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Traditional and Evangelical Adventism: A Comparative Study of the Two Main Theological Perspectives Among the Seventh-day Adventists

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents the different interpretations that the main theological streams of the Seventh Day Adventist Church have given to the writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White on the Subjects of Righteousness by Faith, the Human Nature of Christ and the Heavenly Sanctuary. The writings have been interpreted to understand the nature of Mrs. White’s theological beliefs on such subjects.

Over the past fifty to ten years, the Seventh Day Adventist Church has experienced numerous significant changes, and what once was seen as a monolithic theology has suffered significant fractures. Adventist writers have stated clearly that within this church there are at least three different theological sects with different beliefs on the core doctrines or pillars of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. These sects are called the Historical, Evangelical and General Conference or Mainline Adventists. These theological sects have interpreted the writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White to serve as a basis for their beliefs.

It is the goal of the researcher to attempt a non-biased interpretation of Mrs. White’s writings, including her theological views and interpretations on the doctrines of Righteousness by Faith, the Human Nature of Christ and the Heavenly Sanctuary.

This dissertation evaluates Mrs. White’s work and how she has interpreted the doctrines stated before, and attempts to bring to light what she has said about them. The main aim of the study is to make a comparative study of Traditional and Evangelical Adventists in order to determine which represents true Adventism and to reconcile the two in the light of Scripture. To this end, the dissertation studies the historical evolution of the Seventh-day Adventists, the doctrinal position of Traditional Adventists, and the doctrinal position of Evangelical Adventists; compares Traditional and Evangelical Adventists and outlines the doctrinal differences between the two; and evaluates the two positions in the light of Scripture to determine whether the two can be reconciled with one another. The central theoretical argument of this study is that reconciliation and healing of the divisions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is possible.
This study was initially undertaken in quest of an academic understanding of the historical and contemporary theological doctrines and disputes in my Church, in the hope of resolving some of my own concern and confusion about what seemed to be difficult and often obscure tenets and teachings. As my readings and research progressed, however, the ultimate goal of the project changed somewhat; I came to the view that a final, absolute interpretation of Church doctrines and theological issues was not possible in purely human terms. Instead, I came to feel that a higher purpose could be served by my study, if it contributed in some way or another to the reconciliation and ingathering of the disputing schools within the Church. It is in this spirit that I present the work that follows— not to pit these schools against each other or prove the correctness of one particular position or viewpoint, but to urge the leaders and members of the Church to enter into a new stage of historical development, where concerns about narrow areas of interpretation give way to a larger spirit of Christian fellowship and mutual acceptance.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Over the past half-century, the theological foundations of Seventh-day Adventism have been shaken by doctrinal disputes among scholars within the church, many of them centred on differing interpretations of the foundational writings of Ellen G. White. What was once seen as a monolithic theology has been splintered into three theological streams that interpret differently the core doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These streams are known as Traditional, Evangelical, and General Conference or Mainline Adventism. They have been identified and labelled as such by scholars within each of the streams, including the Traditional theologians: Ralph Larson (1994) and Ron Spear; mainline theologians such as Kenneth Wood (1994); and Evangelical theologians Michelle Rader, David Van Denburg and Larry Christoeffel (1994). Some non-Adventist religious scholars familiar with the recent history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church – Kenneth Samples being one – have come to the same conclusion regarding the identification of the splinter movements (Samples, 1988; Martin, 1972).

The proposed study accepts the general nomenclature and doctrinal distinctions attributed to these divergent streams. On balance, Traditional Adventism is basically a more conservative version of Mainline Adventism, and the two streams agree in principle about most aspects of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. The primary difference between them is that Traditional Adventism is more exclusive in its definition of a believer, limiting it not only to practising Adventists, but also to those belonging to the Traditional or Mainline streams of the church. (In fact, Traditional Adventists seem to take the position that the great conflict between Christ and Satan is also fought within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with the Traditional Adventists aligned with Christ and the Evangelical Adventists aligned with Satan.) As such, for the purposes of discussion about Adventist doctrine in this proposal and in the dissertation to follow, the mainline position is seen as implicitly being similar, if not identical, to the Traditional position, except where otherwise noted (Larson, 1994; Wood, 1994).
The doctrinal dispute between Traditional and Evangelical Adventists has shaken the core theological foundations of the traditional Seventh-day Adventist Church, and divided the faith in the process. The participants in these disputes have contributed to a far-reaching and subtle exegetical debate, without stepping back and taking account of the debate as a whole, or taking stock of Ellen G. White's foundational writings (1949, 1968) as a whole. This study will seek to answer the following questions:

- What are the doctrinal differences between Traditional and Evangelical Adventists regarding justification by faith, Heavenly Sanctuary, the human nature of Christ, the events of 1844, assurance of salvation, and the authority of Ellen G. White and her writings as compared to the Scripture?
- Which doctrinal perspective between Traditional and Evangelical Adventists represents true Adventism?
- Which one of the two reflects the beliefs and identity of Seventh-day Adventists?
- How may the two be reconciled (if that is possible) each with the other in the light of Scripture?

The focus of this research, therefore, will be to make a comparative study of Traditional and Evangelical Adventists with an eye to determining which represents true Adventism; and to reconcile the two in the light of the Scripture. The individual problems to be researched are as follows:

- What is the historical development of Seventh-day Adventists?
- What is the doctrinal position of Traditional Adventists?
- What is the doctrinal position of Evangelical Adventists?
- What are the doctrinal differences between Traditional and Evangelical Adventists?
- How do we evaluate the two in the light of the Scripture and what is the way forward?
The main aim of the study is to make a comparative study of Traditional and Evangelical Adventists in order to determine which represents true Adventism and to reconcile the two in the light of Scripture.

The objectives of this study are:

- To study and outline the historical evolution of the Seventh-day Adventists.
- To study and outline the doctrinal position of Traditional Adventists.
- To study and outline the doctrinal position of Evangelical Adventists.
- To compare Traditional and Evangelical Adventists and to outline the doctrinal differences between the two.
- To evaluate the two positions in the light of Scripture and to determine whether the two can be reconciled with one another.

The doctrinal differences between Traditional and Evangelical Adventists are centred on the core teachings of righteousness by faith, human nature of Christ, the events of 1844, assurance of salvation, and the authority of Ellen G. White. The central theoretical argument of this study is that reconciliation and healing of the divisions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is possible.

The study is undertaken from within the Reformed Evangelical tradition and the following methods will be used:

Literature Study:
- The historical development of Seventh-day Adventists.
- The doctrinal position of Traditional Adventists.
- The doctrinal position of Evangelical Adventists.

The exegesis and conceptual analysis of interpretations as used by the majority of Adventists scholars will be done according to the grammatical-historical method.
CHAPTER TWO: THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

2.1 THE ROOTS OF ADVENTIST TRADITION

Adventist tradition has its roots in Millerism, a new Christian sect emerging in 19th century America. William Miller was a Baptist layman whose Bible studies convinced him that he was living near the end of his age. He felt compelled to preach the message of Jesus' imminent return. Beginning in 1832, Miller preached for ten years, gained a following, and created a movement. His followers became known as Adventists, the term used for this event. Miller predicted that the second coming of Christ would occur between 21 March 1843 and 21 March 1844. Subsequently, adjustments were made to Miller's chronology, and the real date of return was fixed at 22 October 1844. The "great disappointment" arose when nothing happened on that date, and the movement was left in chaos.

Some among those who did not disband claimed that Miller's prophecy should be interpreted as an invisible spiritual event. One of Miller's followers who did not become disheartened when the second coming of Christ did not occur was Ellen G. White. She had a vision in which Adventists travelled straight to heaven, and she was soon embraced by other followers as a messenger of the Holy Spirit.

Early Adventists reflected theological diversity in various doctrines, one of which concerned the nature of God. Trinitarian doctrine holds that God comprises three divine persons who share substance, essence, and being, in common and are co-equal. Arianism, on the other hand, denies the absolute divinity of Christ. Instead, Jesus is seen as the highest created being, but one who does not share God's substance. Views on Trinitarian and Arian doctrine were divided during the early history of the Adventist church. There was little focus on the nature of Christ, but when there was, the writings reflected an anti-Trinitarian stance. There was, thus, a fundamental agreement on the issue of the Christ's nature. He was regarded consistently as a subordinate being to God the Father. The Holy Spirit was essentially an influencing force rather than co-equal of the Deity.
Adventist Arians put forth various arguments against the Trinitarian concept, such as the following:

- If Trinitarianism were true, then Christ was an absolute deity;
- Trinitarianism falsely assumed the existence of three gods;
- Trinitarianism diminished the efficacy of the atonement because if Christ were God as the Father is God, His divine nature could not be killed, so His sacrifice would be a human one that could not, therefore, atone adequately for human sin.

The Arians could not accept any of these positions because they did not view Christ as a deity.

The SDA Arian view of Christ's nature changed to one of Trinitarianism after the publication of Ellen White's writings in the early 1890s. While Mrs. White did not contradict statements she made prior to 1890, her later writing was clearly Trinitarian in nature. She depicted Christ and the Holy Spirit as absolutely equal with God, and wrote about the nature of God as one of exaltation of the Holy Spirit and Christ (Gane, n.d.).

In addition to the crisis in developing in the SDA Church because of the issues discussed above, another issue was brought to light that exacerbated the crisis. The proper use of the writings of Ellen G. White, as an inspired source to understand and interpret Scripture, was also at stake.

Historic Adventists are convinced that the bearers of the “New Theology,” as they call the Evangelical Adventists, at first tried to use Ellen White’s writings as a basis for their beliefs. Later on, when their doctrines clashed with her writings they rejected her interpretations of Scripture. Historic Adventists say that at this point the Evangelical Adventists believed that Mrs. White had made many historical and theological mistakes. Thus, the “New Theologians” define the purpose of the Spirit of Prophecy as “to only give counsel and to guide the SDA Church, but not to be used as a doctrinal or exegetical guide.”
Historic Adventists say that, by rejecting Mrs. White’s interpretations, the Evangelical Adventists have also downgraded Scripture. This argument hinges on the assumption that the “New Theologians” have taken the same approach about Mrs. White and applied it to the Bible. Thus Evangelical Adventists are accused of saying that the writers of Scripture, though inspired, did commit many historical errors. They are accused of saying that the literal six-day creation of Genesis is questionable, as well as the historicity of the flood and the fall of Jericho, and the miraculous accounts of the Exodus. They are also accused of saying that the real purpose of Scripture is not to give exact historical accounts, but to bring the message of the Gospel to humanity.

The reason for this stance, according to the accusers, is that many of these theologians studied in liberal seminaries and universities to gain their doctoral degrees. This accusation is made of Dr. Ford, who studied in the University of Michigan for his first Ph.D., and later in the University of Manchester, England for his second doctoral degree (Standish & Standish, 1989).

Some Evangelical Adventists have even been accused of saying that Mrs. White has a lesser degree of inspiration than the Bible. This supposition angers Historic Adventists, especially when some “New Theologians” even use some of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy as a basis for their arguments (Standish & Standish, 1980).

Others, according to Historic Adventists, have said that Mrs. White was inspired only while receiving the visionary messages, but was not inspired while expressing their meaning as she saw it (Douglas, 1986). Others have said that her visions were inspired but because she utilised other sources, those sources could have contaminated or introduced a measure of error into her interpretation of her visions (Standish & Standish, 1989).

On the other hand, Historic Adventists stand firm in their convictions that Ellen White was a true messenger of the Lord, and that she had the prophetic gift (promised by the Bible to the Remnant Church at the End (Standish & Standish, 1980; Douglas, 1986). To them, the Spirit of Prophecy is an inspired commentary on Holy Scriptures. To accept the Spirit of Prophecy, according to Historic Adventists, is to accept the Bible; to do otherwise is to reject God’s Word (Douglas, 1986).
2.2 THE LIFE OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Ellen G. White was born Ellen G. Harmon on 26 November 1827 and died in 1915 at the age of 87. When Ellen was nine years old, a classmate threw a stone that struck her on the head, causing injuries that were nearly fatal. When she recovered after several weeks, Ellen was left with a disfigured face and the consequences of her severe head injury, which led to seriously impaired health. As a result of the incident, Ellen did not attend school past the third grade. Isolated by her circumstances, she became deeply religious and, when she was seventeen years old, began to have visions. At this time she was given what the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) regard as the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Ellen married James White in 1846, a man to whom she was spiritually attracted. Shortly thereafter Ellen and James published their first periodical, The Present Truth, an eight-page semi-monthly publication. Ellen had a series of visions in 1848 that provided the guidelines for spreading doctrine. The Review and Herald was the result. The Whites began publication of doctrine while living in poverty in Rochester. In 1855 they moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, and continued to publish divine guidelines obtained from Ellen's visions, and the Advent Movement began to develop and grow. In 1863 the newly organised body of believers held the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and the new church came into being (Noorbergen, 1972).

The Battle Creek Sanitarium came about as a result of Ellen White's visions about preventative medicine. She began to be in great demand for lectures about the principles of healthful living and temperance. After a near-death experience from pneumonia, Ellen had another series of visions related to publishing work, and received a prophetic message that instructed her to spread her doctrine worldwide. Her work resulted in the worldwide spread of publishing companies, schools, hospitals and missionary stations. The Seventh Day Adventist Church operates the second-largest Protestant-church-affiliated school system in the United States, as well as nine senior colleges and two major universities. There are forty-six publishing companies around the globe, three of which are in the United States.
About her visions, Ellen White said:

Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writing of these pages. From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy between Christ . . . and Satan. As the Spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His Word and the scenes of the past and the future, I have been bidden to make known to others that which has thus been revealed (Noorbergen, 1972).

Mrs. White was attacked viciously during her lifetime, both about the authenticity of her visions and the way in which they were received. These attacks did nothing to deter her from what she considered her life’s work, however.

2.3 HISTORICAL ADVENTISTS

Through the 1960s, 1970s, and especially the 1980s, the polarisation of Adventists regarding doctrinal positions became more evident. According to SDA orthodoxy, the importance of understanding the church doctrines of the investigative judgment, the human nature of Christ, and the authority of Ellen G. White is crucial. Adventists say that these doctrines, in addition to serving as the pillars of their beliefs, are also at the very heart of the Gospel message.

The conflict over doctrine produced two movements that upheld opposing views: Evangelical Adventists and Historical Adventists. As previously stated, Historical Adventists consider themselves the heirs of true Adventist doctrine. They maintain that the pioneers of the Seventh Day Adventist movement held this doctrine. Their calling is to honour and to preserve the beliefs that made the Seventh Day Adventist Church the remnant church for the final days. These are truths that Christianity, on the whole, has lost, but that God has given to the Seventh Day Adventists through Scripture and the writings of Ellen G. White (also known as a The Spirit of Prophecy).
Historical Adventists aim to purge all vestiges of what they call the new theology from the church. According to the theologians Drs. Colin and Russell Standish, this new theology originates from the teachings of St. Augustine of Hippo. The Standishes maintain that Augustine brought three dangerous doctrines to Christianity.

One of these doctrines holds that man has a sinful nature. According to the Standishes, Augustine believed man cannot do any good by and of himself and cannot accept salvation in Christ by an act of his own free will. This view of mankind puts Christians in a defeatist position. Given this base nature, Christians would not be expected to live a sanctified life, as the effort would be futile anyway.

Another of the teachings considered dangerous is that of the sinless human nature of Christ. In other words, Christ, like Adam before the fall, was born with a sinless human nature. According to the Drs. Standish, this view places Jesus in a position of superiority above other human beings. Therefore, Jesus would never become an example for us to follow when we are tempted.

The recent concept of predestination, allegedly derived from Augustinian determinism, states that salvation is given to men through free grace and that sanctification is independent of the salvation of man. According to the Drs. Standish, this doctrine is harmful because Christians may determine that the preaching of the Good News is unnecessary, as God has already determined which souls are saved and which are not. The Standishes also maintain that this teaching is harmful for believers who may put aside sanctification in the belief that it is not necessary for salvation.

2.4 HISTORICAL ADVENTISTS AND THE HISTORY OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

According to the Drs. Colin and Russell Standish in their book Deception of the New Theology, the theological crisis that surfaced in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s was not new. They say that the same beliefs that Desmond Ford and his followers held had been around SDA since shortly after the disappointment of 1844.
Drs. Colin and Russell Standish have stated that the roots of what they call “the new theology” can be traced to the apostasy of Dudley M. Canright. Elder Canright was a minister in the SDA church and a personal friend of the Whites. At some point during the course of his career, he began to have doubt about the visions of Mrs. White and about the sanctuary message. By the 1880s he had left the church and become one of the main opponents of SDA.

Later, by the year 1905, another Adventist to change his views on sanctuary doctrine was Albion F. Ballanger, a former missionary to Great Britain. After moving to the United States, he began teaching the doctrine of justification by faith alone for the salvation of the believer. According to Colin and Russell Standish, his willingness to teach this doctrine was one of the key elements in the growth of this belief in SDA.

Louis R. Conradi was the most influential early proponent of the new theology in the SDA church. After the Minneapolis Conference in 1888, Conradi became a forceful opponent of the prophetic ministry of Mrs. Ellen G. White and her sanctuary message. He taught that salvation was by justification through faith alone in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Conradi became a missionary to the great German communities in the Ukraine, and later became president of the European Division. According to Colin and Russell Standish, Conradi’s belief was the main cause of the apathy currently found in the Adventist ministers concerning the books of Mrs. White. In 1932, Conradi left the church to join the Seventh Day Baptists. Despite being outside the SDA church, he travelled extensively preaching his beliefs. One man influenced by Conradi’s teachings was William W. Fletcher, chairman of the Southern Asia Mission.

Fletcher was an Australian minister of the SDA church. When he retired and returned to Australia, Fletcher became the rector of the Bible department at the Australasian Missionary College, now Avondale College. There he taught his beliefs to the students. After a long dialogue, during which seventeen of the main leaders of the General Conference including its president, W. A. Spicer, tried to convince him of his errors, Fletcher was asked to leave SDA because of his beliefs. Later, during the 1950s, the influence of the teachings of Elder Fletcher would surface again in the figure of Pastor
Robert Grieve, the president of the North New Zealand Conference. Elder Grieve influenced many outstanding students at Avondale College in the 1950s.

The influence of this "new theology" also reached the United States. In 1947, there was already a professor holding to the un-fallen nature of Christ who taught at the Seventh Day Adventist Seminary in Washington, D.C. One of the doctrines to which the Drs. Standish hold is akin to that new theology within the Adventist church (Standish & Standish, 1989).

In the 1950s, the seminary was having problems with some professors who held to higher criticism. To eliminate this difficulty, the seminary replaced them with other theologians who held to the conservative lower criticism view of scripture. However, according to the authors of Deceptions of the New Theology, the seminary was replacing one evil with another. The new teachers at the seminary were influenced by the doctrines of justifications by faith alone and other doctrines alien to Adventism (Standish & Standish, 1989; 1990).

In the late 1950s, Dr. Ford enrolled in the seminary for his master's degree, and later went to Michigan State University for his doctorate. In the early 1960s, Dr. Ford went back to Australia to head the theology Department of Avondale College (Standish & Standish, 1989). It was at this time that Robert Brinsmead was causing quite a stir with his new doctrines.

The leaders in the Adventist church in Australia saw that Dr. Ford was someone who could match Brinsmead's wit. However, as time went by, Brinsmead and Ford became intellectual allies, rather than foes. In 1965, during the presentation about the sanctuary doctrine at the Victorian Camp conference meeting, many students from Avondale College strongly disagreed with the doctrine. These students were influenced, according to Dr. Standish, by Dr. Ford's theology (Standish & Standish, 1989, 1990). The reason that no action was taken against Ford was that the church was so busy trying to counter Brinsmead's doctrines that most of the leaders could not recognise the danger of the new theology introduced by Professor Ford (Standish & Standish, 1990).
Drs. Colin and Russell Standish document that, in addition to Dr. Desmond Ford’s stay at the Adventist Seminary in Washington, D.C., another major influence in his life came from reading sermons written by famous ministers from the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian). These ministers held to the Reformed, or Calvinist theology, which was based, according to the Drs. Standish, on Augustinian theology (Standish & Standish, 1989).

Another influence in Dr. Ford’s theology was his trip to Manchester, England. There, he earned his second doctorate under the mentorship of Dr. F. F. Bruce, a member of the Plymouth Brethren church. This organisation also holds to the doctrine of salvation by grace and justification by faith alone for salvation (a doctrine that Colin and Russell Standish say is rooted in Augustinian theology) (Standish & Standish, 1990).

Dr. Ford and his theology shaped and influenced the SDA church in Australia. Many colleges, academies and churches taught his doctrines. The Standishes feel that this influence also brought about a decline in the spiritual life of many students and church members (Standish & Standish, 1989). In the current day and age, the new theology has influenced many pastors and theology students in SDA around the world.

