's investigations that flowered at the 1982 International Prophetic Guidance Workshop, Fred Veltman's research on *The Desire of Ages* and related initiatives. A coherent overview from the White Estate was needed urgently and was promised in the publication by Herbert Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (1998). This 586-page work took a constructive step in the right direction despite the fact that it was hampered by a profound limitation. An effective study typically begins with an inclusive literature review. However, as a

consensus project, the Douglass volume failed to name some of the important researchers, let alone analyse in any detail their explorations of the key issues.

Perceived outcomes still appear daunting in the eyes of some believers. Currently, much of the agenda as stated in 1980, jointly agreed upon by the Biblical Research Institute and White Estate, is unfulfilled in any comprehensive way by the combined efforts of both entities. The sterling intentions of the Adventist Theological Society to help the church embrace and proclaim a viable doctrine of inspiration seem to be constrained by a theology that dismisses crucial findings made during recent decades within the discipline of Adventist Studies.³⁹ Meanwhile, independent organisations channel millions of Adventist dollars into alternative initiatives driven by their analysis of “the ills of God’s church” or a doctrine of inspiration that demands inerrancy for both the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White.⁴⁰ The Western church is still losing adherents who experience unbearable cognitive dissonance, often because they are unaware of research that clarifies many of the issues effectively.⁴¹ Even so, the church is at times tempted to be hesitant in fostering research, to the point that at times dedicated members working individually are the ones who appear to break fresh ground.⁴²

This observation may be illustrated from the research undertaken by specialist medical practitioner Don McMahon and historian Fred Hoyt. McMahon, in the view of some believers, has contributed to the Adventist jigsaw puzzle the single most important piece relating to Ellen White’s inspiration of any submitted since 1970. However, T. Joe Willey has produced substantive critiques of McMahon’s claims.⁴³ The world church knows little about the illuminating research that Hoyt commenced

in the 1970s. Bulging filing cabinets and boxes of data in Hoyt's crowded office offer potential for a fuller understanding of early Adventist charismatic experiences, the education of Ellen White, the influence of John Wesley on Ellen White's life and ideas, the relationship between Ellen White's literary indebtedness and the doctrine of inspiration, as well as a number of related matters. Neither McMahon nor Hoyt claim expertise outside their respective fields of medicine and history. Such findings and those of others (not least, Fred Veltman and his team) offer a continuing challenge to the church's biblical scholars, systematic theologians and pastors to effectively interpret their significance for the church at large.⁴⁴

Pieces of a Jigsaw?

As one examines the individual items of information derived from the efforts of the many who have engaged in Adventist Studies during recent decades, it is apparent that these fragments are parts of a larger whole. Consideration of the individual jigsaw pieces is fruitful, as is the attempt to assemble them into a coherent picture. Selected sketch lines may be drawn in terms of the following observations.

The Adventist church has invested enormously since 1972 to implement its decision to facilitate research by enhancing access to primary and other sources that relate to its history and faith. By establishing a worldwide chain of research centres or heritage entities to serve the various geographical sections of the world, effective investigations by believers and others have been facilitated. Further, the church continues to invest hugely in a system of higher education that meets increasingly the accreditation requirements of the various nations within which Adventist institutions are located.

It is evident that during the past two decades, trans-disciplinary research has flourished as individuals have crossed boundaries between often-separate modes of inquiry that focus on Scripture, history, theology, education or related topics. The same observation is true with respect to an array of physical, biological, social, health and other sciences that impinge on matters of faith.⁴⁵ Such enquiries also enhance the comparative study of Adventism, not least with their trans-denominational qualities. It is, for instance, unlikely that the Adventist struggles over soteriology can be solved effectively without intentional reference to the biblical data, the Christological controversies of the early Christian centuries, the writings of magisterial Reformers and Puritans, as well as the specific input of Adventists and others who have engaged in long-continuing discussions since 1844.⁴⁶ The principle expressed in this observation can be extrapolated and applied to other aspects of Adventist thought and practice. It is best explicated by the studies that investigate Adventism as an organic entity in terms of its biblical foundations, antecedents, and development up to the present.

There is much to be gained from the processes that focus diverse minds on Adventist Studies, including believer-participants, researchers in Adventist and non-Adventist settings, and those who do not identify with the church as adherents.⁴⁷ Adventists who desire to see themselves from the perspective of others are glad when the “prayer” of Robert Burns (“O wad some Pow’r the giftie gie us/To see ousels as others see us”) is answered, but for some believers such a process is too daunting to contemplate seriously.

Apologetics is a valid enterprise but it often presents particular perils.⁴⁸ While the Adventist past may be littered with casualties of credibility, these events are diminishing in number as better research methods are adopted. The advent of the mimeograph machine began to change the ethos of Adventist Studies; the ham radio and the photocopier accelerated the change; computer technology has democratised the process. Technology in its electronic and other forms now requires the church to function in an open manner.⁴⁹ It is encouraging to note the church's current impulse to interpret data, in contrast to its attempt to control information during the Australasian crisis of the 1980s.

