

The Tent and the Cathedral: White-Collar Adventists and Their Search for Respectability

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The squad cars drove up to the tent on the corner of Smythe and High Street, across the street from the Tijuana Night Club, in Montgomery, Alabama, the summer of 1954. The officers walked through the aisles of the tent as a thousand or so African-Americans listened to evangelist Edward Earl Cleveland. Initially few noticed. In time, however, the audience became distracted and Cleveland calmly stated, “No need to worry; let the officers do their jobs.” Someone reported that Adventists were violating Alabama ordinances by allowing Whites and Blacks to commingle at a public meeting. Cleveland had publicly insisted such ordinances need not be obeyed since all are children of one God.¹

The tent in the infested district² of Montgomery received two more visitors that summer when the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, pastor of the largest Black congregation in the city and the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., canceled their vacations because the Adventists were stealing their sheep. A seamstress named Rosa Parks from the local Lutheran congregation, along with members from other denominations, attended the meetings regularly. Abernathy and King came to investigate.³ King told Cleveland: “I was informed that a Black Billy Graham was preaching the Gospel, but all I heard was ‘the Law, the Law and the Law.’”

Cleveland, unimpressed by theological discourse, responded; “You must have arrived late because all I preached was ‘the Lord, the Lord, and the Lord.’”

For a century, tents, like the one in Montgomery run by Adventist itinerants, popped up all over the world: the Philippines, Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean, etc. In 1854 Adventists pitched their first tent on the corner of Van Buren and Tompkins Street in Battle Creek, Michigan.⁴ When Adventist numbers grew to a couple of thousand, ten years later, a dozen or so tents appeared in the infested districts of the

¹ The details from this story came from a research paper written by a student in my History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Oakwood College. The author, Arthur Jennings, who wrote a history of the Adventist Church in Montgomery, Alabama interviewed E. E. Cleveland and several of the members of the Montgomery Alabama Seventh-day Adventist Church. E. E. Cleveland, in his autobiography, *Let the Church Roll On* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1998), also mentions some details from the same incident.

² I use the term “infested districts” to refer to sections of urban cities that are usually considered the most run down and neglected by city fathers. The infested district is usually the place where the last-to-come-migrants and immigrants find housing. The new immigrants are usually unable to pay the rent in the more affluent sections of town so the infested district becomes home, at least until they get on their feet and are able to move out. It is usually in this section of cities that Adventist have traditionally set up their tents. For a more thorough discussion of this idea see my book: *On the Margins of Empire: A History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Huntsville, Ala.: Oakwood College Press, 2007).

³ For a good understanding of what was happening in the Black Protestant Churches in Montgomery Alabama in mid twentieth century see, Taylor Branch, *Parting of the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 1-205.

⁴ John N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Its Progress* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1905), 327; Arthur White, *Ellen White: The Early Years*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), 293-298.

Old West.⁵ By the end of the century tents surfaced from California to New York.⁶ When E. E. Cleveland confronted the civil and religious authorities in Montgomery, Adventists had grown into hundreds of thousands, and tents continued to be centerpieces of Adventist ethos.

However, not all Seventh-day Adventists, in the middle of the twentieth century, continued to feel comfortable under tents. A white-collar Adventism, more at home in cathedrals, slowly emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. Rather than working infested districts, the new breed of Adventists felt more comfortable in suburbia. Although their parents and grandparents had come out of a traditional Adventism, they were no longer at ease with the mores of their forefathers. Some could argue that by the 1950s, an Adventism of the mind was replacing the traditional Adventism of the heart.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Seventh-day Adventists experienced a series of transformations altering traditional Adventist values, ways of looking at the world, worship styles, and agenda. In a sense, the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, in 1957, reflected the theological discourse of a group of Adventists who lived in a world very different from the world of the pioneers. For the new Adventists the traditional view the world collapsed out of focus. They inherited a complex society tailoring themselves to fit. To understand the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* and the role it played in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is important to understand how the Seventh-day Adventist Church changed.⁷ Why did the traditional Adventist worldview, still nurtured in most of the world, no longer garner respect from an emerging group of Adventists in the United States? Why was the Publication of *Questions on Doctrine* even necessary? Who needed to write this book? In this paper, I argue that in the first half of the twentieth century two catalysts transformed Adventism: first, the New Diasporas that flowed into the nation's mainstream, and second, the rise of an age of abundance.