2.5 ROOTS OF EVANGELICAL ADVENTISM

Evangelical Adventism arose out of the belief among many members of the church that, while the Adventists had recognised and accepted the fact that they had been called upon to renew the message of the Gospel so that humans could prepare for Christ’s Second Coming, they had come into error when it came to the actual understanding of what that Gospel meant. Also, by placing too much focus and emphasis on what made the Adventist faith so unique and different from other faiths (including Protestantism), Adventists ran the risk of neglecting what could be considered the central, core beliefs for all Christians: that it was only through Christ’s death on the cross that one could achieve salvation. In fact, Evangelical Adventists believe that, by placing emphasis on works (perfectionism), traditional Adventists were in danger of sliding once more into the Papist camp and the unconscionable practice of the buying and selling of dispensations as a way to build up those works.
While not an official document in support of Evangelical Adventism, it is generally recognised that the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* (QOD) in 1957 laid out, in general, the beliefs that Evangelical Adventists take as central for their church today. In fact, it was the position of Kenneth Samples in an article in the *Christian Institute Journal* that the QOD represented a positive turning point and a watershed in the history of Adventism. According to the article: "Would Adventism continue in the same direction established ... in the QOD, or would the denomination return to a more traditional understanding of the faith? The debate over this question would give rise to two distinct factions within SDA: Evangelical Adventism and Traditional Adventism" (Samples, 1988: 9). Before the publication of the QOD, the Adventist Church laboured under the stigma of not being 'all on the same page' when it came to some of the key beliefs central to the Christian faith. In fact, according to prominent Adventist scholar and church historian Le Roy Edwin Froom, it was these variant interpretations of such beliefs that had led many theologians and scholars in the Christian tradition to label Adventism as a non-Christian cult, "for a cult, according to the definition of many Evangelicals, is a religious body that denies (1) the eternal pre-existence and complete Deity of Christ, (2) that His Act of Atonement was completed on the Cross" (Froom, 1971: 35). Froom attributed the publication of the QOD with helping to remove this erroneous label:

We are no longer regarded as mere doctrinarians and legalists, but increasingly as true Christians, with our hope and our teachings centered wholly in Christ and the fullness of His Deity, His complete Act of Atonement on the Cross, His atoning ministry in heaven, and with salvation by faith in Christ and His righteousness as primary in the broadest and fullest sense of the term (31).

The QOD was responsible for helping get Adventism back to the basics, as it were, to the fundamental truths of the Christian faith. The QOD distanced itself from what it terms "certain limited and faulty concepts" that some within the Church held or continued to hold (QOD, 1957: 31). This has allowed the stigma to be lifted and to bring Adventism closer to other fellow Christians who all hold the same objective: to spread the Word and to prepare for Christ's Second Coming. According to Samples (1988):
When QOD repudiated such commonly held traditional doctrines as the sinful nature of Christ, literalistic extremes of the heavenly sanctuary, and the writings of Ellen White as an infallible doctrinal authority, they laid a critical foundation for those who would later carry the torch for this reform movement (9).

2.6 EVANGELICALS AND SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

Before the 1950s the consensus about the Seventh Day Adventist church was that it was a cult. Most Evangelical leaders and theologians were concerned with the beliefs of this church about being the “remnant church,” and Saturday worship as the seal of God’s people, whereas Sunday worship was the seal of the Anti-Christ. However, Evangelicals were mostly concerned about the sanctuary doctrine with its investigative judgment, which is supposed to be the entitlement for believers to be accepted into eternity, and the belief of SDA leaders about Christ’s birth with a sinful nature.

Later, in 1955, following several dialogues with SDA leaders and theologians, two Evangelical theologians reached a different conclusion. Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, founder and editor of the Christian magazine ETERNITY, and Walter Martin, one of the most knowledgeable theologians in his time on the topic of comparative religions and cults, met these leaders in the SDA headquarters at Tacoma, Washington. The dialogue continued in Dr. Barnhouse’s home in Philadelphia, where another Evangelical theologian, the Greek scholar Dr. George Cannon, joined in the dialogue.

In these dialogues on SDA doctrine, Walter Martin and Dr. Cannon spent two days researching leading SDA publications as well as Mrs. Ellen G. White’s books. The conclusion of these three Evangelicals was that the SDA church was another Evangelical church. They said that most of the Evangelical assessment about SDA was based on information received from an ultra-fundamentalist group within SDA, but that this group did not represent the true SDA doctrines. Many Evangelicals disagreed with this conclusion. In the years that followed other Evangelical theologians challenged Martin, Cannon, and Barnhouse’s conclusion by communicating their own fidelity to SDA. These theologians were Louis Talbot, J.K. Van Baalen, John Gerstner, Anthony Bookema, and Harold Lyndsel. Recently, another Evangelical theologian has tried to understand SDA doctrine and what the SDA church now believes as a whole. In an
According to Mr. Samples, then, there are two dissident groups in SDA, one of them termed the Evangelical Adventists. Samples traces the roots of the Evangelical Adventists to the Evangelical/SDA dialogues of the 1950s. The second group defined by Mr. Samples was referred to as Traditional Adventists. Mr. Samples believes that this group is the fundamentalist SDA referred to in Evangelical/SDA meetings in 1955-58.

Mr. Samples concludes that the SDA church is at a crossroads. SDA as a whole has not made a decision whether to follow either one of these two groups, and this indecision has brought dissensions amongst the SDA church as well as considerable concern and confusion in many of the Evangelicals. According to Mr. Samples, only time will tell if SDA will become Evangelical or cultic over time.

2.7 THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT AND THE SANCTUARY DOCTRINE

As mentioned previously, the sanctuary doctrine and the investigative judgment were the two doctrines that Evangelicalism found the most controversial. Nevertheless, Walter Martin explained that in the conversations taking place in 1955-56, these doctrines apparently did not contradict the message of the Gospel. According to Martin, the interpretation by the SDA of the word “Azazel” as devil was not new. Many other Evangelical scholars had reached the same conclusion (Martin, 1956). On the other hand, he explained that the idea of SDA’s belief in an incomplete atonement was not accepted in the SDA. The idea of the incomplete atonement stated that the atonement was not completed on the cross and that it would be fulfilled at the end of times when God would place the sins of the world upon Satan.

According to Martin, in the SDA/Evangelical dialogue, the SDA ministers and theologians had introduced a different explanation of the passage. These SDA leaders held that the reason for placing the sins of humanity on Satan was to make him pay for his own responsibility in bringing sin and rebellion into the world. This would not
complete the atonement on the cross, which was already finished, but would instead, be part of Satan's own punishment. Therefore, this assigning of responsibility for sin in no way happens to be vicarious like Christ's atonement was (Martin, 1972; 1956).

The SDA literature stating that Christ was born with a sinful human nature comes from the "lunatic fringe," which the SDA leaders had talked about in the SDA/Evangelical dialogue. Mr. Martin explained that there was nothing to worry about, because they were not going to be printed any more (Martin, 1972).

2.8 OTHER NON-EVANGELICAL SDA DOCTRINES

2.8.1 Saturday Sabbath

According to Mr. Martin, this belief, like the idea of worshipping on Saturday, is not new to the Christian Church, or even to Evangelicalism. He says that even the leaders of the Reformation in the XVI century recognised such a doctrine. Some of the theologians mentioned in this context were Martin Luther, William Tyndale, and John Wycliffe (Martin, 1990).

Whether to believe in Sunday as the day of worship is not thought to be an absolute issue where salvation is concerned, however. Mr. Martin says that SDA believes that salvation is only by faith through grace. Salvation for SDA is only through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (Martin, 1972).

2.8.2 Soul Sleep

According to Mr. Martin, the belief about soul sleep, like the idea of worshipping on Saturday, is not new to the Christian Church, or to Evangelicism; leaders of the Reformation in the 16th century believed in such a doctrine. Again, among the theologians mentioned were Martin Luther, William Tyndale, and John Wycliffe. Martin says that though he does not agree with this doctrine, he believes that there is no basis for saying that SDAs are not Evangelical or that they are a cult.
The interpretation of the investigative judgment, read by most Evangelicals, is not subscribed to by the SDA anymore, according to Walter Martin. About the investigative judgment, Walter Martin showed that the interpretation, which most Evangelicals had read, was not believed by SDA anymore. According to Mr. Martin, this investigative judgment was based on the Armenian interpretation of salvation. Arminianism, said Mr. Martin, stated that even though the atonement was completed on the cross, it is the believer who is responsible for reaping the benefits of Christ's sacrifice.

Mr. Martin was making the point that unlike the Calvinist doctrine of preservation of the saint, where the believers were preserved from losing salvation, Arminianism holds that salvation can be lost if the believer keeps on sinning and forsakes Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Thus, the doctrine of the investigative judgment does not invalidate Christ's atonement; the doctrine of the investigative judgment is the SDA interpretation of Arminianism. According to Mr. Martin, although this interpretation of Arminianism may be unique, it does not make the SDA church a non-Evangelical denomination (Martin, 1990).

2.8.3 The Sinful Human Nature of Christ

The dialogue with the SDA leaders convinced Mr. Martin that the SDA church believed that Christ had been born with a sinless human nature. According to SDA theologians, Jesus had been born with the likeness of human sinful flesh but without a taint of sin or its sinful propensities and passions.

2.8.4 The Remnant Church

According to Mr. Martin, the belief of the remnant church in SDA theology is not that the Adventist church is the only remnant church. According to the explanations by SDA authorities to the Evangelical theologians, the remnant church is the church of all true Christians in the end time. This is the last iteration of the Christian church, which will exist just before Jesus' second coming. Mr. Martin says that it is true that SDA believed that they were the remnant church at some time in history. However, he also says that the denomination changed its position afterwards. Currently, according to Martin, the individuals who insist in quoting the literature stating this belief are mistaken.
Mr. Martin further says that SDA holds to heterodox beliefs, instead of Orthodox doctrine of the mainstream Christian faith. On the other hand, he says that the doubts that most Evangelical theologians have about the Evangelical nature of SDA can disappear if the Evangelicals would learn about the new positions taken by the Adventists (Martin, 1990).

2.9 OTHER EVANGELICALS AND SDA

Many Evangelical theologians reacted negatively after the publication of the SDA/Evangelical dialogues and the different books and magazine articles by Mr. Martin and Dr. Barnhouse. According to the other Evangelical theologians, they were not convinced about the change of beliefs that had occurred in the SDA church. They believed that even the book *Questions on Doctrine* was not convincing. The topic of Sunday worship as the mark of the beast in some of the SDA literature has contributed to the idea that the SDA church is the "remnant church" or the true Christian church. This idea also brought much distress amongst the Evangelical theologians.

SDA holds that their movement has discovered biblical truths, which were overshadowed by Roman Catholic beliefs amongst the Evangelical theologians (Gerstner, 1960). Combined, these truths have made SDA the holder of the Truth. The truths found were, amongst others (Linsdel, April 1958):

- Saturday worship
- the sanctuary doctrine
- baptism by immersion and
- a Congregationalist organisation.

Many of these doctrines are new to many Evangelical churches. On the other hand, Saturday Sabbath worship, the Sanctuary doctrine and the prophetic gift of Mrs. Ellen G. White are doctrines that make SDA different from the other churches.

2.10 SUNDAY WORSHIP: THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND THE REMNANT CHURCH

One of the concerns that many of the Evangelical Theologians voice is that the book *QOD* did not clearly state that worshipping on Sunday was not the mark of the Beast.
Harold Lindsel points to the book QOD, where it says that in the end time every man will know about the truth, including the truth about Saturday worship as God's revealed truth. He also points that the book says that at this time the ones who do not keep this commandment will never attain salvation (Lindsel, April 1958).

Another Evangelical theologian who considers the Saturday Sabbath question to be an issue is Herbert S. Bird. He says that The SDA use the chapter of Rev. 14 to argue that the SDA is in fact the "remnant" church of the last days. According to the Adventist interpretation of this chapter, the only church that keeps God's commandments by worshipping on Saturday is the SDA church. The other churches are considered apostate churches, or "Babylon", as they quote the Book of Revelation (Bird, 1958). Herbert Bird says that to accept the SDA as another Evangelical church would only bring more confusion in the Christian world (Bird, 1958).

John Gerstner says that the SDA church goes even further than to call other churches apostate because of Sunday worship. He says that some in the SDA church have stated that the other Evangelical churches are not true churches because of Sunday worship (Gerstner, 1960). There remains some contradiction in the debate concerning Sunday versus Saturday worship.

Another Evangelical theologian, Van Baalen, says that some SDA literature goes even further. He says that in this literature, even the United States government is accused of being the "Beast" since it will supposedly make Sunday worship a law. Because of this, every person in the U.S. will have the legal obligation of worshipping on Sunday, and the SDA church will suffer persecution (Van Baalen, 1956). This allegation is completely without merit, as Jews, Buddhists and Muslims are not forced into Sunday worship, but Saturday worship is clearly one of the hallmarks of the true church.

For Harold Lindsel, the idea of Saturday worship as the mark of the true church means an attack on the Evangelical and Reformational belief of salvation by grace and justification by faith. According to Lindsel, the doctrine of salvation, or soteriology, in the Evangelical churches is one of pure grace. In other words, the believer is not saved by the good works that he may do, but by God's love and grace. Works are seen as the result, and not the basis, of salvation (Lindsel, April 1958).
According to Lindsel, Bird and Gerstner, the belief in Saturday worship as the mark of the true church connects salvation itself to a correct day of worship, the true Sabbath. Because of this, some Evangelicals perceive SDA as being overly legalistic and non-Evangelical in outlook (Lindsel, April 1958). Lindsel even states that the book QOD says the true church will believe in Saturday, not Sunday worship, in the end time (Lindsel, March 1958). These conflicts aside, the doctrinaire, legalistic approach to Saturday worship is more closely connected with Literalist, Historical Adventism than with the Evangelical school.

2.11 THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Another problem seen by Lindsel is the belief that Ellen G. White’s books are inspired. To him, inspiration is unique to the Bible only. It is important to say that this belief stems from Lindsel’s view on inerrancy. He interprets the words “inspired” and “inerrant” to have identical meanings. Thus, when he reads the words in the book QOD, which say that Mrs. White’s books are seen as “inspired counsels from the Lord,” he becomes suspicious. Lindsel says that these words are a “suggestion that Mrs. White was inerrant” (Lindsel, March 1958). This belief also implies that she never made any mistake, either ethically, or theologically. According to Lindsel, this makes her writings as inspired as the Bible itself. Another Evangelical theologian, Anthony Hoekema, believes that to hold to this presupposition keeps the believer from true examination, and leads to the conclusion that Mrs. White’s writings are true to the Bible, as if the verdict has already been made (Hoekema, 1977).

Another Evangelical writer who has become wary of the SDA belief regarding Mrs. White’s inspiration is John Gerstner. In his book The Theology of the Major Sects, Gerstner seems to underscore the same preoccupation of Lindsel by pointing to the SDA doctrine of Bible infallibility. According to Gerstner, the SDA church believes in the inspiration of the Scriptures, but not in its infallibility, a belief that they also hold about Mrs. Ellen G. White’s writings. It is interesting to note that according to SDA literature, Gerstner is apparently correct in his appreciation (Gerstner, 1956; Hoekema, 1977).
Many Evangelical scholars believe that the SDA belief in inerrancy answers the need to hold to Mrs. White as a prophetess. Belief in the Bible as inspired, but not as inerrant, is a way to acknowledge Mrs. White's inaccuracies in certain historical and theological facts. At the same time, it is a way to keep the belief in Mrs. White as being on a par with the prophets of the Bible (Hoekema, 1977).

2.12 THE SANCTUARY DOCTRINE

As we have said before, the Sanctuary doctrine has long been one of the most controversial doctrines in the SDA church. Even though Dr. Barnhouse and Mr. Martin came to the conclusion that this was a heterodox doctrine- although one which did not do any harm to the doctrine of righteousness by faith- many Evangelical Theologians do not believe likewise.

Amongst these theologians is Dr. Anthony Hoekema. After reading the book QOD, he states that he still has doubts about the interpretation and the explanation given. He says that the idea that the SDA believe in the perfect expiation for sin on the cross, while at the same time holding to the idea of investigative judgment, is confusing. Hoekema says that this explanation has been a way of retaining the belief of an investigative judgment since 1844.

According to Hoekema's interpretation of QOD, Christ's sacrifice cleanses the sins of the believer as he confesses them daily. Hoekema points out that according to SDA doctrine, the investigative judgment will show in the end of time that true believers will be the ones who applied Christ's sacrifice as they confessed their sins daily. The ones who did not confess daily will be the ones who only professed faith in Christ but were not truly believers. Hoekema further states that, according to SDA doctrine, once the investigative judgment is finished, “the heavenly books” that register every single action by the believers, good or bad, will be opened. These books will prove which believer held true to Christ. Jesus will be the advocate who will defend the case of the believers who live with Him for eternity. This is why, says Hoekema, the SDA church assigns so much importance to God's distinction between forgiving and forgetting sin. According to Hoekema, SDA states that the sins of the believer are transferred and kept in the sanctuary, even though confessed. These will only be erased in the final day, when it will be proven that the believer was truly faithful to Christ. Hoekema goes even
further. Citing the book QOD, he says that the reason for not erasing these sins is because of the change of attitude that the believer may have. Hoekema says that QOD states that these changes of attitude will be the key to the final decision on the believer’s salvation (Jones, March 1954; Hoekema, 1977; Lindsel, April 1958).

2.13 RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

Justification by faith is another doctrine considered crucial in the SDA church; some even say that this doctrine is the one that has created most problems within SDA. Justification by faith rather than works was a principle tenet of the Lutheran revolt, and a foundation of modern Protestantism. As we have seen, many Evangelical theologians believe the SDA church holds to Galatianism, the doctrine of salvation by keeping God’s law (Hoekema, 1977; Van Baalen, 1956). On the other hand, we have read that Mr. Martin and Dr. Barnhouse believed that the SDA church leaders hold to the true Evangelical belief of righteousness by faith.

Besides the doubts that the SDA church brought to many Evangelical scholars concerning whether Sunday worship is the mark of the beast, and of the SDA as the true “remnant church,” the Sanctuary Doctrine holds that since 1844, God has been conducting an investigative judgment amongst the believers. This judgment will decide which Christians will be entitled to live eternally with Him and which will be condemned eternally (Gerstner, 1960; Bird, April 1958). As well as Lindsel’s fear that that Sunday worship reflects the mark of the beast, keeping Christians from eternal life, the SDA Doctrine of Righteousness is another problem for Evangelical theologians. Gerstner and Bird found as they read SDA literature that righteousness in the church is not seen as imputed but as imparted.

According to these Evangelical scholars, the SDA Doctrine of Righteousness is completely different in its core theology from the Evangelical doctrine. While Evangelicals believe that righteousness is a legal act of imputation, where grace is given freely to the believer, SDA holds that Christ’s righteousness is imparted unto the believer so that Jesus will keep God’s law in and through the believer. Thus it seems that the believer will stand righteous before God because of the extent to which he lets Christ work His character through him. This work, according to Bird, citing Branson, is to keep God’s Law depending in Christ’s power (Bird, 1961).
In his book *Seventh Day Adventism*, Anthony Hoekema is doubtful that the book QOD holds true to the doctrine of Righteousness by Faith. According to him (Hoekema, 1977), QOD holds that justification implies “... the believer’s righteousness is imputed” while sanctification is “... righteousness imparted.” While he says that this assertion confirms both justification and sanctification as coming from God’s grace, he holds the former assertion as suspect.

According to Hoekema (1977: 387), in the page preceding asseveration, it is said that only the believer who keeps appropriating God’s grace daily will be the one to be sanctified and perfect. To Hoekema, the word “perfect” here is suspect. Hoekema questions the definition of the term “perfect” as a complete perfection before the final judgment, especially when the SDA church holds to Rev. 12:17 as a basis for the true church, the church that keeps all of God’s commandments.

Hoekema believes that this belief in perfection, united with the SDA Doctrine of the Sanctuary, is contrary to the Doctrine of Righteousness by faith alone. If confession of sins is required in order that the believer’s sins be erased from the sanctuary, and thus for the believer to be saved, then righteousness in SDA is by works and not by grace. What Hoekema means is that, according to the book QOD, the only way for the believer to be saved will be for him to keep doing good, confessing his sins, and being careful not to change his attitude towards the Gospel (Hoekema, 1977). This activity, to Hoekema, is Salvation by Works.