Such realities are apt to make the church more aware of many old and new troubling issues, including those of poverty, justice and gender equality.⁵⁰ Costly and demanding processes have developed far-sighted approaches to Christian service (illustrated well by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency) and responses to the issues of sexual and domestic abuse (epitomised in Australia by Adventist Support and its 2006 publications). Also, the church's employment practices have become more transparent. The indicators suggest that in both the administrative and the scholarly spheres, the church is attempting to maintain a healthy marriage between academic freedom and academic responsibility. The self-correcting nature of effective scholarship, the ongoing dissemination of research through print and electronic publishing (including the checks and balances provided by the independent press on both the church's right and left) will tend to maintain balance in this regard.⁵¹

Another important realisation from the past two decades is that doctrinal development in Christianity and Adventism is a reality that may be destructive or constructive.

Many of the believers engaged in Adventist Studies see it as part of their responsibility to contribute toward constructive outcomes (especially in terms of responsible biblical exegesis) and shape their activities accordingly. Further, the church appears to be fostering more effectively “the dialogue and dialectic of a community” rather than employing disciplinary measures to narrow the scope of research.⁵²

Trajectories

If the research of historian and sociologist Ronald Lawson is seriously considered, Seventh-day Adventism is a denominationalising sect.⁵³ The evidence is unmistakable that Adventism is experiencing the range of tensions that might be expected as a nineteenth-century movement faces the exigencies of Western civilisation following World War II and the flourishing of Post-Modernism.⁵⁴ In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the tensions in Adventism remain real and the interpretations of them varied.

More than twenty of the volumes published independently by twin brothers, a medical doctor and a psychologist whose “dominant work” became ministry, “rely on the plain text of inspired writings” without “the philosophical musing of theologians.”⁵⁵ The Standish brothers illustrate what is clearly an international impulse in Adventism driven by a determination to maintain Scripture and Ellen White’s writings as inerrant and to utilise the proof-text method as the normative way of arriving at the truth of inspired writings.

In the polar-opposite position are former believers who have given up on Adventist faith. Some remain nominal members. Others advocate entire separation from

Adventism and identification with another form of Christianity (most often evangelicalism) or secularism. It is claimed that in the United States one former minister alone has 35,000 Adventists on his electronic mailing list used to advocate separation from the church.⁵⁶

The Adventists closer to the middle are, even so, varied in their perceptions. Those who identify with the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) find it difficult to accept as true believers many of the 360 members of the Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS). Many ASRS members have felt their integrity as scholars would be compromised by signing an ATS statement of faith. However, both groups agree that biblical exegesis is the core activity for those who want to define Adventism and express its identity faithfully. Both ATS and ASRS members often advocate revival and reformation as a constant necessity for individual believers and their community of faith. Yet the ASRS scholar is more likely to see as constructive the processes of change documented by Rolf Pöhler and others, whereas the ATS scholar is more likely to be nervous about such change and to identify more closely with continuity.⁵⁷

This article suggests that there is a striking degree of coherence in over a score of the doctoral theses/dissertations that it lists as published or completed during recent years, reflecting research in Adventist and other institutions.⁵⁸ Many other published or higher degree studies illustrate this situation more fully. However, the grassroots understanding of the church's faith is a continuing focus of dialogue, dialectic and sometimes division. Furthermore, the field of Adventist Studies is characterised by unfinished business as well as by tidily completed projects; in other words, options abound for further investigation.⁵⁹ Within the church and beyond it, innovative

initiatives are needed and some are underway, not least in the Ellen White encyclopedia, in the Newbold College study of the persons to whom Ellen White addressed letters, in the early Adventist research of Fred Hoyt at La Sierra University, in hoped-for feminist and other biographies of Ellen White, and in ongoing research at Adventist and public universities in various parts of the world.⁶⁰

Struggle and Rebirth?

It is instructive to examine Adventist conflicts against the broad background of similar struggles. Secular “history wars” in North America and Australia engage not only historians but also politicians and the public. The corresponding attempt to understand religion in a single nation is likely to be a complex enterprise that evokes diverse interpretations. To illustrate the point: since World War II, the history of one Australian religion (Christianity) has benefited from vigorous debate. A large number of voices must be heard if earlier imbalances are to be corrected: Manning Clark, Bruce Mansfield, Patrick O’Farrell, Edmund Campion, Walter Phillips, Don Wright, Anne O’Brien, Brian Dickey, Ian Breward, Hilary Carey and many more. In its global expression, Adventism has often felt misrepresented rather than understood, especially in older polemical writings stocked by Christian bookstores. Worldwide patterns are changing, not least under the impact of better encyclopedias of religion. Meanwhile, Australian Adventists are increasingly cheered by the perspectives of professionals who do not identify with their particular faith; note, for instance, the writing, editing, supervising or examining of Richard Ely, Stuart Piggin, John Knight, Hilary Carey, Mark Hutchinson, Robert D. Linder, Philip Hughes and others.⁶¹