At the heart of the transformation of Adventism sat the pools from which Adventists drew their membership. Up until the end of the nineteenth century, most Seventh-day Adventists came out of the Northern European Diaspora. Millions of Europeans abandoned their homelands from the 17th through the 20th century and migrated to North America, South America, Africa, Australia, and other parts of the world.⁸ The first Adventist communities on the planet grew their membership roles from these, mostly Protestant immigrants and their children.⁹ However this pattern, which had dominated in the nineteenth century, came to a halt with the new Diasporas.

⁵ C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell It to the World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventists* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1977), 137.

⁶ The first tent in California was shipped from New York in 1868 and by 1910 several ethnic groups and African Americans were sharing a tent in New York City. See also Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, 386.

⁷ For a more complete discussion of this transformation see Ronald Lawson, "Church and State at home and Abroad: The Evolution of Seventh-day Adventist Relations with Government," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Summer 1996, 279-331.

⁸ The European Diaspora had started in the 14th and 15th centuries with Portuguese and Spanish expeditions of discovery. However the human flow from Europe to the rest of the planet had taken off in the 18th and 19th centuries with incredible force producing European like nation states in the Americas, Africa, and Australia. More than 20 million left and never returned to the British Isles between 1600 and 1950. See Niall Ferguson, *Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 2002).

⁹ The first Adventist communities outside of the United States emerged either in Europe or in places like Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, and Australia where the relatives of the early Adventists lived.

Between 1900 and 1910, almost 10 million immigrants entered the United States, a wave larger than any other in the history of the nation.¹⁰ Anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic prejudices, reacting to the flow of the mostly Catholic and Jewish immigrants, grew like wildfire in American cities. Xenophobic sentiments stressing the superiority of the northern European races over the Southern and Eastern Europeans took hold. Tens of thousands joined organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. By the 1920s, restrictive immigration bills sailed through Congress reflecting a widespread public fear of the new immigrants.¹¹

This Southern and Eastern European wave reshaped Adventism in several subtle ways. For example, in 1920 the General Conference Committee received a request from Broadview Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, an institution established in 1910 for Swedish immigrants on the outskirts of Chicago.¹² The administrators pleaded for funds to establish a foreign language department. The need for such a department came from the fact that Italian, Russian, Polish, Bohemian, Hungarian, Finish, Rumanian, Serbian, and various other Latin-Slavic youth, 34 in total, had enrolled in the Seminary. According to the request, their numbers could easily reach 50. The letter stated that the Seminary could not accommodate the new wave of students with the current budget or curriculum. The administration of the Seminary was afraid that in the coming year 60 more would apply.¹³

The onslaught of the new immigrants washed over the nation at about the same time that the African-American Diaspora flowed out of the South and into the industrial cities of the North.¹⁴ By the middle of the twentieth century, millions of African-Americans had migrated north.¹⁵ Dozens from this flow joined the Adventist church when Adventists operated city missions. In New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., Black and White Seventh-day Adventists worshiped together.¹⁶ As the numbers of African-Americans increased, Adventist leaders were forced to deal with a membership that was unlike the Protestant immigrants of the nineteenth century.

¹⁰ United States Census. 1910.

¹¹ George Donelson Moss, *America in the Twentieth Century* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2000), 143, 144.

¹² Two other seminaries were established at the same time—one in Minnesota and the other in Arkansas; however, with the wave of the New Immigrants, the General Conference allowed all three of them to close. The General Conference also founded then closed a School for Mexican youths. Instead of allowing language group institutions they decided that all of the Adventist institutions would be English-only Colleges. See M. E. Olsen, *Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1925), and Manuel Vasquez, *The Untold Story: One Hundred Years of Hispanic Adventism* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2000), 59-80.

¹³ Minutes of the General Conference Committee, 1920.

¹⁴ Page Smith, *Redeeming the Time* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1987), 211-262.

¹⁵ Between 1040 and 1970 over five million African Americans migrated north. See Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

¹⁶ See *The Life Boat 1898-1930 Journal* founded by the International Benevolent Association in Chicago. Although it was published only a few years, the last years of the City Missions, the articles reflect the fact that Adventist were working with African Americans in most northern Industrial Cities. When Ellen White visited the City Mission in New York City at the turn of the century she discovered that many of the members in the Church associated with the New York City Mission were African-Americans. The same pattern developed in most of the cities where Adventist founded city missions.

