University of Newcastle Faculty of Education

THE CHANGING ROLE OF ELLEN WHITE IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM WITH REFERENCE TO SOCIOCULTURAL STANDARDS AT AVONDALE COLLEGE

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Doctor of Philosophy



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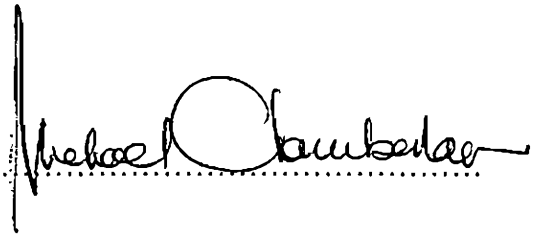
I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

(Signed).........

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To my longsuffering Ingrid and Zahra

Contents

i Acknowledgements.....ix

ii Glossary of terms.....x

Abstract.....1

PART I: A RATIONALE FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND AN EXAMINATION OF THE EMBRYOS FOR AVONDALE'S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 1. Towards a thesis methodology and sociocultural perspective
1.1 The researcher's position.....4
1.2 Encountering some evidences of institutional tensions.....5
1.3 Establishing the historical and sociocultural rationale in this investigation.....7
1.4 Some thesis parameters, definitions and limitations.....11

Chapter 2. An outline of the thesis' areas for investigation
2.1 The Avondale College context.....14
2.2 The sociocultural determinants and periods under analysis.....15

Chapter 3. Embryos of Adventist sociocultural belief
3.1 Introduction.....22
3.2 The Methodist legacy to Adventist identity.....26
3.3 The evolution of an Adventist belief structure determining its cultural practices 28

Chapter 4. Avondale, the school for "proper education"
4.1 Introduction.....33
4.2 The institutional "pattern".....34
4.3 The "blueprint" reaction.....39
4.4 Avondale as an Old Testament institution school home model.....41
4.5 The sectarian paradigm of the home: The fortress of separatism, control and the panacea for the non-arrival of the Eschaton. 47

PART II: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SOME OF AVONDALE'S SOCIOCULTURAL POLICY MAKERS AND REVISIONISTS

Chapter 5. The effects of eschatological emphasis on education and mission at Avondale c. 1897-1918
5.1 The Sabbath factor in eschatological time.....60
5.2 Australia the new bastion for religious liberty?.....62
5.3 The sin of sloth.....64
5.4 An Eschaton most imminent.....66
5.5 Armageddon and World War 1.....69

Chapter 6. The figuring of the Eschaton driving an era of moral perfectionism c. 1919-1943
6.1 Reactionary and Fundamentalist forces on College education.....72
6.2 Moral purity driven by the distinctive dogmas of a hierarchy promoting a final generation theology.....74
6.3 Safety only within the Adventist school system.....76
6.4 The emphasis on Ellen White's authority *above* Scripture.....77
6.5 A zenith in moral perfectionism and the obsession with Ellen White's sociocultural standards.....81

Chapter 7. Post-second World War winds of change c. 1943-1959
7.1 A new sense of need for relationship and values focus.....85
7.2 The higher education and soteriological focus of Murdoch and Church administration reaction.....87
7.3 The eschatological and standards focus driven by American Church leaders.....88
7.4 Murdoch's struggle for College denominationalisation and an inclusive worldview against the College's "blueprint" resurgence.....89

Chapter 8. The maintenance of traditional cultural standards at Avondale against the tide of modernistic sociocultural trends c. 1960-1970
8.1 The McDowell charismatic authority factor.....96
8.2 Further winding back of the Eschaton and a sense of need for personal standards-based judgements.....97
8.3 Evidences of increasing divergence from denominationalised sociocultural standards with some American parallels.....99
8.4 "High noon" for Avondale's sociocultural identity.....103

Chapter 9. Further College trends towards a soteriological balanced values system paradigm c. 1970-1980
9.1 An administration attempts to hold back further winds of change..... 111
9.2 Magnusson begins to facilitate cultural revision.....112
9.3 Traditionalist forces gather.....117
9.4 Battle lines drawn in the Ford controversy over the validity of distinctive doctrines "supported" by Ellen White.....119
9.5 A more open soteriological thrust driven by Magnusson.....121

Chapter 10. The Fordian fallout and the decline of the significance of the Eschaton, Ellen White's authority and sociocultural standards c. 1980-2000
10.1 The 1980s commence with *annus horribilus*.....125
10.2 The old guard tightens its authoritarian control.....126
10.3 Desmond Ford is sacked.....128
10.4 The aftermath: A triumphalist hegemonial administration removes its offenders and the rank and file told to tow the line.....130
10.5 Evidences of subtle discontent.....133
10.6 The Madigan factor and the open door to privatisation of a standards-based paradigm.....137

PART III: TRACING SELECTED SOCIOCULTURAL STANDARDS INDICATIVE OF COLLEGE REVISIONISM TOWARDS A "POST-ELLEN WHITE" ERA

Chapter 11. A new culture transforming focus: The era of significant revisionism
11.1 Analysing the heart of Avondale's sociocultural dilemma.....143
11.2 The Wolfgramm Revisionist model.....146
11.3 Ford's revisionism of Ellen White: The new focus on soteriology and its balance with the former emphasis of eschatology.....151
11.4 The servanthood management style of Ellen White.....154

Chapter 12. Taboos on attending opera, theatre, dances and other entertainment
12.1 Introduction.....158
12.2 Entertainment venues as "schools of depravity".....159
12.3 Evidences of Avondale's higher education effects on the rationalisation of its entertainment standards.....161

Chapter 13. Literature censorship: Novel notions
13.1 Introduction.....164
13.2 The course is set.....164
13.3 Conflict over the College proscription on educational books 166
13.4 The installation of secular literature is stymied by Church administration policy.....168
13.5 A commitment to academic excellence in literature over sectarian standards for character development.....171

Chapter 14. Vain dress, plain dress, cosmetics and jewellery
14.1 Plain and vain dress during Ellen White's era.....176
14.2 The post-World War 2 revolution.....179
14.3 The revision of apparel codes and the appeal to personal Bible-based values..182

Chapter 15. Physical activity in "proper education": The evolution of manual labour to competitive sporting events
15.1 Sport "the curse of the colonies" 190
15.2 Stringent manual labour tasks as the only means of proper physical exercise gives way to informal games programmes 196
15.3 The revisionary door is opened for internal sporting events.....199
15.4 From organised internal to external competitive sports.....205

Chapter 16. The evolution of a music culture and its revisioning with community welfare in the context of good media public relations

16.1 Introduction: The Ellen White model for good music.....211
16.2 The College interpretation.....212
16.3 The feared influence of Rock and Roll in College worship.....213
16.4 Worship formalism in Adventism.....215
16.5 Music as an aid to public relations.....216
16.6 Avondale carves an Australia-wide public profile.....218
16.7 Public relations and community welfare.....221

Chapter 17. Audio, visual and print media dilemmas
17.1 The initial fear and loathing for film.....226
17.2 Tensions over radio.....228
17.3 The War brings revision to attitudes over communication technologies.....229
17.4 Some unperceived threats to revisioned religion.....231
17.5 Reynaud's analysis and paradigm prescription.....234
17.6 The Bull and Lockhart view of time and space.....235

Chapter 18. The prohibition of alcohol
18.1 Introduction.....239
18.2 The College crusade for alcohol prohibition and its political gambit.....239
18.3 The subtle revisioning of a black and white case.....243

Chapter 19. Avondale's standards for sexual behaviour and marriage
19.1 Isolating male and female affections in a co-ed school of adult age.....248
19.2 Ellen White's philosophy on courting.....249
19.3 Student responsibility and trust slowly emerges.....254
19.4 The McDowell era: heavy discipline for offenders.....256
19.5 A liberalisation of standards and a revisionist attitude to the sacredness of sex.
.....258

Chapter 20. Tracing a brief history of College sectarian evangelism
20.1 The central doctrine of Adventism: Perfectionism through the doctrine of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the Second Coming 264
20.2 Struggling with transparency and lost souls.....265
20.3 The "New Avondale" and a new theological emphasis.....267
20.4 Enter a progressive Church Board Chairman--Walter Scragg.....270

PART IV: SHIFTS FROM A COLLEGE ESCHATOLOGICALLY STANDARDS-CENTRED PARADIGM TO A SOTERIOLOGICALLY VALUES-CENTRED PARADIGM: IS IT NOW A REVISIONIST POST-ELLEN G. WHITE ERA?

Chapter 21. The evolution of the Avondale mission statements and their objectives
21.1 Avondale's original sectarian objectives.....273
21.2 More evidence of a revisionist thrust.....275

Chapter 22. Perspectives of mission and the imminent pressure for a paradigm shift
22.1 The paradigm of the Truth, the Remnant and the Spirit of Prophecy.....279
22.2 The case for defining Adventism as a sect in 2000: Who are the "unequally yoked"?.....280
22.3 By whose authority?.....284
22.4 The revisionist reality of *Sola Scriptura*.....289
22.5 Towards a social paradigm for mission.....292
22.6 A brief history of the Church's Australian welfare interest and limitations.....294

22.7 The ADRA factor: From an eschatological to humanitarian basis for mission.296

Chapter 23. The Church, Avondale and Burtchaell's perspectives on American religious college comparisons in soteriological and eschatological mission
23.1 Towards a values-based paradigm revisited: Burtchaell's historical assessment 303
23.2 Adventist education's institutional monster.....307
23.3 Can a Seventh-day Adventist Avondale University identity be sustained?.....310

Chapter 24. The transition from an eschatological basis to an ecclesiastical-soteriological paradigm basis for Adventist Mission: Some implications
24.1 The problem of retaining an Adventist identity, continued.....312
24.2 The problem of administrative intransigence.....313
24.3 The rise of Australian Adventist-inspired sociological critiques.....315
24.4 Ford's contribution to the soteriological emphasis paradigm.....316
22.5 Revisiting sectarianism and standards control and a more "mature" values-based paradigm.....319
24.6 A warning: Develop a biblical and Ellen White values-based hermeneutic for a future identifiable Church and education system, now.....322

Chapter 25. Conclusions and cautions
25.1 Introduction.....329
25.2 Some problems in the denominational paradigm.....335
25.3 The New Testament order for a new social paradigm revisited.....337
25.4 Other evidences for revisionist thought: Motif revisioning.....339
25.5 Seeking an education utopia: The quest for transparency, honesty, and justice. 340
25.6 Final remarks.....347

References.....352

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Glossary of terms

AA - Avondale Announcements

ASBM - Avondale School Board Minutes

ASFM - Avondale School Faculty Minutes

AMCBM - Avondale Missionary College Board Minutes

AMCFM - Avondale Missionary College Faculty Minutes

ACBM - Avondale College Board Minutes

ACFM - Avondale College Faculty Minutes

UCR - Australasian Union Conference Record

AR - Australasian Record

AP - Adventist Professional

SPDSDA - South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists

AMCAC - Avondale Missionary College Administrative Committee

General Conference: The world governing body of Seventh-day Adventists based in Washington D.C.

Conference: A governing body of the Church subservient to the SPDSDA but with considerable autonomy in its local area.

Australasian Union Conference: The Australasian Church's controlling body prior to the Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventists: The controlling administrative church body renamed after the Union Conference

South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists: The Australasian governing body of the Church based in Wahroonga, New South Wales, renamed after the change from the Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

The Twenty-seven Fundamentals: The authoritative statement of the Church regarding its beliefs adopted in 1980.

Eschaton: The end or destruction of the physical world and the return of Jesus Christ. This occurs in a highly visible and sensational manner when He resurrects those that have been his faithful witnesses through the ages of the world, as interpreted from the

Scriptures by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and some other conservative Protestants.

Soteriology: The study of salvation from ultimate judgement and punishment for the sinfulness of the human race. This occurs through the miraculous birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the essence of God on earth, through which all may be saved by an acceptance of His Gospel and His Word. More concisely it may be defined as the doctrine of salvation from sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiology: The theological basis for the church.

Abstract

The core tenet of this thesis, I will argue, is that sociocultural standards at Avondale College have changed dramatically since the Ellen White period, to the extent that a general paradigm shift may be evidenced, although her writings appear to remain the official standard for the Church at senior administration level up till the time of the delivery of this thesis (See endnote 1). The administration has steadfastly maintained through the Church's "creed" of Twenty-seven Fundamentals--last updated in 1980--that Ellen White is a prophetess of God. She is the authoritative and inspired commentator on Scripture and in effect has been used as the arbiter for decisions on Church doctrine and sociocultural lifestyle (See endnote 2).

Fundamental to my argument is that this paradigm shift can be demonstrated in the new sociocultural philosophy and attitude at Avondale College as a result of an implicit revisionist interpretation of her writings. That revisionist mode, leading to and bearing evidence of a paradigm shift, is best expressed in the College's contemporary approach to allowing a private or individualised set of standards by the student to be derived from a Christo-centric values paradigm in contrast to the former corporate or hegemonial interpretation of a set of cultural mores imposed on the student.

Defining the notion of a College being in "post-Ellen G. White" mode is contingent upon a number of information sources and observations, mainly from a comparison of the available historical and contemporary literature produced from the Church and more recently Avondale College itself. The term "post-Ellen G. White" is derived principally from contrasting the College and Church's extreme position evidenced later in this thesis, particularly after her death, until World War 2, with the present documented stance. This, in essence shows that, Avondale College administration, without exception, in the last ten years, has not cited her as the basis for the College's philosophy of education. In consequence, I would propose that this is a stunning reversal from a position once held that she was virtually inerrant in all her writings. Accordingly, these were administered in a way so open to abuse as to give the impression, especially in matters affecting the Church's distinctive truths, that the Holy Scriptures within the New Testament context appeared to be sublimated

to her authority. This issue, as will be elaborated extensively within, remains highly sensitive for the Church's identity and raison d'etre particularly at senior SPDSDA and General Conference administrative levels.

I should also indicate that the notion that a "post-Ellen G. White" era now exists at Avondale, while appearing to be exclusionary, is not designed to give encouragement to scholars, laity or dissidents who might think that this thesis will show that she is totally disgraced or alien to Avondale College's contemporary sociocultural philosophies. I have no evidence of a movement to obliterate her as a woman of overwhelming vision, inspiration, strength, determination and dedication to the Church's mission, especially its education system. However, I will argue that my observations of a decline in the College's official literature, since the mid 1980s, to not refer explicitly to any document from her writings, is an indication of a nervousness by the College to be seen by peer education or higher education authorities as a sectarian institution and not, therefore, worthy of consideration as a bona fide contender for university status.

My second argument lies in the evidence that, for a clear transition from this "slavish" and often authoritarian adherence to and consequent misuse of the sociocultural standards issued by her without particular regard, the historical or national cultural context of those standards is now largely rationalised. Many standards or "decrees" are either no longer adhered to or given assent to. They have been marginalized as irrelevant.

The third argument for a post-Ellen G. White period is derived from observations by Seventh-day Adventist or former Seventh-day sociologists well aware of the epistemological and sociological functions of the Church. These include Monash sociologist, Dr. Robert Wolfgramm, Queensland University's Professor John W. Knight and New York City University sociologist, Professor Ronald Lawson. It is in Wolfgramm's categorizations that the writer has particular interest on this point. He introduced four categories of sociocultural approach within the Church in 1983 through which the "Revisionist" will seek to facilitate respect for Ellen White's contribution but only in the context of her historical and cultural milieu. The use of the term "revisionist" and its multidimensional nature is offered as a pivotal term throughout the thesis, allied to the paradigm shifts of various sociocultural mores. While there is adumbrative mention of this term in early chapters, they are inchoate references best contextualised in a presentation of this term within the Wolfgramm

model. Evidences for this revisionism, especially in mission focus, are currently seen in literature published by the College and dealt with later in this work.

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1. Oliver contends that I have "oversimplified" the terms "official standard" and "senior administration". He argues that "the Church's positions are voted in by a General Conference session which gathers people from all over the world," (Oliver, 2001) adding that such leaders have been cognisant (more recently) of the critiques by Gary Land, George Knight and others. While I believe that Oliver's remarks are more appropriate within the contemporary climate of Church administration, the position I have taken in this thesis is one that accepts some validity from comments by Ron Lawson and others on the perceived continuing shortcomings in Church administrative structure as stated elsewhere in this thesis.