### 2.14 EVANGELICALS AND ADVENTISM AFTER 1950

In the early 1980s another Evangelical scholar, an Anglican clergyman named Geoffrey Paxton, raised some questions about whether SDA was truly Evangelical in its doctrines. His book, *The Shaking of Adventism*, was an historical overview of the doctrine of righteousness by faith amongst the SDA church. According to Paxton, the doctrine of righteousness by faith, as believed by the Reformers of the 16th century, had been a struggle within SDA. His book stated that in the beginning, Adventism had more importance to sanctification, thus the Doctrine of Sanctification became the main focus of the church, making the Doctrine of Righteousness by faith alone disappear in the long run.
Paxton wrote that in 1988, two men named Dr. E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones raised the issue of the Doctrine of Righteousness by faith alone as a lost idea for Adventists. Paxton noted that many of the SDA leaders rejected the message, though Mrs. Ellen G. White stood behind Waggoner's and Jones' message.

Later, says Paxton (1981), Jones recanted from the doctrine and fell into Pantheism. This made many SDA leaders suspicious, and Righteousness by Faith alone disappeared once more from the church. Paxton pointed out that this doctrine remains "low key" in some SDA literature, as some theologians believed in it. The issue was raised again in the early 1980s with Dr. Desmond Ford and Robert Brinsmead. Ford raised questions about whether the Sanctuary Doctrine was biblically true to the Doctrine of Justification and Righteousness by faith alone. The aftermath of this resurgence of the sanctuary doctrine issue created chaos within the SDA church, especially when Dr. Ford was 'dis-fellowshipped' with other ministers and members. Paxton stated in his book that the SDA church was struggling to find its identity, and that most leaders in the church were believers in righteousness through sanctification and an imparted justification, instead of by righteousness by faith alone and an imputed justification (Paxton, 1981).

In 1988 another Evangelical scholar, Kenneth Samples, wrote two essays published in the magazines *Christian Research Journal* and *Christianity Today*. In these essays he came to the conclusion that there were different theological presuppositions amongst SDA. He said that there were three main groups within the SDA church. According to him, these groups were divided in what he called the Traditional Adventists, the Evangelical Adventists, and the Liberal Adventists.

Samples considers the Traditional Adventists to be a sectarian group. The members of this group are separatists, holding that SDA is the true remnant church. They also believe that righteousness by faith includes sanctification besides justification, and that righteousness is imparted. This doctrine is also linked with the belief in the sinful human nature of Christ. This doctrine means that Jesus, by being triumphant over sin, even having fallen man's propensity toward sinning, became an example of sanctification for the believer to follow.
This group also believes in a literal sanctuary in heaven and in an investigative judgment. They also hold to the authority of Mrs. Ellen G. White. They believe that having her writings is the sign of the final “remnant church.” This church, according to them, will have the spirit of prophecy amongst them. Mrs. White, they say, is authoritative in every aspect of life, doctrine, faith and ethics. She is considered as inspired as any other prophet in the Bible. Samples referred to the opposing group as Evangelical Adventists, the common usage in this study. This group, according to him, does not believe in a literal heavenly sanctuary in heaven. They also hold, he says, that the believer’s righteousness stands on faith in Christ’s sacrifice alone.

Concerning Christ’s human nature, the Evangelical Adventists believe that Christ was born with a sinless human nature. Just as Adam was born perfect, Jesus was born perfect without any inclinations towards sin. His triumph over sin and his death on the cross for the sins of the world are imputed to the believer; thus he is counted as righteous before God and without sin.

According to Samples, the event of 1844 means that Jesus entered not the Holy of Holies, but heaven itself. Evangelical Adventists believe that the Sanctuary Doctrine has no basis in Scripture. Concerning Ellen G. White’s authority, this group holds the authority of the Bible over that of Mrs. White. They believe that her writings are not infallible and only the Bible is the basis for faith and doctrine.

Liberal Adventism’s beginnings are traced to the 1950s when a group of SDA students went to study at non-SDA Universities and theological seminaries, according to Samples. There they learned and adopted liberal and neo-orthodox doctrines regarding scripture and faith. This group, he observes, does not worry overly about the Doctrine of Righteousness by faith and is more at ease with the doctrinal differences amongst SDA. Liberal Adventists, for example, still hold to Sabbatarianism, and other doctrines like soul sleep. Some hold to the SDA style of temperance, but they are not deeply involved with doctrinal issues within the church.

Samples believes that the SDA church still does not have a monolithine doctrinal stance. He believes that this is the main crisis confronting the SDA church today (Samples, 1988).
2.15 FORMER SDAS AND ADVENTISM

Besides the Evangelical theologians mentioned, it should also be noted that in the early 1980s there were many SDAs who began to doubt their doctrines. These were 'disfellowshipped' individuals, just like Dr. Ford. However, unlike him, they did not embrace SDA doctrines like the 'soul sleep' or keep the Sabbath as the Lord's Day. Some forsook these SDA doctrines to believe like other Evangelicals. Others even changed their views on religion and the Bible.

One of these former SDAs was Walter T. Rea, author of the book *The White Lie* (1982). In this book he raised questions about the inspiration of the writings and prophesies of Mrs. Ellen G. White. He affirmed that most of Mrs. White's writings had been plagiarised from other authors whom she had read thoroughly. When Rea was 'disfellowshipped', he published his findings. After writing his book, Mr. Rea's position on religion and on the Bible changed. Some of his thoughts are expressed at the beginning of his book. He started by professing that many power- and money-hungry leaders take advantage of the faithful and have utilized the Bible and religion as the means to do so (Rea, 1982).

Others, like Dave Ratzlaff, Don and Vesta Muth, and Mark Martin have taken the position that the SDA church as a whole is a cult. They agree with Mr. Rea regarding Mrs. White's plagiarism, and publicise their beliefs. For the most part, these people have either joined Evangelical denominations or founded independent Evangelical churches and ministries.

2.16 CONCLUSION

Over time, the Adventists have become more polarised in regard to doctrinal positions. The Historical Adventists hold that there are truths that God has given to the Seventh Day Adventists through Scripture and the writings of Ellen G. White. They aim to eliminate the "new theology" doctrines about man's sinful nature, Christ's sinless nature, and salvation through grace that is independent of sanctification.
Historic Adventists are also at odds with Evangelical Adventists on the subject of Mrs. White’s interpretations of Scripture, because Evangelical Adventists are thought to believe that Mrs. White did commit historical and theological mistakes. In addition, the Evangelical concept that the purpose of Scripture is to bring God’s message to humanity, and not to give exact historical accounts, is thought to be erroneous. On these two points, the schism between the two schools of SDA doctrine is particularly wide. The rift between Historic and Evangelical Adventists is based on fundamental differences that call into question whether both groups can consider themselves members of the same faith. The beliefs of each group are examined in the following chapters with the intent of evaluating whether the doctrinal differences between them present too wide a chasm to be bridged.

Table 2.1 Demographic Distribution of Seventh Day Adventists

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http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=118257#AnnualStats

CHAPTER THREE: THE HISTORIC ADVENTISTS' THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINE

The objectives of this chapter are to examine the doctrinal positions of Historic Adventists regarding:

- Justification by faith
- Heavenly Sanctuary
- the human nature of Christ
- the assurance of salvation and
- the authority of Ellen G. White and her writings as compared to the Scripture.

In section 3.1, discussion concerns the belief that Jesus could overcome temptation and sin, while possessing the same human nature that we have inherited from Adam. In 3.2, the position is discussed that salvation is all by grace through faith in Christ’s work through his life and on the cross. In 3.3 Historical Adventists believe that God does not hold anyone responsible for sins of ignorance, since they are not willful, negligent violations of God’s law. Sections 3.4 through 3.6 examine the Sanctuary message and the biblical passages from Daniel and Hebrew concerning the sanctuary doctrine. In sections 3.7 and 3.8, Ellen White is discussed as an inspired source, followed by an examination of her theological statements.

3.1 THE SINFUL HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST

In order to document the opposing positions in this theological debate, we must present a basic summary of the views of each school.

Historic Adventists believe that the great conflict between Christ and Satan is also fought within the Seventh Day Adventist Church, between those who say that God’s Law cannot be kept by the believer because of his sinful nature - the Evangelical Adventists (Rader, VanDenburg, & Christoeffel, 1994) - and those who say that God’s Law can indeed be kept perfectly: the Historic Adventists (Standish & Standish, 1980, 1989). Historic Adventists thus feel called to awaken the Seventh Day Adventist church from a deadly slumber that Satan has brought; only then, they believe, will SDA
be a powerful witness to the Gospel and a source of salvation rather than a doctrine of fatal error.

For Historical Adventists, the key element in the history of redemption is the right understanding and teaching of Christ's human nature. The key to believing in God's just character is to believe that Christ was born with a sinful, or fallen, human nature, like all human beings after Adam's fall (Standish & Standish, 1980; Grosbol, 1989: 9-10; Priebe, n.d.). Christ's assumption of a divine character thus provides a supreme model for all of fallen humankind.

The belief that Jesus could overcome temptation and sin, while possessing the same human nature that we have inherited from Adam, is God's gift to us. By never surrendering to sin, Jesus became our example and comfort when we are suffering from our encounters with temptation. Also, by being joined spiritually to Him, we are empowered by His triumph over temptation and sin, so that we too may be triumphant (Standish & Standish, 1980: 151-156; Grosbol, 1989: 13-16; Priebe, n. d.: 16-19; Priebe, 1990: 65-90; Spear, n. d.: 1-8; Scarborough, n. d.: 117-130). The divergence of opinion in the church stems from the question of the sinful nature of human beings.

The basis of the Historic Adventists' doctrine of the sinful nature of Christ (as applied to sanctification and salvation) rests in their interpretation of sin (Standish & Standish, 1989: 77; Priebe, 1990: 22-3). Historic Adventists believe that sin is not a state within human beings, and that we do not inherit a sinful nature from Adam after the fall (Standish & Standish, 1989: 17, 22, 41; Grosbol, 1989: 10-1). In this theology, sin always constitutes the willful actions that transgress God's holy and perfect law (Standish & Standish, 1989: 17, 22, 41; Grosbol, 1989: 10-1). For man to transgress God's law is to follow Satan's lie that God is unfair and His law impossible to keep. This is the lie Satan told the angels, and later repeated to Adam and Eve in the garden.

Historic Adventists thus believe that man is born with sinful tendencies; these tendencies can only be overcome by uniting our will to God's (Standish & Standish, 1989: 66-71; Priebe, 1990: 65-90; Grosbol, 1989: 10-1). So, sinfulness is not what we are by nature, but what we do (Standish & Standish, 1989: 64-5; Standish & Standish, 1980: 34, 38-41, 43-50; Grosbol, 1989: 8). This belief stresses our ultimate
responsibility for our own sin, and the need to sanctify our own life (Standish & Standish, 1989: 66-76).

According to Historical Adventists, Christ was born with a sinful nature, as we all are. He had the human propensities to evil, being incarnated in the flesh. Jesus was tempted in everything, thus He could have sinned, although He did not do so. Historical Adventists presuppose that Jesus was heir to man's sinful nature at His birth, since he was born of Mary (Mat. 1:16, 18-25; Luke 1:26-31; 3:23). Mary was likewise a member of the human fallen race because of the fall of Adam. In the same sense, since Jesus was organically related to Mary, he also possessed the same human sinful nature.

The title Son of Man (Mat. 8:20; 24:27), taken by Christ, is another key to the Historic Adventist's position. They say that Jesus is thereby affirming solidarity with human nature. As the second Adam, Jesus was not created through a special act of God, like the first Adam. On the contrary, Jesus was born like every human being since Adam and thus participated in the law of heredity. The same thing, according to Historic Adventists, is true of Christ's participation in sinful human nature.

These Adventists also use the analogy Paul used about the first Adam and the second Adam. Adam represents man's fallen human nature. Christ, on the other hand, represents man as conqueror of sin in his fallen nature (1 Cor. 15).

To Historical Adventists this analogy is invaluable for understanding the great conflict between Christ and Satan. By taking man's fallen human nature yet conquering temptation and sin, Jesus proved to man and even to the angels that God's law can be obeyed through the power of the Holy Spirit (Standish & Standish, 1989: 52-3; Douglas, 1986: 26-7).

Another point expressed by this theological position within SDA involves an interpretation of the Apostle Paul's use of the word sarx in his New Testament epistles. According to the Historical Adventists, Paul sometimes uses the term literally - where it means sin (cf I Cor. 15:39 and II Cor. 12:7) - and sometimes uses it metaphorically - where, meaning flesh, it designates human nature as opposed to the divine nature (I Cor.
According to Historic Adventist theology, to see the term *sark* as meaning an intrinsic sinful nature within man is to hold to Greek dualism. This belief stood for the unity of opposing forces in nature and, thus, within man as well (Larson, 1986: 15-6). Historical Adventists say that though it is in the *sark*, flesh, where man’s egotistical desires exist, Christians can subdue those desires and so conquer sin in their time (Larson, 1986: 16). So, when Paul uses the term *sark* as a synonym for sin, he is referring to man’s sinful acts. These acts cause the break between God and man. This break in the relationship between God and man does not turn man into such a sinful person that he may not be able to regain his relationship with God once again: it is for man to repent and to renew his relationship with God once again (Larson, 1986: 16).

Another interpretation by Historic Adventists - one fundamental of their position - concerns this phrase in Rom. 8:3: "...in the likeness of sinful man..." Historic Adventists say that this verse, if read literally, implies that Jesus Christ had the same fallen nature as man (Larson, 1986: 16). This fallen nature did not affect His character, since, they explain, only sinful actions can change man’s character and relationship towards God and Jesus never sinned (Larson, 1986:16). The distinction between sinful fallen human nature and a sinful nature in Jesus may seem semantic, but it is a critical interpretation for the SDA church.

### 3.2 THE GOSPEL AND JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

To Historic Adventists, justification is the believer’s title for Heaven, while attaining heaven is conditioned to the human triumph over sin (Standish & Standish, 1980: 19). Does this mean that salvation is attained by the works of the believers? Those who hold these doctrines say this is not so. Salvation is all by grace through faith in Christ’s work through his life and on the cross. Historic Adventists say that Jesus Christ came to this world to justify perfectly and also to sanctify perfectly all those who believed in Him. As was stated before, Jesus was born with a sinful nature. This was Adam’s nature after the fall (Standish & Standish, 1980: 88-91; Priebe, 1990: 47-55; Prescott, n. d.: 1-23). Thus Jesus might have sinned in his life (Priebe, 1990: 60-4), yet He chose to hold fast unto the love and power he had received through baptism when the Holy Spirit
descended over Him (Priebe, 1990: 60-5). By His triumph over temptation and sin, Jesus became the great example to human beings. Jesus did not have any advantage over us; yet, He defeated sin and temptation with our sinful nature (Priebe, 1990: 97-101). Furthermore, Jesus proved to the whole humanity and to the host of angels that God's law could be kept and that the Father's character was just. Since He needed to live a holy and perfect life to please His Father, Our Saviour had to crucify the flesh and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit (Standish & Standish, 1989: 56-7).

But Jesus did something more than understand our human struggle. He empowered us to triumph over temptation and sin (Standish & Standish, 1980: 106-120). Before His resurrection, our saviour told us that He would send us the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit that empowered Him to conquer over sin was now given to all believers (Standish & Standish, 1989: 78-82). Because of the sinless life that Jesus lived, it is held, He became the example Christians ought to follow. He gave Himself entirely to prayer and to following God's perfect law (Standish & Standish, 1989: 67-72). Jesus surrendered Himself to the power of the Holy Spirit so that he could do His Father's will (Standish & Standish, 1989: 70-6). Thus Jesus, although born of a sinful human nature, triumphed over sin and became the divine exemplar.

3.3 UNION WITH CHRIST AND PERFECTION OF CHARACTER

Historical Adventists are often accused of believing that to be saved, the believer has to be perfect (even of and in spite of sins of ignorance). In order for this to be true, of course, no human creature could be saved. But in fact, Historical Adventists simply believe that God does not hold anyone responsible for sins of ignorance, since they are not willful, negligent violations of God's law (Standish & Standish, 1989: 70-6; Priebe, 1990: 63-4, 85-90). To these Historical Adventists, perfection has to do with triumphing over known sins.

Another accusation Evangelicals level against the doctrine of perfection for salvation is that it is based on human power and is never subjected to God's grace. Historical Adventists say that this perfection is a dependent perfection. To them, the Christian depends on the power of Christ to be perfect (Standish & Standish, 1989: 90).
This doctrine is critical, as it holds the key to a Christian's salvation. When the Christian is born again, he is born of the Spirit. He receives the same power that Christ had in order to overcome sin. It is also this Holy Spirit, which unites the believer to Christ, so Christ is in the believer and the believer is in Christ (Douglas, 1987: 23). By this, the believer will be able to attain a perfect character filled with love for God and His law. So the doctrine of justification and sanctification for perfection, they say, teaches that it is not in man's power to accomplish triumph over sin. It is Christ, who dwells in the believer, the one who does His good works in us and through us (Standish & Standish, 1991:13-5; Spear, 1990: 15-23). Jesus took Adam's place so that the believer could triumph over sin by following Jesus' example. The Christian will overcome sin by surrendering himself to the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus did. Because of Jesus, the believer is truly free from the slavery of sin (Douglas, 1987: 31-2).

The Historical Adventists believe that true Christians will shine in the last judgment because of their good deeds. The final generation of believers will be perfect in the judgment. They will be able to obey God's law because Jesus will give them the power to do this (Douglas, 1987: 24). By doing so, they will show every man, woman, child, and even the angels, good or bad, a beneficent God who empowers His children to obey His laws, so that they can be saved. (They will show all of creation that God's laws can be kept). Thus God's character will be honoured throughout eternity (Standish & Standish, 1989: 89-91).

3.4 THE SANCTUARY MESSAGE

The Sanctuary Message is unique to the Seventh Day Adventist Church (Standish & Standish, 1989: 90). For Adventists, the Sanctuary Message is the basis of their own message (Standish & Standish, 1989: 101-5), one of their Pillar Doctrines (Standish & Standish, 1991: 68-74), the purpose for the existence of Adventism (Standish & Standish, 1991: 70-4), and the message of the Gospel itself (Standish & Standish, 1991: 78-80).

According to Historical Adventism, the Sanctuary Doctrine has been watered down by the theological influence of Evangelical Adventists, which they call the "new theology" (Standish & Standish, 1991: 93-102, 145-56; Douglas, 1987: 47-52). They argue that too many theologians in the church have given all of the importance to the sacrifice of
Christ on the cross, as if the only and sufficient sacrifice made by Christ's sacrifice was completed on the cross (Standish & Standish, 1991: 103-13). Thus, they believe in Salvation by Faith only, forgetting the righteousness that comes through the works that is also needed for salvation (Standish & Standish, 1991: 173-92). Historic Adventists say that the "new Theology" misinterprets the message in Leviticus 16 on the sacrifices of the sanctuary. To Historic Adventists the key to understand Christ's atonement may be seen in the symbolism of the different apartments of the tabernacle.

The Sanctuary was built with three apartments. The first one was the atrium where the Jewish people went every morning and evening to offer a lamb for the forgiveness of his daily sins. The lamb was then sacrificed by the priests on the altar of the holocausts (Standish & Standish, 1991: 205-10; Douglas, 1987: 52-3). Once the lamb was sacrificed, its blood was taken to the second apartment of the sanctuary, which was named the Holy Place. There the priest would sprinkle the blood over the veil, which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Standish & Standish, 1989: 101). The Third apartment of the Sanctuary was, as stated above, the Most Holy Place. The ministry in this apartment was done only once a year, and only the High Priest was allowed to enter (Standish & Standish, 1991: 220-6).

The first type of sacrifice had to do with the continual forgiveness sought by the believer every evening and every morning (Standish & Standish, 1991: 220-6; Douglas, 1987: 57-82). The sprinkling of the blood on the curtain meant that the blood of the lamb, which represented the sins of the repentant sinner, was imputed to the sanctuary itself. Thus, God forgave the sins of the believer but did not forget his sins, since they were still in His presence.

Then, once a year, the High Priest entered the sanctuary with two goats (Ford, 1980; Standish & Standish, 1989: 107-8). One of them was to be sacrificed; the other one was left alive and was taken to the wilderness, outside the camp. The goat left alive, Historic Adventists say, is a symbolic representation of Satan's continuing presence in a sinful world. He will bear the guilt of the sins of the ages, at the final Day of Atonement in history, performed by Christ Himself, since he was the cause of all of them. Thus, after this atonement, neither sin, nor anyone who is sinful, will continue to exist in the world after the second coming of Christ.
According to Historic Adventists, this sacrifice did not have to do with the forgiveness of sins, since forgiveness of sins was obtained through the sacrifices in the Holy Place. The ministry in the Most Holy Place had to do with the ‘blooding of sins’ from the sanctuary itself, which had been polluted by the sins of the people contained in the blood sprinkled on the curtain.