When the General Conference moved to Washington, D.C., in the early years of the century, the tension surfaced. Ill-prepared to handle the new migrants, Adventist leaders frequently mismanaged problems. Pastor Louis Sheafe, an African-American pastor¹⁷ of the integrated Church in the city and General Conference leadership could not get along. In time, the tension became unbearable forcing the Peoples Church to leave the Adventist fold. Another congregation in 1920, one of the largest in the South under the leadership of Elder Mann in Savannah, Georgia, also abandoned the Adventist Church. The most dramatic rupture came in 1929 when the names of all 600 members and J. K. Humphrey, the pastor of the Harlem Church, were disfellowshipped.¹⁸ In 1931, students at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, closed the school down demanding that conditions change and that a Black President be elected.¹⁹ An apparent solution to the differences between the White leadership and African American Adventists surfaced in 1944 when the General Conference segregated Black Adventists by creating Black Conferences.²⁰

Ironically, the dangers older Americans feared from the new migrants and immigrants, produced an era of unprecedented prosperity and growth, pushing the old stock immigrants and their children up into the middle class. Consequently a robust white collar class enjoyed the kind of mobility their parents had never dreamed of. The flow of new immigrants and migrants into the cities where Adventists had their churches produced an age of plenty—the likes of which the world had never seen. Wages increased dramatically. The newly-generated wealth transformed the standard of living of millions of Americans, including second, third, fourth, and fifth generation Seventh-day Adventists.²¹

By 1959, Vice President Nixon could boast in the presence of the Russian leader, Khrushchev, that 44 million American families owned 56 million cars, 50 million television sets, 143 million radios and 31 million homes. The nation was indeed basking in an age of abundance. During these years, the life expectancy of an average American increased to 68.2 years, a twenty-one year jump from 1900. Deadly diseases, like tuberculosis, typhoid, scarlet fever, measles, and whooping cough, were all but eradicated. By the time of the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, Americans families enjoyed shorter work weeks, paid vacations, social security, running water, central heating, electricity, refrigerators, stoves, national parks, and “I Love Lucy.”²²

¹⁷ Doug Morgan, paper given at the Fifth Triennial Meeting of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians, Oakwood College, April 20, 2007.

¹⁸ See Clifford Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-day Adventists* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2007).

¹⁹ Holly Fisher, “Oakwood College Students’ Quest for Social Justice before and during the Civil Rights Era,” *The Journal of African American History* 88 (Spring 2003): 114, 115.

²⁰ Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948), 292-322; Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1979), 568.

²¹ In 1900, the average wage of an American worker was 418 dollars a year. Abundant economic growth, produced by the new workers and two World Wars, pushed wages up year after year so that by 1930 the average wage jumped to 1,712 dollars annually and by 1950 American workers were earning 3,880 dollars a year. Wages were taken from the beginning of each decade section in Scott Derks, *Working Americans 1880-1999: Volume I, The Working Class* (Lakeville, Conn.: Grey House Publishing Inc, 2000).

²² Brink Lindsey, *The Age of Abundance: How Prosperity Transformed America’s Politics and Culture* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 16, 32. See also George Donelson Moss, *America in the Twentieth*

The economic prosperity of the nation fed and nourished the affluence of the Adventist church which grew its assets from 12 million dollars in 1912 to 207 million dollars in 1952.²³ The growth in dollars multiplied the number of institutions and proliferated church employees. In the nineteenth century, most Adventist workers were pastors or Bible workers. By 1902, the church employed about 2,000 evangelistic workers. Two decades later, the General Conference employed 7,421 evangelistic workers and 6,588 institutional workers. The new prosperity pushed Adventists into the middle class. In spite of the Great Depression, by 1950, 20,968 institutional workers, beneficiaries of an upward social mobility, worked for the church—3,000 more than the traditional evangelistic workers.²⁴

These changes became evident by 1929 when the General Conference established a new Journal, *Ministry*, designed to help pastors deal with the transformations engulfing the Church. The articles taught pastors how to preach, how to incorporate appropriate music into the worship services, how to pronounce words properly, etc. Frequently, in the articles of *Ministry*, pastors were urged to rely on reasoned and rational assertions rather than emotionalism.²⁵ In the October issue, S.A. Ruskjer suggested that new member take an oath before baptism. Clearly, the oath, like the articles in the magazine, was design to infuse uniformity, and iliminate irregularity brought into the church immigrants and migrants. The Ruskjer provided a list of nine beliefs that, in his opinion, new Adventist needed to embrace.²⁶