2. These Beliefs refer to her as a "continuing and authoritative source of truth", (Fundamental Beliefs 17) a theme that has been evident in previous official Church literature including the *Review and Herald.* Its editor, Francis Wilcox, recorded for the Church in 1946 that her writings must be accepted with the status of a "divine commentary" or "inspired commentary" nature (Wilcox, *AR*, August 5, 1946, pp. 1-3).

PART I

A RATIONALE FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND AN EXAMINATION OF THE EMBRYOS FOR AVONDALE'S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 1

Towards a thesis methodology and sociocultural perspective

1.1 The researcher's position

The research and writing of this thesis and the passion to achieve it was derived firstly from revisiting the roots of my transplanted faith--from Evangelical Methodism to Adventism--and my experiences now well documented, in the Australian courts and the media. Much of the work has been a lonely voyage. There has been no employment during this research programme and little Church institutional support. No commission or inducement was offered to write this document, the task being wholly derived and financed from my own resources. My experience as a Church pastor and layman has contributed significantly to driving me in this "open-ended" research journey. Therefore, as the author of this work, I declare without fear or favour that I remain a member of the community that I examine.

The ethics employed in this research have brought into consideration issues including sponsorship, the risks and benefits to those who are participants in the research, and whether or not the information has been obtained openly or covertly. Furthermore, the concern that culturally-tinted glasses will be worn to assess the values of Avondale College's sociocultural standards, is real. As a culture-framed writer within the Church I have been warned that to attempt such a thesis one will be damned by the Church for the alleged demythological content and damned by the secular world for an alleged public relations cover-up. I am painfully aware that some things have had to be said in this research, but in spite of this it remains a hope that, on balance, there will be those who, finding gratitude for its freeing power, will gain new perspectives that enlighten and enrich.

1.2 Encountering some evidence of institutional tensions

Following my choice of subject in 1998, the College showed, not surprisingly, certain reluctance. The current dean of the Theology Faculty warned me that certain factions of the Church would not like it. The former vice president of the College appeared to show little relish for my analysis also. He delivered the news to me of a thirty-year embargo on further primary research of College documents from 1970, a day before I commenced work on them. This had occurred despite a College administrative letter from the president a year earlier, giving me access up until a later date, and then afterward, qualified access. In acknowledging that the reason given was quite within the legal rights of the College and that there was precedent elsewhere, it was unfortunate that no prior warning concerning this had been offered to me at the commencement of my work when others had been allowed access on other topics. In this matter I offer some comments in my attempt to understand such a decision from an institution that prides itself on transparency of faith and practice. I cite an excerpt from *the Avondale Mission Statement 2000* on values that may serve as a reference point to the former communications.

> Our Community is distinguished and motivated by:
> The personal values of integrity, justice, equity, community service and a commitment to Seventh-day Adventist faith and lifestyle.
> The professional values of excellence, ethics, equity, collaboration and openness to knowledge.

Michael F.D. Young has indicated that those institutions that "stratify" knowledge and define "property" components on the basis that "ownership" should restrict freedom of access, render in effect this knowledge as private. (Young [ed] 1976, p. 32). In reviewing Basil Bernstein on the classification and framing of knowledge, Young suggested that there is a "Protestant" and "sacred" pretext underpinning the basis that: "Knowledge under collection is private property with its own power structure and market situation" (Young [ed] 1976, p. 56). In the case of my research into Avondale College, the concerted resistance from administration to prevent more recent documents for perusal might be viewed as being due to a perceived fear that the exposure of certain information might lead to the undermining of either the College's or administrator's values, or its relative power and privileges

associated with the dominant groups involved.

The restrictions, not placed on at least two former PhD researchers, may be due, in part, to the perception that the area of research, documenting and analysing an educational institution's journey in sociocultural behaviour, is not one that the Church has shown energy or motivation to pursue. It may also be contingent on the fact that the Church has no control over the findings and outcomes of *this* research. In the light of most Church research being controlled by the various Church universities, this may be further exacerbated by the knowledge that a secular university is facilitating this research. In the past, sociological scrutiny of authorities has not been generally welcomed, as it is seen as "irreverent and anti-authoritarian" (Sargent, Nilan and Winter, 1997, p. 8). Sociocultural analysis may demythologise their power at the level of a structured base or expose unfavourably the means by which they control the minds of those who are their subordinates.

Within the domain of religious institutions there have been some, who, having been aligned to a set of values and involved in a process of change, have discovered that the main casualty from embarking on such a theme has been their job (Sargent, Nilan and Winter, 1997, pp. 8-11). Avondale has in this matter experienced a minimal disruption to its teaching and administrative process, but with one significant exception. Despite my approaching but a small select number of key administrators, past and present, only one director of a department and one former Division and Avondale College president avoided or declined the interview and questionnaire process. This was disappointing and was possibly related to the aforementioned exception. The dedicated service that both departmental director and College president had rendered in protecting either Ellen White's status or the Church's authority had been particularly significant.

Fortunately for researchers such as myself, there appears to be more recent concerns by Church scholars as well as academics outside the Church, that objective investigation into the social and cultural dynamics of institutions would benefit organisations looking for direction and wisdom to succeed in future commitments. Over recent years there has been an increasing interest within the Adventist educational community to seek to know how they are performing, where they are heading and what they can learn from their history to secure a satisfying future. In other words, as a result of the delay of the once considered highly imminent Eschaton,

the Church's new thinking has emerged from an epistemic basis towards a more balanced, reflective, sociologically and relationally-involved community.

There appears to be increasing interest in understanding religious culture and an acceptance of the views of social theorists, including C. Wright Mills, who claim that in such matters we have only ourselves to work out the answers. The evolution of the concept of a "sociological imagination", the "quality of mind which enables us to understand our own society...is calculated to allow us analytically to 'comprehend the relationships between individuals' (and groups') life histories and the history of human development and change" (Sargent, Nilan and Winter, 1997, p.1). The other side, as perceived by the Church, would indicate that we have more than just mortal beings to work out the answers and that understanding still comes from the special revealed will of a transcendent God. In this case there will be an attempt to show that a considerable amount of cultural behaviour has been sourced from pietistic influences and extruded through eighteenth and nineteenth century American religious culture.

1.3 Establishing the historical and sociocultural rationale in this investigation

The culture traced and examined at Avondale School for Christian Workers, 1897-1911, becoming Avondale Missionary College, 1911-1963, and thence Avondale College from 1963 until now, is drawn primarily from an historical-sociological, and somewhat extensive longitudinal perspective up until the "presentist" (or an up to the "minute" of the event) period of history. Historians have perceived real problems in presentism, where there is the risk of irrelevance from failing to understand and connect to the deep historical roots.-- Recognising the dangers of this engagement I have attempted to document copiously much of the past, recognising that it is by describing and analysing and by comparing and contrasting with other selected institutions, albeit in a limited way, that such issues might be relevant to current practice and policy (see Donato and Lazerson, *Educational Researcher*, vol. 29, no. 8, pp. 4-15). The attempt to map a sociocultural geography about the values, standards, norms and attitudes of the various participants of the hierarchy and scholars of the Church and College that drove it in the past sociocultural direction, assisted in demarcating expectations and processes that are in a continuing and contemporary

mode of transition.

For the purposes of this thesis I define culture loosely as "the social meanings and transmitted knowledge, values, beliefs and customs in a given society or group" (cf Sargent, Nilan and Winter, 1997, p. 4). It involves the differences of interpretation of meaning that people give as a result of their perceptions of a struggle to survive and achieve their goals—of maintaining an identity and holding on to a sense of belonging within its ethos of spiritual, psychological, economic and social rationale. The term "sociocultural" may be defined as an examination of the origins, organization, development, and functioning of a community's culture and social relationships within and without that culture. In 1981, Raymond Williams defined social culture as "describing a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values." An analysis may clarify these meanings and values explicit in the way of life of a particular culture (Williams in Bennett et al, 1981, p. 43). This can occur by investigating and assessing "maps of meaning which makes things intelligible to its members"...and by which "social relations are structured, shaped, experienced, understood and interpreted" (Williams in Bennett et al, 1981, p. 52).

In the case of Adventism and its administration of Avondale's education, there has been at times a strong hegemony perpetuated through its leadership. This may have occurred through the autocracy of the "priest-king" Church administrator(s) or through certain families, either passed down from generation to generation, or from the dominant beliefs of a former revered leader exhorting a sectarian eschatological hope that this group and this group alone holds the key to an all-consuming and exclusive solution. In seeking to contextualise Avondale College and the hegemony dominant in its establishment and development, I venture to demonstrate how, in Williams' terms, this "hegemonic cultured order attempts to *frame* all competing definitions of the world within *its* range" (Williams in Bennett et al, 1981, p. 59). This is processed by the advancing of ideas, policies, philosophies and standards, thereby subordinating its constituents within its "key institutions and structures that support the power and social authority of the dominant order" (Williams in Bennett et. al., 1981, p. 60).

There is no attempt to weight the validity of the theology of Seventh-day Adventism although it is conceded that implications may be deducted from the way interpretations on beliefs have been translated into social action. Neither is there any intentional attempt to compare in terms of value-judgement, the merits of one religion

over another. That is not the work of sociology. Of course on the other hand sociologists have their own codes of values that may unintentionally intrude into their research. Indeed we should be prepared to be as critical about our own codes as we are about those whom we research. It has been said that if those value judgements cannot be extirpated they must at least be subdued. Some, like classical German sociologist, Max Weber, have advocated that the researcher must be "value free". This notion, held also by other prominent classical sociologists was designed to give the discipline status and to facilitate the development of the modern university, void of external political or religious interference (Sargent, Nilan and Winter, 1997, p.10). MacIver presents a definition in which I find some merit.

> ...the only clear and indubitable sense in which sociology can be value-free is that in dealing with value-facts the sociologist should never suffer his own valuations to intrude into or affect his presentations of the valuations that are registered in the facts themselves (MacIver, 1970, p. 284).

For the purpose of this thesis I investigate the phenomena of those with *achieved* status, i.e., those who have obtained a position usually by hard work through education or life chances, as well as those with *ascribed* status or power, i.e. born into a name, a group or a family (See Sargent, Nilan and Winter, 1997, ch.1). In attempting to use a critical historiographical model from a past to present dialogue, an attempt has been made to inject some insight into the existing situation by delineating certain historical values, standards and mores still embedded in the present reality. Consequently in accepting the view of Goodson et al. in this manner, I have tried to provide an historical perspective and consciousness for viewing inside the College's sociocultural evolution in its inculcating of a set of "unproblematised traditional facts" through its teachers, as technicians, imparting "the truth". In the event of meaningful sociocultural reform, there seems to have been a failure to understand why present structures or cultures have existed, despite its intentions to facilitate or present the best ideologies, thus further undermining useful reform efforts (See Goodson, 1997, Introduction).

I will attempt to show in this project that despite a strong lock-in of belief and practiced culture through the Church administration's control and use of Ellen White, the influences from a wider society, inevitable from the process of higher education, combined with a new internal awareness of survival and mission, have caused significant individuals within the education system to *transform* their culture while in

that learning process (Bates, 1986, p. 14). This process has been carried forward particularly by those who, being concerned by mission emphasis or through rigorous higher education inquiry, have created a revision of ideas or concepts leading to struggle, conflict and an ultimate shift in paradigm. In the case of Avondale College, this struggle has largely been waged by some significant scholars against a historical traditionalist Church driven by senior Church administration in Australia, reflecting the leadership views of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in North America.

The basis of my methodology has been driven by an *historical sociological* approach that may simply be defined as "the study of the past to simply find out how societies work and change." It may be seen as a mutual interpenetration of *past and present* through the description of events, processes, behaviour and structuralization (Smith, 1991, p. 3). In the reportage of events, attempts have been made, where possible in the last eighty years of the College's history, to obtain agreement among those extant persons on matters of competition for power and progress in ideology, pertaining to sociocultural standards and values (See Smith, 1991, pp. 130-145 cf Runciman, 1989, 1990; Giddens, 1971, 1973, 1976, 1981, 1983, 1985). It is an attempt through the literature to obtain an empirical-analytic knowledge concerning who was involved, what events were critical, and in what years certain things happened—the factual accounts by historical literature observation. The second, the *historical-hermeneutic* approach, describes what the historical events meant to the people involved, why they felt the way they did, their concerns, beliefs, and philosophies--through verbal or written account. I have occasionally engaged in the self–reflective or critical approach, checking on the reliability of information by comparing other points of view other than the ones already heard or in print, and assessing the propaganda content causing a limitation of choice (See Lovat and Smith, 1992).

However, the verbal data component, from questionnaire surveys and interviews on past behaviour and experience, actions, motives, beliefs and their practice, has provided a very minor part for the collection of data in this dissertation. Recognizing that this had the potential to provide radical but not necessarily reliable knowledge in matters of attitudes and feelings, especially when recorded after a substantial lapse of time, (See William Foddy, 1993) I used this method only where the writer experienced difficulty in obtaining appropriate historical data from the College,

having been denied on request. This information has often been discovered elsewhere in officially published sources. Some informal interviews conducted have been of an open-ended nature and the researcher has tried to make sure that he has clearly defined the topic and that the respondents, having a shared understanding of the topic, were capable of comprehending those questions by avoiding difficult or abstract words or concepts.

Finally, I have attempted to apply an inductive methodology in examining the primary and secondary data. As already intimated, the researcher did not know the findings of this thesis until the later part of writing and processing of that data. The study had sought clarification and answers to issues that have affected the lives of students and administrators in their sincere desire to understand their time and place in the cosmos and its perceived eschatology. To cover 100 years of sociocultural evolution was quite optimistic. It has required reading hundreds of thousands of pages of data, material that the Church has often been meticulous in recording and preserving. However it is also acknowledged that there is still other data that could have been researched which may have had some bearing on the conclusions, but which will have to be accessed by others, should they be so inclined, to process and provide further critique on another occasion.

1.4 Some thesis parameters, definitions and limitations

In the sociocultural standards or mores set for Avondale College through Ellen White's philosophy of education, focusing on character development, I trace a history of the philosophy causing and revealing the relaxation of these behavioural standards. We also examine underlying factors that attended an eventual exponential breakdown of these standards. Certain other factors, external to the Church's and College's faith and practice, impinging on the College, are not considered at any length in this paper. These include the effects of the Azaria Chamberlain case, television and the media in general, institutional rationalization, and the effects of postmodernism on the constituents and administration. I do not engage in any attempt to examine the culture that leads to administrative stress, the conflicts between the theological and the pedagogical departments, the issue of the equality of women or Ellen White's influence on feminism. The Avondale stance to the culture of war, namely World War One and Two, is not investigated although this led to Avondale's name change to

Australasian Missionary College in 1911.

Another topic attracting merit, which I have not investigated, is found in the tension between administrators and teachers in the acceptance of state funding. Barry Wright examined this, and from his research and other documents I am of the view that no particular paradigm shift has been forthcoming. (See Wright, 1993) Furthermore, whereas it may have been of some assistance to this thesis to inquire into other similar conservative private colleges in Australia, including Moore College in Sydney, I have opted to trace several colleges in the United States, that appear to be helpful to illustrating my work, through the descriptions by James Tunstead Burtchaell.

Words can be rubbery. Sociological terms are not always understood within religious contexts. Problems arise when religious and sociological terms are used loosely and sometimes pejoratively. Although Seventh-day Adventism has exhibited strong sectarian attitudes and behaviour throughout its existence, and has been usually termed a sect sociologically, I am of the opinion that post 2000, these characteristics are merging toward a more denominational outlook in sociocultural values. Consequently, for the sake of consistency throughout this thesis, I have nominated to call the Adventist organization the "Church". My context for choosing this term is partially and broadly derived from Ian Robertson's definitions of *ecclesia, denomination, sect and cult.* (see Robertson, 1981, pp 416-418) and more specifically from Bryan Wilson and H. Richard Niebuhr's postulates. Dr. Donald Roy summarised some significant identifiers of the sect from Wilson and Niebuhr. The sect consisted of a community or subculture of believers who were "motivated by a sense of special mission" based on "the monopoly of truth" driven from a source of "special revelation" *outside* Protestant authority (the Bible) to endorse an exclusive or elite community (Roy, 1988, pp. 49-51).