According to their belief, Moses had built the earthly sanctuary with the blueprint, which God Himself had given him. His blueprint was nothing else than the blueprint of a literal sanctuary in heaven.

Believing that the heavenly sanctuary is being polluted daily by the sins of the believers, Historic Adventists say that the heavenly sanctuary also needed to be cleansed (Standish & Standish, 1989: 116-8; Standish & Standish, 1991: 173-80). They support their belief by interpreting the text of Daniel 8:14: “And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

They see this as the reason why Jesus purportedly passed from the Holy Place, to the Holy of Holies (or the Most Holy Place) in 1844. It was since this time that the Father and His Angels started an investigative judgment of humankind. This judgment is done to see who are the true committed Christians. These are the individuals who will receive the blood of their sins in the final day (Standish & Standish, 1989: 116-8; Standish & Standish, 1991: 173-80); those who do not will suffer condemnation.

While Evangelical Adventists and other Evangelicals believe that the final judgment will seal the fate of every human being (Standish & Standish, 1989: 114), Historic Adventists believe differently regarding the judgment process. They say that, to be sure who are the believers who were really faithful, an investigative judgment of their works needs to be done; this judgment began in 1844 and continues to this day.

The importance of this judgment is twofold, according to Historic Adventists. One reason is that God’s character will be understood through the investigative judgment. All living and personal beings (human, angels and demons) will know that God’s requirement for man to obey His law could be kept by the believers who obtained perfect sanctification through Christ (Standish & Standish, 1989: 114-6; Standish &
Thus, they will agree that God is a fair God, requiring something that could be kept for salvation.

The other reason for extending judgment is also tied to the first one. This judgment will demonstrate who the faithful are, namely, the ones who live a holy life. Those will be the only ones who will enter in God’s kingdom. Thus, no one will accuse God of unfairness in rewarding or punishing humans unjustly (Standish & Standish, 1989: 116).

There is also a spiritual aspect in the interpretation of the sanctuary message, according to Historic Adventists. According to an article written by Ron Spear in the Magazine NUESTRO FIRME FUNDAMENT” (translation into Spanish of Our Firm Foundation) Vol. 4 #5, pp. 28-31), the Sanctuary Message can also be seen in the life of the believer.

According to Elder Spear, the symbolism presented in the sacrifices of the two apartments of the sanctuary concern the actions of the believer who is repentant for his sins. The Holy Place is a symbol of the believer who makes a covenant with God. In this covenant, he promises to stop sinning and asks God for power from the Holy Spirit to triumph over sin. The sprinkling of blood on the veil is symbolic of the forgiveness of one’s sins, and of the sanctification that has been imparted to the penitent. Here the believer has offered his life to God so that He can use it to His glory. The Lord, on the other hand, enables the person to live a sanctified life where the believer claims his victory over sin and continues seeking higher spiritual growth, knowing that Jesus will help him to have ultimate victory over his temptations. This is the reason why Historical Adventists say that justification through the sacrifice of Christ is imputed righteousness, while sanctification is righteousness imparted. Both are united in the message of the Sanctuary and given to the penitent in an act of grace.

The third apartment of the Sanctuary was called the Holy of Holies. The ministry in this apartment was done only once a year, and the only priest who could enter into this apartment was the High Priest. According to Elder Spear, this ministry did not have to do with the forgiveness of sins, since this ministry was performed in the Holy Place itself.

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The ministry in the Most Holy Place had to do with the blooding of sins from the Sanctuary. Thus, the sanctuary had to be cleaned of the sins that had polluted it during that year. So, also the believers have to be cleansed from all his sins for the final day where his name will be called to salvation if he has been faithful or to condemnation if he has not.

3.5 DANIEL 8:14 AND THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

With the controversy in the early 1970s, many doubts were raised about the exegesis used in the Seventh Day Adventist church to prove the sanctuary doctrine. Dr. Desmond Ford held that the exegetical proofs used by SDA were not sound. In particular, he stated that the use of Lev. 16 to prove that Dan. 8:14 was referring to the cleansing of a literal sanctuary in heaven was not acceptable to any biblical scholar, even scholars in SDA (Standish & Standish, 1989: 116-7). Many of the exegetical issues with the sanctuary doctrine have to do with the use of the text in the biblical book of Daniel in the Old Testament. This text tells us about a cleansing of the sanctuary after 2,300 evenings and mornings. The verse was compared with Chapter 16 of Leviticus. This chapter is about the Day of Atonement.

According to Historic Adventist doctrine, the cleansing of the sanctuary began in 1844. This year Jesus passed through the veil, which divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Once inside the Holy of Holies, Jesus started the process of cleansing the Sanctuary in heaven (Standish & Standish, 1989: 116-7). Dr. Desmond Ford raised doubts about this interpretation during the late 1970s and early 1980s, arguing that there was no connection between Lev. 16 and Dan. 8:14. In addition, Ford stated that the Hebrew word used in Daniel, nisdaq, should be translated as restored or reconsecrated, while the word used in Leviticus is taher (which translates as "to cleanse," as in cleansing or purifying). The contexts are also different, according to Dr. Ford’s view. While Daniel is talking about the destruction of the temple, the book of Leviticus talks about the cleansing of sin.

Countering Dr. Ford and other Evangelical Adventists’ exegesis, the Historical Adventists say that Daniel 8:14 and Leviticus 16:30 are linked. They agree that the word used as ‘cleansed’ in each text is of a different root and may have different translations. On the other hand, Historical Adventists say that in the Greek translation
of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, the word *nisdaq* is translated as 'cleansed'. This implies, according to Historic Adventism, that the translators did understand the real meaning of the word (Standish & Standish, 1989: 117-8).

To further their argument, Historic Adventists also look at the root of the word *nisdaq*. Since this word is not found in any other part of the Bible this branch of SDA uses *sadaq* (the root of *nisdaq*) to strengthen its argument (Ford, 1980: 2). This word is used frequently in the Psalms: Hebrew poetry, of which the Psalms are representative, has an internal structure known as poetic parallelism. Poetic parallelism involves repeating the same thoughts or beliefs in different words, for the sake of poetic emphasis and drama (Standish & Standish, 1991: 313-8). In this context, Historic Adventists point to the use of the word *sadaq*, which is used interchangeably with *taher* in four passages in the Old Testament:

> Shall mortal man be more just [sadaq] than God?  
> Shall a man be more pure [taher] than his maker? (Job 4:17.)

> The righteous [sadaq] also shall hold on his way,  
> And he that hath clean [taher] hands shall be stronger and stronger (Job 17:9).

> The fear of the Lord is clean [taher], enduring  
> Forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and Righteous [sadaq] altogether (Job 17:9).

> All things come alike to all: there is one event to  
> The righteous [sadaq], and to the wicked; to the  
> Good and to the clean [taher], and to the unclean (Ecc. 9:2).

Thus, the Historical Adventists do not feel that there is a significant difference in these two words as they have been used in Leviticus and Daniel. They believe that the use of these two words in Hebrew poetry supports the linking of the cleansing of the Day of Atonement and the text of Daniel 8:14. They believe that the verse in Daniel is the atypical cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary in heaven by Christ (Standish & Standish, 1989: 109).
Another issue relating to the text of Daniel 8:14 is the use of the translation of the "2,300 evenings and mornings". Evangelical Adventists, along with many evangelical exegetes, say that this phrase is related to the evening and morning sacrifices in the sanctuary (Standish & Standish, 1989: 109-10). Through the exegesis of this passage, therefore, the assertion that the text is talking about 2,300 days is not necessarily correct. It is stated that some sacrifices made in the sanctuary were done every morning and evening of each day. In this case Daniel 8:14 is not talking about 2,300 days, then, but 1,150 days (Standish & Standish, 1989: 116-8).

Historical Adventists further argue that days in the Bible are referred to as evenings and mornings, in the conventional sense of a single diurnal cycle. One example they use to uphold their argument is the text of Genesis 1:4, that uses phrases like: "...And the evening and the morning were the first day (Gen. 1:4)." On the other hand, the Historical Adventists point out that the Bible uses a different phrase to describe the time of the day when sacrifices were to be done. To support their argument, they quote verses such as the ones found in two Old Testament books:

Behold, I build a house to the name of
The Lord my God, to dedicate it to him,
And to burn sweet incense and for the
Continual shewbread, and for the burnt
offering and evening (2 Chronicles 16:40)

To offer burnt offerings unto the Lord
upon the altar of the burnt offering
continually morning and evening, and to do
according to all that is written in the
law of the Lord, which He commanded Israel
(1 Chronic. 16:40)

He appointed also the king's portion of his
Substance for the burnt offerings, to wit,
For the morning and evening burnt offerings,
and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths, and
for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as
it is written in the law of the Lord
(2 Chronic. 31:3).
By the use of these and other verses, Historical Adventists show beyond a doubt that the 2,300 evenings and mornings mentioned in Daniel 8:14 are not to be translated as "sacrifices" but as "days" (Standish & Standish, 1989: 111; Standish & Standish, 1991: 313-8).

Another doctrine linked to the Sanctuary message is the belief that the (literal) sanctuary in Heaven is polluted with the sins of humanity. This is a logical conclusion to the Investigative Judgment and the historic Adventists' view of atonement. If man is only forgiven of his sins, but they stay on the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies until the second coming, then the sanctuary is, indeed, polluted. Historical Adventists defend this doctrine against Evangelical Adventists who say that there cannot be anything polluted by sin in Heaven. God dwells there and His Sanctity cannot abide next to sin.

Besides the sanctity of heaven and of God, another argument used is the atonement of Christ. Christ took upon Himself the sins of His people and died for them. Thus, there is no presence or need for sin in heaven: it no longer exists. Historic Adventists refute these ideas stating that before there was sin in the world, Satan and his angels rebelled in heaven. Then, they say, there is proof that there can be sin in heaven. They also point to Heb. 9:23:

\[
\text{It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these (Heb. 9:23).}
\]

Besides their belief of the pollution of the sanctuary and the need for purification in this text and their rationale, Historical Adventists believe in the need for purification and sanctuary.
3.6 HEBREWS 9

Of all passages in the Bible, this is the only one that speaks directly of a sanctuary in heaven (Standish & Standish, 1989: 111). This passage (and the various interpretations of it) has been cause for much trouble in the SDA (Standish & Standish, 1989: 112).

In 1980 Dr. Desmond Ford, an Evangelical Adventist, presented the issue at a talk he gave at Pacific Union College, California. He said that, since the only chapter in the Bible that spoke about a heavenly sanctuary was Hebrews 9, SDA had to consider what it stated. He also concluded that there was no exegetical evidence of Jesus entering the Holy of Holies in 1844. Dr. Ford said that this book of the New Testament did speak about Jesus going before the Father's presence at His ascension (Standish & Standish, 1989: 112). Another issue raised in Dr. Ford's talk was the interpretation SDA had given to the Greek word τα ἡγαία in Heb. 9:12. According to him the true meaning of the word is "the most holy place". Dr. Ford said that the author of the book of Hebrews was referring to Heaven itself, where God the Father dwells.

Another question raised by Dr. Ford was the belief that SDA held throughout its history about a literal sanctuary in Heaven. According to SDA theology, God gave Moses a blueprint on the mount and instructed him to build from it a sanctuary on earth in which the Jewish people could worship (Standish & Standish, 1989: 112). Dr. Ford argued that if Jesus had entered into the Father's dwelling at His ascension, there was no need for Christ to enter, later on, into the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place, which represented God the Father's beliefs. Historic Adventists hold that there is a true basis to believe that Heb. 9 does support the sanctuary doctrine. They also believe that this book of the New Testament does say that there is a real sanctuary in Heaven where Jesus truly spent His time in the Holy Place until 1844. There He changed His ministry as He entered to the Holy of Holies to start the Investigative Judgment. There Christ has begun the first phase of the cleansing of the Sanctuary, which will culminate in His second coming when the believers and non-believers alike will be judged by their true allegiance to God.
First of all, Historic Adventists argue that the Greek word *ta hagia* may be translated either in the plural or the singular. They say that the Greek language does not have different ways to differentiate between the spelling of the singular and the plural in number. Thus the word *ta hagia* could be translated into either "the holy place", meaning a specific room in the sanctuary, or "the holy places" meaning the sanctuary as a whole (Standish & Standish, 1989: 127). They also counter the argument that says that in later manuscripts the copyists made a distinction between the plural and the singular. Historic Adventists say that they find this argument somewhat questionable (Standish & Standish, 1989:112; Ford, 1980: 379). So, they say, to believe that Jesus entered into the whole of the sanctuary at His ascension may not be exegetically correct after all.

From the conclusion, Historic Adventists say that the only way to translate this word correctly is to look at other places in Hebrews in which the author uses the word *Holy of Holies*. So, they say that the only place where the author makes reference to this apartment of the Tabernacle is in Heb. 9:3. In this verse, they note, the word in Greek as used by the author of Hebrews is not *ta hagia*. The word used is the compound word *hagia hagion*. This word literally means the holiest of all, or the Holy of Holies (Standish & Standish, 1989). Thus, they conclude, the author of Hebrews was very specific in his choice of words when he referred to the different rooms of the tabernacle, for when he talks about the Holy of Holies he uses the Greek word *hagia hagion* and not *ta hagia* (Standish & Standish, 1989: 131).

### 3.7 ELLEN G. WHITE AS INSPIRED COMMENTARY ON SCRIPTURE

As the crisis in the SDA Church developed because of these doctrinal issues emerging between the two groups, another issue arose: use of the writings of Ellen G. White as an inspired source to understand and interpret Scripture.

Historic Adventists are convinced that the bearers of the "New Theology", as they call the Evangelical Adventists, at first tried to use the writings of Mrs. White as an unique basis for their beliefs. Later on, when their doctrines clashed with her writings, they turned against her interpretations of Scripture. Historic Adventists believe that, at this point, the Evangelical Adventists began to maintain that Mrs. White had made many historical and theological mistakes (Standish & Standish, 1989: 130-1). Thus, the "New Theologians" define the purpose of the Spirit of Prophecy as "... to only give counsel..."
and to guide the SDA Church, but not to be used as a doctrinal or exegetical guide” (Spear, n. d: 44).

Historic Adventists say that the Evangelical Adventists have also downgraded Scripture by doing this. This argument hinges on the assumption that the “New Theologians” have taken the same approach about EGW and applied it to the Bible. Thus Evangelical Adventists are accused of saying that the writers of Scripture, though inspired, did commit many historical errors (Spear, n. d.: 44). They are accused of saying that many question the literal 6-day creation of Genesis, the historicity of the flood and of the fall of Jericho, as well as the miraculous accounts of the Exodus. They are also accused of saying that the real purpose of Scripture is not to give exact historical accounts, but only to bring the message of the Gospel to humanity (Standish & Standish, 1989: 128). The reason for this, according the accusers, is that many of these theologians studied in liberal seminaries and universities to gain their doctoral degrees. This accusation is made of Dr. Ford who studied in the University of Michigan for his first Ph.D., and later in the University of Manchester, England for his second doctoral degree (Standish & Standish, 1989, p. 131).

Some Evangelical Adventists have even been accused of saying that Mrs. White has a lesser degree of inspiration than the Bible - something that angers Historic Adventists, especially when some “New Theologians” even use some of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy as a basis for their arguments (Standish & Standish, 1980: 9-11).

Others, according to Historic Adventists, have said that Mrs. White was inspired only while receiving the visionary messages, not while expressing their meaning as she saw it (Douglas, 1986: 21-3). Others have said that her visions were inspired but because she utilised other sources these could have introduced a measure of error into her interpretation of her visions (Standish & Standish, 1989: 53; Standish & Standish, 1980: 41).

On the other hand, Historic Adventists stand firm in their convictions that EGW was a true messenger of the Lord, and that she had the prophetic gift (promised by the Bible to the Remnant Church at the End) (Standish & Standish, 1980: 88-9; Douglas, 1986: 20). To them the Spirit of Prophecy is an inspired commentary on Holy Scriptures. To
accept the Spirit of Prophecy, according to them, is to accept the Bible: to do otherwise is to reject God's Word (Douglas, 1986: 22).

3.8 ELLEN G. WHITE'S THEOLOGICAL STATEMENTS

A critical analysis of Mrs. White's theological doctrines can only be made alongside a summary listing of her various statements in her own writings. To clarify the time period when Mrs. White made her statements the years will be noted at the beginning of each statement.

1858
Jesus also told them...that He would take man's fallen nature, and His strength would not be equal with theirs. (Spiritual Gifts: (I): 25).

1864
It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen man... (Spiritual Gifts: (IV):115. In this passage Mrs. White does not equate Christ's form with His nature)

1870
... (He) took our nature that He might understand how to sympathize with our frailty...(RH 4/19/70 p. 139 col 1, BV 95).

Christ humiliated Himself to humanity, and took upon Himself our natures...that...He might become a stepping-stone to fallen men. (RH 5/31/70 p. 185 col 2 BV 97).

...Christ's steps in between fallen man and God, and says to man, you may yet come to the father... (p. 186, col 1 BV 98).

1872
This was the reception the Savior met when He came to a fallen world. He...took upon Himself man's nature, that He might save the fallen race. Instead of men glorifying God for the honor He had bestowed upon them in thus sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh... (RH 12/24/72 p. 119, col. 3, BV 119).

1873
Christ condescended to take humanity, and thus He unites His interests with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam here below... (RH 1/21/73 p. 126, col. 1, BV 126).
Through His humiliation and poverty Christ would identify Himself with the weakness of the fallen race...The great work of redemption could be carried out only by the Redeemer taking the place of fallen Adam...The king of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity...He would take man’s fallen nature. (RH 2/24/74 p. 83, col.2, BV 139).

Christ was not in as favourable a position in the desolate wilderness to endure the temptations of Satan as was Adam when he was tempted in Eden. The Son of God humbled Himself and took man’s nature after the race had wandered four thousand years from Eden, and from their original state of purity and uprightness. Sin had been making its terrible marks upon the race for ages; and physical, mental and moral degeneracy prevailed throughout the human family. When Adam was assailed by the tempter in Eden he was without the taint of sin. He stood in the strength of his perfection before God. All the organs and faculties of his being were equally developed, and harmoniously balanced. Christ, in the wilderness of temptation, stood in Adam’s place to bear the test he failed to endure. Here Christ overcame in the sinner’s behalf, four thousand years after Adam turned his back upon the light of his home. Separated from the presence of God, the human family had been departing every successive generation, farther from the original purity, wisdom, and knowledge, which Adam possessed in Eden. Christ bore the sins and infirmities of the race, as they existed when He came to earth to help man. In behalf of the race, with the weakness of fallen man upon Him, He was to stand the temptations of Satan upon all points wherewith man would be assailed. Adam was surrounded with everything his heart could wish. Every want was supplied. There was no sin, and no signs of decay in glorious Eden. Angels of God conversed freely and lovingly with the holy pair. The happy songsters caroled forth their free, joyous songs of praise to their Creator. The peaceful beasts in happy innocence played about Adam and Eve, obedient to their word. Adam was in the perfection of manhood, the noblest of the Creator’s work. He was in the image of God, but a little lower than the angels.
In that contrast is the second Adam as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan single-handed. Since the Fall the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength, and sinking lower in the scale of moral worth, up to the period of Christ’s advent to the earth. And in order to elevate fallen man Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man, and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him. (RH 7/28/74 p. 83, col. 2 BV 139; DA 117.)

The humanity of Christ reached to the very depths of human wretchedness, and identified itself with the weakness and wretchedness of fallen man… (RH 8/04/74 p.58, col. 1 BV 144).

1875

What an act of condescension on the part of the Lord of life and glory that He might lift up fallen man (RH 3/04/75 p. 159, col 2 BV 159).

Satan show his knowledge of the weak points of the human heart, and put forth his utmost power to take advantage of the weakness of the humanity which Christ had assumed…Because the Son of God had linked Himself to the weakness of humanity…(RH 4/01/75 p. 161, col. 2 BV 161; p. 162, col 1, BV 162).

God committed to His Son, in a special manner, the case of the fallen race. (RH 4/29/75 p. 163, col. 1, BV 163.)

Christ became sin for the fallen race…Christ stood at the head of the human family as their representative… In the likeness of sinful flesh He condemned sin in the flesh. (RH 5/06/75 p. 164, col. 3 BV 164.)

1877

He had taken upon Himself the form of humanity with all its attendant ills…(ST 1/04/77 p. 1, col 3, BV 41).

(Satan) told his angels that when Jesus should take fallen man’s nature, he could overpower Him…(ST 1/30/79 p. 85, col.1).

Here (at the Lord’s baptism was the assurance to the Son of God that His father accepted the fallen race through their representative…The Son of God was then the representative of our race. (ST 8/07/79 p. 101, col. 3, BV 101.)
Our redeemer perfectly understood the wants of humanity. He who condescended to take upon Himself man’s nature was acquainted with man’s weakness...Christ took upon Himself our infirmities, and in the weakness of humanity He needed to seek strength from the Father. (RH 10/11/81 p. 1, col 2, BV 289.)