In summary, since 1970, Adventists have experienced what Johnson describes as “a constant process of struggle and rebirth” in a context so dynamic that many believers have adopted one of three competing stances. Carrying what novelist Morris West might describe as “a heavy load of unexamined certainties,”⁶² some have found comfort and security in the nostalgia of reversion. Little short of total escape has been adequate for others; an unacceptable level of cognitive dissonance has caused them to reject Adventist teachings and opt for a cultural rather than a theological affiliation, or a different expression of Christianity, or secularism. A third option, the principal one, has sought the transformation of Adventism.⁶³ In part, the discipline of Adventist Studies documents the various responses and assesses their strengths and weaknesses. In an Arminian movement committed to the Reformation notion of the priesthood of all believers, the role of the individual is crucial, as is the need for community.⁶⁴ The long-term outcomes of the struggle to define Adventist identity coherently in the twenty-first century may be, in some respects, unclear. However, at least one volume, tested in a Western culture as a textbook for a number of years before achieving its final form, acknowledges “controversy” but identifies “growing understanding.”⁶⁵

A final illustration of how this process occurs over time may be useful. For instance, the *JoRH* article of 1987 noted the controversy surrounding an Australian theologian, Desmond Ford. Since then, the component issues have been explored or reviewed in a number of doctoral studies, and summarised by Adventist and other authors. Ford’s personal insights and reflections may be assessed from his website and his voluminous published writings that are still being augmented frequently by magazine articles and books. The perspectives of his wife, Gillian Ford, provoked intense debate

during the 1970s but are achieving a fresh maturity with her ongoing studies at the University of New England.

As early as 1999, an astute Adventist systematic theologian observed that Ford was “dismissed from the Adventist ministry in 1980 because of his disagreement with traditional Adventist views” but that “subsequent Adventist thinking in North America seems to have moved closer to his position and further away from that of those who dismissed him.”⁶⁶ For the reversionists, this is further evidence that apostasy is flourishing.⁶⁷ For the alienationists, it is too little, too late. However, at least some transformationists interpret it as a sign that such struggles as those so well documented by Ballis and others have, in fact, led to what Johnson might agree to interpret as “increased understanding.”⁶⁸

Critiques of drafts of this article have offered constructive insights too numerous to incorporate, often noting the need for comprehensive analyses of important issues like biblical hermeneutics, the role of women, the historical patterns of Adventist doctrinal development, or the “tools” that may be most effective during the ongoing quest for fuller understanding.⁶⁹ A response from a female colleague whose academic background embraces theology and the social sciences suggests that whatever stance is taken—reversionist, alienationist or transformationist—the pursuit of “a mutually satisfying outcome of shared theological understanding must remain a common goal of modern Seventh-day Adventists.” The sharing of ideas in “an environment of objective and vigorous debate is crucial to the realisation of this goal.” While such debate continues, this observer concludes, “the church remains dynamic and therefore

open to change—a vital component of the ongoing history of the Adventist or any other church.”⁷⁰

¹ Arthur N. Patrick, “Seventh-day Adventist History in the South Pacific: A Review of Sources,” *The Journal of Religious History* 14, no. 3 (June 1987), 307-326. For a discussion of “Religious History” as defined by *JoRH*, see Arthur Patrick, “Introduction,” “Christianity and Culture in Colonial Australia: Selected Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan and Adventist Perspectives, 1891-1900” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Newcastle, 1991), 1-8; cf. J.D. Bollen, A.E. Cahill, Bruce Mansfield, Patrick O’Farrell, “Australian Religious History, 1960-1980,” *The Journal of Religious History* 11, no. 1 (June 1980), 8-44. The 1987 article should be read in the context provided by Hilary M. Carey, Ian Breward, Nicholas Doumanis, Ruth Frappell, David Hilliard, Katharine Massan, Anne O’Brien, Roger Thompson, “Australian Religion Review, 1980-2000, Part 2: Christian Denominations,” *The Journal of Religious History* 25, no. 1 (February 2001), 56-82. For an effective introduction to Australian Adventism, see Philip Hughes, editor, *Australia’s Religious Communities: A Multimedia Exploration* (Kew, Melbourne: Christian Research Association, 2000).

² The 1987 article described primary sources at some length and provides a framework for the present discussion that is limited to theses/dissertations, published accounts and in-process research. The perspective is that of a South Pacific observer who has worked and studied for only eight years in the United States. Doctoral studies written in Australia and New Zealand are referred to as theses; those from other parts of the world are cited as dissertations.

³ Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 515-6.

⁴ Marilyn Westerkamp, “Religion,” in Daniel Vickers (editor), *A Companion to Colonial America* (Malden, Maine: Blackwell, 2006), 366-388.

⁵ A 1981 lecture by Robert M. Johnston to the professional body now known as the Adventist Society for Religious Studies cited Ludwig’s analyses and terminology from Frank E. Reynolds and Theodore M. Ludwig (editors), *Transitions and Transformations in the History of Religions: Essays in Honor of Joseph M. Kitagawa* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 25-55.

⁶ Peter Harry Ballis, in research for a doctoral thesis (La Trobe University, 1992), identified 180 Adventist clergy in Australia and New Zealand who exited for various reasons between 1980 and 1988. Ballis analyses the variety of the operative impulses; his statistics do not include ministers whose careers were radically impacted by the same factors but remained in some type of church employ. The published form of the Ballis study is available as *Leaving the Adventist Ministry: A Study of the Process of Exiting* (Westport, Conn.: Praegar, 1999).