This special revelation or epistemology, overseen by a hegemony, is evaluated as unchanging, and part of the religious or sociocultural landmark, set between firm and unambiguous guideposts and its stamp of authority from God who changes not. While in a sociological sense it could be argued that Adventism still holds on to certain sectarian characteristics, from a theological standpoint the organization assents to all the fundamental beliefs of traditional Protestantism, despite adding several distinctive beliefs of its own. Those beliefs include the Reformation doctrine of the final authority of the Bible; the historical saving power of Jesus Christ causing a spiritually

transformed life; the eternal redemptive nature of this power culminating in the Eschaton and the importance of evangelistic mission. While it must be conceded as part of the argument of this thesis that the Church in its earlier period of history did not exhibit a particularly denominational character, there have been strong indications towards this paradigm in recent years, yet not without reservations. This matter will be discussed later in more detail.

This work may attract some concerns from some historians who could object to the apparently excessive time period of approximately 100 years, that it could be disqualified from being an in-depth analysis. My defence would be mounted on the basis that, in order to present a body of meaningful evidence demonstrating a significant change in cultural approach and philosophy, a reasonable if not substantial period of time is required for assessment. Given that Church administrators have tried assiduously to keep the Church's faith and practice immutable and impervious to change by holding to its landmarks and way marks, so called, evidences of change appear to have been less forthcoming until more recently.

Another concern, which I revisit here, is my attempt to interpret current behaviour in the context of the past by recording "presentist" history. Although I am quite aware of the detractors of this approach there is also some scholarly support for it. Apart from the recognition that this thesis emanates from a Faculty of Education, I would be inclined to prefix any apologetic for this approach by stating that a high proportion of the material documented and analysed is officially in the public arena. That would seem to be already a static reference point from which the data of reliable history may be reasonably derived. Furthermore, I have not relied on casually constructed views or hearsay. The material I deal with is neither covert, nor controversial but rather, I would argue, quite valid.

The title of this thesis is not intended to lead the reader to a view that any other Adventist tertiary education institution has been investigated or compared to Avondale College's sociocultural evolution. This dissertation is fundamentally about change and continuity/discontinuity in Adventist culture, illustrating Avondale as a special case study of what might be seen elsewhere in some similar institutions as a more pervasive phenomenon.

Chapter 2

An outline of the thesis' areas for investigation

2.1 The Avondale College context

Avondale College stands in a unique position as a survivor in Australia and the South Pacific region with the status of an ongoing privately owned, Church-operated, co-educational boarding institution. The reasons for Avondale's success lie to a large extent in its militant loyalty to Ellen White's philosophic code of faith and practice and the adherence to a separationist social policy. Australian Adventist historian, Arthur N. Patrick, is unequivocal when he stated that Avondale's endurance lay in the belief that "Ellen White epitomised *the truth*, that is *the message.*" She was the "mother of the Church in the South Pacific" (Patrick, *Adventist Heritage,* Spring, 1993, pp. 30,36; emphasis mine; see endnote 1).

In maintaining a certain sociocultural identity for more than one hundred years, the College has attempted to remain aloof from the beckoning inroads of secularism and government domination and, until recent years, has attempted to steadfastly maintain its culture and control over its student population. Yet sociocultural standards at Avondale College have changed dramatically since 1900, although the writings of Ellen White, from whence they were derived at that time, had not. In contrast to the citing of scriptural values Church administrators and College Board chairmen have tended to follow Ellen White's sociocultural standards to the letter up until the 1970s. By comparison with contemporary trends, they implied that she had virtual imprimatur status without due regard to those matters of practice or Church culture that should have been allowed a variable consideration. Until the 1960s she had been promoted by Church administration as the Church's insurance against liberalism and modernism, as its assurance for the Church's spiritual identity and distinctiveness, and an encyclopaedic authority for its members (See Patrick, Unpublished manuscript [Draft dated] April 2, 1998). The Church's concern for standards for the first 70-odd years stemmed from an eschatological urgency to prepare for the imminent return of Jesus Christ, (the culmination of the Eschaton), through correct cultural behaviour. While not normally under the direct control of

reactionary administrators, Avondale College, up until the 1970s, cited Ellen White to enforce College standards.

Adventism has in many ways trodden somewhere between the pathways of the Amish who have been passed by through holding to eighteenth century cultural ideals and more recently the American Methodists who have assimilated so much of the American secular culture that they appear to have lost almost all vestiges of identity. As already intimated, the problems of secularisation and materialism have all but defeated Methodism, which, like Adventism, was largely a product of eighteenth and nineteenth century culture and the "children of their time". Combined with the strength of Puritan philosophy toward literature, entertainment, alcohol, adornment, and strict Sabbath (Sunday) observance, it was all part of the early American Evangelical culture. Such religion tended to focus on peripheries that Adventism easily assimilated.

Theoretical interpretations in educational goals might lead one to conclude that Avondale occupied a strong position in regulating, energizing and sanctioning the moral climate of the Australasian Church. The school "home" assisted in socializing students, teaching the way of conformity fitting into the family of the "Great Advent Movement" and preparing the student for effective mission and sectarian service. Dr Bryan Ball, College president 1984-1990 and College Board Chairman, 1990-1996 declared that *Avondale has been "the mind and heart" of the South Pacific Church community* (Ball, *AR*, November 26, 1983, p. 3).

2.2 The sociocultural determinants and periods under analysis

Taking this on board, it seems important that I attempt to indicate how the sociocultural standards set for the College at its founding in 1897, through Ellen White's philosophy of education, focusing on character development, have since evolved to the extent that we may propose that an over-arching paradigm shift has occurred. Her original standards were documented in such bulletins as the Avondale *Announcement* in 1900 which decreed that flirtation, courtship, profane language, card playing, tobacco, alcohol, novels, story magazines or other reading matter of an injurious character were prohibited. There was nothing extraordinary about a statement of these conservative Protestant beliefs across other churches. Of significance are the degree and the time period in which they continued at the

College. In particular I refer to the icons of the Sabbath and vegetarianism that still remain largely, and certainly officially, intact at Avondale, having the status of an institution offering postgraduate degrees. A summary of the history of these evolving standards, largely selected on the focus, space and discussion given in the official Adventist literature, includes:

* The evolution of a public relations culture through music and welfare
* The revision of a censorship in literature and the reading of novels
* A transition in Church standards in cosmetics, jewellery, apparel
* The rationalising of attending theatre, dancing and other entertainments
* Playing sports like cricket, football and basketball etc
* Standards for sexual relationships
* Abstinence from alcohol
* A change of theological and cultural emphasis in evangelism (mission)
* The evolution of Avondale's mission statements

As previously indicated, in contrast to the predominant contemporary citing of scriptural values, Church administrators and College Board chairmen (the Australasian Church presidents) have until recently tended to follow almost to the letter Ellen White's word for standards of behaviour and their perceived interpretation for the theology of the Church's mission. This mission was traditionally eschatologically mission-based. Its theology was set on the theme that the Eschaton would be ushered in within "this generation". Such "final generation" belief was a continuing fertile ground for the Church leaders, conferring not a small degree of bureaucratic authority, to continually buoy the faithful members that it was "only minutes to midnight" before Jesus would return in all his glory.

Ellen White's authoritative statements always accompanied these exhortations. Yet the Church has tried zealously to paint itself as a Scripture-affirming body of believers holding to its fundamental tenet of a vested authority in the Scriptures alone (See Patrick 1987, p. 315; Schwarz and Greenleaf, 2000). Schwarz and Greenleaf maintain a traditionalist stance on Adventist history claiming that, doctrinally, the Church has been on track except for some confusion over the doctrine of the Trinity. They admit to the Church's emphasizing the details of the Eschaton and its set of propositional doctrines at the turn of the twentieth century, followed by a more

soteriologically-based attitude with a relational focus on Christ and a social awareness towards the end of the twentieth century. But their position that Adventists "always believed and taught that they were a legitimate part of the Christian community [and] that their message was based *on the Bible alone*," may be seen differently from reading this thesis (Schwarz and Greenleaf, 2000, p. 649). On reflection it would appear nearer to reality that the Church's use of "remnant" and "the message", was contextualised in the belief that they were the vessel of *the* true Christian community rather than having *a* legitimate part of it.

It seems true to say that many in the informed Protestant community had tended to look more benignly at the Church and accept it as Christian, as Adventism reduced the emphasis on exclusivity of truth and remnancy and revealed to the world a greater desire to have the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and not the distinctive truths of Adventism, as the central key. But the stance of Adventism, while seeking to be accepted as truly Christian, even now, despite the rhetoric, has made no official statement concerning genuine Christian believers from other denominations that defines them unconditionally and unreservedly as "the body of Jesus Christ". The bottom line is that normative Adventism, by virtue of its "message", and as dictated by the General Conference, still appears to embody implicitly the claim to having *the* exclusive remnant church members and *the* exclusive truth ("Actions", *Adventist Review*, July 20-27, 2000, p. 73).

Since the 1960s, it is accepted that the growing sophistication and obsession for modern education and technologies and the influences of the media, notably TV, have caused the Church, albeit unwittingly, to be driven into a heartland of secularist and materialistic philosophy. The original yearning for a revolution of the world's system by divine cataclysmic intervention has been subverted, in part, by these technologies and the philosophy of postmodernism. Institutional technologies have depreciated the need for the supernatural, and the operating table and the startling inroads made by medical technology have all but demythologised miracles.

Such faith and practice have been also exchanged, suggests John W. Knight, in the bid for elevated socio-economic status and secular acceptance at Avondale as observed in the "independent spirited" Avondale science courses of the early 1970s. These exhibited an appearance that scholars, and not "sect administrators", were now in control despite a unit in Bible remaining compulsory. Likewise, following in its wake, the BA Theology course was developing "in sophistication and scholarship"

through a more exegetical (John W. Knight, 1973, p. 203) and inquisitorial approach, in contrast with the style of education, nearly seventy years before.

The College remained preoccupied with its cultural standards of dress and etiquette into the late 1960s. The work-study principle, so firmly adhered to in its first 70 years, for cultural and economic reasons found itself in an inexorable transition as College farming was economically rationalised and the Sanitarium Health Food Company at Cooranbong became automated.

Curriculum-wise, the one telling divergence with virtually all other denominations was that globally the Seventh-day Adventist education system contained the consuming belief and hope in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and therefore, because of its imminence, must not at any costs be thwarted in its mission by wasting time on non-essential learning. This confluence of the apocalyptic figuring of the seventh-day Sabbath held the imminence of the Eschaton together with the efficient use of believers' time and was an inseparable centrepiece to Adventist educational philosophy. Adventism's embryonic days, for instance, show ample evidence of a concerted rooting out of classical curriculum. Such an educational philosophy may be aptly summarised in the words of an 1825 Pennsylvanian legislator, who suggested that classical languages "added no more to scientific (or religious) knowledge than the croaking of frogs" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 821).

American Catholic Church historian, James Tunstead Burtchaell, (see endnote 2) agreed that there is little evidence to support a claim that Christian students basked in any genuine nourishment from the classical curriculum of the nineteenth century (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 821). From a curriculum standpoint, Avondale made little attempt philosophically to evaluate other belief systems. All valid belief was ascribed to the Scriptures through the writings of Ellen White and no course was considered necessary, even in comparative religious studies. However it would seem that the waning of interest in the imminence of the Eschaton towards and during the 1980s might have significantly emboldened those driving higher education in Adventism to nonchalance about the Church's former distinctive sectarian identity and overt cultural practices. Significant eras that influenced the ebb and flow of sociocultural control at Avondale included:

* The context of the formation of Avondale's policies during its conception and foundation (c.1844-1900).

* The impact of World War 1 and the death of Ellen White (c.1900-1918).
* The reaction to liberal and modernistic forces between WW1--WW2 and the development of Ellen White to imprimatur status (c.1919-1943).
* The embryonic vestiges of the rationalisation of the Church's sociocultural imprimatur on Ellen White (c.1943-1959).
* Resistance to further cultural rationalisation (c.1960-1969).
* Renewed focus on soteriological themes and biblical values (c.1970-1980).
* The Fordian and Rea challenge to Ellen White's legitimation as prophet, inspired writer and Bible commentator and the reactionary fallout (c.1980-1984).
* The renewal of a soteriological and ecclesiological emphasis impacting on the growth of biblical value judgment based principles. Further change in mission emphasis and evidences of an emerging Revisionist-styled "post-Ellen White" era (c.1985-2000).

Dr Barry Oliver, SPDSDA Church executive secretary, has suggested that its traditional historical emphasis on eschatology and mission must become more balanced by a soteriological and ecclesiological emphasis. Since 1970, and more particularly following 1984, there have been moves for a more equitable basis for mission. This has been in part due to the destabilisation of Ellen White's authority as the inspired interpreter of Scripture. The changes in emphasis and the loss of explicit comment on sociocultural standards and statements anchoring Ellen White to College philosophy of education and mission are particularly noticeable since the early 1980s.

A significant identity at Avondale and charismatic academic head of the Theology Department for more than ten years, Dr Desmond Ford, (See endnote 3) challenged Ellen White's authority as the last word in doctrinal arbitration. American born, Pastor Walter Rea (See endnote 4) exposed her borrowing from other writings. The ensuing process by which the administrative bureaucracy managed these challenges served to disillusion many members and further weaken the authority of the Church. The fall-out from the Ford and Rea controversies had a reverberating effect on the College's sociocultural authority, not witnessed in any previous time. The alienation and subtle marginalisation of these men, in particular Ford, caused a significant loss of face for the administrative authority of the Church and a significant loss of faith in Ellen White's authority in Australia and at Avondale College.

Corresponding to this was a pulling away from "final generation" eschatology, as evidenced from the 1980s onwards, in direct contrast to repeated expressions on the urgency of an imminent Eschaton so uncompromisingly expressed in the first fifty years of the twentieth century.

The outcomes include evidence for a significantly reduced use of Ellen White as an authority. She is no longer referred to explicitly in the official College mission statements. College Board chairmen and Avondale presidents evidenced this shift--i.e. Cox, Scragg and Ball in the 1980s and Madigan in the 1990s--emphasizing that the essence of Adventism, was *being* in Christ, rather than *doing* good works and upholding the Church standards, ideas that were pervasive from the 1920s to the 1940s. The College handbooks now make little reference to definitive standards of dress, social entertainment or sociocultural behaviour as defined by Ellen White through the bureaucratic mandate of the Church administrators. Replacing this has been an emphasis on Christo-centric values and relationships.

An attempt will be made to demonstrate some significant evidences of this in the paradigm shifts from the former taboos in competitive organised sport, for example, basketball, now promoted as a form of community evangelistic outreach to attract new recruits for the College, Karaoke pool-side style entertainment, social gospel-styled overseas humanitarian mission endeavours and the general tendency for outward conformity to secular standards of apparel, diet, literature, and entertainment. While there remains a general appeal to biblical values there is now a reluctance to decree any explicit standards with the exception of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, nightclubs and inappropriate sexual behaviour. In its quest for university status the College, especially apparent in the current president's philosophical direction, provides some evidence for a developing "de facto" authority by virtue of its own evolving academic and educational philosophy.

Commenting on causes for sociological change in the Church, Adventist historian, Gary Land, (See endnote 5) summarised the position of American Adventism in the 1970s, postulating that, in part, "secularisation, social unrest, and the decline of traditional values" caused the Church in the 1980s to be:

> faced with the dilemma of maintaining and reinforcing its sectarian tradition or moving toward accommodation with other denominations and society at large. The former would mean increasing isolation from American society, while the latter could possibly mean loss of identity (Land, (ed.) 1986, p. 208).