His work was in behalf of fallen man...He assumed our nature. (ST, 1882: 204.)

The majesty of heaven held not Himself aloof from degraded, sinful humanity (ST, 1882: 746, 747).

Jesus took upon Himself man’s nature, that He might leave a pattern for humanity: complete, perfect...our fallen nature must be purified. (ST 11/11/83 p. 14, col. 1, BV 327.)

Because the Son of God had linked Himself to the weakness of humanity....(ST 4/12/83 p. 169, col 2, BV 342).

...He condescended to take upon Himself the weaknesses and infirmities of human nature...(ST 1/15/85 p. 33, col. 3, BV 480).

He left His throne in the courts of heaven, He laid aside His royal robe, clothed His divinity with humanity, and came to our world all seeded and marred by the curse, to reach men where they were. (ST 10/29/85 p. 642, col. 1, BV 506.)

He was made like onto His brethren with the same susceptibilities, mental and physical. (RH 2/10/85 p. 81, col 3, BV 505.)

Christ humiliated Himself to humanity, and took upon Himself our nature, that He might become, a stepping-stone to fallen men. (RH 5/25/86 p. 1, col. 2, BV 45.)

Christ with His long human arm encircles the fallen race, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Almighty, thus uniting earth with heaven and fallen, finite man with infinite God. (Ms. 16 1896:2.)
...He so pitied a fallen race that He laid aside His kingly robe, left the royal courts of heaven, and came down to this world of pollution and sin, and took upon Himself the form of man...(RH 1/04/87 p.2, col. 1, 104).

(Christ) saw that man had become so weakened, by disobedience that He had not wisdom or strength to meet the wily foe, and this is why the Son of God takes upon Himself man’s nature...(RH 3/15/87 p. 1 col. 3, BV 119).

He might have helped His human nature withstand the inroads of disease by pouring from His divine nature vitality and undecaying vigor to the human. But He humbled Himself to man’s nature (The unfallen Adam suffered no inroads of disease) (RH 7/07/87 p. 1, col. 3, BV 151).

He took our nature upon Him that He might become acquainted with our trials and sorrows, and knowing all our experiences, He stands as Mediator and Intercessor before the Father (ST 11/24/87 p. 706, col. 1, BV 165).

He laid aside His royal robes, clothed His divinity with humanity, stepped down from the royal throne, that He might reach the very depth of human woe and temptation, lift up our fallen natures, and make it possible for us to be overcomes...(RH 7/17/88 p. 450, col. 1 BV 230).

This surrender to God’s will and the power to obey are gifts of the Holy Spirit, thus it cannot be said, according to Historical Adventists, that they believe in salvation by works only. Historical Adventists declare that salvation is always by grace. On the other hand, to Historical Adventists the belief that man cannot achieve perfect sanctification in this life is contrary to God’s Revelation. The following quotations illustrate the foundations of this doctrine:

Entire conformity to the will of our Father, which is in heaven, is alone sanctification...the keeping of all the commandments of God is sanctification. Proving yourselves obedient children to God’s Word is sanctification. (RH March 25, 1902)

Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and was charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the lawgiver. Men who are under the control of
Satan repeats these accusations against God, in asserting that men cannot keep the law of God (ST Jan. 16, 1896).

The strongest temptation cannot excuse sin. However, great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to so evil (PP 421).

All who obey as He did are likewise declaring that the law is “holy, and just, and good”. Rom. 7:12. On the other hand, all who break God's commandments are sustaining Satan's claim that the law is unjust, and cannot be obeyed. Thus they second the deceptions of the great adversary and cast dishonor upon God (DA 309).

The Son of God, heaven’s glorious commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race... He came to the earth in the form of man to refute Satan's lie, that God had given a law which man could not keep (ST July 23, 1902).

Exact obedience is required and those who say that it is not possible to live a perfect life throw upon God the imputation of injustice and untruth (RH Feb. 7, 1957).

At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God’s purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase (COL 65, 66).

This sanctification is a progressive work, and an advance from one stage of perfection to another (ML 250)

The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God (1SM 48; 2SM 78).

God has promised help for us, and in His strength we may conquer...Satan will be baffled and defeated when he finds the heart preoccupied with the truth of God. We need also to be often at the throne of grace. Earnest, persevering prayer, uniting our human weakness to Omnipotence, will give us the victory (ST Jan. 19, 1882).

Many seem to think that it is impossible not to fall under temptation, that they have no power to overcome...Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He said “The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30). What does this mean? It means that the principle of evil could find no advantage ground in Christ for his temptation; and so it may be with us (RH, May 19, 1891).
When historic Adventists talk about the doctrine of justification by faith, they assume that the faith that saves the believer is faith that God will give him the power to live a sanctified life. Justification by faith...is the Third Angel’s Message in verity (RH April 1, 1890).

All power is given into His hands that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure (TM 92).

(God)...upon man’s heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature (COL 411).

God cannot save man against his will from the power of Satan’s artifices. Man must work with his human power, exist aided by the divine power of Christ, to resist and to conquer at any cost to himself. In short, man must overcome as Christ overcame. And then, through the victory that it is his privilege to gain by the all-powerful name of Jesus, he may become an heir of God and join heir with Jesus Christ (4T 32, 33).

3.9 CONCLUSION

Historical Adventists hold to the same essential beliefs that the traditional Seventh Day Adventist Church - grounded in the inspired commentary of Ellen G. White - has always taught. Perhaps they are more vocal about these beliefs since they also believe that the sanctuary is a type of inward manifestation of grace. Thus the living temple, which is the human body, has to be cleaned for the Last Day when the books will be opened and creation will be able to know who were the true believers. These elements of SDA orthodoxy are clearly at the core of the church doctrine, whether historical or modern.
CHAPTER FOUR: EVANGELICAL ADVENTISTS’ THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINE

THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

Evangelical Adventists believe that, in order for Adventism to be true to its founders, it must return to the path originally set out for it. That path follows in the steps of the 16th century Reformation in its taking back of the Gospel from the tainted and contaminated hands of the Popish conspiracy and Roman Catholicism. That path means a return to the infallible Bible itself for truth-saying and correct interpretation, rather than relying on fallible human voices to provide the meaning of the Good News and the Word of God - no matter where those voices come from. Out of this arises the fundamental Evangelical Adventist doctrines, doctrines that have had the effect of bringing Adventism closer to the other Protestant Reformist denominations while still maintaining the unique set of beliefs that differentiate Adventism from them.

A deeper understanding of these unique beliefs can only come from study and review of declarations of doctrine and interpretations of scripture in SDA writings and records. The principle doctrines are relatively few in number:

- The belief that “righteousness by faith” means justification only and not justification and sanctification. Sanctification is reserved for after the judgment occurs, as a reward, in other words, rather than the reason for the reward of sitting with God.
- The belief that Our Lord and Savior had a human nature that was sinless-without the desire to sin but still liable to the temptations of Satan, in a way analogous to Adam’s nature before he was cast out of the Garden for sinning.
- That Our Lord’s Ascension was the moment when he arose to heaven-and not in 1844. Similarly, the idea that “investigative judgment” of how one conducts one’s life began in 1844 is not upheld in the Bible.
- It is Our Lord’s “imputed righteousness” that gives us the ability to stand before God-and not any innate ability we may have towards perfecting ourselves as Christians. No matter how hard one tries, and there is nothing wrong with trying to achieve perfection, it cannot be achieved here on Earth.
- Perfection belongs in heaven. It is Christ’s sacrifice on the cross at Calvary, and that alone, which allows us the opportunity to be saved. In other words, he the
sinless One substituted his death for the sinner’s—even though it is the sinner who deserves to die for those sins: “Evangelical Adventists believe that those who accept this sacrifice can have assurance that they stand accepted before God today. They deny that the Christian is accepted before God on the basis of his or her own good works … They also believe that Christ’s death was more than a mere display of God’s love but was in fact a necessary satisfaction of the penalty of sin” (Rader, Vandenberg & Christoffel, 1994).

While there is no denying that Ellen G. White was a powerful, prophetic voice and a true Christian used by God to increase knowledge of His message and to advance the truth, the danger lies in taking her or what she said and wrote as infallible, on a level with The Word itself (Diehl, 2005). There is some irony in the fact that Mrs. White herself spearheaded the move towards an evangelical style of Adventism by emphasising the importance of Christ’s death and justification by faith (White, 1958-1980: 372).

Growing the Evangelical Seed

It is commonly accepted by Evangelical Adventists that the persons most responsible for pushing the dialogue forward once the seed was planted by the QOD were Australian Adventist scholars Robert Brinsmead and Desmond Ford. This was especially true when it came to the bringing to a head the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It is the Brinsmead/Ford doctrine (as it was understood by them in the 1970s) that produced the five main tenets of Evangelical Adventism as listed above: righteousness by faith (justification only); the human nature of Christ (human but impeccable); the occurrences of 1844 (linked to the Great Disappointment with the denial that Christ was due to enter the sanctuary at this time); the assurance of salvation (resting on Christ’s righteousness and the impossibility of sinless perfection on Earth); and Ellen G. White’s authority (gift of prophecy but not infallible or to be used as doctrinal authority).

The crisis came to a head in the late 1970s with the publication of two books that challenged head-on two of the traditional Adventist beliefs: Geoffrey Paxton’s The Shaking of Adventism, challenging how Adventists understood the doctrine of justification of faith; and Brinsmead’s 1844 Re-examined, in which he challenged the
perceived wisdom with respect to what took place in 1844, as well as the doctrine of investigative judgment, having to do with the perfectibility of human beings while still on Earth (Paxton, 1977; Brinsmead, 1979).

According to Brinsmead, Adventism sooner or later had to face what was considered by many as the central tenet of the Reformation: justification by faith alone. He came to understand that there could be no way to bring together the doctrine of justification by faith and that which espoused a bit of one and a bit of the other: yes, justification by faith but also perfectionism and the accumulation of righteousness within individuals so that they could be judged.

To make matters worse, Brinsmead argued that traditional Adventism was treating this doctrine in the same way as the Roman Catholic Church, rather than the way the Reformation fathers had. If one thought through what traditional Adventism was actually saying on the subject, one was pushing aside Christ's sacrifice and the centrality of faith for personal character development. As well, Brinsmead points out that, aside from being perfectionistic, "... some of the pioneers also had difficulty accepting such fundamental truths as the Trinity, full Deity of Christ, complete atonement on the cross, as well as justification by faith alone"(Brinsmead, 1972-73).

Unfortunately, the battle had the effect of turning Brinsmead completely away from Evangelical Christianity and the Bible as the word of god, and into the fallow fields of "Christian Humanism." It is sad that he now refers to our truths as "drivel." Brinsmead was not the only one who became disillusioned by this process. An anonymous Adventist pastor stated at the time:

When the Ford issue exploded . . . I started to have serious questions, and then I looked at the leadership of the church in the form of both the academics as well as, ah, the political leaders. And whereas Glacier View should have been an answer, what was demonstrated very clearly there was that the church was not interested in truth, that was all I could say, this church is not honest, it's no different to the JWs [Jehovah's Witnesses] (Cited in Ballis, 1999: 149).
In a sense, what has been happening was a modern debate along the same lines as that which took place during the Reformation: the Traditional Adventists found themselves in a parallel position to the Roman Catholic Church at the time, defending themselves against the reforming tendencies of the Evangelical Adventists. Paxton, for one, argues that the position of traditional or historic Adventists on justification/righteousness by faith is closer to the Council of Trent than to the Reformers—which is something to say about a group that believes the Roman Catholic Church is little more than a front for Satan (Paxton, 1977: 46).

The other problem is that, despite official denials to the contrary, many of the influential leaders of traditional Adventism were holding Ellen G. White up as someone whose interpretation of the Bible could not be challenged; this made her an infallible voice even if no one came right out and said as much. As McDowell notes: "In practice, if not in theory, the writings of E.G. White have been elevated to an almost verbally-inspired touchstone of interpretation which has resulted in an essentially biblically illiterate membership" (McDowell, 1981: 37). Because Ford openly dared to challenge this, he could not be let off the hook unless he recanted.

**A Modern Witch-hunt?**

If we look at the history of Protestantism, there are some undeniable similarities with what happened to Desmond Ford in 1980 and what took place with Luther in the original Reformation battles. Ford, a respected Adventist scholar who served as the chairman of the theology department at Avondale College in Australia, questioned the doctrines of sanctuary and investigative judgment, both having been accepted into Adventist liturgy because they had been vouched for by White herself in a prophetic vision.

Ford felt these doctrines were overly literal in the way traditional Adventists accepted them, leading to a moving away from what the Bible actually said—and thus from the core of Christian beliefs that every denomination wishing to call itself Christian needs to affirm. Ford’s defence of his theology, gathered together in a 990-page manuscript *Daniel 8:14: The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*, did not serve to sway the administrators and scholars gathered at Glacier View Ranch, Colorado, to determine whether Ford’s views represented orthodox Adventist thought (Ford, 1980).
Because he would not recant, Ford was relieved of his credentials and no longer able to teach at Avondale. Said Samples: “The firing of Desmond Ford, who some consider the father of Evangelical Adventism, angered many and led to a mass evangelical exodus from the denomination in favor of independent Adventist and mainline evangelical churches. As well, as many as a hundred evangelical leaders and Bible teachers were later fired or forced to resign because they supported Ford’s theology” (1988).

The purging of Ford and others who questioned the orthodox interpretation led to a massive exodus from traditional Adventist ranks. In the five-year period between 1980 and 1985, one Adventist Conference alone lost more than 1,000 of its 7,000 members. Many large city communities that had been flourishing were suddenly emptied, or left with only the elderly (Ballis, 1999: 144).

Ironically, as pointed out by Duncan Eva, the Ellen G. White Estate Trustee at the time: “Des is in some ways a sacrifice as we move along. The Colorado statement is quite a modification of the SDA sanctuary doctrine. The consensus statement does move away from some of the stilted and rigid positions we have taken. Ford needs to realize the speed of the convoy is that of the slowest ship” (Cited in Patrick, 1980).

Brinsmead, in his comments on what took place at Glacier View, tended to be a lot less subtle as to what actually happened. According to him, the other scholars there who supported the administrative attack on Ford “… proved themselves to be a lot of nincompoops … a mob of dead-heads … Adventist academics had proved themselves to be weak-minded, visionless puppets, only fit to be pawns of the all-powerful hierarchy. Hewers of wood and drawers of water”. (Cited in Wolfgramm, 1983: 356-357.)

It was, according to Brinsmead and many others, a mistake on the part of Ford to believe that he could win because of his superior arguments and direct quotations from the Bible as backing: an example of naiveté and a typical scholar’s error when confronted with a political problem rather than a truly religious one: “What Des was asking administrators to do was to preside over the disillusionment of Adventism … they had to make a stand, if they were to preserve the system” (Cited in Wolfgramm, 1983: 356).
In other words, the attack on Ford was not based on any efforts to arrive at the truth of his critique of traditional Adventist doctrines but rather a circling of the ships to protect that doctrine from being questioned. It was felt that Ford was questioning a central tenet of Adventism uniqueness, that of the sanctuary: “Any hint the investigative judgment harbours theological problems constitutes a direct attack on the heart of Adventism” (Gladson, 1992: 4).

Diehl argues that this is patently untrue. While he concedes that there is a significant difference between Ford’s (and at the time Brinsmead’s) belief that what God is doing through the Adventist church is restoring the most holy place ministry gospel of Christ while the historical Adventists argue that this ministry did not even start before 1844, it is not something that can be seen as destructive to Adventists: “This is really the major difference between what traditional and evangelical Protestants are proposing. To state as some do that if what evangelicals are teaching is true, the entire reason for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist movement is then destroyed, is ridiculous” (Diehl, n.d.).

Interestingly enough, the reaction from some in the Adventist community, after Ford was pushed out, led to comparisons to what were probably the two most feared adversaries of the denomination: the Catholic Church and totalitarian regimes. According to one Adventist scholar: “Takoma Park [the Adventist headquarters in the U.S.] is the Vatican and administration officials are the Italian Curia” (Cited in Ballis, 1999: 141).

On the other side, Tarling compared Ford’s fate to what happened to the condemnation of Snowball in George Orwell’s Animal Farm: “Will we now be subject to endless propaganda telling us that you knew that Ford was never really straight? That he did this, and he did that? When will the purge come? [Will] everyone in the work be forced to sign a document? Everybody on the Verdict mailing list held suspect?” (Tarling, 1981: 234.)

While all these unfortunate things happened or were forecast to happen, it also led to a revitalisation of the Adventist mission - both because of the stimulation that the controversy and crisis caused within the church and also, because many of those who
were let go or resigned were the most inquisitive and curious in the congregation. This in turn led to the Evangelical Adventist movement.

4.1 THE SINLESS NATURE OF CHRIST

Just like Traditional Adventists, Evangelical Adventists consider this difficult doctrine to be the foundation of the message of the Gospel. To Evangelical Adventists, God becoming human is the act of God that unites Him with man. Evangelical Adventists say that, because of our sinful nature, human beings are not united to God by their own power (Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994).

This was the purpose of God becoming human: to unite Himself to us. This union came because of His love, thus salvation comes by grace, and not because of anything that we can obtain (QOD, 1957; Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994).

It is very important in the Evangelical Adventist theology to look at the Genesis account of the fall to prove the importance of believing in Jesus’ sinless human nature. By looking at this biblical account, they can make a comparison between the first Adam and the second Adam, who is Christ. According to them, there were differences between the character and nature of both Adams, which are key to the history of salvation.

Sin came to the world by one man, the first human being: Adam. He was the sole representative of the human race before God. Through his fall, human beings undergo two different kinds of death, spiritual death and physical death. When Adam was created, he was born without a sinful nature and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. When he fell, however, he lost that communion with God and even sought to hide from God's sight. This sin of separation from God is spiritual death (QOD, 1957; Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994).

Physical death came to humanity when Adam and Eve were made barren from touching the “tree of life.” This loss of “life” was the loss, not only of the physical death in the future. When Adam and Eve lost the tree of life, their physical bodies started the process of decay. This process is the slow approaching of death through sickness and through ageing (QOD, 1957; Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994).
When Christ was born, he was born of the Holy Spirit. This means that, unlike other human beings, he was born without the sinful human nature that we all possess by being born of Adam. On the other hand, Christ was subjected to pain, sickness, growing old, suffering pain, and even dying. As a member of the human race, Jesus was born with the physical aftermath of the fall. Only in this way could He redeem humanity, because the only way in which Jesus could pay for all the sins of His people was by suffering death on behalf of them (QOD, 1957; Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994). Because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, human beings are saved from condemnation. Jesus as the new representative of humanity has died in place of his people (QOD, 1957; Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994).

Jesus' position as Second Adam not only has to do with justification. Sanctification is another important aspect of His position as the Second Adam. According to Evangelical Adventists, because of Adam's fall, human beings are born with sinful natures. This sinful nature brings human beings to want to naturally do evil instead of naturally being and doing what is good. This sinful nature also makes humanity's most decent and good actions as bad as if they were done with sinful desires. The best way to understand this point is through an analogy. Like a drop of poison: although it may not be noticed by anyone, it spoils a whole glass of water, makes it harmful and even lethal to drink: it is so with man's human nature (QOD, 1957; Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994).

For evangelical Adventists sanctification is seen in two aspects. The first aspect is that sanctification is seen primarily in Christ. When Christ died, he not only took upon Himself the condemnation of His people; He also gave them His Holy nature. In this process, holiness is only seen as "imputed," or placed on the account of the believer.

This means that if there is nothing that human beings can do which is good, then something has to be done for them, if they are to stand holy and sanctified (which means separated for God's glory). Thus, the way in which God has made provision for this to happen is by putting Jesus' sinless life into the believer's account.
The other side of sanctification – holiness - is the quality that a believer manifests, not the quality essential to attain salvation. The believer tries his best to please God in gratitude for the salvation that he has already received in Christ (QOD, 1957; Adams 1994; Knight 1989, 1992, 1994). In this regard, Adventism returns to the mainstream principles of Protestantism.

In section 4.3, we will present an outline of the main tenets of Evangelical Adventism, focusing on the problem of sinful human nature and its significance for Adam and Jesus. These extensive quotations and citations will clearly demonstrate the heterodox elements in this doctrine.

4.2 THE GOSPEL AND JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The believer already has perfection and sanctification through the legal act of imputation. This means that perfect character of Christ is counted as ours. Through Christ’s death and resurrection God sees the believer as already justified, perfect and sanctified.

Biblical verses used by Evangelical Adventists.

... Those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ... by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Rom. 5: 17-19.