⁷ R.W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1979). Cf. the revised edition: Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2000) as well as published histories written or edited by Gary Land (in the United States) and by Ross Goldstone, Noel Clapham and Arthur Ferch (in Australia).

⁸ Benjamin McArthur, “Where Are the Historians Taking the Church?” *Spectrum* 10, no. 3 (November 1979), 9-14; Gary Land, “From Apologetics to History: The Professionalization of Adventist Historians,” *Spectrum* 10, no. 4 (March 1980), 89-100. Note a recent perspective on this process: Benjamin McArthur, “Point of the Spear: Adventist Liberalism and the Study of Ellen White in the 1970s,” *Spectrum* 36, no. 2 (Spring 2008), 45-55.

⁹ See Russell R. Standish and Colin D. Standish, *Half a Century of Apostasy: The New Theology’s Grim Harvest, 1956-2006* (Narbethong, Victoria: Highwood Books, 2006) for the authors’ depiction of

Adventism's "escalating headlong descent into deep and deeper apostasy" (4). Near the end of the book they state: "Our condemnation of error is not as strong as the pitiful situation in our Church merits" (465). By contrast, note the centrist perspectives of William G. Johnsson, *The Fragmenting of Adventism: Ten Issues Threatening the Church Today* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1995).

¹⁰ The writings of sociologists have evoked both caution and appreciation within Adventism. A cluster of factors indicate that a question Bryan Wilson posed in the quarterly journal of the Association of Adventist Forums has become increasingly important over time: "Sect or Denomination: Can Adventism Maintain Its Identity?" *Spectrum* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1975), 34-43. Another sociologist has observed that the debates within Adventism arise in part from the movement's diligent preservation of the sources that relate to its history: note William Sims Bainbridge, *The Sociology of Religious Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 89-118.

¹¹ *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008).

¹² Loma Linda University (California), the most widely known Adventist institution of higher learning, incorporates a School of Religion even though its principal focus is health sciences. The history of such institutions is summarised in the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996) that forms volumes 10 and 11 of the *Commentary Reference Series*. The SDA church is divided into thirteen world divisions with each geographical region served by an Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centre or a similar heritage entity that facilitates the exploration of the matters treated in this article. Due to the way indexing systems offer ready access to the writings of authors who refer to Adventist themes, endnotes in this article are often abbreviated. Electronic access to resources for the study of Adventism is increasingly offered by General Conference archives, Adventist universities and other entities.

¹³ *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, begun in 1963, is the best-known SDA refereed journal and reports dissertations completed. See, for instance, "Dissertation Abstracts," *AUSS* 45, no. 2 (Autumn 2007), 260-262. The church's "general paper," *Adventist Review*, has been published since 1849; geographically focused magazines serve the thirteen world divisions; *Ministry*, a monthly journal for clergy, commenced in 1928. Other journals focus on such issues as education, law, health, gender, mission and ethics. There is an active independent press driven by a range of concerns. Print has been crucial throughout SDA history: see Bruce Manners, "Publish or Perish: A Study of the Role of Print in the Adventist Community" (Ph.D. thesis: Monash University, 2004).

¹⁴ See "Adventist Studies: An Introduction for Higher Degree Students" online at www.avondale.edu.au or the annotated edition in print (Cooranbong: Avondale College, May 2006). While hundreds of websites offer reliable data and (in many cases) ephemeral opinion about the SDA church, its General Conference, world divisions, institutions and ideas, those sponsored by the church's archives and universities are of prime importance for serious researchers.

¹⁵ This observation is contextualised by Rick Ferret, "Charisma, Sectarianism and Institutionalisation: Identity Issues in Seventh-day Adventism" (Ph.D. thesis, Sydney College of Divinity, 2006), forthcoming as Richard B. Ferret, *Seventh-day Adventist Identity: Charisma and Routinisation in a Millennialist Community* (Lampton, United Kingdom: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008.)

¹⁶ The literature is abundant; for example, Philip Barlow, "Book Review Essay: Jan Shipps and the Mainstreaming of Mormon Studies," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 73, no. 2 (June 2004), 412-426; Jan Shipps, "From Peoplehood to Church Membership: Mormonism's Trajectory since World War II," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 76, no. 2 (June 2007), 241-261; Andrew Holden, *Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Rennie B. Schoepflin, *Christian Science on Trial: Religious Healing in America* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

¹⁷ For examples, see Stephen Hunt (editor), *Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco* (London: Hurst, 2001), and note the wider writings of Kenneth Newport, author of the chapter on SDA thought. Observe the review by John Kloos of *Anglo-American Millennialism, from Milton to the Millerites* (2004), in *Church History* 74, no. 4 (December 2005), 859-860. See also Newport's insightful

exploration (Oxford University Press, 2006) of the Waco incident involving the Branch Davidian movement that had a connection with Adventism six decades earlier.

¹⁸ LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, Vol. 1, 1950; Vol. II, 1948; Vol. III, 1946; Vol. 4, 1954).

¹⁹ Note Charles Scriven's thought from the publication of his doctoral dissertation as *The Transformation of Culture: Christian Social Ethics After H. Richard Niebuhr* (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1988) to his "Being and Becoming Adventist" lectures at Avondale College, August 2006. The Avondale College lectures form part of Scriven's forthcoming book that is tentatively entitled *The Promise of Peace: How and Why to Be Adventist*.