In conclusion and as a consequence of these factors, I will endeavour to offer support for the notion that Avondale is now in a "post-Ellen White" era. This is revealed in the form of a proposed new orthodoxy pervading the College with a changing emphasis on mission, and theological and sociocultural life-style perspectives. The evidence comes from a number of sources including comparisons of its Mission statements and its shift of the eschatological mission paradigm emphasis to a more soteriological, ecclesiological-based paradigm. Subject to the validity of these deductions any appearance that Avondale is becoming a Revisionist (See endnote 6) educational institution might have caused some repercussions with a traditionalist and orthodox General Conference administration. The current General Conference administration however, headed for the first time by a theologian (since 1999) appears to be more empathetic and receptive to change, evidence of which will be offered later in this thesis.

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1. Its overt aloofness from political agendas in Australia did not preclude the Church from playing a significant part in the South Pacific indigenous culture and politics of PNG, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands.

2. James Tunstead Burtchaell is a published United States–based Catholic researcher and writer. He is a lecturer, educational consultant and commissioner. His work is cited at length in this thesis on the basis that he offers examples demonstrating how religious identity in higher education moves from sectarian security to becoming uncomfortable with its roots, progressing to an expendable state where there is ultimately disengagement between church and school.

3. Dr Desmond Ford acquired doctorates from Michigan State University in the USA and Birmingham University in the UK, making him arguably one of the Church's most influential and effective communicating scholars in its history. Considerable discussion revolves around his work and influence in this thesis.

4. Pastor Walter Rea, whose work is not examined in this thesis, wrote a popularly read analysis by Adventists of Ellen White, claiming that she plagiarised from other historians' works. A sociocultural assessment of his impact might be a useful study, especially in a United States-based context.

5. Gary Land was Associate Professor of History at Andrews University in 1989.

6. The use of this model, I would propose, does not necessarily provide the ultimate strength or veracity of the methodology applied. Rather it should be interpreted as a heuristic device for the reflection and ultimate integrity of this description and analysis. Movement away from the paradigm of Ellen White's inerrant authority cannot be described in hermetically-sealed causes or as carrying with it incidents or single events sufficient within themselves to facilitate any dramatic process.

Chapter 3

Embryos of Adventist sociocultural belief

3.1 Introduction

The historical and sociocultural development of Seventh-day Adventism has been more recently understood fundamentally as a phenomenon derived largely out of the nation of the United States of America. Despite having blossomed into a globalised religion, its tenets of belief are strikingly similar universally and its standards of behaviour remain held together by devotion to its revered pioneer, and for many, its prophet, Ellen G. White. Today the governing body of the Church remains in the United States and continues to direct and guide the world Church despite its diminishing numerical strength in relation to the rest of the world Church. A former Adventist editor and political US Congressman aide, Tom Dybdahl, observed in 1976:

> It (Seventh-day Adventism) was born, nurtured, and it came of age here, shaped wholly in American culture. Despite its wide spread, there is still remarkable uniformity among Adventists throughout the world. And today with about one fifth of the membership, Americans in America control the World Church (Dybdahl, *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 33).

Dr Arthur N. Patrick (See endnote 1) restated the historical sociocultural context for Avondale, affirming in 1987, "From the outset, it is essential for the researcher to understand the general religious antecedents and specific North American origins of Seventh-day Adventism" (Patrick, 1987, p. 309).

However, to summarise the theological perspective, the former head of Avondale's Theology Department, Dr Alwyn P. Salom, examined Adventism as having been derived ostensibly from Reformation theology. This determined a significant and comprehensive contribution to the rise of Adventism through its challenge to papal authority and the freedom for individuals to interpret the Scriptures without the interference of the Church. Such a stance caused an awakening for sectarian and denominational development with its accompanying distinctive tenets of Protestantism. Salom records that "Seventh-day Adventism also borrowed from post–Reformation movements, in particular, Puritanism and the Enlightenment. The Puritans stressed the importance of self-discipline, and the dignity of labour, and the

blessings of rigid Sabbatarianism." Furthermore Adventism acquired the Baptist tenet of adult baptism by immersion and the biblical ordinance of feet washing. The apocalyptic emphasis of Adventism was derived out of the "awakenings", in particular the "Second Great Awakening" in the United States between 1800-1830, as a result of world physical catastrophes alluded to in the New Testament and interpreted as a preview to the end of the world.

Armed with the notion that Protestant-backed America had been "divinely ordained to serve both as a place of refuge for godly people from all places and as a great centre of missionary endeavour," (Salom in Hughes, pp. 1-2, in press) a resulting doctrinal system of Adventist belief had fertile ground for germination after 1844. This does not sit so easily with the proposition of Bryan Ball in the *English Connection* (1981), where he claimed that Adventism had a direct lineage to New Testament Protestant Reformation thought, nor the historical interpretation of other Adventist historians including George Knight elsewhere cited in this work. Adventists up until the 1960s tended to be hagiographical and triumphalistic in their historical interpretation (See Patrick, 1987, pp. 309-312). Since this time there has developed a considerable tension between the professional Adventist historian and sociologist against the usually lesser-trained Church administrator holding on to the landmarks of traditionalist Adventism. It seems appropriate here to prefix my following research with some supporting observations concerning this tension.

Within the Protestant Reformation theme, the first tension that has remained for the life of the Church and College has occurred between those who asserted the supreme Protestant cornerstone of the righteousness of God attained by faith in Jesus and those who tagged on the notion that man's moral behaviour and attainments were also necessary for God's acceptance, "to be ready" and "to get ready". The second tension is the confusion of cultural heritage between the pietistic view derived from biblical sources and an American reality intertwined with Puritan, Methodist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist and Quaker beliefs and ethos. Adventism seemed to be denying the work and experience of the Spirit as evidenced during the initiation to Christianity by Christ and the Apostles, with the exception of a spirit of prophecy to which it was devoted exclusively. Adventism saw the Puritan work of the Spirit in the greater context of turning men from sin to moral righteousness, strengthening them against temptations and preparing them for translation.

Jonathan Butler (*Spectrum*, 1979) and others, including myself, have observed

the phenomenon of the Adventist cringe in the presence of outsiders when asked to reveal the Church's attachment to, and dependence on, Ellen White. Until the 1960s, this so-called "skeleton" in the Adventist closet had largely been a faceless woman to the public and an unknown in driving the Church to apocalyptic fanaticism (Numbers, 1992, p. xxix). In 1976, *Time* magazine reported on Ronald Numbers' assessment in their article, "Prophetess or Plagiarist", opening for wider scrutiny her hold over the Church. Following the death of James, Ellen White's husband, her son William became largely complicit in "forming the paradigm of her matriarchal leadership at the turn of the century". Although her public visions had ceased, her writing had proliferated and increased in authority (Numbers, 1992. p. xxxi). She had major import in the finalisation of a "remnant" (See endnote 2) doctrine although, as stated previously, the administration and clergy publicly promoted *sola scriptura* (Numbers, 1992, pp. lvii-lviii). The strength of the White family dynastic control over its esoteric family truths did not dissipate until their venerated icon and mother endured a demythological assault by several Adventist researchers who dismantled her mystique in revealing her knowledge sources and alleged plagiaristic activities (Numbers, 1992, p. xxxv). In Land's opinion, Numbers had postulated that: "Ellen White's historical function had been to make a religion out of health reform" (Land, 1986, p. 221).

Benjamin McArthur and others confirmed that the Church "has had an uneasy relationship with its own history" (McArthur, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1988, p. 36). Seventh-day Adventism had grown from a sect of an estimated 3500 in 1863 to arguably the most *widespread* Protestant denomination in the world, with a membership exceeding 10,000,000 in 2000 (*Seventh-day Adventist Year Book* 2000).

The Church's focus on the emphasis of the Eschaton led it to largely disregard the significance of reflection about itself and its own history until about 1970 (Land, (ed.) 1986, p. vii). Characteristic of militant religious organisations, protective of its esoteric truth and perceived good reputation, it wished always to be seen in a good light. Sociological scrutiny was consequently unnecessary and threatening. Yet an anomaly lies in its aversion to historical analysis. Adventism was "a movement born from the preaching of history's end" (McArthur, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1988, p. 36). Perhaps the least desired analysis for corporate or external comment was the prophetic gift of Ellen White and how it could be credibly sustained (McArthur, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1988, pp. 36-41). The culture of public silence over historical objectivity, doctrinal disquiet, and traditional subjectivity within the

fraternity of Adventist scholars for fear of dismissal and alienation, was cause enough. The sanctuary (See endnote 3) was the exalted pivot upon which the cornerstone of Adventist authority existed as the remnant church of the Eschaton. Desmond Ford's *expose* of this belief, at best poor biblical exegesis and at worst a contradiction of the Gospel of Christ, reaffirmed that sectarian thought in Adventism was alive and well in the 1980s. During this unravelling, Ellen White was portrayed as the prophet who was "neither original nor inerrant" (Numbers, 1993, p. lx). Because of the lack of comment due to internal sensitivities by the Church hierarchy there has been a tendency to shut down, rather than explore, theological or sociological matters within the Church that were seen to destabilise their hold over matters of distinctive faith and practice (See endnote 4).

Mention here should also be made of my use of critique or criticism of Avondale as a sectarian institution, by a former Seventh-day Adventist and humanities lecturer at the College, John Robert Godfrey (1997). His contribution is the only serious sociocultural assessment of the College in the 1960s and in my opinion, despite the SPDSDA's sensitivity to his criticisms, cannot be ignored although his critiques are much later reflections of his days at Avondale when he was himself a conservative.

Wilson (1975) alerts us to question why the Advent Church was not as truly interested in *being* denominationalised as it was keen to be *seen* as a denomination. The Church exhibited the non-sectarian characteristics of a professional ministry, theologians, institutions of education, health food and medicine, so why then did it not show a greater openness to be willing to discuss matters that remained at the core of its sectarian character or culture? John W. Knight (see endnote 5) provided an answer in 1978 when he warned the Church that, "the major challenge facing Adventism was the choice between 'education *or* faith' and 'education *and* faith'" (John W. Knight, 1978, pp. 13-14). He had set out to demonstrate that, just as the Church hierarchy had feared, in the twentieth century the acquisition of higher education for its members and the possibility of them not remaining "uncontaminated by the world", meant that the maintenance of its sectarian culture would be unrealistic (John W. Knight, 1978, p. 16). Knight observed that the Church's

> fideistic set of prescriptions and beliefs...faith in the unseen God of the Bible, giving obedience to the divine and inerrant revelation of his will as revealed by inspiration of the Bible and the writings of His messenger Ellen G, White, and rejecting the ways of the world

could not remain intact as part of the student's traditional faith and practice. Knight expanded the Adventist sociocultural position:

> No secular activity may be undertaken on God's holy day, the Sabbath; the dance-hall, the picture theatre, alcohol, tobacco, tea, coffee, drugs, unclean foods (pork, shellfish and the like) are all prohibited; gambling, sexual immorality, popular novels and pulp magazines are unfit for the Christian (John W. Knight, 1978, p. 17).

Within twenty short years of the publication of his thesis, many of these, albeit less physically risk-taking behaviours, are practised by a significant group of students.

3.2 The Methodist legacy to Adventist identity

Factors that laid a path for the historical Seventh-day Adventist Church to evolve may be traced as far as the formation of Scripture itself. But some of the more immediate factors are rooted historically in the Renaissance, by virtue of causing a shift of interest from the Church to the world, and witnessing the rise of reason over revelation (Webber, 1986, pp. 146-147). This set the stage for a reformation in the Christological interpretation of salvation and grace through the dissatisfaction by Martin Luther and others. Following this, Pietist influences led to the Evangelical revival by John Wesley, and Methodism in England, and to John Whitefield in America (Webber, 1986, p. 157). Armenian Methodism developed into a widespread evangelical awakening in tandem with Calvinistic and Anglican evangelicalism during the eighteenth century. The British Awakening was seen as the orphan to the greater wave of evangelical activity in North America and pietism in Germany (Williston, Walker and Handy, 1986, p. 596-606). This new missionary activity of Wesleyanism with its public preaching developed, according to Robert Webber,

> a heartfelt, Bible-centred religion which motivated people toward the communication of the Gospel and good living... a social concern for the underprivileged and the poverty-stricken as well as an insistence on justice and equity in society (Webber, 1986, p. 157).

In some ways, Seventh-day Adventist sociocultural philosophies are strikingly parallel to Methodism's eclectic mulch, particularly in aspects of Wesley's original

faith, and to a lesser degree, Anglicanism, with its strong Protestant emphasis. I also included Puritan and evangelical strands emphasizing 'the optimism of grace' in the context of 'a transforming power that has visible ethical results' (citing George, 'Methodism' in Richardson, 1969, pp. 213-215). Characterized by strong sectarian overtones along with some misunderstandings about fundamental Protestant beliefs, Adventists were particularly anxious to be separated from "worldly influences" and to be seen as a "peculiar" body of believers. The Adventist thrust was towards an understanding and appreciation of biblical propositions leading towards a logical belief system setting Seventh-day Adventists apart from and being superior to, other Christian belief structures. The Millerite "scientific style" method focused on eschatology (George Knight, 11 January, 1999) and this was stimulated by the application of the prophecy in Daniel relating to "the time of the end" (i.e. the Eschaton) and the increase of knowledge alluded to in Daniel 12:4 (cf Revelation 12:9).

If we were to obtain an authentic contemporary view of the way Adventism perceives the eclectic origins of its faith and practice, Steven Daily has credited Methodism with Adventism's focus on simplicity, order, holiness, an identity with the lower class, a prophetic focus, and the Church's religious enthusiasm and "openness to God's spirit". From Puritanism, he credited the Church's "dependence on biblical authority", the dissent from established religion, baptism by immersion, Christ's high priestly work in heaven, obedience to the ten commandments including the Sabbath, a wholistic view of human nature, a pre-millennial view of the second advent and a particular interest on the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation (Oliver, *AP.*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1995, pp. 4-5). Max Weber is more strident about Puritanism considering it to hold the ethos "which saw every poor person as work-shy or a criminal" (Andreski, 1983 p.156). This prevailing spirit may have added to Adventism's loathing for sloth and inactivity.

There remains a muted vocal debate about Adventism's right to stand among other Christian churches as a bona fide denomination in contrast to a sectarian organisation. Adventism, it can be argued, has evolved through 150 years of its history, from being truly sectarian in nature, to holding remnant elements or vestiges of sectarianism in its now significant religious global organisation (*SDA Year Book 1999*). It may be described as a subtly differentiated and institutionally successful corporate structured religion. It has no significant notoriety for any of its beliefs with

the exception of the extra-scriptural additional authority of Ellen G White and perhaps its Sabbath beliefs, firmly rooted in an Old Testament base and arguably endorsed in the New Testament by Christ himself. But a lesser-known belief was clearly enunciated in an exhaustive doctrinal development concerning an Investigative Judgment and a two-apartment sanctuary in Heaven, which proceeded after 1844, and which anchored the Church's identity and provided its reason for existence. Finally the Church holds no open opposition to the state except in matters perceived to deny religious liberty or to espouse unhealthful practices against the teaching of the Church.

Avoiding the social anger and violence associated with John Wesley's era of Methodist revival, Adventism received a smoother transition through its times of oppression to respectability (Niebuhr, 1957, pp. 66-67). In the rules for their band societies, Methodists, like the later Adventists, were "to abstain from evil, especially from buying or selling on the Sabbath, tasting spiritous liquors, pawning, backbiting, wearing needless ornaments such as rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace and ruffles and taking snuff or tobacco" (Niebuhr, 1957, p. 68 citing Wesley's Works V. p. 193). Such abstemiousness, especially in alcohol and tobacco, may well have contributed to saving the English from a significantly more physically degenerate experience. The social interests and influences were coloured by middle-class leadership ethics in philanthropy and humanitarianism, such concessions being derived from love rather than originating from demands for justice (Niebuhr 1957, p. 69). Wesley, himself a Master's graduate, wrote: "Wherever riches have increased the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion" (Niebuhr, 1957, p. 70). Methodism has since adapted its ethic to the contemporary middle class. Lay preachers have remained, but a new era of respectable and hierarchical-trained ministry evolved for the needs of Methodism's rising clientele; thus in Niebuhr's view it became another "yielding servant of the social order," and "the last great religious revolution of the disinherited in Christendom" (Niebuhr, 1957, p. 72).