...Grace, which he freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved. In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us. Eph. 1: 6-8.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God- not because of works, lest any man should boast. Eph. 2: 8-9.

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, in which we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col. 1:13-14.

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe. Rom. 3: 22.
If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Rom. 10: 9.

What About Antinomianism?

Evangelical Adventists are very careful in showing others that they are opposed to Antinomianism. They prove that this doctrine is not Biblical truth by quoting verses such as the following.

So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. James 2: 17.


For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 2 Peter 1: 9.

Evangelical Adventists make a difference between sanctification and justification. They say that justification is a work already done for the believer by Jesus. Justification changes the position of the believer before God. Before accepting Christ’s sacrifice, the believer was seen as sinful and bound for judgment. Once the person has believed, his position before God is of one who is seen as sinless. Some Bible verses used are the following.

Since we have these promises believed, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God. 2 Cor. 7: 1.

And by the will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Heb. 10: 10- 14.

He is the source for your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 1 Cor. 1:30.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ who lived in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who lived me and gave himself for me. Gal. 3: 20.

Him we proclaim... that we may present every man mature in Christ. Co. 1:28.
... So that you... may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ Phil. 1:11.

...Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfected or our faith. Heb. 12:2.

... What is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe... which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead. Eph. 1:19-2.

... As therefore, you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him. Col. 2:6.

On the other hand, Evangelical Adventists say that sanctification is a true change of character. The Christian is sinless in a legal manner, but still has a sinful nature and has to battle, with the help of the Holy Spirit, with his inherited nature. Sinful nature will always be with us until the Second Coming, when He will make all things perfect again. Sanctification is a growth in character needed by the believer. This growth glorifies God.

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin... For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it... So I find it to be law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members... I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh, I serve the law of sin. Rom. 7.

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. Gal 16:17.

And I, Paul, am the foremost of sinners. 1 Tim 1:15.

Each of us must bear some faults and burden of his own. For none of us is perfect. Gal 6:5 (Living Bible)

Dear Brothers, don't be too eager to tell others their faults, for we all make many mistakes... Jas. 3:1-2 (Living Bible) in many things we all offend (RSV)

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but I press on toward the goal... Phil 3:12-14.
... I pummel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. 1 Cor. 9:27.

... But we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. Rom. 8:23 (See Rom. 8:2-13).

Evangelical Adventists believe that Christian perfection is the believer's growth in maturity. Although the believer cannot be perfect in this life, he strives to grow into perfection to glorify God. Verses they use to support this are:

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3:18.

... Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure or the stature of the fullness of Christ. Eph. 4:13.

Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ. Col. 1:12 (KJV reads mature as perfect).

... Let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking of nothing. Jas. 1:4.

... To lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Col. 1:12.

Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 2 Peter 1:5-7.

As the believer tries to do what God demands of him, there will be change, and he will mature spiritually. There is a difference between the sins that the believer does because of his limitations, due to his sinful nature, and on the other hand, cherished sins. The first ones are forgiven by Christ's sacrifice; the other ones will not be covered since God's perfection will not allow for them.

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either sin, which leads to death, or of obedience,
which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness... now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. Rom. 6:15-19.

For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins... Heb. 10:26.

How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? Heb. 10:29.

Finally, the believers will be completely perfect at the second coming of Christ, when they receive perfect bodies, and will be just as Christ Himself.

"And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" Phil. 1:6.

For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 1 Cor. 15: 52 (Ford, 1975).

4.3 UNION WITH CHRIST AND PERFECTION OF CHARACTER

Scripture Outline Used by Evangelical Adventists for Adam's Nature Before the Fall.

Adam's nature was sinless before the fall.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" Gen. 1:27.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him" Gen. 1:27.

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good Gen. 1:31.

...The man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed. Gen 2:25.

Adam's nature after the fall became sinful and depraved.

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. Gen. 3:7
... And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Gen. 3:9

And he, Adam said: “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and hid myself.” Gen 3:10

... These be they... having not the Spirit Jude 19 (KJV)

(According to Evangelical Adventist Gillian Ford in The Human Nature Of Christ In Salvation, from which these quotations are taken, it can be seen that human beings have tried to attain their own righteousness before God. This can be seen in their action of looking, in the expulsion from the Garden, to cover their nakedness with aprons made by their own hands, instead of looking for God to cover them.)

**The Nature Of Humanity After The Fall.**

Since Adam was humanity's representative before God, humanity has received the same sinful nature which Adam, its representative, gained:

*For in Adam all die...* I Cor. 15:22

... *I was brought in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceived me* Ps. 51:5

... *All our righteous deeds are liked polluted garment.* Isa. 64:6

Who can say, “I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin? Prov. 20:9

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Job 14:4

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?* Jer. 17:9

... *We all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.* Eph. 2:3

...*All men alike are sinners. No one is good- no one in all the world is innocent.* Rom. 3:9, 10

*The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds.* Isa. 1:5, 6
As the second Adam, Christ was born without a sinful nature. He had no propensities to sin. As the second Adam, He endures the same temptations that the first Adam experiences, but conquers them to be our new representative before God. By being the new representative of believers who have true faith in His sacrifice, they are seen as sinless by God.

*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the More High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. Luke 1:35*

*For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separate from sinners, exalted above heavens. Heb 7:26*

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin... 2 Cor. 5:21*

...The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing with me. John 14:10 (Ms. Ford quotes Ms. E. G. White saying that she means that Jesus would respond to Satan's temptation)

*He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips 1 Peter 2:22*

... But with the precious blood of Christ, like the of a lamb without blemish or spot 1 Peter 1:19

... Christ, who offered himself without blemish to God... Heb. 9:14

... And in him there is no sin. 1 John 3:5

*For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh Rom. 8:3*

Evangelical Adventists say that when the Bible and Ms. White say Christ took humanity's flesh or nature, they mean He took upon himself mankind's physical weakness and was open to temptation.

*For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, Yet without sinning. Heb. 5:15*
Since therefore the children share in the flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature... Heb. 2:14

He sent his own Son in a human body like ours- except that ours are sinful... Rom. 8:3 (Living Bible).

Therefore, he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of god, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. Heb 2: 17, 18. (Ms. Ford explains in her book that when the Bible uses the phrase in every respect it "... means in suffering and temptation.")

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Heb. 5:7-8

Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied with his journey, sat down beside the well. I was about the six hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." John 4:6-7

Christ offers humanity to be counted legally as justified in his sinless life, his sufferings at the cross and in his resurrection. When we, as believers, appropriate ourselves of these gifts by faith we are seen as if we never sinned.

...As one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. Rom. 5:18

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died... All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation... For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God 2 Cor. 5:14, 18, 21

And he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the courses of this world, following the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the Sons of disobedience. Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. But God, who is rich in
mercy, for the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our
trespasses made us alive together with Christ (By the grave you have been saved), and
raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus
Eph. 2:1-6.

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions
and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one
another; but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he
saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own
mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured
out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his
grave and become heirs in hope of eternal life. Titus 3:3-7

And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made
alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond
which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside nailing it to the cross.
Col. 2:13-14

For as in Adam all die, is also in Christ shall all be made alive 1 Cor. 15:22

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God
John 3:3

He renewed in the spirit of our minds, and put on the new nature created after the
likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness Eph. 4:23-24

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold,
the new has come 2 Cor. 5:17

...That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:6

... By the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5

... You have put off the old nature and put on the new nature, which is being
renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Col. 3:9-10

... You must be even more careful to do the good things that result from being
saved, obeying God with deep reverence, shrinking back from all that might displease
him. Phil. 2:12 (Living Bible).
Since Adam's fall, human nature has become sinful. Now human beings are born with a bent to do evil, something that they cannot rectify. Thus, we are sinful, not only for the sinful deeds that we do but we are also sinful for who and what we are.

... Sin is a tremendous evil. Through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Sin has degraded the faculties of the soul. Temptations from without find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet turn imperceptibly toward evil. (Ministry of Healing, 451).

Because of sin, his posterity (Adam's) was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. (SDABC, V. 1128)

...Through disobedience, his (man's) powers were perverted, selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength to resist the power of evil. He was made captive to Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. (Steps to Christ, 17)

Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished by the means of which his temptations assert their power. (Review and Herald, Nov. 8, 1887)

Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing him... The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will... There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. (Education, 29)

They (the Israelites had not true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, the utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Savior. (Patriarchs and Prophets, 371)

When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not in variance with Satan. (Great Controversy, 505)

It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. (Steps to Christ, 18)

At Conversion the believer receives a new nature.
Rebellious thoughts and feelings are overcome, and the voice of Jesus awakens a new life which pervades the entire being. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, all deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. (My Life Today, 46).

The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, and new tendencies. Those who are begotten into a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship in Christ (Review and Herald, April 12, 1892)


According to Evangelical Adventists’ linguistic study of the work “perfection,” when the Bible says that the believer should be perfect, does not mean that he will be perfectly sinless in this world. They believe that the word perfection in the Bible means spiritual maturity rather than finally perfected.

Old Testament words used:

“Tamim” (Used 90 times), means “complete”, “whole”, “upright”, “innocent”; IN Gen. 6:9-11 (Ms. Ford says that we should read the word “perfect” as “blameless”); Deut. 18:13.

“Tam”- Means “perfect”, “plain”, “upright”, “pious”. E.g Job 1:1, Job 9:20; Gen. 25:27. (N.B. Ms. Ford says that the word tam is equivalent to the Greek word “teleios” which means “mature” or “full grown”).

“torn”- Means “perfection” “integrity”. e.g. Psalm 101:2 "I will behave myself in a perfect way... I will walk within thy house with perfect heart".

Ms. Ford explains the use of the word “perfect” here is as follows:

The first word perfect here comes from tamim, and may mean “entire”, “whole”, or in substantive form, “integrity”, “truth”, “complete”, “without blemish”, “undefiled”. The second word perfect in this verse comes from torn, meaning “to complete” in various ways: “accomplish”, “cease”, “be clean”, “consume”, “have done”, “end”, “fail”, “come to fullness”, “be all gone”, “be all here”, “perfect”, “set”, “sum, upright”, “be wasted”, “whole”. Ms. White notes,
"It is clear that perfection as the ultimate point in a progression, beyond which there is nothing more perfect is not involved in the many meanings of these Hebrew words. A perfect man was one whose heart was wholly toward the Lord, whose life as marked by the absence of willful sin, and who was growing or maturing day by day in the things of God."

"Shalem"—"finished", "perfect", "whole", e.g. 1 Kings 8:61 (Here the term means whole-hearted) 2 Chr. 25:2.


Artios—“fitted”, “perfected” E.g. 2 Tim. 3:17 (Here Evangelical Adventists say that the word “perfect” means equipped for every good work RSV)

Telos—Root of the words telein, teleloun, teleios, teleiotes, teleiosis, teleiotes.
This group has various meanings as follows:
Perfection as the fulfillment of a purpose, the accomplishment of an end;
Maturity as an ideal to be reached;
Initiation fully into spiritual mysteries.

Evangelical Adventists claim that the word used in the text of Mt. 5:48, “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” derives from this root. The word used in the text is teleios. Evangelicals point out this text is taken by many to mean that man can attain perfection in this life. On the other hand, they say that the meaning of the text here is much different than what the apologists for perfection try to make it.

Evangelical Adventists compare this word to the Hebrew word used in Lev. 19:2, (Holiness) and the word used in Luke 6:36 (Mercy). They say that this word is usually translated by Bible commentators as “mature”.

Katartizo—In Heb 13:21. the word translated here as “perfect” is translated in the KJV as “to complete through”, “to repair”, or “adjust” – “fit”, “frame”, “mend”, (make) perfect (-ly join together), “prepare”, “restore”.

According to some Evangelical Adventists using these translations, the word “sanctified” refers therefore,
"... not to a process in Christian experience but to the Christian's being "set apart" by Christ's sacrificial work. It is this "setting apart" which leads the believer to act as one wholly given to God, and thus the experience. Theologically defined as sanctification new inevitably ensues." (Ford 1975.)

4.5 DANIEL 8:14 AND THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

Dr. Desmond Ford was a key person to Evangelical Seventh-day Adventists' with regard to the interpretation of Daniel 8:14. His presentation of hermeneutical views on the subject of the Sanctuary, Daniel 8-14 and the investigative Judgment, were new to Seventh day Adventist theology. As we have seen in this chapter, the Adventist church did not accept Dr Ford's views at the time. Despite this, the new hermeneutical approach, as well as the questions he brought about this key doctrine within Adventism, was the basis of many new developments in the minds of other Adventist theologians. Though some may agree only in part with Ford, and others may disagree with most of his views, this controversy gave strength to what was known in the early 1980's as Evangelical Adventism.

To understand Ford's hermeneutics on the topic of Daniel 8:14, The Sanctuary and the Investigative Judgment, we will attempt to summarise the document presented by Ford to the meeting at Glacier View.

This summary covers seven principal points:

1. methodology;
2. a review of Adventist sanctuary studies;
3. the specific exegetical problems found concerning Daniel 8:14;
4. Ford's understanding of the sanctuary in Hebrews;
5. Ford's solution to the problems in Daniel and Hebrews;
6. Ford's hermeneutic of Daniel 8:14 and 1844; and
7. Ford's use of Ellen G. White in this topic.
Methodology

Dr. Ford's objective is to "make clear the doctrinal problem confronting our church" and to "suggest a solution to the problem" (42). To do so, he uses the "grammatical-historical" method. To him this is "... the only valid means of doing full justice to the meaning of Scripture" (43). By means of this hermeneutical method, Dr. Ford assumes that the book of Daniel was written in the sixth century before Christ, that Ellen White was a true prophet, and that the golden rule applies to the reader as well as the writer (43-44). He also warns the Seventh-day Adventist church against basing doctrine on types or apocalyptic symbols (471), and against preconceived opinion, as a barrier to the discovery of truth (609).

Review of Adventist Studies.

The first chapter of the Glacier View manuscript mentions the problems related to the sanctuary doctrine over the years. Several Adventist writers are mentioned who recognised the problems Dr. Ford had brought to the Adventist Church before writing this manuscript (53-115). Seven of them left Adventism because of these, others remained within the church, but had problems with the hermeneutics used to prove this Adventist doctrine (5).

Dr Ford says that the "... failure to deal adequately with [this problem] is the strangest feature of any historical review of the subject" (47). He also refers to a letter of M. L. Andreasen to J. L. McElhaney and W. H. Branson (December 25, 1942). In this letter Andreasen states his concern that once the immediate crisis occasioned by such "heresies" as those of Conradi and Fletcher had passed, the church gave the matter no further consideration and, as a result, was unprepared for the next crisis. This tendency, Andreasen writes, has "... undermined the faith of the ministry in our doctrine of the sanctuary." Part of the letter says:

If my experience as a teacher at the Seminary may be taken as a criterion, I would say that a large number of our ministers have serious doubt as to the correctness of the views we hold on certain phases of the sanctuary. They believe, in a general way, that we are correct, but they are as fully assured that Ballenger's views have never been fully met and that we cannot meet them. They decide
that the question is not vital and relegate it to the background (159).

The Exegetical Problems in Daniel 8:14

In the following chapter of his exposition, Ford mentions four specific areas of the traditional interpretation of Daniel 8:14 which he addresses in his manuscript:

- The identity of the sanctuary
- What defiled it, and the nature of its cleansing or restoration
- The Sanctuary's "daily" or "continual" services: its Day of Atonement/ investigative judgment emphasis
- Ford's interpretation of the 2,300 evenings-mornings and the year-day principle.

According to the traditional Adventist interpretation, the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is, exclusively, the sanctuary in heaven presented in Hebrews. The basis of their hermeneutics is chapters 6 to 9 of the book. Traditional Adventists' foundation for this belief is the relationship they assign to the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 to the sanctuary mentioned in verses 11 to 13, and the analogy they see with Hebrews 9.

In his manuscript Dr. Ford states that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is the earthly sanctuary, or Temple, in Jerusalem, but according to the apotelesmatic principle (the dual or multiple fulfilment of prophecy), it also becomes the symbol of the kingdom of God (in earth and heaven) in all ages.

According to the traditional Adventist interpretation, the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is defiled by the confessed and forgiven sins of God's repentant people of all ages, transferred to it by the ministry of Christ, our Great High Priest, during the antitypical phase of the "daily" or "continual" ministration. To Traditional Adventists the Sanctuary is finally cleansed on the antitypical Day of Atonement that began in 1844. This cleansing of the Sanctuary consists of the removal of the sins accumulated throughout the centuries. The validity of this concept is based on the meaning of nisdaq, "cleansed," or "restored to its rightful state," on the relation of this word to its context, and on the validity of a supposed analogy with the Day of Atonement cleansing of Leviticus 16.
On the other hand, Dr. Ford states that *nisdaq* is to be understood in terms of its context in verses 9 to 13, as a restoration of damage done by the little horn. In terms of the apotelesmatic principle, furthermore, the sanctuary of 8:14 is "restored" by a rediscovery of the true gospel as imaged in the sanctuary and by an understanding, appreciation and appropriation of the great principle of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Ford says that "... while it is true that among the many lesser meanings of *nisdaq*, 'to cleanse,' could be invoked, the cleansing thus indicated would have to comport with what the context states about the need for cleansing" (348). It is essential, also, to remember: "the context says nothing about believers doing harm to the sanctuary, but unbelievers" (346). In terms of the apotelesmatic principle, however, he also states plainly that he does not "... question the eschatological cleansing of the sanctuary, and the fact that the Day of Atonement and Daniel 8:14 point to that." He also says: "... such positions were landmarks of our pioneers and [he] accept[s] them heartily" (595).

According to the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary on a great antitypical Day of Atonement consists of an investigative judgment, an examination of the life records of those of all ages who have professed to be among God's people. They say that this judgment culminates in the transfer of their confessed and forgiven sins that have accumulated there, to Satan. This concept depends on an analogy between the cleansing of 8:14 and that on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16, interpreted as a work of judgment by analogy with the judgment of Daniel 7, and on the validity of applying the year-day principle to the 2,300 evenings-mornings.

Dr. Ford says that the concept of an investigative judgment was proposed about 13 years after Adventists had adopted the idea of a heavenly sanctuary; it was not an original part of that concept (293) and that the Bible does not teach an investigative judgment as it is taught by Traditional Adventists (651). He believes: "[the] use of sanctuary imagery to support the investigative judgment concept has been faulty" (651). Desmond Ford believes that it is a metaphorical concept that points to reality but is not reality itself (624). He also states that Ellen White's description of it is not stated in
literal terms (626). Further, he said that in Daniel, judgment has to do with unbelievers, not believers (355ff).

On the other hand, he agrees that: "Seventh-day Adventists have been right in seeing the theme of judgment in Daniel 8:14" (367), for "... the fact that Scripture clearly teaches two resurrections with only the righteous coming up in the first, demands that their destiny be settled prior to Christ's coming, for they are released from the house of death with immortal bodies" (650). He also affirms: "... at every point in His intercession, Christ knows whether professed believers are truly abiding in Him" (477), that "... the professed Christian must stand before the judgment bar of God" (476), and that men are being judged now (523). Dr. Ford also says that the debate over "the daily" by Adventist theologians, was a "battle to give the context its right place" by relating verse 14 directly to verse 13 (395). The new view of "the daily"... "practically ignored the investigative judgment concept and spoke in terms of restoring the 'daily'-the gospel of Christ which had been taken away by Antichrist" (395).

According to the year-day principle of the traditional Adventist interpretation, the 2,300 evenings-mornings stand for 2,300 days that, in turn, represent 2,300 years commencing in 457 B.C. and terminating in 1844. This interpretation hinges on the meaning of ereb-boker, "evenings-mornings," on the validity of the year-day principle, on the viability of 457 B.C. as their terminus a quo, and on the relation of the 2,300 evenings-mornings to the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. But, according to the apotelesmatic principle, there is no biblical basis for the year-day principle. The 2,300 evenings-mornings met their original fulfilment when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem, and the cleansing of the sanctuary at their close was fulfilled by restoration of the everlasting gospel in the Advent Movement of 1844 (646). He also states in the Glacier View manuscript that Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 do not yield the day-year principle, nor is it to be found, contextually, in either Daniel 8:14 or 9:24 (295). Adventist Old and New Testament scholars frequently confess, according to him, that it is impossible to prove the year-day principle from the Bible (35), and even the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia assigns its origin to medieval times (326-36).
However, he believes that "... it was in the providence of God that the year-day principle was espoused after the Advent hope of the early church had faded away" (294). It "... is not a primary Bible datum, but a providential strategy of God, only pertinent after the long centuries of unnecessary delay" (643-44). Concerning the viability of 457 B.C., the *Seventh-day Adventist Commentary* notes that several dates in the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, including those of the restoration decree, the crucifixion and the *terminus ad quem* of the seventieth "week," are not precisely known (317, 320, 345).