Up until the publication of this list Adventists did not have a uniform set of doctrines. In a statement the church published in 1872, called “Fundamental Principles of the Seventh-day Adventist,”²⁷ the following sentence appeared: “Seventh-day Adventists have no creed but the Bible.”²⁸ During the nineteenth century, Adventists commonly

Century (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1989), 344, who reports that the generation of the 1950s was the richest, healthiest, and most mobile generation in the history of the planet.

²³ H. W. Klasser, *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventists, 1952* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1953), 4.

²⁴ *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventists, 1950* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1951), 4. Although the pastors and the Bible Workers that the church employed in the nineteenth century could technically be called white collar, they were, in fact, tied to the immigrant and migrant communities that live in the tenements of the large urban cities of the nation. It was only when the laity of the church began to move out into the suburbs that a truly white-collar Adventist community appeared.

²⁵ Dickson, *Ministry*.

²⁶ S.A. Ruskjer, “The Vial Question,” *Ministry*, October 1928, 28, 29. In this article Ruskjer suggests that the list of beliefs should be nine: 1. Sabbath keeping, 2. Second Coming; 3. Tithe and offerings. 4. Missionary Endeavour. 5. Sabbath School attendance. 6. No tobacco or liquor. 7. No tea or Coffee; 8. No outward adornment, silver or gold. 9. No theater, dance, poolroom, etc.

²⁷ In 1872, Uriah Smith, at the request of persons asking about the beliefs of the Adventist Church, produced a document entitled, “Fundamental Beliefs” which he insisted was not to be seen as a dogma or a creed. That list of Fundamental Beliefs, which did not include the Trinity, appeared in several of the Year Books in the first two decades of the century. This idea of the Bible and the Bible alone is found over and over again in the writing of the church. This quote is from *Review and Herald*, May 26, 1903, 3: “Adopting the Bible and the Bible alone as the sufficient rule of faith and practices and taking forth its keynote the fundamental principles of the reformation, justification by faith alone...”

²⁸ Quoted in Paul Ernest McGraw, *Born in Zion? The Margins of Fundamentalism and the Definition of Adventism* (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 2004), 60.

held divergent interpretations of the Bible. The following quote by John Loughborough illustrates how Adventists disliked the idea of adopting a set of uniform doctrines:

The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth is to denounce as heretics those who do not believe in that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.²⁹

In the nineteenth century, theological discourse was not given much weight by the members of the Adventist church. The fact that several of the leaders of the church did not believe in the Trinity³⁰ illustrates this. The urgent desire to tell others of the Second Coming of Jesus forced Adventists to resist the creation of a creed for many decades.³¹ As late as 1919, Adventists held healthy debates on the nature of Christ and the Trinity without anyone demanding punishment for those who did not hold a particular position.³²

By the 1930s, however, under an avalanche of new members and the upwardly mobile membership the idea of an oath appeared to have struck a unifying cord in the readership of *Ministry*. In issues following the first list, other pastors offered better and improved lists.³³ Under the editorial leadership of A. G. Daniells and his protégé Leroy Froom, there developed a desire to create a set of standards to which Adventists would adhere. In 1931, the president of the General Conference, Elder Watson, created a committee of four which authored a statement of beliefs. However Watson, fearing opposition, never submitted the new document to the body of the Church for a vote.³⁴ The statement simply appeared in print for the first time in the *1931 Year Book*.³⁵

The new ethos became even more apparent as abundance spread across the landscape. The protestant ethic of self-denial, rooted in scarcity, which shaped the Adventist pioneer culture, came under inspection. By the middle of the twentieth century, this ethic was no longer functional for white-collar Adventists as Americans began to place value on self-expression and satisfying lives. Leisure time, something the pioneers rarely savored, became a staple of the new society as many Americans began to discard the ascetic traditions of the past.