²⁰ Ball emphasises continuity and complementarity between English Puritanism and Adventism; cf. his writings from the completion of his doctoral dissertation (1971) published as *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), to *The Seventh-day Men: Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Ball is expanding the latter volume for publication as a second edition.

²¹ Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 84-6. Note the second edition under the same title (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006) is reviewed by Stephen Hunt in *Journal of Religious History* 32, no. 1 (March 2008), 123-4. See also the appreciative yet evaluative reviews in *Spectrum* and *Adventist Today*, including Lisa Clark Diller, "Bull's and Lockhart's Challenge to Adventist Progressives," *Adventist Today*, January-February 2008, 9. The finest longitudinal study of Adventist millenarianism derives from Douglas Morgan's dissertation written at the University of Chicago under the supervision of Martin Marty, published as *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001). Cf. Reinder Bruinsma's doctoral dissertation (University of London, 1993), published as *Seventh-day Adventist Attitudes Toward Roman Catholicism, 1844-1965* (Berrien Springs, MI.: Andrews University Press, 1994).

²² Gary Land, "Foreword" and "The Historians and the Millerites: An Historiographical Essay" in Everett N. Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis, 1831-1844* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1994), vii-ix, xiii-xxviii; cf. David L. Rowe, *God's Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

²³ Note the writings of Russell Staples (Andrews University), Fred Hoyt (La Sierra University) and others on the Methodist antecedents of Adventist ideas with historical treatments of Millerism such as Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler (editors), *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) and George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1993). For a cogent analysis of the transition from Millerism to Sabbatarian Adventism, see Merlin D. Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844 to 1849" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002); cf. Alberto Ronald Timm, "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages 1844-1863: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-Day Adventist Doctrines" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1995) and note Hoyt's ongoing, largely unpublished research. Burt's study is near completion as a book manuscript.

²⁴ A current resurgence of a nineteenth-century struggle relating to the doctrine of the Trinity (Fundamental 2, 1980) appears to be spurred worldwide by advocates of "historic Adventism."

²⁵ As indicated above, this article conserves space by not citing the full bibliographic information that is immediately available with the help of the indexes in the Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centre at Avondale College, Cooranbong [near Newcastle], NSW, Australia, and in similar research entities that serve the other Adventist world divisions.

²⁶ The extensive writings of Samuele Bacchiocchi also illustrate this comment, beginning with the published form of his doctoral dissertation (Rome, 1977).

²⁷ The quoted words are those of Presbyterian Donald Grey Barnhouse, contextualised in two chapters of Paul Ernest McGraw, "Born in Zion?: The Margins of Fundamentalism and the Definition of Seventh-day Adventism" (Ph.D. diss., The George Washington University, 2004); see 176-177. Cf. papers, articles, books or doctoral studies cited at an Andrews University Conference (October 2007) and, in particular, the dissertation by Juhyeok (Julius) Nam (Andrews University, 2005). The focus of the conference was the first fifty years of the controversial volume *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (1957). All the presentations are accessible on www.qod.andrews.edu.

²⁸ The recent study by Eric Livingston, an Australian who completed a Ph.D. at the University of New England in 2007, indicates this process is ongoing. Papers by Raymond Cottrell offer cogent participant testimony from the 1950s onward; the independent magazine *Adventist Today* (AT) is placing materials on its website (atoday.org) that relate to the forthcoming Cottrell biography. For evidence that the full range of options relating to 1844 remain under vigorous public discussion, see AT 14, no. 6 (November/December 2006) and note the AT attempt since 1993 to offer "reliable, unfettered news reporting on events, people, institutions and theological movements associated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church [and] a sense of connection among people who treasure their Adventist heritage while rejecting some fundamentalist elements of historic Adventism." The issues may be discerned as lying behind the text of such works as Raoul Dederen (editor), *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, Vol. 12, *Commentary Reference Series* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000).

²⁹ Several volumes written by Roy Gane well represent the attempt of a competent Old Testament scholar to exegete Leviticus and express Adventist distinctives coherently.

³⁰ Ralph E. Neall, "The Nearness and the Delay of the Parousia in the Writings of Ellen G. White" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1982).

³¹ LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers: The Conflict of the Ages Over the Nature and Destiny of Man* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, Vol. 1, 1966; Vol 2, 1965); Bryan W. Ball, *The Soul Sleepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestley* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: James Clarke & Co, 2008).

³² Arthur Patrick, "Prophets Are Human! Are Humans Prophets?" *Spectrum* 33, issue 2 (Spring 2005), 71-2, reviews five books about Ellen White; since the article was published other volumes have appeared and more are under preparation. *Spectrum* initiated the new phase of the debate with its Fall 1970 issue and has published more than ninety significant articles on the theme. Several positions taken that seemed experimental or even radical at the time have since become SDA orthodoxy whereas some SDAs have prided themselves on destroying, unopened, copies of the journal mailed to them. *Spectrum* presents itself as "a journal established to encourage Seventh-day Adventist participation in the discussion of contemporary issues from a Christian viewpoint, to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject, to evaluate the merits of diverse views, and to foster Christian intellectual and cultural growth."