**Hebrews 9**

In Ford's manuscript he argues that the expression *ta hagia,* "the holies," of Hebrews 9:3, 8, 12, 24, 25, Hebrews 10:19, and Hebrews 13:11 is a plural with singular meaning. According to Ford this refers exclusively to the Most Holy Place. The same is true of the expression "within the veil", or "the inner shrine behind the curtain" of Hebrews 6:19-20 (RSV), which is equivalent to "after the second veil... the Holiest of all" or "behind the second curtain ... the Holy of Holies" of Hebrews 9:2-3 (RSV) (57, 261).

In the comparison of Hebrews 9 "... the first apartment [of the ancient sanctuary] is symbolic of the whole earthly sanctuary during the Jewish age" prior to the cross (243; see verse 9), and the second apartment, of the entire ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary between His first and second Advents (480, 507). The antitypical Day of Atonement thus spans the entire Christian era, with its inauguration at the cross and its consummation when Christ appears a second time (480). He makes this comparison to point out the superiority of Christ's ministry to that of the ancient sanctuary-direct access to the Father without the mediation of human priests. Ellen White repeatedly applies the Day of Atonement to the cross, with no mention of 1844 (550-551). Ford says that since Hebrews 9:23 clearly applies the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary to "... something already accomplished by our great High Priest" (236); "Hebrews is saying as clearly as words can say it that Christ already in the first century was engaged in the equivalent ministry to that which the typical high priest performed in the second apartment of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement" (175). In Hebrews, the Day of Atonement spans "... the whole period from the cross to the coming...[it] reaches its climax in eschatological salvation..." (204-205; see verses 27-28). He also believes that "... this relationship between fulfilment in the days of the first Advent and
consummation with the second is vital for our understanding of the use made of the [ancient] Day of Atonement in the Atonement [of Christ]" (442).

In this connection, it is important to note "... the whole weight of New Testament testimony that God's ideal plan was that Jesus should have returned in the first century A.D., not long after His ascension to heaven. This, he believes, is clearly taught from Matthew to Revelation and recognised by the vast majority of New Testament scholars..." (295-197), as it is by the Spirit of Prophecy, by the Bible Commentary and by numerous Adventist scholars. He believes "... that the long delay in [the] Lord's return was not necessary, but caused by the failure of the church" (643-644).

- In his manuscript Dr. Ford explains that over the past 20 years, Adventist Bible scholars have repeatedly affirmed that it is impossible to prove the investigative judgment from the Bible, and he pointed to the fact that Hebrews 9 clearly assigns Christ's ministry in the Most Holy Place and the antitypical Day of Atonement to the entire period between the two Advents (34-35). Because of this he concludes in his document "... these developments, along with [the] recognition of 'the true meaning of the key original terms,' have changed the complexion of [the] former apologetic in the area of the sanctuary" (525). The developments referred to are:
  - "... frank denials [in the SDA Bible Commentary] that Hebrews teaches [the] sanctuary position;
  - plain statements to the effect that Christ should have returned not in 1844 but in the first century;
  - the teaching of the conditional element in prophecy; and
  - the admonition that prophecy always had direct relevance for the people first addressed.

Over the years, he states, Seventh-day Adventism has made numerous changes in the sanctuary teaching, the first of these being abandonment of the "shut door" theory of 1852 (564, 593). Dr. Ford also lists fifty-five details in which the sanctuary teaching today differs from the nineteenth-century exposition of it (28-33). After listing twelve proof-text era presentations of the sanctuary, he also notes that all "have been repeatedly challenged by Adventist scholars, and several of them, at least, repudiated by a majority of those who are specialists in the particular area of Scripture concerned" (466-77).
Finally, he points out that on twenty points, Adventist scholars already agree in rejecting the traditional interpretation (469-70; see also 115-36, 564, 590, 593, 596). In short, Ford argues for a non-dogmatic, interpretive approach to SDA doctrine.

**Ford’s Solution**

Dr. Ford offers a solution in his manuscript to the problems in Daniel and Hebrews. He believes that applying what he calls the apotelesmatic principle may solve these problems. He points in his work to numerous Adventist publications in which it states that all Bible prophecy is conditional (305-306, 366). He even mentions Ellen White who, according to him, "... spoke ever in terms of the divine ideal for the people of God...", that she noted that it "... was conditional on the faithful response of the church" (539). He also mentions that scholars recognise "every part of the Bible had meaning for the people who first received it" (392); thus, he concludes "all prophecy had relevance for the people first addressed" (525, 564). But, he also says: "Scripture clearly shows that prophecies may have more than a single fulfilment, and Ellen G. White amply exemplified that truth" (345).

Thus, he believes, Daniel 8:14 may be understood as pointing both "to a local sanctuary cleansing in the days of Antiochus" and "to the final resolution of the sin problem by the last judgment" (347). From this, he says that the 1844 interpretation was "a providential reinterpretation of an apotelesmatic fulfilment, rather than the primary intention of the apocalyptic passage." On the other hand he says that this interpretation of the text is not insignificant because of that, but ceases to be a competitor with Calvary and the Second Advent.

The apotelesmatic principle affirms that a prophecy fulfilled, or fulfilled in part, or unfulfilled at the appointed time, may have a later or recurring, or consummated fulfilment, with the recurring fulfilment repeating the main idea rather than precise details and each fulfilment being a pledge of that which is to follow (485, 489). He wrote in the Glacier View Manuscript that the Seventh-day Adventist church has already accepted this principle when it interpreted the little horn as both pagan and papal Rome (395). In his work, Ford lists numerous Bible and Ellen White applications of the apotelesmatic principle to which, he believed at the time, all would agree (488-92, 505, 531, 655).
By applying the principle to Daniel 8:14, then, he believes that "... every era of revival of the truths symbolized in the sanctuary" can be seen as fulfilling the prophecy (486). Antiochus was the first antichrist, the papacy another, and Satan in his final counterfeit of Christ the last (486). For Dr. Ford it is essential, for Adventists to realize that "the Adventist application of Daniel 8:14 to 1844 was an application in principle, an apotelesmatic fulfillment—a legitimate but not exhaustive application" (574).

**Daniel 8: 14 and 1844.**

In his document Ford does not argue that the Seventh-day Adventist church has been wrong in applying Daniel 8:14 to the "emergence of the Advent movement." He states that "the year-day principle as regards its practical essence has always been correct. That which could have been fulfilled in days had the church been faithful is now taking years" (344). Furthermore, he says that "Seventh-day Adventists, and their predecessors the Millerites, were not wrong when they asserted the eschatological significance of Daniel 8:14" (366), for it "is an eschatological message regarding judgment" (367). What he affirms is that "Seventh-day Adventists have been right in seeing the theme of judgment in Daniel 8:14" (481).

He also believes that 1844 was a key date, for it was then that "in the providence of God, He brought to birth the movement with the last message to the world" (623). "In 1844, God raised up a people to preach the everlasting gospel" (646). Thus, he sees 1844 and the Advent movement as "a fulfillment of Daniel 8:14, an apotelesmatic fulfillment in the same sense that A.D. 70 was a fulfillment of Matthew 24, and John the Baptist of Malachi 4:5, 6, and Pentecost of Joel 2:28" (624). Dr. Ford says that Daniel 8:14 "is the most important verse in the book" (643), and 1844 "a providential reinterpretation and an apotelesmatic fulfillment, rather than the primary intention of the apocalyptic passage" (367, 420). However, "the fact that 1844 rests on several assumptions impossible to demonstrate does not invalidate God's raising up of a special people at the time to preach 'the everlasting gospel'—in the sanctification setting of salvation and the judgment" (648). "In the providence of God, Adventists were raised up in 1844" (622), and to Dr. Ford, "that message ... is beautifully enshrined in the symbolism of the sanctuary" (623).
In his manuscript, *Daniel 8:14*, Ford states that the Bible is "... the sole basis of doctrine. But for that very reason, is also open to any manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit promised therein, including the gift of prophecy". He wrote that he finds in Ms. Ellen G. White, one who lead him to Christ and His Word as supreme in all things, and who exhorts to holiness. Ford wrote that he, then, accepts the messenger, Ms. White; but he does not surrender the right to exercise the canonical test of Scripture" (641, 656). Since he found Christ through the writings of Ellen G. White and since she influenced him more than any other writer since John the Apostle, he found spiritual help in her writings, and acknowledged her "as one of God's greatest saints, specially raised up and endowed to lead the weak and needy remnant into areas of service allotted by the counsels of heaven" (661). Thus he says: "What type of people would we be if we followed the counsels of Ellen White? One word answers - saints" (614).

Ford wrote that the Seventh-day Adventist church must remember, "Never did Ellen White claim to be a medium of truth that superseded Scripture" (604). Also, he admonished: "We do her wrong, therefore, to make her writings the sovereign interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. She never made that error, but continually revised even her written statements on the basis of continuing light from the Word. The church, if it is to prosper, must follow her example" (594). "I believe that we should take the writings of Ellen G. White, confident that God has spoken through her in a way He has not spoken through us, and acknowledge them as light... Let us read them for pastoral admonition, for spiritual insight" (602). But we must be clear: "Ellen White is not our [doctrinal] authority. That position only Scripture can hold. To divert from 'the Bible and the Bible only' as the 'sole bond of union' and 'our only creed,' would be to cease to be either biblical or Protestant, and could only result in splitting this church down the middle" (623). "Let us build our framework of truth solely on the Word, but use with gratitude the counsels meant to be for 'upbuilding and encouragement and consolation'" (628).

Thus, he concludes with the following point: "It is true that in the early days of the movement, when our brethren were yet dependent upon the proof text method, and when every man had a different interpretation, at such a time God through Ellen G. White indicated some evidence from Scripture which decided the point at issue" (605).
Later, however, she wrote: "I request that my words shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy . . . that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their view of 'the daily.' ... I cannot consent that any of my writings shall be taken as settling this matter . . . I now ask that my ministering brethren shall not make use of my writings in their argument regarding this question" (608).

4.7 ELLEN G. WHITE'S THEOLOGICAL STATEMENTS

The Nature of Adam

*According to Evangelical Adventists, Adam was created sinless, with the free will to sin, which he did.*

The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. (SDABC V, 1128)

When Adam was assailed by the tempter in Eden, he was without the taint of sin. (Review and Herald, July 28, 1874)

God made Adam after His own character, pure and upright. There were no corrupt principles in the first Adam, no corrupt propensities or tendencies to evil. Adam was as faultless as the angels before God's throne were. (SDABC, 1, 1033).

(N.B. According to Evangelical Adventists, Jesus took on this sinless nature when he became a human being.)

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. (Steps to Christ, 17)

*Before the fall, Adam had a perfect body and lived in a perfect environment.*

...When Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him, He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings (Desire of Ages, 117).
Ms. Ford then quotes the next section of this passage:

It was thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years, the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could he rescue men from the lowest depths of his degradation.

Evangelical Adventists thus conclude that Jesus was just as the first Adam in His sinlessness, but had inherited Adam’s physical body, which as corrupt flesh, could get sick, and was decaying naturally.

When Adam fell, he brought a sinful nature as well as physical corruption to the human race.

As related to the first Adam men receive from him nothing but the sentence of death. (SDABC VI, 1974.)

Sorrow filled heaven as it was realized that man was lost and that the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and that there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. (Early Writings, 126.)

...They were told that their nature had become depraved by sin; they had lessened their strength to resist evil, and had opened the way for Satan to gain more ready access to them. (Patriarchs and Prophets, 61.)

Immortality, promised to men on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach. (Great Controversy, 533.)

...Selfishness took the place of love. (Steps to Christ.)

...selfishness is the essence of depravity. (Counsels on Stewardship, 24.)

When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, he was in harmony, and not at variance, with Satan. (Testimony, No. 33, 41-43.)
As a result of Adam's disobedience, every human being is a transgressor of the law, sold under sin... serving Satan. (Signs of the Times, July 23, 1902.)

All who comprehended the spirituality of the law, all who realize its power as a detector of sin, are in just as helpless a condition as in Satan himself, unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our atonement, atonement with God. (SDABC, Vi, 1077.)

4.8 CONCLUSION

Summarising as briefly as possible the argument in Ford's manuscript he reaches the following main conclusions.

1. Many recognised Adventist Bible scholars, past and present, have acknowledged the problems in the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9, and standard Adventist publications such as the SDA Bible Commentary explicitly acknowledge them. Over the past 75 years, repeated crises have arisen over these problems and not a few have left the church because of them. Once each crisis passed little or nothing was done to deal adequately with the substance of the problems.

2. On the basis of sound, recognised principles of exegesis and interpretation these problems are as follows.

   a) In context, the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is the sanctuary or Temple in Jerusalem, not the sanctuary in heaven, a fact that invalidates equating it with the sanctuary of Hebrews.

   b) In context, it is the acts of the little horn that defile the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14, not the confessed and forgiven sins, or sin guilt, of God's repentant people.

   c) In context, the "cleansing" or "restoration" of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 consists of its restoration from the damage it suffered from the little horn, not from the sins or sin guilt of God's repentant people.

   d) There is nothing in the context to suggest a Day of Atonement setting for the "cleansing" or "restoration" of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14, a fact which invalidates the Day of Atonement ritual analogy with Leviticus 16.
e) Etymologically and contextually, the word *nisdaq* means "to be right" or "to be restored," not "to be cleansed".

f) There is no etymological or analogical basis for interpreting *ereb-boker* as "days," nor is there any clear biblical basis for the year-day principle in Bible prophecy.

g) There is no unambiguous basis for identifying the decree of Daniel 9:23, 25, to restore and build Jerusalem, with Artaxerxes' decree in 457 B.C., or that date as the commencement of the 2,300 *evenings-mornings* or 1844 as marking their close.

h) Hebrews 9 clearly equates Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary commencing with His ascension—and not 1844—as the antitypical counterpart of the Day of Atonement.

3. Despite this interconnected series of linguistic, contextual and analogical non-sequiturs in the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9, the apotelesmatic principle of multiple fulfilsments provides a sound, biblical basis for applying Daniel 8:14 to a final gospel-restoration message involving judgment, and also to the ultimate eradication of evil as "imaged" in the eschatological symbolism of the ancient sanctuary Day of Atonement ritual.

4. Every professed Christian must stand before the judgment bar of God in a pre-Advent judgment now in progress. All are now judged according to their response to the gospel, and as Christ's ministry above closes, their state will be fixed eternally by His fiat.

5. Over the years, Seventh-day Adventists have progressively refined our understanding of Daniel 8:14 and the sanctuary doctrine, with the result that at many points our present official teaching differs from what it was originally. The apotelesmatic principle can be the final, master link in this process.

6. The Bible itself, the writings of Ellen White and standard Seventh-day Adventist publications have all acknowledged the conditional element in Bible prophecy, the relationship of Old Testament predictive prophecy to the Jewish people and its intended fulfilment within the historical perspective of God's covenant with them, the possibility of a first-century Advent and Christ's Day of Atonement ministry as
our great High Priest in the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary since His ascension.

Thus Ford believes the following:

- the validity of Daniel 8:14 as a message of eschatological judgment;
- the validity of the year-day principle as a providential provision rather than a biblical datum and its application to the prophecies of Daniel, though without *punctilian precisio*, a rough rule of thumb that saved the waiting church from losing hope in the return of Christ;
- the validity of the 1844 Advent movement as a fulfillment of the gospel restoration motif of Daniel 8:14;
- the validity of 1844 as marking the time when God, in heaven and on earth, raised up a people to whom He entrusted His last, everlasting gospel message of righteousness by faith in Christ, for the world;
- the validity of the prophetic gift manifested in the life, ministry and writings of Ellen White; and
- the Scriptures as the sole basis of doctrine, and Ellen White as God's chosen and inspired messenger to the remnant church, to bless His people and to prepare them for the soon coming of Christ.

Another Adventist theologian who held to Dr. Ford's hermeneutical and theological position concerning Daniel 8:14 and the investigative judgment, was Dr. Raymond Cottrell, retired editor, major contributor to the *SDA Bible Commentary*, and leader for decades in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In his paper “The 'sanctuary doctrine'-Asset of liability”, first delivered to the second JIF symposium in 02-04 November 2001 and again publicly on 09 February 2002 at the Assoc. of Adventist Forums meeting in San Diego, CA, he mentions the same issues that Dr. Ford mentioned in his document *Daniel 8:14*. He also states that Dr. Ford’s defrocking and the scandal after the Glacier View conference was brought not by theologians in the meeting, but by Adventist leaders. These leaders, who were in key political positions within the church, held to “obscurantist” views on the Sanctuary and theology. (Cottrell, nd.)
On the other hand, other Evangelical Adventists such as Larry Christoffel, Waine Mack and Lee Greer, hold to another interpretation of Daniel 8:14 and the Investigative Judgment. Though they believe that the Traditional Adventist hermeneutical position for Daniel 8:14 was flawed, they say that neither Ford, nor Cottrell's position advances far enough to make a correct exegesis of the passages in Daniel. These Evangelical Adventists hold that Daniel 8 and 9 are connected to the Jubilee year in Leviticus 16. They say that there are many parallels between those chapters which point to the Jubilee year, the Day of Atonement and the liberation of the Jewish people from their bondage in Babylon. They also hold that these various parallels point to a Christological fulfilment.

According to these Evangelical Adventists' exegetes, the sanctuary is actually tarnished by the sins of the people, who have called judgment to themselves because of their idolatry and living lives contrary to God's Law. Thus, they have been sent captive to Babylon. During their captivity, Daniel receives the message that, after seventy sevens of years (490 years) the people have been captive in Babylon, but that their restoration will be coming soon. According to Christoffel and Greer this message is paralleled in the Jubilee year stated in Leviticus 16. According to the law in Leviticus, people who were slaves to others in the Hebrew people had their freedom in the year of Jubilee. This year was fulfilled after seventy sabbatical years.

Christoffel and Greer state that, after the seventy seventies God was going to free his People. Their sins were going to be pardoned by the sacrifice of the Messiah. And the final fulfilment of this prophecy will come when Christ purifies creation and the Saints in His second coming. It will be then that His people will never be persecuted again; they will never suffer infirmity, or the consequences of sin. Then God's people will be finally free (Christoffel, n.d.; Greer, n.d.)

Either way, none of these hermeneutical positions hold to an investigative judgment where the Saints will be judged by their works in the final day. None of these positions hold strictly to the notion of Christians having to stand before God without any other righteousness but Christ's love and God's grace (Christoffel, n.d.)
There is no doubt that the Adventist Church would not be as vibrant and alive today if it were not for the introduction of evangelical elements into the unique blend of Adventist theology and beliefs. Not only did these evangelical elements introduce fresh blood to the mix but they also pushed the congregation to think about the doctrines they upheld and to clarify their thoughts in that respect. As well, the evangelical movement showed a way to get back to the more fundamental and basic of the tenets that led to the Reformation in the first place. Such questioning of received wisdom always comes at a price (and cannot be done without some sacrifices and sacrificial lambs). But that price is always worth it in the end. The Adventist Church went through serious upheaval during the last three decades. Some felt it would not survive or that it would splinter without hope of reconciliation. That has not happened. There are disagreements, of course, and the occasional theological battles. But the church is very much alive.

The paper concludes with these inspiring words:

Evangelical Adventism is committed to making the gospel of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture central in Seventh-day Adventist doctrine and evangelism. It does not see itself as a “new theology” but rather as the continuation of a gospel centered emphasis that began in Adventism over 100 years ago, and can be traced as a stream flowing throughout Christian history back to the early church. Evangelical Adventists believe that this emphasis does not reject the importance of distinctive Adventist doctrine, but rather gives it a firm foundation and enables the church to truly fulfill the great commission of Jesus to prepare a people ready for his return (Rader, Vandenburgh, & Christoffel, n.d.).
CHAPTER FIVE: TRADITIONAL AND EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE COMPARED AND EVALUATED

5.1 INTRODUCTION: TRADITIONAL VS EVANGELICAL ADVENTISM

5.1.1 Key Traditional Doctrine Summarised

As Adventism arose out of the Millerite movement of the mid-1800s and concentrated on the coming of Christ in 1844, the church experienced a rapid resurgence following what was called the “Great Disappointment” arising out of Christ’s non-appearance at that time. It was from this “Great Disappointment” that Adventists produced one of their key doctrines: that of the “Investigative Judgment.” In essence, the idea was that the date had not been wrong, only the perception of what humans saw as the Second Coming, and of what Adventists understood by the event.

The date chosen by Miller did not indicate the Second Coming in terms of the apocalyptic end of the world and the judgment of the faithful/damned but rather Christ’s ascendancy into the Holy of Holies—an intermediate point along the road to salvation. However, the doctrine also held that the moment Christ entered the Holy of Holies, all decisions as to whether someone would be saved had been made. In other words, for all intents and purposes, judgment day had indeed arrived—and there was little anyone could do once that date had passed (Damsteegt, 1988).