If E. E. Cleveland, in Montgomery, Alabama, in the 1950s exemplified the old-time Adventist ethos, LeRoy Froom in Washington D.C. epitomized the emerging white-collar Adventism. Froom came from a third-generation Adventist family, son of an Adventist medical doctor who headed the General Conference Health Department at the

²⁹ Cited in Alaybe Rhorpe, ed. *Welcome to the Family* (Takoma Park, Md.: Home Study International, 1987), 109

³⁰ Joseph Bates, James White, and Uriah Smith are a few. See Gary Land, *Historical Dictionary of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), 107.

³¹ LeRoy Froom states that “Our position in 1861 had been against any creedal statement.” LeRoy Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971), 419.

³² 1919 Bible Conference, the full transcript of the conference can be access at the Adventist Archives at <http://www.Adventistarchives.org>, 56-58.

³³ In *Ministry*, September 1928, 14, A. A. Cone offered a list with 17 covenants that each of the persons he baptized had to accept. To the don'ts he had added card playing, novel reading, moving picture shows, criticism and others.

³⁴ Twenty five years after the fact Elder Watson confided to L. E. Froom of his fear. See LeRoy E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D.C. Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971), 419.

³⁵ *Review and Herald*, February 19, 1931, 6. See also the 1931 *Yearbook*.

beginning of the century.³⁶ As editor of *Ministry*, professor at the Adventist Theological Seminary, and field secretary of the General Conference, Froom wrote extensively helping shape the emerging Adventism.³⁷

Froom's profound desire to mainstream Adventism made him ill at ease with the old Adventism. He wanted to take Adventists from the rank of an apocalyptic sect to the status of a denomination, uneasy with the label, "cult," usually applied to Seventh-day Adventists in his day. In his younger years as editor of *The Watchman*, he had always wanted to reach the educated and upper class. Apparently tired of immigrants and migrants, he wanted lawyers, magistrates, legislators and editors to embrace Adventist teachings,³⁸ wanting the world to understand that Seventh-day Adventists were genuine Protestants. In an article in the *Review and Herald* he wrote, "Seventh-day Adventists are the pre-eminent Protestants of today..."³⁹ Convinced that the Adventists were the true inheritors of the teaching of the early church and the Protestant Reformation, Froom believed that through scholarly research and reasoned arguments Adventists would become "respectable." To prove this he spent countless hours in the most prominent archives in the United States and made two trips to Europe to visit the libraries of Oxford, Cambridge, and the British Museum.⁴⁰

Unlike E. E. Cleveland, who distrusted civil and religious authorities,⁴¹ L. E. Froom, saw himself as a Protestant conservative scholar chosen by God to write a distinctive Adventist Theology.⁴² He clearly wanted his Church to be an integrated part of the larger society. In a paper Froom read for the 1952 Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conference he used the metaphor of a Great Cathedral. In his opinion the Seventh-day Adventists were called to finish the construction of a cathedral being built across the ages by "the chosen." The task of the new Adventism was to provide for the world a correct and enlightened theology.⁴³

³⁶ Leroy Edwin Froom was mentored and aided by A.G. Daniels from his teenage years, when he lived next door in Takoma, Park. Daniels advised him to study for the ministry and probably got him editorial internships at the Pacific Press and in China before he started working as editor of *The Watchman* and later *Ministry*. Daniels considered him his "ministerial son" and guided his career. The last 8 weeks of Daniels life were spent with Froom at his side. See Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 396-405.

³⁷ His most prominent work was a six tome series; *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, four volumes, and the last two volumes *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*. The first four volumes, the complete set, appeared in 1956 and would be advertised in the review and Herald in full page adds up until the middle 1960s. The first two volumes, Volume two and Volume three appeared in the 1940s; in the summer of 1950 volume I was published.

³⁸ Froom. *Movement of Destiny*. 397.

³⁹ *Review and Herald*, August 26, 1948, 6.

⁴⁰ *Review and Herald*, November 14, 1963, 1.

⁴¹ For a good description of the early Adventist distrust of Civil Government and the Protestant Establishment see Douglas Morgan, "Adventism, Apocalyptic, and the Cause of Liberty," *Church History* 62 (1994): 237-239.

⁴² See LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), 14. Also Ernest Trice Thomson, Review of *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*, in *Church History* 5 (1956): 84, 85.