3.3 The evolution of an Adventist belief structure determining its cultural practices

Ellen White's Armenian Methodist exposure appears to have impressed upon her the need for personal holiness. Contemporary with this emphasis was the Wesleyan

Holiness movement (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 76). Her experiences no doubt provided her with some clear direction later when some very serious confrontation occurred with senior Church administration who were promoting in their ignorance, according *Adventist Review* editor, Dr William Johnsson, examples of destructive doctrinal views and reactionary leadership.

Johnsson presents a graphic example in a serious Adventist doctrinal dispute that erupted at the General Conference session in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1888. It concerned the differentiation of the moral and ceremonial laws of Moses. (On the one side were A.T. Jones, J.H. Waggoner and Ellen White. On the other side was the General Conference president George I. Butler and his officers. Ellen White and her backers presented the view that references to the law of God in the Book of Galatians were all encompassing and included the moral and ceremonial laws of Moses.) As Johnsson saw it: "These were the bare facts: Dispute over the role of the law in salvation, polarization, large-scale rejection of Waggoner's and Jones' influences but endorsement of it by Ellen G. White" (Johnsson, 1995, p. 101). In this battle, E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones had pushed their contemporary American perfectionist holiness model. They emphasized faith over obedience. It was not what the Church authorities wanted to hear. Actions of the body were transferred to choices of the heart. The hub of true religion was transformed from outward conformity to the laws of God to the reception of the indwelling Christ (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 77). Ellen White understood the significance and supported their thrust in principle. The atonement made by Christ at Calvary for the sins of the world was another concern for early Adventism in its claim to have "the saving truth covering the entire Christian era" (Froom, 1971, p. 38).

In Adventism's first doctrinal statement of belief, the *Declaration* of 1872, there was a categorical denial that the atonement began with the cross. In stark contrast the book, *Questions on Doctrine,* (1957) stated that the atonement was completed on the cross. In another view, Ellen White remarked:

> The intercession of Christ on man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was his death upon the cross...[He] died to make an atoning sacrifice for our sins ... (White, 1911b, p. 489) [and is now] our interceding High Priest making an atoning sacrifice for us (White Manuscript 29, 1906).

Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart cite *Questions on Doctrine* for a clarification on this point from its Adventist authors:

> When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature--even in the writings of Ellen G. White-- that Christ is making an atonement now, it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross (*General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, 1957, pp. 354-355).

Further controversy erupted over Ellen White's comments about growing a perfect character in preparation for Heaven when she stated: "While our great High Priest is making the atonement for us we should seek to become perfect in Christ" (White, 1911b, p. 623).

Apocalypticism provided a strong cause among Adventists who immortalized their name by very association with the return or Second Advent of Jesus Christ (Niebuhr, 1957, p. 31). While arguably claiming a mortgage on being great discerners of the signs of the times (one of the Church's official evangelistic magazines bears the name *Signs of the Times*) Adventists, nevertheless, having learned the lesson about date-setting from the Millerites, are historically emphatic that of the Second Coming of Christ, "no man knows the day or the hour" (Matthew 24:36). In Ellen White's major prophetic work, *The Great Controversy,* written for non-Seventh-day Adventists, she presented an apocalyptic scenario of the end of the Eschaton during her own lifetime. She received significant acceptance from other Evangelical Protestants who considered that Protestantism was going to seed in the late nineteenth century (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol.10, no. 2, p. 3).

The noted Congregational commentator, Josiah Strong considered that there would be a papist takeover of America and with their lifestyle of hard drinking and permissive Sunday observance would in turn worry and burden Protestants (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol. 10, no. 2, p. 6). It was therefore not unusual for Victorian Bible studying Protestants to see the world in apocalyptic terms because of this and other prophetically interpreted reasons. In this manner, says Jonathan Butler, nineteenth century Conservative Protestant anxieties became ingrained in Adventism's Church fathers and once encapsulated in Ellen White, were pumped through her as a highly effective communicative device into the twentieth century, with the Church continuing to feed its people religious beliefs and behavioural issues from another culture and era. She imprimatured the early American Puritan emphasis on "self-control, industriousness and impulsé renunciation" through her vision for Adventism as a remnant of the purified Bible-based form of Protestantism. In this way, Adventists, through Ellen White's later interpreters, have shown a capacity to "out-

Protestant the Protestants" (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol. 10, no. 2, p. 7).

In further support of acculturisation of Australian Adventism in general and Avondale College in particular, Butler cites Anthony C. Wallace:

> Adventist beliefs on the Second Coming, the Sabbath, health education, social welfare, church and state, big labour, and the cities all show Adventism to be a Victorian Protestant subculture sustaining itself long after the larger host society has disappeared (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol.10, no. 2, p. 10).

If there was a shift away from involvement in social issues in the late nineteenth century, there were several factors that caused this. The civil war had dampened the utopian dream and the desire for social reform. The "life beyond" this world of depression and major wars, now had more appeal. The quest to rescue "fallen souls from the sinking ship of this world" through public evangelism and the new focus of fundamentalistic styled religion in defending Bible doctrine saw further movement toward religious institutionalism and mission agencies (Webber, 1986, pp. 162-3).

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1. Associate Professor, Arthur N. Patrick, DMin, PhD, retired in 1999 from La Sierra University, California. He is one of the Australian SDA Church's most prolific writing theologians and historians. He was a former director at Avondale College's Ellen G. White Research centre.

2. In theological and biblical exegesis the term "remnant" (as in "remnant of her seed" in the Revelation of St John) is applied by Seventh-day Adventists to mean that a special end time message, enunciated by three angels in Revelation 14-6-12, is now being delivered to the world as a warning to prepare for Christ's Second Coming. The religious faith and practice, exhibited by born again Seventh-day Adventists, by virtue of their biblical pietism, is seen by most Adventists to fit closest to that eschatologically defined people encapsulated in the woman clothed in a white robe (the true Church through out history known ultimately only by God). They are described in Revelation and elsewhere as a faithful and loyal people who keep the faith of Jesus and the commandments of God (See Revelation Chapters 12, 13, 17&19).

3. Seventh-day Adventists place great significance on the Old Testament Sanctuary service and the way it was transformed by the death and resurrection of Christ in the New Testament. The "Great Disappointment" in October 22 1844, thought by many people within American denominations, to be the time when Jesus should have returned was later explained by Seventh-day Adventists to mean that in fact a transition in work by Christ occurred when he began opening the Judgement books in preparation for His return after that date had passed.

4. *Spectrum* and *Adventist Professional*, written largely by Adventist academics, appeared to be viewed with conditional acceptance by the Adventist Administration. Writers of these magazines, who often exhibited revisionist tendencies, were muzzled by the fact that, as employees of the various educational Church institutions, they could be marginalised or lose their jobs for constructing a too radical or revisionist argument. Writers, including Malcolm Bull, Keith Lockhart, Jonathan Butler, Arthur Patrick, Roland Numbers, Gary Land, Desmond Ford, Robert Wolfgramm, Harry Ballis, and John W. Knight, are among those who

I would define, to a greater or lesser extent, as revisionist inclined. Their works and the two aforementioned academic magazines have made a significant contribution to the critique content in this thesis.

5. Associate Professor John W. Knight, PhD, lectured at the Graduate School of Education, Queensland University, Australia. He specialized in the areas of sociology of religion and education, critical policy analysis, discourse theory and social and political movements.

Chapter 4

Avondale, the school for "proper education"

4.1 Introduction

If one were to summarise the context in which Adventist Christian education emerged there are definite parallels with early Christian education institutions up until the Reformation in that they focused on moral and spiritual character. Protestant-based Colleges followed this emphasis until the middle nineteenth century when social and public formation and the acquisition of skills and functions tended to increase (See Banks, pp. 26-27).

The Seventh-day Adventist education system, now established in varying degrees throughout the world, has become the most important jewel in the Church's institutional crown. In its one hundred years of development, Christian education has become indispensable to its ministry and mission. It had been robust in holding to a distinctive culture of lifestyle beliefs, sheltered as much as practicable from the perceived contaminating sinful influences of society. In agreeing with SPDSDA education specialist, Dr Don Roy, and B.M. Bullivant's general view, the writer accepts that within this context there is considerable justification for examining the culture of Avondale when defined as an institution wherein we may observe,

> a patterned system of knowledge and conceptions embodied in symbolic and non-symbolic communication modes, which a society has developed from the past, and progressively modifies and augments to give meaning to and cope with the present and anticipated future problems of its existence (Bullivant, 1981, p. 3).

In as much as the loyal Seventh-day Adventist student has regarded their religion as their life and in many cases their livelihood, Roy put the Adventist education position succinctly as being,

> founded on ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions which legitimise the school as a key institution intentionally structured to maintain and reproduce its particular culture.
>
> For this reason education for the SDA Church constitutes a form of 'management' of that knowledge upon which the culture is founded, while the total curriculum, its implementation and management constitute an observable embodiment of that culture and its supporting ideology (Roy, 1988, p. 2).

Mindful of this, I will seek to show firstly how Avondale College, as Australia's first Church tertiary-orientated teaching college, was believed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to have been designed originally as a "pattern" from God. This was shown to Ellen White in the mid-1890s during her own evolving philosophy of "true" or "proper education" in Adventism's own sectarian context. The pattern was not an unalterable "blueprint" but was subject to change wherever it was deemed important to adapt to the continuation of an effective educational programme glorifying God. Secondly, I will attempt to demonstrate how this model, in showcasing the moral character virtues of education, found its enduring qualities could be best sustained by strictly adhering in principle to the parameters of isolationism, separationism, and exclusivism, from secular and all other religious culture that was considered worldly and false. This pattern has since given way to a revised edition of sociocultural beliefs and practices that is dealt with in later chapters.

4.2 The institutional "pattern"

Within the foregoing brief discussion in chapter one, I attempted to show a sociological and philosophical seedbed for Avondale's inauguration. Now I will try to demonstrate how Avondale College's educational institution was an event propelled almost entirely for its first fifty years by the animation of time through apocalyptic perspectives and an acculturation of American Protestant culture and ethos. According to Roy, Adventist schools including Avondale College were seen by their administrators as institutions "intentionally created for the maintenance and reproduction of culture...that is they are cultural artefacts in which teachers are 'managers of culture'" (Roy, 1988, p. 5). In this case, the teachers of culture were vested in the writings of Ellen White and through the administrators' interpretation of her.

Adventism's appeal, anchored in the momentous circumstances of the 1840s, confronted new political and secular forces of the second half of the 19th century. These included Darwin's first sketch of *Origin of the Species*, challenging the validity of a creation Sabbath; the arrival of modern Spiritualism, attacking the Adventist belief in conditional immortality; and the Marx and Engels ideology written in *The Communist Manifesto,* postulating that law, morality and religion are only bourgeois prejudices. Such works, seen as a polemic at best, and anathema at worst, to the

Church's cause, fired it into believing that it had an authentic prophetic place in the history of the world. Adventist historian, Jonathan Butler is in agreement in his assessment that the major portion of Adventist *apocalyptic* belief was seen through the eyes of Ellen White and that she was largely responsible for the interpretation of events contemporaneous with her life. "She virtually personified the Protestant period of American culture and her writings offer a perspective of every major event of the era" (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol.10, no. 2, p. 3).

In this context, if Avondale was to be accepted for its cultural strength and administrative control, there is ample evidence that this has been eclipsed since the 1970s by a sociocultural struggle and conflict. While such conflict has been derived both from within and without, this thesis attempts to locate its consciousness, knowledge development and inquire into its management and authority as political sites for institutional control. In finding a rationale from the sociology of education for this study one could find Bates' perspective appealing, where he emphasizes:

> ...the development of an epistemology that takes account of the social bases of understanding; a systematic analysis of relationships between social, cultural, epistemological and educational domination...the improvement of practice through processes of critical reflection on the relation between practice and the potential for human emancipation (Bates, 1982, p. 3).

Cognisant of some evidence from chapter three describing how Wesleyan Methodism almost certainly made some impact on early Adventist educational philosophy, one may also observe, from John Wesley and his followers, the acceptance of a major platform from the Gospel of John where they present the conversionist view for the need of transformation from worldliness to that of a child of God (Niebhur, 1951, pp. 218-219). But underlying one of Wesley's tenets of belief, simplicity was defined as "make all you can, save all you can, and give all you can" (Daily, 1993, p. 60). Aware but perplexed by the implications for Christians to be industrious, thrifty and frugal, he was mindful that this would eventually lead to a better socio-economic status. Consequently he had to grapple with the unforeseeable and inevitable decline of Methodist purity. This can be evidenced by his amazing proclamation: "If those who gain all they can, and save all they can, will likewise give all they can, then the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasures they will lay up in heaven" (Niebuhr, 1957, p. 71; Southey, vol II, pp. 305ff).

From the century of Methodism's birth to the next, there was considerable

movement from the ethics of the disinherited to that of the respectable middle class, although it remained considerably sectarian in character. According to Niebuhr, while Methodism was:

> Originally urban in character, it retained the loyalty of its tradesmen and workers who, rising in the social scale through their thrift and diligence became the small and later often the great capitalists of the growing cities of the nineteenth centuries (Niebuhr, 1957, p. 71).

It is significant therefore that Adventism, in the philosophy and background of Ellen White, was encouraged to believe that life was more than a time of enjoyment or contemplation. Adventism attracted people who enjoyed an industrious lifestyle not dissimilar to early Methodism. Steve Daily described the work ethic as attracting and moulding converts who have become known for their "frugality, A-Type personalities, upward mobility, and charitable generosity" (Daily, 1993, p. 60; see endnote 1).

From the outset of Seventh-day Adventism, evident as early as 1847, there was the desire to be seen to place Scripture as an unassailable authority and *the "only rule of faith and practice"* (James White, et. al. 1847, p. 13). There is nothing particularly unusual about this. Burtchaell noted that Concordia Teachers Seminary, (See endnote 2) in 1864, held a four-year curriculum based on the Bible, Bible history, the Luther's *Large Catechism*, The Augsburg Confession and sacred music. There was distrust for the rationalistic ethnic German teachers that caused the synod to move quickly to adopt indigenous American national lecturers. Arthur W. Klinck, its first president to hold a doctorate, led the school from 1939–1953 in a vigorous programme toward accreditation. By 1952, with student enrolment at 522, the College was given a high rating for teacher education by the State University of Illinois (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 521-522).

In contrast to the inspiration or charisma of any particular Avondale principal and sensing that certain standards must set them apart as being more godly, the Adventist hierarchy did not discourage the emergence of the Church's culture through developing a theological interpretation of the works of Ellen White and her many testimonies during her seventy years of influence on the Church. Instead of transforming their lives directly through the principles of New Testament values, as its only rule of faith and practice, the Church, albeit unwittingly, promoted Ellen White before its students to transpose biblical values for those standards derived

around her own cultural interpretation by the very weight and expansiveness of her own writing.

The paradigmatic origins for Avondale evolved from Ellen White's views on education theory, first evident in 1872, in the book *Education* and not published until 1903, probably saw nearly half of her principal theories developed while in Australasia between 1891-1901 (Patrick, 1991, p. 214). Nevertheless, as previously advocated, Australian Adventism's sociocultural standards were derived almost exclusively from a mid-nineteenth century, North-Eastern American genre. Patrick reinforces this by stating succinctly that "the Australian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church cannot be understood in isolation from its North American head" (Patrick, 1991, p. 212). Its evangelisation and permeation of the minds of its converts was systematically unified in material and methodology. In other words the process and teaching in becoming a Seventh-day Adventist was now strongly identifiable.

> Of the future and Ellen White's influence, Dr Borge Schantz prognosticates that although most of this counsel was written with the work of North America and Christendom in mind, much bears application to universal Christian methods of evangelism and pastoral care, and can readily be adapted to almost any cross-cultural situation (Dunton, et. al., 1990, p. 53).