Other traditional Adventist doctrines include:

- **Baptism**: actual, physical, water-based baptism needed for one who “wished to become part of [Christ’s] church, His spiritual kingdom” (Damsteegt, 1988: 182).

- **Sabbath**: observance of the Sabbath considered the “final test” to separate those who “receive the seal of God” and those who “receive the mark of the beast” (White, 1950: 605).

- **Christ’s sinful nature**: the belief that, like all human beings born after Adam’s fall, Christ had a sinful nature at birth, and had to overcome that nature. In other words, He was subject to temptation not only in a theoretical, abstract sense, but in the same way other humans were.
The Infallibility of The Visions And Prophecies Of Ellen G. White

As one can see, the emphasis in traditional Adventism is on the fact that human beings can determine their own destinies and, in fact, must fulfil certain conditions before they stand any chance of being admitted into heaven; for example, White made it very clear that a belief in the Investigative Judgment was essential: “The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God ... Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs for them to fill” (White, 1950: 488-9).

5.1.2 The Evangelical Response

Evangelicals in general and evangelical Adventists in particular have significant problems with each of the traditional doctrines mentioned above. On a general level, the main sticking point is that, while traditional Adventists believe in some form or type of human works in order to be able to achieve salvation, evangelicals as a whole believe that the only way to salvation is “entirely by God’s grace alone, apart from any works, and laid hold of by faith alone” (Oliver, 1996).

With respect to baptism, the argument is that the word does not refer to a specific baptismal technique (such as advocated by traditional Adventists) but rather to a baptism of the spirit: “If a passage [in the Bible] makes baptism essential to salvation it can only refer to the baptism of the Spirit, or it would conflict with other Scriptures which plainly teach salvation is apart from any human work” (Oliver, 1996).

Similarly, the Evangelicals have trouble with the Sabbath observance being the dividing line between the saved and the damned, rather than Christ alone being responsible for humanity’s ability to achieve forgiveness and the chance at eternal life. Evangelicals believe that, when the Scriptures talk of observing the Sabbath, they are speaking of Christ and “the rest one experiences from one’s own works when one enters into Christ” (Oliver, 1996).
When it comes to Christ's nature, Evangelicals believe that, while Christ had a human nature, it was sinless. His nature could be compared to that of Adam before the Fall rather than after. In other words, Christ did not have the after-the-Fall desire to sin that the rest of us experience daily. But He could still be tempted by the devil (with the possibility of succumbing to that temptation) - just as Adam and Eve were before the Fall.

As for Ellen G. White, Evangelicals believe that she was one of God's many instruments to advance Christianity. God used her, in other words, for His own purposes. This is not the same as saying that everything that came out of her mouth should be taken as infallible truth. Or that what she said or wrote was on the same level as the Scriptures themselves. The dangers of such errors can be seen clearly in the recent controversies having to do with accusations of plagiarism - especially as they came from Rea (1982) and Robert Brinsmead (1980: 361-83). As described by Moyers (2001):

Ellen White had frequently been accused of plagiarism. Just as frequently the accusations were denied to the satisfaction of most Adventists. Rea was a well-established Adventist minister and self-described devotee of White. In the course of graduate work at a non-Adventist university, he discovered a number of uncanny parallels between the works of other nineteenth century religious writers and White’s writings ... In some instances the very words attributed to Jesus or an angel in her visions were lifted directly from some other, very human author.

The greatest controversy, however, has been saved for the belief in an “Investigative Judgment”. Evangelicals argue this goes completely against what the Scriptures say about salvation and the Second Coming. They would argue that the date 1844 is not significant, either as the time when Christ ascended into the Holy of Holies or as a line of demarcation to separate the damned from the saved. According to Oliver (1996): “The investigative judgment proposes to ‘vindicate the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus,’ by showing they were ‘loyal,’ ‘penitent,’ and ‘faithful’ commandment keepers. This is an outrage. God’s justice in saving sinners is vindicated by Christ’s death on the cross, period.” Many Christians thus see the doctrine of a
different process of judgment according to the date on the Adventist's calendar as heretical.

5.1.3 Effects on the Adventist Church

From the preceding review of SDA doctrine and history, it can be seen that there are important differences between the Historical/Traditional Adventists and those advocating a more Evangelical approach, even while still trying to operate within Adventist parameters. These differences have led to splits within the Church and, as we have seen, regular purges in attempts to eliminate the apostasies created by the clash of doctrines and beliefs. This also produced the type of polarisation that the Adventists had always hoped to avoid, especially among the various levels of the church hierarchy (Paxton, 1977). As Oliver (1996) explains it:

The church administrators generally became more entrenched in the unorthodox positions of traditional SDA, while some pastors and even whole congregations left or were asked to leave the SDA church. In official publications the SDA church continues to defend Ellen White legends, and maintain there was no difference in the degree of inspiration she received from that received by Bible writers.

Evangelicals became even more disillusioned and angry following the June 2000 General Conference where the church administrators voted to very strongly and unequivocally re-affirm and offer the strongest support to the "Spirit of Prophecy through the ministry of Ellen White" (McLarty, 2000).

Thus, it seems that, despite all the scholarly research and the fairly strong accusations of plagiarism and fallibility on the part of Ellen White, many Adventists (and definitely the majority of Traditional believers) maintain her infallibility. As Moyers (2001) states:

It is probably safe to say that the majority of Adventist church members are not very much interested in data ... that challenges the traditional Adventist understanding of Ellen G. White. Active denial of the facts of her borrowings and erroneous statements is an understandable, if regrettable, consequence of the exalted position
she occupies within the church. Religion, like many other facets of human culture, is not based on “relevant data,” but comes from a basic human need to “know” things that cannot really be definitely known, for some hard and final “truth” about the uncertainties that haunt the human condition.

This has led to many clashes between those who believe in the infallibility of White’s words and those who respect her, but do not take her as the font of all knowledge. The former believe that the only way in which the Adventist church can move forward is if it sticks as closely as possible to the letter of White’s law interpretation of scriptures. The latter believe that Traditional Adventists are making the grave error of using White in a way that she would have vigorously objected to: as a barrier to necessary change. They fear that, when the best informed and most scholarly of Adventists are being attacked and all too frequently forced to leave the church (or at the very least recant), the church risks the danger of making itself irrelevant. As well, some would argue this is one of the major reasons why the church seems headed towards a congregational future if not a complete split.

In the table below, Patrick (1998) gives a breakdown of what a loyal and well-informed Adventist might have been expected to believe before 1970 and after 1970 with respect to Ellen White and her teachings.

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<tr>
<th>Belief Expectations Pre-1970</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ellen White’s writings make a striking appeal to timeless truth</td>
<td>Ellen White’s writings make a striking appeal to timeless truth even though they are historically conditioned to a significant degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They contain many unique elements</td>
<td>They contain certain unique elements even though they are related in an evident way to both the Adventist and the non-Adventist literature of her time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Her writings on health placed Seventh-day Adventists on vantage ground by relating bodily health to basic spiritual well-being and by pointing out numerous paths to right living.</td>
<td>Her writings on health placed Seventh-day Adventists on vantage ground by relating bodily health to basic spiritual well-being and by pointing out numerous paths to right living, even though she reflected some of the inaccurate ideas of her Adventist and non-Adventist contemporaries</td>
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She made copious and effective use of the Bible in her writings. She often helped the church develop and express its theology. She retained control over her literary output. Her writings reveal a remarkable literary beauty.

Table 5.1 Pre- and Post-1970 Ellen White Belief Expectations (Patrick, 1998).

5.2 SECT VS DENOMINATION

An interesting approach to the Traditional-Evangelical divide within the Adventist church is to examine the nomenclature of sect and denomination with respect to Traditional/Historical Adventism. According to Stark & Bainbridge (1985), the single most important dimension with which to distinguish a sect from a denomination (altered from the original Troeltsch (1931) split between cult-church so that it could be used in the U.S. which supposedly has no established church) lies in "the degree to which a religious group is in a state of tension with its surrounding sociocultural environment" (23).

A sect is defined as a religious group that is in a high-tension state with the surrounding society (coming from characteristics and traits that are not accepted by those in society with the effective power to control others and to influence the passage of laws). A denomination displays less of this tension, and may even be imbedded within those who possess these powers. According to this definition, Traditional Adventism - with the major beliefs mentioned and examined above - comes closer to being defined as a cult than Evangelical Adventism.
Stark & Bainbridge (1985) also discuss how sects eventually do one of two things: restrict themselves out of existence or make compromises with the world around them, thus reducing the original tensions. This leads to a diversification of opinions and beliefs, a loss of centralised control, and eventually a questioning of some of the beliefs that defined the church as a sect in the first place. This also leads to some members seeking retrenchment. According to Niebuhr (1957), some members would not feel very comfortable on seeing the direction the sect was taking as it moved towards denominational status, and would stick to their traditional teachings and beliefs. Ironically, this leads to even more diversification within the church and increases the chances of an eventual split or schism.

This, in essence, is what has been taking place within the Adventist Church. According to Wilson (1990), the Seventh-Day Adventists “have gradually accepted a less intensely sectarian stance, and in some respects have come closer to a denominational position” (140-141). At the same time, leaders within the Adventist Church have always argued against this sociological definition of their church as a “sect”:

Adventists have often been thought of as a sect or cult … But Adventists have always looked upon themselves as being in solidarity with historic Christianity … Seventh-day Adventists hold to the central core truths of Christian Faith … [they] meet all the criteria of an authentic church. The idea of cult or sect does not apply (North American Division, 1992: 91-92).

That may be one of the reasons why the leadership within the Traditional Adventist Church was so quick in 1993 to disassociate itself from David Koresh and the Branch Davidian Adventists in Waco, Texas. At the same time, others within the church tried to be helpful and openly discussed the links between the Branch Davidians (a 1959 splinter group from the Davidians who themselves split from the SDA church in 1930), while still others argued that the association with Koresh would help re-invigorate the church and bring it back to its apocalyptic and millennial roots. The official response to the Waco tragedy was typically phrased in these terms: “Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has no affiliation with the Branch Davidians or any other cult, our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones in the Waco, Texas, tragedy. As compassionate, peace-loving people, our prayers are with these families” (Haus &
Hamblin, 1993:31). It was thus that a so-called “media crisis” was averted (at the cost of never having told the membership that the church had hired a media consultant to guide it through the crisis).

A second response was that of the staunchly conservative and traditional Adventists who argued that this would be a great opportunity to spread the message of Adventism on the mainstream media. According to these, the real problem was that the Adventist church was no longer preaching the true gospel—the message that had set it apart in the first place: “Our close fraternisation with the World Council of Churches, with the churches of Babylon, and with the local ministerial associations has nearly shut our mouths to giving to the world the distinct message that has made us God’s remnant church in this last generation” (Spear, 1993:29).

The third response was that of the more liberal members of the Adventist church, or those persons who can be loosely identified with (a) attempts to bring Adventism closer to the recognised denominations; and (b) a rationalisation of the Adventist beliefs. In their eyes, David Koresh was sacrificed on behalf of Adventists: “[A] piece of us is inside the Waco compound. We have all been part of a religious family that has its dysfunctional side, and our black-sheep brother David is acting out the role of scapegoat very effectively for us” (Cooper, 1993: 47). Ironically, Koresh’s message had some resonance for both traditional and evangelical Adventists and, in a sense, represented a return to the roots of Adventism:

Koresh’s broadcast appeal referred to apocalyptic symbols and presuppositions embraced by traditional Seventh-day Adventism. His call to unlock the Apocalypse, to break the seven seals, and to anticipate the battle of Armageddon mirrors calls made by evangelists who attracted our grandparents, our parents, ourselves (Teel, 1993: 48).

Overall, as Lawson (1995a) points out, the diversity that is being felt within Adventism is the result of the fact that it is a liberalising sect struggling to be defined as a distinct denomination. The heterogenous mixture within the church - geographically, politically, racially, socially, and socio-economically - can only lead to a greater divergence:
American Adventism is having an increasing difficulty coping with this level of diversity, especially with the conflicts over beliefs and life-style. Extreme sects minimize such differences by expelling those with unorthodox views. However, as a liberalizing sect, Adventism has become more reluctant to do this (339).

This leads to a feeling that the church is under siege, and there is still a sense that those in power are in an embattled state. According to a former world president: "[T]he church is being attacked from within by people on two extremes" (Folkenberg, 1992: 5).

At the present time, there have been only modest splits from the Adventist church and the church has not had to handle a major split. However, according to Stark & Bainbridge (1985), the potential for such a major split increases as the church faces uneven tension along the line from increasingly rapid change, with some members attempting to hold fast to the unique beliefs of the church from the time of Ellen White and other members excited about the very same changes. To quote Patrick (1998):

Some people are apt to throw up their hands in horror and call for open discussion to stop; that is, they revert to the seeming safety of their original position and draw up inflexible lines of defense to protect themselves from unwanted reality. Others throw up their hands in horror and declare there is poison in the pot, so they leave the church and encourage others to do the same; that is, they reject their original position entirely, to the extent that some of them even abandon Christianity. Others ask what the new data means, and how they might respond to it adequately; that is, they revise (or transform) their original understanding in the light of new evidence.

5.3 COMMON GROUND

This study has focused on doctrinal differences and disputes between the Historical/Traditional and Evangelical Adventists. But it is not all bad news when it comes to the clash between Traditional and Evangelical Adventists. For the time being, they are still talking and the predicted split within the church has not come to pass. In this section of the paper, the commonalities between the two are discussed—in the hope of coming up with enough common ground to provide a meeting place where the two might be able to compromise.
One of the ways of determining the amount of common ground between Traditionalists and Evangelicals is to go back to the roots of the Adventism movement. There, it may be possible to discover what is essentially Adventist and what is not. As Patrick (1998) points out:

We live near the conclusion of the great war between righteousness and sin, identifying with Jerusalem over against Babylon. Ours is the faith of Israel: we are to worship the God of creation and exodus with the openness of the psalmists and the faithfulness of the prophets. But the promise of the Old Testament meets fulfillment in the New. Thus, ours is the faith of the new Israel, centered in Christ and faithful to the eyewitness testimony of the apostles. We are, therefore, to be "catholic" in an authentic sense: our message is for every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

5.3.1 The Remnant Church

For all Adventists, being God's remnant church means:

- A belief in the need to allow the inclusion of both Judaic and Christian faith within Adventist teachings.
- An affirmation of Biblical checkpoints that can lead from the time of Paradise Lost to a Paradise Regained, including the creation, God's covenant, and redemption.
- The belief that Jesus died on the cross, and then rose again to become the mediator between God and us, and to prepare us for the final judgment day.
- The belief in an everlasting truth as presented in the Old and New Testaments.

All Adventists also agree that they are the bearers of the "third angel's message" referred to in Revelations 14:6-12. This message was interpreted to mean that a group of people would be selected and called forth as a way to present a final warning before the Second Coming. As Morgan (1994) points out: "As bearers of the third angel's message, the Seventh-day Adventists were radically alone, a tiny remnant pitted against the dominant forces of society. They believed an 'apostatized' American Protestantism, along with Catholicism, and Spiritualism were all clearly identified in apocalyptic
prophecy as conspirators in history’s final rebellion against God and attack on God’s people” (237).

5.3.2 Premillennialism and the Apocalypse

Basically, all Adventists can claim a common fundamentalist approach to history and the world. In fact, it has been argued that this apocalyptic interpretation of history not only was responsible for the birth of the Adventist Church but it has also been responsible for holding the church together in the century and a half since that birth. Any direction the church may have had in that interval stems from this; any coherence in its beliefs and rituals is a result of this. It is a natural starting point for the discovery of any common ground between Traditionals and Evangelicals:

Apocalyptic Scripture was the matrix in which Adventists formed their sense of identity and mission in relation to the religious and political forces around them. They interpreted the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in accordance with the “historicist” school ... the belief that the apocalyptic visions of Scripture constitute an advance chronological outline - encoded in symbolism - of the history of the conflict between the people of God and the forces of evil, extending from the time of the biblical writer to the Second Coming of Christ (Morgan, 1994: 236).

At the same time, while other premillennialist religions were advocating a passive approach to the world around them (in line with the idea that the apocalypse was about to descend anyway so why all the fuss about worldly things), Adventists took another approach. This was an activist approach of going out into the world and fighting for the higher principles such as liberty and freedom of conscience. Again, this is a common belief among the various factions within the Adventist church. Morgan (1994) makes the case: “… adherence to their interpretation of history has helped Adventists maintain a clear sense of mission and identity in the interplay of American religious and political forces. It has impelled them to resist the linkage between fundamentalist religion and conservative nationalism that some premillennialists have forged in their program for saving Christian civilization in America” (249).
5.3.3 Common Ground Revisited

As one can see, there are enough commonalities between Traditional Adventists and Evangelicals to at least attempt reconciliation. The differences are not in fact cultural, social or spiritual, but for the most part doctrinal and even legalistic. As has been demonstrated in this study, the differences are not grounded in Scripture, but in differing interpretations of Scripture, SDA history and teaching. Whether reconciliation takes place or whether the church splits into pieces, where each claims it is the true remnant church, is something that cannot be reasonable predicted at this time. It is, however, a consummation devoutly to be wished for.

An examination of the types of change the church is facing and will face in the future may be a way to set up some underlying foundations for such a prediction. In any case, it is to be hoped that every member of the Adventist church fervently wishes for reconciliation.

5.4 A TIME OF CHANGE

When it comes to change, churches have always faced a delicate balancing act: they need to maintain the elements that make them unique no matter what the external circumstances may be; and, at the same time, they must learn to adapt to the fundamental changes that occur in society. Too much of the first attitude leads to an over-rigidity and a loss of contact with what potential converts feel is important to them; too much of the second leads to a weakening of the foundations that differentiate the church from others.

Like all churches, Seventh-day Adventism is being particularly stressed these days by the increasing pace of change. When you add the lag in knowledge time between the leaders of a church and its congregations, you get a volatile mix that can easily explode and fragment. It could be argued that just such a fragmentation led to the creation of the Seventh-day Adventist church itself, following the Great Disappointment. Ironically, the emphasis on the literalness of Ellen White’s message by many Traditionalists today goes against White’s own responses at the time of The Great Disappointment. After all, it was she who did the most to help SDA build it organisational structure, against
tremendous opposition, and it was she who led the drastic re-organisation of the church in the early 1900s.

Michael Pearson (1990) tackles exactly this condition: how the Seventh-day Adventist church is adapting to a world where the ethical conditions are not very much like those during the Victorian era in which the church was forged. Pearson lists the major influences on Adventist moral thought, historically and presently, as follows.

- Belief in the imminent second coming of Christ.
- Belief that the church is the unique remnant church which will remain faithful to the Word during an otherwise universal apostasy as the Second Coming approaches.
- The priority of maintaining worldwide unity within the church.
- Ensuring that the nuclear family is protected.
- A cultural legacy that stems from Victorian times.

This list seems to fit both Traditional and Evangelical Adventists, as do quotations such as these: “There is a strong presumption in favor of child-bearing, thus generating a future membership of the church (35). On divorce: “It may be that the church will have to impose more stringent requirements on those seeking to marry for the first time with its blessing, rather than the second” (228).

That these kinds of moral and ethical dilemmas are bound to arise today (given the increased interconnection between people and the educational opportunities - on the Internet, for example) has been recognised by some Adventist leaders. As pointed out by Lawson (1995b):

> Although the range of doctrinal and behavioral diversity makes Adventist leaders somewhat uncomfortable, they are learning to cope with it, just as they are accommodating to the cultural diversity that is the natural result of being active in almost every country and of becoming a predominantly Third World church. As Adventists have become increasingly accustomed to their own diversity, congregations have softened discipline, and there has been a marked decline in disciplinary proceedings (370).
What these leaders are going to do about such tensions is another matter. If they do not act to heal the wounds in a timely manner, the wounds will fester and eventually lead to the type of scarring that cannot be removed.

5.5 CONCLUDING PERSONAL REMARKS

To conclude, the Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to be true to itself in order to continue its mission: to bring the chosen people to salvation. If it needs to sacrifice some of its cultural habits and beliefs in order to achieve this core mission, then it is important for it to do so. It is my belief that some form of adapting the interpretive teachings of Evangelical Adventism to the mainstream traditional teachings provides the church with the best chance of doing so: this will mean balancing the core beliefs of the Church with the changing times. There is a great deal that modern day Adventists and students of theology can learn from the Historic Adventists, who are perhaps the persons who have kept the basic Adventist doctrines alive to this day, when so much relativism in doctrinal beliefs has done so much harm in the Evangelical Church.
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