⁴³ This paper is published in *Our Firm Foundation: A Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conference Held September 1-13, 1952, in the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953), 77-182. Much of Froom's time and energy was dedicated to collecting books, journals, charts, and documents of all sorts. He commented on the collection, labeling it "the greatest collection of its kind, in the hands of Seventh-day

Froom's agenda and priorities reflected his personal position and also the changes taking place in his church. In 1932 the Autumn Council of the General Conference voted to establish a school of theology. When they discovered that such a project was too ambitious, they started the Advanced Bible School in the summer of 1934 with its first session on the campus of Pacific Union College. Although the church did not have trained theologians it took its most respected leaders and turned them into theology professors. The president of Union College, M. L. Andreasen became the professor of systematic theology; William M. Landeen, president of Walla Walla College, became professor of church history; LeRoy Froom became professor of ministry and early advent sources; Benjamin P. Hoffman became the dean of the school and professor of prophecy and world religion.⁴⁴

By 1942, the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary was granting a master's degree, and three years later, in 1945, its first Bachelor of Divinity degree—usually three years of study after the Bachelor of Arts. In 1953, the General Conference voted that all ministerial students who graduated from one of the Adventist Colleges do a fifth year at the seminary. Joining the Protestant mainstream had become a priority for the new Adventism and the best way to achieve that end was to produce better-trained clergy who could articulate a reasoned theology.⁴⁵

The need to defend, rationally, the teachings of the Adventist church and make the church respectable also produced a multi-volume commentary series, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. The first volume, covering the first five books of the Bible, came off the press in 1953. By 1957, when *Questions on Doctrine* came off the press, Adventist scholars had produced almost 8,000 pages explaining, interpreting, analyzing, amplifying, and clearing up the Bible text.

By the 1950s, the new Adventist ethos was in full bloom and the transformation of Adventist culture could be seen everywhere. Adventist sanitariums became Adventist hospitals. Adventist training schools turned into liberal arts colleges. Tents in infested districts disappeared and Adventist cathedrals like the one in Takoma Park, Maryland, became the new model for Adventist houses of worship. City missions gave way to disaster relief. Professionally trained clergy replaced itinerant preachers. Adventist camp grounds morphed into Adventist retreats. Testimony-filled sermons developed into theological discourses. And pipe-organ-accompanied-anthems replaced syncopated gospel songs in storefront churches.

In summary, the first half of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of a white-collar Adventism that shed many of its traditional standards and replaced them with a new agenda. *Questions on Doctrine* reflects the struggle of the new Adventists and how they tried to figure out the nature of Christianity. Reacting to the new waves of immigrants and migrants which poured into the United States, the leadership of the Church adapted, modified, and transformed. The age of abundance helped the church develop new tastes and desires. Leisure time allowed white-collar Adventists to reflect

Adventists." He considered his work to be the most important activity in the chronicles of Adventist history. In 1963 reviewing his accomplishment he wrote: "For the past several years the writer has under special assignment upon perhaps the most exacting and comprehensive single research writing project in our denominational annals. Under the direction of the General Conference Officers and Committee..."

⁴⁴ *Review and Herald*, January 17, 1935, 20.

⁴⁵ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 41.

upon their teachings, values and how they fit into the larger society, creating, in the process, a crop of Adventist theologians and theologies.

Ironically, in an effort to be true to their calling, the white-collar Adventists also appear to have undermined the growth and expansion of Adventism. By the 1950s, the new Adventism walked on a path many radical Christian communities had journeyed in the past.⁴⁶ The pattern was familiar.⁴⁷ A radical sect—distrustful of civil and religious authorities⁴⁸—grows like wildfire challenging the values and standards of those in power. As the sect prospers and begins to savor the fruits of success, its distaste for the ways of the culture diminishes. With the passage of time the religion of the sect conforms and learns to adapt becoming not much different than the religion of the empire.

⁴⁶ Just as the early Christian Church evolved from a radical sect persecuted by the authorities of the larger society to an Imperial Christianity, many Christian communities in the history of Christianity have traveled down the same path. In a sense, the history of Christianity is the continuous pattern of birth, growth, and emergence as part of the established order. The Reformation in Europe is a good example how the pattern starts again in the cradle of the Catholic Church or the Anglican Church. In American the rise of Methodism from circuit riders to powerful denomination provides another example in the American setting.

⁴⁷ See Bryan R. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," *American Sociological Review* 24 (February 1959), 3-15.

⁴⁸ Puritans, Presbyterians, Methodist, Baptist, among others groups and churches, have followed a very similar pattern in the United States.