In a more sociological context, Fuller Seminary's Theologian, Professor Carl George, described Adventism as "a movement emerging from a century of aloofness" (George, 1988, p. 1). They have been "more concerned with defending or emphasizing certain elements of Adventist lifestyle rather than worshipping and obeying our Lord Jesus Christ" (George, 1988, p. 2).

A key concept in her theory of "proper education", was that its context lay in *the "harmonious development" of the spiritual, mental, and physical aspects of humanity, in a balanced and systematic programme of education. Its goal was to comprehensively prepare the believer's character and fortunes for the imminent new world* (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1953-1957, vol. 5, pp. 711-712). *She was unequivocal in her philosophy that "the ultimate object of education is the development of character"* (White, 1913b, p. 544). *To cement this direction and maintain the strength and intensity of that purity of character, the solution was seen as only available through an institutionalised programme, with Christ at the head of an army of workers.*

Later Adventist theologians, including Avondale's Robert McIver, have slipped in the word "social" due to its absence in her definition (See McIver, *Adventist Heritage*,

Spring, 1993, pp. 46, 54). The absence of this word appears not to have aided the traditionalist Church to respect the Gospel balance of factoring in one's neighbour's condition and feelings, examined later in this thesis. Ellen White tended to reinforce the "them and us" paradigm when she proposed: "When Christ is head of all our working forces, more and more thoroughly will our institutions be cleansed from every common worldly practice" (White, 1913b, pp. 264-265). At the height of the Church's quest for moral perfection, which it thought was the significant element heralding Christ's return, this statement was included in the Avondale College *Student Handbook* from 1940 and remained in its publications into the 1960s *(Policies, Avondale Missionary College, 1940; Avondale Student Handbook* n.d. [1965]).

Having already indicated that the quest for a spatial and socially uncorrupted environment was a significant factor in the choice of Avondale as a spiritual sanctuary and fortress--a spiritual buttress against the evils of the world (Patrick, 1991, p. 216)--the agrarian and industrial environment facilitated a fortress attitude among its members. In a manner similar to the rural nature of the conservative so-called US "Bible belt", Adventism had also flourished generally in rural areas and in particular amongst trades people. These were industrious but often disadvantaged semi-skilled workers who had experienced religious disinheritance (John W. Knight, 1973, p. 55). The marriage of conservative fundamentalism with trades people, normally allied to a more radical union environment, appeared to have courted odd bedfellows (See Niebuhr, 1957, pp. 183-184). But the choice of the more radical trade unions was seen to violate the conscience and the freedom of personal choice and responsibility by the individual worker (John W. Knight, 1973, pp. 64-5). The quest for isolation in a country as vast in area as the United States but with a fraction of the population, centred in part around the Church's perception of itself as a community of believers and the people of God. Walter Douglas, citing Kung, Minear, Newbigin and Gardiner, (Oosterwal, et. al., 1980, p. 84) argued that the term "people of God" as used by Ellen White was derived from an Old Testament concept of Israel (Oosterwal, et. al., 1980, p. 69). I will take up this theme in more detail later in this chapter.

In line with some American experience, the agrarian nature of the College was to be preserved at all costs. In a definitive four-page statement on "the disposition and use of the lands near our school", published in the official Australian Church paper, Ellen White emphasized:

> This land is not to be occupied with buildings except to provide the facilities essential for the teachers and the school... If you settle this land near the school with private houses, and then be driven to select for cultivation other land at a distance from the school, it would be a great mistake and one always to be regretted. All the land near the building is to be considered the school farm where the youth can be educated under well-qualified superintendents (White, *UCR,* July 31, 1899, pp. 11-12).

As far as educational standards were concerned, no time limit was stipulated at Avondale to complete a course. Rather, it was a matter for the faculty to determine how quickly the student was able to process the subjects based on their ability and maturity (*The Avondale School: Prospectus for 1898 UCR,* January-February 1898, p. 10). The College advocated: "All who engage in the acquisition of knowledge should aim to reach the highest round of progress. Let them advance as fast and as far as they can." This was balanced with the warning that "Long periods of continual study are injurious to physical, mental and moral well-being." In context of the Eschaton, the College stated: "The thought to be kept before students is that time is short...Precious probationary time will not permit of long protracted years of drill" ([Avondale] *Annual Announcement* 1899, p. 30).

4.3 The "blueprint" reaction

So far, I have tried to demonstrate the flexibility in doctrinal change and emphasis by the Adventist pioneers and this is no less evident in their quest for the best Christian education system available. The blueprint concept was "a deeply rooted American belief in 'the best method' of education that will meet the needs of the entire population." George Knight suggested that the American notion, that a "pedagogical panacea" was just around the corner though jumping on the right "educational band wagon", was responsible for the "myth" about Ellen White's "blueprint" for education (George Knight, 1985, p. 17).

To elaborate a step further, the word "blueprint", coined by traditionalist Adventist educators and administrators following World War 2, as an unfortunate misnomer by definition from *The Macquarie Dictionary* ("a photographic reproduction" implying exact and inflexible details) was applied to induce two progressive or revisionary principals toward a return to the so-called cherished Avondale "blueprint". George Knight is clear that the word "blueprint" is absent from

Ellen White's vision and philosophy to establish Avondale College. Despite this clarification, perhaps by coincidence or because the Avondale College Foundation (ACF) was unaware of the mythology surrounding the concept of the College "blueprint", they commenced a magazine with the same masthead in 1978. As a reaction to the American Adventist educational system in the 1870s and 1880s, occurring as a result of the Church's academia and administration falling short of her standards, Avondale, as a "sample school" was to be "an object lesson" and a "model school", and a "pattern" for other future schools (White, 1943, p. 374; White, 1913b p. 394; White Manuscript, 1900). But it was to be this and no more.

A year before her return to America, Ellen White wrote unambiguously of her pattern school:

> God designs that this place shall become a centre, an object lesson. Our (Avondale) school is not to pattern after any school that has been established in America or after any school that has been established in this country.... Why have we gone to such an expense in putting up buildings here, if we are not to be separate from the world? We are to stand in Christ, learning of Him, the greatest Teacher the world has ever known (White Manuscript, 1899, p. 101).

After leaving Australia in 1901 she placed her own definition on her word choices: "The Lord has not designed any one, special, exact plan in education." White, 1980, Bk. 3, p. 227; George Knight, 1985 p. 18). This was again reiterated by Ellen White when commenting on another particular school, Madison, that was being set up in 1907, adopting the most exact Adventist pattern possible. She stated with the hindsight of a remarkable hands-on experience in Australia that:

> *no exact pattern can be given for the establishment of schools in new fields. The climate, the surroundings, the condition of the country, and the means at hand with which to work must all bear a part in shaping the work* (White, 1913, p. 531, emphasis mine).

Four years later, after leaving Avondale, Ellen White advocated the establishment of Washington Training College, later Columbia Union College (George Knight, 1985, p 24). But generally, for other American educational institutions including Pacific Union College, her desire was that they would be situated on large acreages similar to Avondale--not that this desirable rural feature for Adventist education was necessarily the exclusive goal. She recognised the need for "schools should be opened in the cities as well as in the country" (White, 1909, vol. 9, p. 201). The country school, away from the city influences, was preferable however. She added that it was not her pattern but the adoption of the Lord's "design" from which proceeds His

blessing. The Avondale school experience may have been *a* pattern but not an *exact* pattern (White, 1913, p. 533).

This controversy flushed out an ultra-conservative, reactionary wing of the Church that later became highly critical of Avondale and other Adventist institutions. Their discontent resulted in a break away from the Church system to pursue their own reform school programmes. Of this mindset, she lamented "the strongest expressions" without regard to the context or attendant warnings and their lack in applying the appropriate context to satisfy their own egos in the implementation of their reforms. She warned that this type of individual was among those who, in "...picking out some things in the Testimonies [they] drive them upon every one, and disgust rather than win souls" (White, 1980, bk. 3, pp 285-6).

Ellen White laid down a fundamental principle to her followers when discussing St Helena Sanitarium in 1902: "God wants us all to have common sense and He wants us to reason with common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things" (White, 1980, Bk 3, p. 217). Those perceived circumstances have not as yet arrived. Avondale, as the first co-educational College to be established in Australia, maintained a curriculum diverse from other colleges. It is with monumental focus and passion that for some sixty-odd years, it was able to remain an educational force without having conferred one degree. Its formal recognition of its own lecturers' degrees was not listed in its College calendar until 1940 when three out of eighteen faculty and staff held bachelor degrees (John W. Knight, 1973, p. 196). Its promotion of a tertiary style of education for its premier academic students was in effect an upper secondary standard (Gilson, 1963, pp.168-171). At this time, with the advocacy of genuine tertiary academic standards, the imprimaturization of sociocultural standards, so long exhorted by the Church leaders would gradually, and as shown later, become rationalised in favour of a biblical values-oriented culture.

4.4 Avondale as an Old Testament institution school home model

Sociologically, the College has seen itself as a home or family model, after a fortress style as evidenced in the first Adventist boarding school commenced in Melbourne during 1893 (*School Board Minutes*, Bible Echo Office, February 8, 1893). The Edenic environment of Adam and Eve has inspired Adventism to attempt to facilitate

the return to conditions in the Edenic home. As in Eden, now at Avondale, the Church sought to create a new home "as a safeguard against temptation" where "characters should be reformed" (Codling. *AR*, July 14, 1913, pp. 6-7) and there would be a "city of refuge for our children" (*AR*, March 8, 1915, p. 7). The plan for "college homes" or student boarding facilities where teachers became parents was enacted into Adventist legislation in 1893 with its inaugural institution, when it was resolved that "we require all the teachers in the Australasian Bible School to reside in the home" (*School Board Minutes*, February 8, 1893).

The Australasian Missionary College "home" at Avondale four years later was designed to be a panacea for the deficiencies of the parental home. The students would experience "equality...right habits...grace of deportment... [and] polished manners which are evidences of a complete home education." Here lay "the sphere of influence" where "The characters of the students are moulded in righteousness by the good spirit that prevails in the college homes." The author, Walter Codling, in drawing heavily from Ellen White's writings, painted an idyllic sociocultural picture from the expectations of Puritan, Methodist, and Victorian standards for the ideal female married companion.

> What can be a better picture than that of a healthy young woman, who neatly arrayed in a white apron, is ready with willing heart, a disciplined mind and trained hand for the successful execution of domestic duties?

The male student's stereotype provided more scope, philosophically, in setting and in opportunity. Codling expounded with echoes of the then College principal, George Teasdale:

> This is a picture which may be equalled only by that of a young man, who while standing high in the knowledge of the sciences, is filled with the desire and the determination to excel in the performance of all the duties assigned him, however unpleasant they may be (Codling, *AR* , July 14, 1913, pp. 6-7).

The standards for appropriate Church behaviour were well entrenched at Avondale and Ellen White's code of avoiding every appearance of evil again endorsed this standard in the Australian Church paper of September 1913. The College standards were to be a model to the letter of this code, and in a "home" situation closely observed and monitored. She stated:

> Every word, every action would tend to elevate, refine and ennoble the character
>
> Let married men be reserved and guarded, that no evil may truthfully be said of them.

> Let the workers keep up the barriers of reserve; let not one instance occur of which the enemy can make capital. If they begin to place their affections upon another, giving special attention to favourites, and using flattering words, God will withdraw His Spirit.
>
> Their [workers] minds and hearts must be so thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of Christ, and so solemnised with the sacred message they have to bear, that every thought, every action, every motive, will be above the earthly and sensual (White, *AR*, September 8, 1913, pp. 1-2).

Amongst Adventists, especially in its earlier days, the view of God has tended to be portrayed as the Old Testament Jehovah of energetic activity, (for six days of the week) the stern legislator, the Creator and Judge, and to a lesser extent Redeemer and Saviour. To this end some true believers are prone to interpret their salvation as coming through a chain of command that interprets sin as an act more than a status. Righteousness was interpreted as having more to do with right actions according to a series of divine commandments than an acceptance of God's atonement for sinful men on Calvary's cross (Niebuhr, 1957, p. 85).

The American frontier was distrustful of intellectualism and academics particularly during the emergence of the industrial culture. Abstract thought was worlds apart from the honest hard work of pragmatic labour producing the sweat of the brow (Anderson *Spectrum*, vol.1, no. 1, 1969, p. 10). Religion and education were a sphere for labour. Industry and business were considered meritorious and indeed virtually indispensable for victorious earthly existence. Weber termed it "active asceticism". He observed:

> The values of religion are regarded less as a divine free gift than as an end of striving; the method of religion is held to be the method of constant activity; the conception of God is held to be the conception of dynamic will; the content of faith is a task rather than a promise (Weber cited in Niebuhr, 1957, p. 83).

By drawing heavily on the Judeo-Christian heritage, Adventism had sourced from the Hebrew interpretation that humans are created as holistic beings and that spiritual wisdom is the product of a balanced development of the mental, spiritual and physical dimensions of being. College lecturer in pedagogy, G.H. Greenaway, confirmed in May 1929 that it was the Old Testament education models that were the foundations to the Adventist school institution:

> Very careful attention is given to the divine plan for education. The successive systems established by Jehovah to meet man's need; namely the Eden school, the patriarchal school, the schools of the prophets and our present day system of church schools and colleges are studied, and effort is made to develop our own work as

> teachers upon the basis the servant of God has laid down (Greenaway, *AR,* May 27, 1929, p. 5).

And again in July 1930, Greenaway repeated the Ellen White view that "the first school established by the Lord ["The Edenic School"] was to be the pattern for all future schools....His [mans'] physical needs were supplied in the dressing and keeping of the garden (Greenaway, *AR,* July 21, 1930, p. 1).

From this Old Testament model one may interpret that the patriarchal system and the subsequent schools of the prophets established by Samuel, developed as a response to man's failure to respect and understand the Edenic School. According to Greenaway, as a result of this change, "the parents became the teachers" (Greenaway, *AR,* July 21, 1930, p. 2). Their purpose, reiterated by Greenaway, was for the (Adventist) schools: "To save the children and youth of the Church, to develop workers to carry the message and to pioneer in soul-winning." In revealing the ultimate purpose for this education in Adventist schools, he cited Ellen White: "...the knowledge essential to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God is to be the all-important theme" (White, 1913a, p. 539, as cited in G.H. Greenaway, *AR,* July 28, 1930, p. 1). The view was held from very early biblical history that Israel was to be set apart from the world while yet in the world. The world was perceived to be abjectly evil and it was only inside the church that protection from evil was available.

As already stated elsewhere, emphasis was placed in the Australian Church, during 1900, on the imperative of alienating worldly associations and cultures, especially from the "apostate and world loving church called Babylon" and to be like Christ, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Adventists were encouraged not to "seek companionship among those who seek worldly prospects" and to avoid "playing cricket, or cycling, or any form of amusement which requires association with the world" (Caldwell, *UCR,* March 1, 1900, p. 2).

If the choice of an isolated location was the Church's most effective geographical bulwark for the preservation of its cultural education heritage, then according to Patrick "a deep commitment to personal standards must protect the Adventists from (according to their perception) the contamination of the evil world in which they lived as witnesses" (Patrick, 1991, p. 218). Adventist author, C.B. Haynes' revival of the isolationist exhortation by Ellen White to "move out of the cities" was a rewrite of her statements during the first decade, when she claimed the impending destruction of thousands of cities prior to World War I (Haynes, *AR,* March 10, 1947, p. 2). Wesley

Amundsen stated in 1956 that Adventists must make careful plans to leave the large cities and avoid "the terrible effects of life" (Amundsen, *AR*, June 11, 1956, p. 14).

Patrick cited Niebuhr in support of the view that in the preservation of Adventist identity was the virtue of its educational hope and strength away from the contaminants of city life. In the Church's early anti-cultural stance, it supplanted that city culture with its own. By adopting a vegetarian style diet and rigid standards of dress, entertainment, recreation and reading, in an effort to develop in their eyes, a character acceptable to Christ, "the loyalty of the believer (was) directed entirely toward the new order, the new society and its Lord" (Niebuhr, 1951, p. 48). Regrettably, this same philosophy backfired in the Avondale dream for a hospital and rehabilitation service for itself and the community. This failed miserably because it was too far away from any city (See Chamberlain, 1997, pp 139-142).