³³ For sources relating to the past four decades, see Donald R. McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum* 10, no. 4 (March 1980), 27-41; Merlin D. Burt, "Overview and Brief Critique of Publications on Ellen G. White's Writings and Prophetic Ministry, 1976-2006," a paper delivered at the Ellen G. White Estate World Advisory, 12-15 October 2006. Note Burt's call for a "process that will systematically develop biblical and historical understanding" (p. 18). Burt is the editor of a forthcoming volume on Ellen White Studies sponsored by the Biblical Research Institute and Ellen G. White Estate; see *Reflections*, "the official newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference," January 2008, 1. Important sources are described in a notice entitled "Ellen G. White Writings: Complete Published Edition 2007," *Ministry*, February 2008, 29.

³⁴ See the 1989 doctoral dissertation by Kai Arasola, published as *The End of Historicism: Millerite hermeneutic of time prophecies in the Old Testament* (Uppsala: Arasola, c. 1990).

³⁵ Jonathan M. Butler, "Introduction: The Historian as Heretic," Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-day Adventist Health Reform* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), xxv-lxviii; cf. Numbers, "Preface," *Prophetess of Health*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008). The accounts by Butler and Numbers illustrate how events played out in the United States, especially during the 1970s, whereas Ballis (see footnote 6, above) documents from a sociological perspective the far greater fallout in Australasia during the 1980s. A doctoral dissertation by Jan Smuts van Rooyen (School of Education, Andrews University, 1996) offers a "primarily psychological" perspective that identifies eight reasons why Adventist ministers leave their vocation, including "doctrinal dissonance, restriction on freedom of the mind, discovery of a new hermeneutic." An Australian Ph.D. thesis (Wilfred Rieger, 1991) identifies ten reasons why teachers left Adventist employ between 1984 and 1987 but Rieger did not find theological issues to be of high importance.

³⁶ Ray C.W. Roennfeldt, *Clark H. Pinnock on Biblical Authority: An Evolving Position* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1993); cf. Peter Maarten van Bemmelen, *Issues in Biblical Inspiration: Sanday and Warfield* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987). These publications are, respectively, Volume xvi in the *Andrews University Dissertation Series* and Volume xiii in the *Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series*. Cf. George W. Reid (editor), *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), vol. 1 of *Biblical Research Institute Studies*.

³⁷ See "A Notice Regarding *More Than a Prophet*" (www.whiteestate.org) and papers presented at the White Estate world advisory conference (2006) for some of the wide-ranging discussion. Michael W. Campbell, "The 1919 Bible Conference and Its Significance for Seventh-day Adventist History and Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2007) analyses an earlier event that frames the first International Prophetic Guidance Workshop (1982) with its 941 pages of documents and cassette recordings. Such documents and materials that interpret them are readily available in Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centres like that located on the campus of Avondale College. The independent Adventist website sdanet.org/atissue attempts to offer constructive commentary.

³⁸ The topics (literary, historical, scientific, theological, hermeneutical, methodological) were agreed upon jointly by the White Estate and the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. For analysis of the need for a mature hermeneutic for Ellen White's writings, see Michael Leigh Chamberlain, "The Changing Role of Ellen G. White in Seventh-day Adventism With Reference to Sociocultural Standards at Avondale College" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Newcastle, 2001). Chamberlain's thesis is now rewritten and published as *Beyond Ellen White: Seventh-day Adventism in Transition—A Sociological History and Analysis of the Australian Church and its Higher Education System* (Teneriffe, Qld: Post Pressed, 2008).

³⁹ Note recent initiatives such as the cycle of "International Faith and Science Conferences" (see *Adventist Review*, 11 November 2004, 12-15), "Integration of Faith and Learning" seminars, Bible conferences in Jerusalem and Istanbul, the input of regional Biblical Research committees and related attempts to foster understanding and unity. Of importance for the South Pacific Division have been biblical and theological conferences (2003, 2006) and an Ellen White Summit (2004). Note an address on 8 July 2006 to 240 theologians and scholars in Izmir, Turkey, by world president Jan Paulsen, "The Openness That Lies Before Us," reported in *Adventist World*, October 2006, 10-12.

⁴⁰ See the range of conservative independent publications: books and magazines written by Russel R. and Colin D. Standish, volumes written or edited by Samuel Koranteng-Pipim (cf. DrPipim.org, "a website that seeks to restore among Bible-believing Christians the spirit of the early Bereans"), as well the content of magazines and journals like *Adventists Affirm* (21 volumes up to 2007) and *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* (18 volumes up to 2007).

⁴¹ A strategy document relating to the life and writings of Ellen White, developed by the South Pacific Division late in the 1990s (the decade in which effective consensus started to develop) and subsequently updated, is the most constructive document of its type produced by an Adventist entity on this subject. Perhaps it is not coincidental that the chairperson of the Biblical Research Committee of the South Pacific Division (general secretary and since 2008 president of the Division) earned a

doctorate in the historical study of Adventism at Andrews University (Barry David Oliver, 1989). It is becoming usual for such Adventist leaders to have earned doctoral qualifications.