Ellen White's manifesto for the panacea for a successful college was presented thus:

> Had there been agricultural and manufacturing establishments connected with our schools, and had competent teachers been employed to educate our youth in different branches of study and labour, there would now be a more elevated class of youth to come upon the stage of action to have influence in moulding society (White 1885, vol 3, pp.155-156, cited in Mills, *AR*, September 9, 1915, p. 5).

Not content to provide for the Church her ideals in education policy and philosophy, she also weighed in on the qualities of the character for an Adventist schoolteacher. Her admonition was daunting:

> Every teacher should be under the full control of the Holy Spirit...No one who will become impatient or irritated should be an educator...[what is need is] Men who are sound in faith, and who have tact and patience; who walk with God and abstain from the very appearance of evil...in short Christian gentlemen (*UCR*, July 26, 1899, p. 12).

In giving priority to ministering to Adventist children Union Conference president and College Board chairman, George Irwin, was protective in this revealing comment concerning the chosen:

> I never could see why we should leave our own children to go to the devil, and then gather someone else's. Let us save our own children. They can go to make up the 144,000 as well as other people's children (*UCR*, July 26, 1899, pp. 13-14).

Of course it should not be implied that the College community was without its black sheep, albeit an isolated report of theft, or students with a penchant for tobacco. But it was nearly three years after the College's inauguration that students were first

mentioned in a Faculty meeting for stealing, in this instance from the Sanitarium Health Food Factory (*ACFM,* February 20, 1900). One was expelled, and two others obtained a reprieve (*ACFM,* March 5, 1900). On another occasion the following year, a student absented himself from Sabbath activities, travelling to the foreign domain of "Morisset" where he was reported for purchasing cigarettes and smoking. The College placed him on probation with the warning that a second offence would bring dismissal (*ACFM,* August 12, 19, 1901).

From these sparse and relatively minor instances it could be deduced that behaviour at the College, discussed behind closed doors, was of an extremely high standard. That Adventists were a "peculiar people" in the 1890s would suggest that the Church's standards and practices were in the same genre as mainstream Protestant groups. But Adventism, through the "sacred" writings of Ellen White would be later afforded little scope or independence from which to move, unlike other groups who have largely adjusted to and blended with contemporary culture. The sociological effects of the impact of Ellen White's admonition would cause a time warp on the consciences of her devotee administrators who have placed her writings on a plane with the Bible. Evidence is given in future chapters how nineteenth century Adventist cultural standards, as enshrined in the inspired writings of Ellen White, have been treated by Church administrators with not dissimilar status to that stamped by a papal imprimatur. This view is supported by various Adventist scholars, including Ron Lawson, who have believed that the Church has maintained certain sectarian tendencies through its exhibition of a "cultural lag" in its social behaviour (Lawson, *Scope,* vol.1, no. 3, 1971, pp. 14-15: see endnote 3).

The very means by which the Church sought to prepare and control its young people in particular, for service and moral development, has resulted ultimately in providing the reconstruction of its sociocultural as well as certain theological philosophies. The trend to upward mobility and the emphasis by Adventism on accountability in the use of time has been quite deliberate. It is derived from its understanding of biblical passages, including the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25: 16-28 where Jesus illustrates the rewards of industriousness. The Book of Proverbs offers further affirmation:

> Do you see a man skilled in his work?
> He will stand before kings;
> He will not stand before obscure men (Proverbs 22:39, RSV).

Because of Adventists' institutionalised style of organisation most of their members have been orientated towards a system, a purpose and goals for achievement from which they should receive their satisfaction and pleasure. Gary Schwartz expanded this notion of the past:

> They [Adventists] feel that a person's activities should emerge out of a complete design for living, and consequently their long-range goals and various momentary interests into a coherent life plan. This, in turn, is related to their dominant emphasis on the economic basis of one's future happiness, and they attach great significance on systematic saving. Their discussions about the proper use of time are permeated with achievement imagery, and in place of immediate gratification, they stress remote, abstract goals (Schwartz, 1970, p. 130).

4.5 The sectarian paradigm of the home: The fortress of separatism, control and the panacea for the non-arrival of the Eschaton

The concept of the home, the family of God, and the institutionalised organisation structure and management has long assisted the Church's leaders to control their members' speech and behaviour. This is evidenced by the mass employment by the Church of its members in educational and publishing institutions. To a lesser extent, its medical and health food work have been a major factor in maintaining a cohesive belief structure and content. Niebuhr's comments on the new generation of church members are relevant for Adventists experiencing the effects of education and disciplinary factors on their parents, relations and friends in that the institutional structure and process assists in maintaining the customs and traditions of the Church (Niebuhr, 1957, pp. 19-20). Avondale Bible teacher, Robert Hare, attempted to distinguish between the roles of the home and the Church: "In his home-life, the child of God is to learn obedience and thoughtful sympathy. In his church-life he must learn submission and humility" (1 Peter 5:5; Hare, *AR*, August 14, 1916, p.1).

Within the Adventist institutional model the use of endearing family terms, indicative of hegemonial control, (see endnote 4) including "brother" and "sister", can be construed as an identification of a sectarian social context in which believers may engage in common fellowship in faith and practice without fear of ridicule. Such is akin to the form of mateship expressed on the corner pub in any Australian town. This ethos continued long into the history of Avondale and other Adventist communities, providing social security, reinforcement and legitimation for its exclusiveness, and insularity, in the assurance that its members belonged to "the great

Advent movement". However New Testament usage suggests that family terminology was also used in the early Christian Church. "Honour all...Love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17). "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 1:13). The New Testament abounds with references to the term "brethren", brothers and sisters, both true to the church. Those members who apostatised were referred to as "false brethren" (2 Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4).

The home had strong Edenic identity. It continues today as the foundation for spiritual nurture, theological formation and enfaithment as people of God in conservative and dynamic religiously orientated families. As in Eden, the prime authority and teacher is God and it was through Him that an entire cultural lifestyle was imbued. Banks suggests that historically there is "no direct evidence that elementary schools existed" earlier than 400 BC in the known world. During the inter-testamentary period he states that: "popular education took place in the synagogue" (Banks, 1999, pp. 83-84). Hebrew Youth were exposed to informal discussions with elders at the city gate. (Judges 5:10-11) Earlier, during and following Moses' era, national leaders and priests, as the people of God, appear to have received more direct evidences of God's will and leading (Banks, 1999, pp. 85-89).

But Adventism appeared to be less willing to take or apply the New Testament as a basis of a school paradigm. Terms and characteristics of the ecclesia or "church" in English versions of Scripture to mean "meeting", "gathering", or "assembly" do not figure as a basis for a community-teaching paradigm. Walter Douglas interpreted "People of God" to mean more than "a voluntary association of men and women who have covenanted themselves to accept and practise certain convictions about God." Of paramount importance to Adventism, Walter Douglas asserted, was that the Church, when described as the people of God, "has been constituted by the mighty act of God, an act issuing forth from his pure grace, and proceeding the first dawning of man's understanding and acceptance of its implications" (Oosterwal, et. al., 1980, p. 69).

In determining who is the body of Christ, Douglas accepted that the concept originated with the Old Testament. It was argued by Peter and Paul that Jewish and non-Jewish members alike were the "people of God" and the "body of Christ" (Based on Hosea 1:10, 2:23; Rom 9:25f., 1 Peter 4:2f.). Douglas admitted, however, that there were serious challenges for Adventism in the "body of Christ" symbolism. He saw the most serious challenge to be the Church's "unwillingness or willingness to recognise the fact of unity in diversity as a necessary part of the nature of the church

and its mission" (Oosterwal, at al., 1980, p. 73; see endnote 5).

V. Bailey Gillespie observed from the results of the American Adventist Valuegenesis Survey that: "some traditional Adventist principles and many standards and rules were suggested as less central to Christianity" (Gillespie, (ed.) 1993, p. 8). There is a tendency for the Church hierarchy to pull institutional standards into the realm of church law. This is no more clearly seen than with the observance of the Sabbath around the world. The principle to "do good on the Sabbath" and "the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath" is applied in different ways by Adventism. The beach is an acceptable place in some areas, while the mountains--and even sking--is acceptable in others. According to Gillespie, the reality was that: "Moral significance cannot be attached to those issues that are only local interpretations" (Gillespie, (ed.) 1993, p.11). Godfrey, while arguably unfairly critical of the principle of the Seventh-day Sabbath as a Christian doctrine, provided some insight into the reasons for Adventist social ghettoism and their social shyness toward the rest of the world. He observed:

> Moreover the Sabbath divided Seventh-day Adventists from other Christian groups for they were out of step with them on two days of the week; they worshipped on Saturday while others did not and they did not worship on Sundays when other Christians did so (Godfrey, 1997, p. 12; see endnote 6).

The concept of isolationism may not always be evidenced in Ellen White's admonition to teachers. On one occasion she stated: "The followers of Christ are not to isolate themselves from the world" (White, 1913a, p. 323). The Church's mission (the proclamation of the gospel) will best be fulfilled "not by their profession of godliness, but by their manifestation of the transforming sanctifying power of the truth on life and character" (White, 1958, Bk. I, p. 133).

But this confidence, as interpreted by Herbert Douglas, tends towards the notion that "is not in the church but in God whose grace enables the church to face its tasks with quiet hope", that gives spiritual fortitude (Oosterwal, et. al., 1980 p. 82) In an Ellen White notion where she views the Church as "God's fortress, His city of refuge which He holds in a revolted world" (White, 1911a, p.11) the depiction seen by Seventh-day Adventist administration has been applied to create "a radical separation between the church and the world, the sacred and the secular" (Oosterwal, et. al., 1980 p. 62). In this manner Adventists will acquire that transforming character.

The Bible appears ambiguous on this matter. In support for this ambiguity, James

emphasizes against making friends of the world. "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (James 4:4; see endnote 7).

In the same way one former Avondale administrator, principal J. Mills, endorsed explicitly the country isolationist notion, drawing from a compilation of Ellen White's statements in 1893 advocating natural surroundings of the rural life as a freedom from the pollution and contamination of the world.

> Never can the proper education be given to the youth in this country (Australia) or any other country, unless they are separated a wide distance from the cities. . . Students will have before their eyes the erroneous practices that have moulded their education... (Mills, *AR,* November 30, 1925, p. 3).

Edward Vick suggested another view that the acceptance of a perceived all-pervasive biblical view in which "the world is the sphere of darkness and evil, and the church the sphere of light and goodness" does not account for the use of the term "world" in community between believer and unbeliever. In the Gospel of John "world" is used in three distinct ways. It may denote, firstly, "whole created order" when referring to God's creation. Or secondly, it may indicate "social unities and institutions" when referring to society. Thirdly, the "world" can be described as an attitude of rejection to the truth in Jesus Christ, or it may be defined as evil or a domain where Satan holds sway. Understanding these concepts should arm the Christian with better instruments to determine his role *how* to relate to the world. In one sense there is a tension between the Adventist concept of an institutional home whereby there is an emphasis or demand for perfection of character and isolation from the world of sin and the other sense whereby the church assembly, the body of Christ, is in frank acknowledgement that sin is in everyone. To live in this world means: (as stated in Romans 7)

> Sin is in the believer.
> The believer is in the church.
> The church is in the world.
> The world is sinful, the world is in the church.
> The church is sinful.

Vick offered a prescription for a wider challenge of Church mission and to reinterpreting Ellen White:

> Once we have overcome the temptation to isolationism, the temptation to think how we can avoid contact, how we can shape our community so that it never knows how to be among men in a creative and intelligent manner, then we can focus our energies on genuinely creative encounter and participation (Vick, *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 38).

To return to the problems for Seventh-day Adventism and Avondale in particular, J.E. Fulton boosted the morale of its members in 1913 by attempting to trade off the failure of the realization of the Eschaton with the good news that the Australian Church could boast to its credit "eighteen institutions" in the South Pacific (Fulton, *AR*, April 28, 1913, p. 14). But by 1925, fearing that Adventism might be falling into the traps of liberal influences Fulton exhorted the Church to return to the old paths where they were known by God. He encouraged members to remain within the institutional model of safety, security and control as "God's peculiar people" in order to obtain thorough sanctification. He proclaimed that this was:

> just what God expects of us, a people 'separated' from the world...Many were the lessons given by the Lord to his ancient people to teach them the dangers of contamination with the nations about them (Fulton, *AR*, April 6, 1925, p. 2).

Having later become the second largest parochial Christian education system (next to Roman Catholicism) in the world by 1971, Adventism's ultimate reason for educational passion was that its education system is relied upon to train Adventist students and others to promulgate the urgency of the Eschaton (*Newsweek*, June 7, 1971, pp. 43-44; Department of Education, G.C. of SDA's, *Philosophy and Objectives of Seventh-day Adventist Education*, 1952, p. 3).

If the Church institutions, described by Bruce Campbell Moyer, were "important and necessary" there are positive and negative outcomes for the growth of the Church. The upside was: "Stability and national presence... the ongoing nurturing of the local church... and an economic base for new believers who are culturally and socially dislocated" (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p. 38). These provided training and leadership facilities along with "a sense of identity, a place of nurture and growth, and in many areas, the locus and focus of what we may call, "retribalisation" or socialisation" (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p. 44).

Yet Adventism's heavy institutionalisation and investment in schools, homes for the aged, hospitals and industry, is seen as a surprising phenomenon in the light of a church so expectant about the imminent return of Jesus Christ (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p. 43; W. Hudson, 1965 p. 347). Ellen White, in perceiving this view, stated: "Some may say, 'If the Lord is coming soon, what need is there to establish schools, Sanitariums and food factories? What need is there for our young people to learn trades?" Her defence lay in the context of members' proclivity to idleness and the

wasting of their talents. If "Bible religion never makes men idlers", its confluence, in her view, followed that employment in Church sponsored institutions was a valid means of training members in "the importance of life's duties" (White, 1963, p. 268).

But without the fervour of knowing that the Eschaton remained only "a moment away", the call by Ellen White and her associates to enshrine health and religion in the form of institutions, while keeping people busy, appeared not to assist evangelical enthusiasm and zeal among the members. The downside then must include the potential for opportunity among dominant personalities in the quest for Church empire building. The concern for the imminence of the Eschaton enabled Church leaders to be held up as greater authority figures. On the other hand, with the gradual waning of the Eschaton's significance Moyer observed: "Few if any Protestant seminaries have, since World War II, trained and produced other than institutional leaders and workers" (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p. 45).

In future chapters I will describe how during the early twentieth century, from approximately 1920 to 1943, the Church and College's distinctive lifestyle became more pronounced. With the advent of modernism, liberalism and biblical higher criticism, the Church's maintenance of a policy of social isolationism provided an identifying marker around major Adventist institutions until recently. One of its distinctive markers, precipitating out of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century obsessions to stave off the influence of worldly culture, was the evolution of its religious ghettos, of which Avondale and Cooranbong serve as a prime example.

Bull and Lockhart support my view that one of Adventism's major weapons for its cultural strength has been the deliberate philosophy and policy of social isolationism, creating the "remarkable social phenomenon" of ghettoism while attempting to preserve its sociocultural identity (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 93). The cry often heard from the pulpit was for its members to remember that while being "in the world" they were "not of the world". If the Church of the nineteenth century, was "theologically peculiar" and thus "relatively socially normal" (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 91), this distinctive theological position became less strident and more "elastic" to some extent in the mid-twentieth century, by an ensuing security as it grew in strength, through the influence of generationalism and the social consequences of its health reform. The health philosophy emerged as two main institutional strands, that of the medical work and the health food industry (Bull and Lockhart, 1989).