⁴² This comment refers only to the type of research that relates to the concerns of this article. Note the extensive scientific and medical research sponsored by Loma Linda University, or that of the Australasian Research Institute as described by Leisa O'Connor, "SAH takes part in food-mood research," *Record*, 9 February 2008, 3.

⁴³ T. Joe Willey to Arthur Patrick, e-mails with attached copies of unpublished articles, 16 November 2006 and 22 February 2008. For an introduction to McMahan's research, see Leonard Brand and Don S. McMahan, *The Prophet and Her Critics* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2005). Ronald Numbers kindly referred me to research by Willey and others. More than any other person, Numbers has drawn Ellen White into the public discussion of religion and health in North America.

⁴⁴ Gilbert Valentine offers an illuminating historical account of efforts by White Estate to fulfil its mission respecting Ellen White's writings: *The Struggle for the Prophetic Heritage: Issues in the conflict for control of the Ellen G. White publications 1930-1939* (Muak Lek, Thailand: Institute Press, 2006). In a volume now being researched and written, Valentine offers perceptive analyses of Ellen White's relationships with General Conference presidents during her lifetime of ministry. Early drafts of the forthcoming Ellen White encyclopedia indicate that the projected book (Vol.13, *Commentary Reference Series*, initiated 1954) will meet a real need. Another long-term enterprise by a Newbold College scholar will describe the people to whom Ellen White addressed letters, thus offering an historical understanding of her correspondence.

⁴⁵ Some of the participants in a series of International Faith and Science Conferences were cheered by an interview between the editor of the church's "general paper" and General Conference vice president Lowell Cooper. Cooper suggested that "we can establish a climate in the church in which dialogue is a safe thing." See "Disagreeing Faithfully: How to understand the difference between unity and uniformity," *Adventist Review*, 28 June 2007, 8-11.

⁴⁶ This claim is illustrated by the papers and reports of the conference held at Andrews University, 24-27 October 2007; see footnote 27, above.

⁴⁷ Some of the most illuminating studies are by individuals who experienced Adventism before moving into the wider society. Note the comment by Julius Nam in *Spectrum* 35, no. 4 (Fall 2007), 18-20. The insider perspectives of this article call for a comprehensive rejoinder from outside of the Adventist community.

⁴⁸ Observe the strictures aptly expressed by John G. Stackhouse, *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and William Lane Craig and others in Steven B. Cowan, editor, *Five Views on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

⁴⁹ Richard Osborn, "Is the Church Flat?" *Adventist Review*, 27 December 2007, 9-13.

⁵⁰ Note the recent action on an issue from World War II: "Church Leaders Say 'We're Sorry'," *Adventist Review*, 13 October 2005, 18-120; cf. decades of research and publishing relating to the Nazi era by Adventist historian Roland Blaich of Walla Walla University and congruent studies by others.

⁵¹ Three decades of struggle over the role of women in ministry illustrate this point. For a recent analysis, see the doctoral study by Drene Somasundram (London: Middlesex University, 2008). Historical context is given in the published form of another doctoral dissertation: Laura L. Vance, *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999). In his review of Miranda K. Hassett, *Anglican Communion in Crisis* (2007), Ian T. Douglas notes the value of reaching "beyond the limits of most current discourse about global Christianity by presenting the complexities and possibilities of an emergent worldwide Christian witness embodying a vast plurality of incarnational realities." See *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 2 (June 2008), 478-481. The Adventist struggle over aspects of sexuality parallels in some respects the Anglican experience; note, for instance, David Ferguson, Fritz Guy and David Larson, editors, *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist*

Perspectives (Roseville, CA: Adventist Forum, 2008). On some occasions independent Adventist publications (like Forum and the Adventist Today Foundation) have expressed ideas that in a decade or so have developed into Adventist orthodoxy.

⁵² The phrase quoted derives from Fritz Guy, “The Future of Adventist Theology: A Personal View” (1980) and “The Theological Task of the Church: Observations on the Role of Theology and Theologians in the Church” (1980) expanded and applied in *Thinking Theologically: Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1999). Compare the thought of Alden Thompson, best reviewed with the help of his website at Walla Walla University and explicable in terms of attitudes intimated in Thompson’s article, “Conversations with the other side,” *Spectrum* 31, no. 4 (Fall 2003), 54-9.

⁵³ Lawson’s many journal articles (for instance, in *Sociology of Religion*, *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Review of Religious Research*) form a record of his ongoing research that is being incorporated into three books.

⁵⁴ Dramatic changes occurring in world Christianity are impacting Adventism profoundly due to its nature as a global movement. Note Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) and Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) in relation to Adventist demographics. Cf. Dennis Steley, “Unfinished: The Seventh-day Adventist Mission in the South Pacific, Excluding Papua New Guinea, 1886-1986” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Auckland, 1989); Barry D. Oliver, Alex S. Currie and Douglas E. Robertson, *Avondale and the South Pacific: 100 Years of Mission* (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 1997); Stephen J. Currow, *Revisioning Mission: Avondale’s Greater Vision* (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2000). By the end of 2006, there were 238,316 Adventists in the mission territory of Papua New Guinea alone: Office of Archives and Statistics, *144th Annual Statistical Report–2006* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of SDA).

⁵⁵ Dr Russell Standish, e-mail to Patrick, 28 February 2008. Russell R. and Colin D. Standish, *The Twenty-Eight Fundamentals: Apostasy Proclaimed in Silence* (Narbethong: Highwood Books, 2005) summarises an earlier volume (*The Greatest of All the Prophets*, 2004) as a defense of inerrancy.

⁵⁶ A book entitled *Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries* (North American Division, c. 1992) outlines some of issues from the perspective of church leaders. For an older though still useful introduction to similar concerns, see Lowell Tarling, *The Edges of Seventh-day Adventism* (Bermagui South, NSW: Galilee, 1981).

⁵⁷ Rolf Pöhler’s 1995 Andrews University doctoral dissertation has developed into articles and books, including *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching: A Case Study in Doctrinal Development* (Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 2001). If the recent past is a guide, one of the important debates in Adventism during the next decade will relate to the doctrine of creation. For constructive viewpoints by SDA religion scholars and scientists, see Brian Bull, Fritz Guy and Ervin Taylor, editors, *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives* (Riverside, CA: Adventist Today, 2006).

⁵⁸ One of the challenges is to translate the content of doctoral studies into the language of Adventist laity. For attempts to undertake this task, note my reports on studies such as those by Pöhler, Manners and Ferret in *Record*, “Official Paper of the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” indexed in the SDA Periodical Index that is available online.

⁵⁹ A plethora of studies need to be undertaken on matters such as the following with reference to Adventism: What are the indicators of religious maturity, and what is the peril and promise of such maturation? How successfully are Adventist exegetes and theologians meeting the call for credibility in biblical exegesis within Western cultures? How may Adventists help the “global North” and the “global South” (as identified by Phillip Jenkins, see footnote 54) remain in communion as they read the biblical books of Daniel, Hebrews, James and Revelation?

⁶⁰ For instance, during recent years the University of Queensland has had a number of research students examining matters that are important for Adventism, including Jeff Crocombe, Mark Pearce and David Thiele. Earlier, John Knight's doctoral thesis at the University of Queensland (1977) equipped him to write journal articles and examine dissertations on Adventism. Many other important voices might be noted in the public conversation about Adventism in its South Pacific setting; see, as examples, the writings of educator John Godfrey (Edith Cowan University) and sociologists Robert Wolfram (now the editor of a newspaper in Fiji) and Peter Ballis (Monash University).

⁶¹ The bibliography that illumines this sentence is considerable. For one example, see Arthur Patrick, "Christianity and a 'good society' in Australia: A first response to Stuart Piggins's Murdoch Lecture," *Teach: Journal of Christian Education* 1, no. 1 (2007), 45-48.

⁶² Morris West, *A View from the Ridge: The Testimony of a Pilgrim* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 1996), 61.

⁶³ I apply Ludwig's categories (cited in footnote 5) in "The *Questions on Doctrine* Event: Contrasting Perceptions, Their Impact and Potential," a paper delivered at the *Questions on Doctrine* 50th Anniversary Conference, Andrews University, 24-27 October 2007, available as text on <http://sdanet.org/atissue/>.

⁶⁴ For an administrator's perspective, see Barry Oliver, "Planning for Mission," *Record*, 2 February 2008, 10-11.

⁶⁵ Robert K. McIver and Ray C.W. Roennfeldt (editors), *Meaning for the New Millennium: The Christian Faith from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective* (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2000). On the potentially constructive outcomes of tensions cf. Michael Pearson's doctoral dissertation in its form as a book, *Millennial Dreams and Moral Dilemmas: Seventh-day Adventism and contemporary ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), with *From Christ to Constantine: The Trial and Testimony of the Early Church* (Worcester, PA: Christian History Institute Teacher's Guide and Curriculum, 1990), 61. In conversations and e-mails, Pearson gave me an appreciation for the trilogy by Harry Williams in the *Contemporary Christian Insights* series (published by Continuum International Publishing Group and distributed in Australia by Allen and Unwin) with its bold attempt to describe "some of the healthy, life-giving conflicts in which we are involved as moral and spiritual beings." Such observations are illumined within their Adventist context by Rick Ferret's doctoral study (see footnote 15).

⁶⁶ Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 90.

⁶⁷ Footnotes 9 and 55 offer context and sources.

⁶⁸ Observe the content of the special issue of *Adventist Today*, November/December 2006; cf. the content and reports of the Sydney Adventist Forum presentations, 22 October 2005. The biography of Ford by Milton Hook (Adventist Today Foundation, 2008) offers scant solace for those who expressed deep concern with the reflections presented at the Sydney Adventist Forum a quarter-century after the Glacier View conference; see Arthur Patrick, "The Hook Book on Ford: A Thumbnail Sketch," *Good News Unlimited*, July 2008, 12. The diversity of current opinion is illustrated by a wide variety of websites, especially those (like <http://reinventingdawheel.blogspot.com/2008/02/rap-session-tom-norris.html>) that include comments from readers.

⁶⁹ Emails, Dr Wilfred Rieger to Patrick, 27 January and 4 February 2008.

⁷⁰ E-mails, Dr Stella Eversden to Patrick, 16 February 2008.