These exclusivist and isolationist policies in all arenas brought about "ghettoization" with the ultimate consequence of thwarting and dismantling mission. The College registered a typical boast made by the Church in the building programme in 1951 that elicited a continuing exclusive social attitude. *Record* writer, T.W. Hammond was led to exclaim that the College construction of a three-storey brick dormitory was unique because it was being "carried out without a contractor and *by a wholly Seventh-day Adventist team of workers*" (Hammond, *AR,* August 28, 1951, p. 5; emphasis mine). The mistaken belief by its controlling body has been that somehow the problem will solve itself. That problem solving process is seen, in part, as building more structures that make Adventists more significant and visible than other denominations. To this end 73% of its members have indicated that this has been moderate to very important. The overall average feeling by other churches to a similar question was 60%. This appeared to provide some evidence for Adventism's preoccupation with bricks and mortar (Kaldor, et. al., 1994, p. 176).

While Adventism has its protagonists, including some who may still label it as a cult, there have grown some obvious reasons for this interpretation. Most available literature about Adventism is slanted on *how* and *why* one should be converted to it. To date, there is a dearth of published information available to the general public concerning the Church. Topics including the Heavenly Temple, the 1844 "Great Disappointment", "the Investigative Judgment", what the Catholic Church is doing, blood sacrifices in the wilderness, have all been conversation pieces about contemporary Adventism in the last two decades.

Demonstrating that Adventists are both sincere and loyal to their church, but to some extent socially isolationist, the Australian Census, suggests that the lowest nominal believers of any group were found among the Adventists. The implication here is that the Church may have few ex-Adventist friends or fringe Adventists as part of a fraternal relationship (Kaldor et. al., 1994, p. 343; Kaldor, et. al., 1995, p. 13). For mission to be more effective, it must not be forgotten that: "*Contacts* are a necessary prerequisite for mission." The survey team also observed that: "Congregations that have low levels of contact will need to think carefully about how to establish bridges with the wider community" (Kaldor et. al., 1995, p.12).

Throughout the twentieth century the Protestant work ethic within Adventism has undergone some changes. Denominations have tended to witness a transformation from frugality in the work ethic to the experience of increasing pleasure resulting

from prosperous times. Frugality and poverty have increasingly fallen out of favour to become a mark of failure and even moral depravity. According to Robert Webber, "what was once a work ethic had become a wealth ethic." Prosperity has now assumed a mark of divine favour. In Webber's eyes: "Today, many Western Christians hotly defend capitalism as if it were an article of faith; they find its sanction in the seventh commandment, in the book of Proverbs, and in the parable of the talents" (Webber, 1986, p. 180).

A major theme in this thesis is that by contemporary Australian cultural standards Adventism is gradually bridging the gap from being sectarian focused, towards being a denomination, by virtue of its attitude to apparel, jewellery, non-life threatening behaviour, secular amusements and entertainment. There is a realisation that by understanding that aspects of all cultures have threads of Christian morality and ethics, these may be used as positive bridges through association with other people. Not all culture of the world has promoted negative behaviour towards the fundamental and explicit laws of God in their revelation through Jesus Christ. For the culture affirming Adventist, the creation of God's handiwork, through natural beauty, inspires serenity and nobility as portrayed in works of art and music. Although they may be derived from non-Christian cultures they are still capable of inspiration and spiritual exhilaration (Dudley, 1986, pp. 44-5). Allied to these works, Ellen White ascribed the thoughts of the world's great thinkers as an evidence of the reflection of "the rays of the Sun of Righteousness." She suggested that every gleam of thought every flash of intellect was ultimately inspired by "the Light of the World" (White, 1903, p. 14). In justifying the working of God in the cut and thrust of world politics and upon heads of state, Dudley points to national and political leaders in Old Testament history as among God's chosen instruments, including Abraham, Joseph and Solomon. They were involved in top administrative decisions or amassed vast wealth and were conscious of corrupting cultures around them.

In the context that "God so loved the world...", the validity of his people must ultimately boil down to their hearts and motives regardless of what level they occupy in secular or ungodly societies (Dudley, 1986, p. 47). Paul remarked: "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (I Corinthians 5:22). The context of these remarks is drawn from the Olympic games of the day, Paul demonstrating his familiarity with their procedures (Dudley, 1986, p. 47). Honouring civil dignitaries, paying dues and taxes to the government (Romans 13:1-

7), as well as bringing a positive disposition to secular authorities by holding a candle to the darkness rather than cursing it, states Dudley, has a place in the Christian schema (Dudley, 1986, p. 49). His assent to the Christian's involvement in politics is argued on the basis that "Christians have a responsibility to vote and, if qualified, to run for and serve in elective positions" (Dudley, 1986, p. 49). In 1986, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists followed the line of the American Catholic Bishops' Conference in preparing an open letter to the United States President and the Soviet leader, asking them to end the Arms Race and pledging Adventist cooperation in making 1986 an International Year of Peace. Although Adventist administrators have concentrated on issues of religious liberty, bans on alcohol and pornography and other harmful social ills, they have not been afraid to use the institutions of society to express their point of view (See endnote 8).

To summarise thus far, Adventist tertiary education has attempted to set up polemical or apologetic structures to prevent the roles of secular tertiary education and their products from acting as moulding, balancing or eroding factors in Adventist social value judgments, beliefs and behaviours. The Church has fostered an education system that is designed to facilitate character development, inculcate religious belief and prepare the student for service in the Church, armed with the Avondale College Motto" a greater vision of a world in need". Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership through bureaucratic development, corporate structures and hierarchical authority, rationalised impersonal association with its membership, evidenced in other secular institutions. As John W. Knight observed: "...these characteristics are essentially destructive for religious enthusiasm..." (See Weber in R.K. Merton, et. al. (eds.) 1952, pp. 18-27). In that this was "a necessary prerequisite for a formal system of tertiary education" the Church has already set itself up to follow the eventual pathway of the process of secularisation. John W. Knight contextualised this situation through the failure of the Church to correctly understand the religio-social effects of its extreme emphasis and heightened state of excitement of the imminence of the Eschaton. The failure of Christ's return had now caused the Church to move into a form of damage control in order for it not to disintegrate as a result of further member disillusionment. This was evidenced in its employment policy whereby it sought to occupy the time of its members in medical institutions, welfare agencies, factories, publishing houses and schools (John W. Knight, 1973, pp. 125-126).

Environmental conditions can interact with social situations to cause or manifest

adjustments to beliefs or ideologies. This is abundantly evident in the latter period of the nineteenth century, when escalating tension between employer and employee caused Adventism to react against the goals of unionism, to prefer agrarian lifestyles and to live independently through knowledge or experience of a trade. They presumed that environmental factors, economic conditions and a worldview were pre-determinants to sociocultural empowerment for Adventism's behaviour. Self-help and industrial independence were sourced from the Puritan ethic (Weber, 1930, p. 115), becoming important factors in the philosophy of developing Adventist educational and medical institutions. Such an ethos is derived from more than socialisation or fraternisation at church worship (See endnote 9).

To a significant extent, Avondale's Cooranbong community fits quite neatly into the mould as a "community unto themselves". Lake Macquarie City Mayor, John Kilpatrick, remarked uncritically: "the Adventist Church is strong on self-help and independence with its own industries, educational programmes and development projects" (Kilpatrick, June 4, 1997). But Steve Daily suggested that Adventism tended to pursue a course of isolationism, thereby fostering a certain irrelevance in the eyes of the World (Daily, 1993, p. 3). In accusing the Church of hiding in a "cocoon of isolationism", he has charged it to "embrace the world for Christ" (Daily, 1993, p. 28). At the turn of the twentieth century, Adventists were exhorted not to live in the real world or to "seek companionship among those who seek worldly prospects", and to avoid any sport or amusements for this " requires association with the world " (Caldwell, *UCR,* March 1, 1900, p. 2; see endnote 10).

Avondale College's motto "A Greater Vision For A World In Need", must face the concern: "Does it now meet the contemporary world's need?" Since the mid-1960s there has been little real growth of College student numbers excepting the nursing degree course, and although active in recruiting for Adventist youth out of school at Adventist camp meetings, few outside the Church have ever been offered a place in the cloistered College halls of learning until more recently.

On the quest for higher education and post-graduate study, Ellen White held a view in 1898 that youth must be educated thoroughly (White, 1958, bk. 2:336-7). This did not include the acquisition of degrees for degrees' sake (White 1895/1923b) and appeared not to countenance the training of students ostensibly for work outside Adventist institutional life (White 1913/1943,1923b). Within this apparently narrow philosophy of education she hammered the importance of preventing apostasy, heresy,

atheism and scepticism with an education that would be strictly within the control of the Church. In the following chapters we will trace the progression from a sectarian fundamentalist vision for Avondale towards a more denominational and less hegemonial-styled philosophy in higher education.

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1. Initially some thirty American missionaries operated in Australia from 1885 to 1900. The missionary literature was American and regularly featured in the official Australian Adventist *Union Conference Record* from 1898. In the 20 years following Ellen White's first visit to Avondale in 1894, when there were just two local conferences, one Australian and one in New Zealand, world-wide education statistics recorded a mere 29 schools catering for 678 pupils. By 1904, the Church had marshalled a structure of seven local conferences, 175 employees. By 1915 there had been a meteoric rise in all areas in Australasia which now boasted eight local conferences and 312 employees. The worldwide education system now complemented the Church with 2500 schools and 29,000 pupils (Fulton, *AR*, March 20, 1916, p. 8). On this given statistical evidence, it had been a golden path for Adventist Church growth and created an optimistic outlook despite the disaster of World War I.

2 Concordia University, as it is known today, was founded as a "confessing Lutheran branch" in 1891. It is located at Moorhead, Minnesota.

3. According to Ron Lawson, Adventism is "much more sectarian' in the developing or third-world countries as a first generation church and operates in an "heavily evangelistic" mode. Predictably, their corresponding education and socio-economic status is poor. (Lawson, 1991a, p. 2) Their views about the political inefficiencies of the state and temporal peace and justice tend to be distracted by their eschatological hopes and beliefs (Lawson, 1991a, p. 13).

In analysing the administrative structure of the Church as New Testament model, he considered that its American Methodist origins are reflected by the use of "president", "conference", and the basic three-tier system of congregations, conferences and General Conference (Lawson, 1991b, p. 2; Mustard, 1987, p. 208). Although the Adventist Church would claim it to be essentially New Testament, through a "representative" model, so called, Lawson suggested that there was some disparity. Where power might lie with members equally, "following the Protestant doctrine of 'the priesthood of all believers' who delegate executive authority to the structural layers above the congregations", the representative tag best fits the members at a grassroots membership level. At the bottom level, the laity, including the professional laity, is disadvantaged by a lack of information and an inability to conference prior to decision-making. From this layer upward, through the clergy and ultimately ascending to the top administration level, Lawson estimated that there are some 15 stages possible in the Church's decision process. He further claimed that lay members above local conference level "tend to be tokens who can be relied on to be cooperative" (Lawson, 1991b, pp. 4-5).

4. Adventist-styled hegemony, in common with most bureaucracies, may be described as normative, i.e. it is not coercive or utilitarian. The Church derives its social control mainly through top-down pressure on its members to conform to its set of morals and mores. The Church is dominated through a five-tier structure. At the top is the General Conference, the overarching ruling authority, based in America, which dictates to the second chain of command, the Division, in this case the SPDSDA. On the third chain is the Union followed by the conference and then the individual Church member at the fifth or tail end of the Command structure. The Church is centred in and dominated by a clergy class. Every Church member is invited to know their roles and to remain loyal to the church often referred to as a "club-like" community. While the laity in theory hold some power it is more theoretical than practical.

5. M.L. Rice, in reviewing the themes of Scripture and their relevance to human need, stated that:

> the biblical account of creation, supports a wholistic view of humanity, and this wholistic view of human nature prevents us from separating our religious beliefs from our personal actions.... It is therefore important for Christians to pay careful attention to all aspects of physical life, from their appearance to the state of their health (Gillespie, (ed.) 1993, p. 87).

But in the body of Christ concept and the biblical attitude to community elsewhere in New Testament Scripture, there appears to be a greater emphasis on the community of Christ and their relationship to each other than to one's self. In observing John's identification of "mutual love among members of the church as the most outstanding consequence of God's saving power" (1 John 4:7-12), from a study of the New Testament it would seem that the motif of service to others was a priority for the body of Christ. Rice commented:

> Service to others should be the central concern of the Christian life, and that an ethic of service is therefore superior to the ethic of self-improvement... most important Christian values are social rather than individual (Gillespie, (ed.) 1993, p. 90).

6. From the Great Disappointment experience to 1862, Seventh-day Adventism was seen to have evolved as a dynamic and *un*organised movement. Following the development of its organisational structure, after 1863, it moved towards institutionalised sectarian tertiary education.

7. There appear to be numerous texts in the New Testament that endorse this interpretation of culture across the board as evil. Believers are basically foreigners trapped in a hostile land and the only respite is God's kingdom of believers in this world, "the remnant". The inevitable direction of this thought is for the castle of faithful believers, glued together in brotherly love and shunning the world of its backbiting and accusing of the brethren, and injustice at the work place. Such is the fortress and bulwark of the Church, standing true and firm to principle though the heavens fall. Dudley observed: "The inhabitants raise the drawbridge and are secure from the influences and dangers from without. On occasions they send out raiding parties to rescue people from the sinful society around them" (Dudley, 1986, p. 28). They consider that all human endeavours are under collapse. Divine intervention is the only solution to the reception of a better world tomorrow (Dudley, 1986, p. 29).

8. Ronald Stradowsky advanced a view that Adventism has been propping up members' morale by the method of reporting on schools by church administration. This may possibly have been at the expense of progress in new languages and new people groups. He suggested that administrators treated statistical growth in much the same way that multinational firms who have to prove their good management by constant growth... "Our reporting system is structured in such a way as to keep us permanently triumphant" (Dunton, 1990, p. 110). Stradowsky observed that: "SDA educational institutions' largest headaches are now its colleges and universities with financial and personnel resources being the major strain" (Dunton, 1990, p. 109).

9. For Adventism, Lenski's findings and analysis fit well into the early Church psyche. Lenski's analysis following a Detroit study in 1963 suggested that "religion is a factor comparable to social class in its influence on behaviour of individuals and hence in the life of society as a whole" (Lenski, 1971, pp. 48-50).

10. That the insularity of Adventists remained more apparent than any other Protestant organisation is borne out by the NCL survey (1991) into where one's friends are found. Adventists were surveyed as having the least number of close friends outside their church with only 12% compared to the average of other church bodies of 21%. Some 83% of Adventists drew their closest friends from within their own body of believers. The average of

other denominations with the closest ties in their own church was calculated at 70% (Kaldor, et. al., 1994, p. 133). Predictably, a low 0.3% of visitors are recorded to enter Adventist churches, the overall average listed for all other churches is approximately 0.8%. The Uniting, the Four Square Gospel and the Baptist Churches attracted the most visitors with an average of 1.2-3% or four times as many as the Adventist Church (Kaldor, et. al., 1994, p. 210).

PART II

AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SOME OF AVONDALE'S SOCIOCULTURAL POLICY MAKERS AND REVISIONISTS

Chapter 5

The effects of eschatological emphasis on education and mission at Avondale c. 1897-1918

5.1 The Sabbath factor in eschatological time

In this chapter I will attempt to deal in some detail with the background and basis for the College's education of a moral character for mission in the South Pacific. Adventism's eschatological emphasis, as a teleological movement, had been perceived as the continuation of a long line of religious belief originating with Christ's apostles who believed that the return of Christ was imminent. Adventist historian, Leroy Edwin Froom wrote in summary:

> Throughout the ages godly men have seriously sought to understand and to interpret the prophecies recorded in God's Holy Word. They have sought to know where they were in the divine plan of the ages—and what was coming hereafter in God's scheme of things (Froom, 1950, p. 9).

Whether it was the focus on the Saturday twenty-four hour Sabbath, the most visible and distinctive stamp on Cooranbong, or the focus on the Eschaton, time literally, whether in work or study, was in every way of the essence. When Avondale inaugural principal C.B. Hughes presented the Ellen White-backed view that physical exercise in the open air aided one's intellect and physical health, he illustrated the thesis that: "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do" with the biblical example of the destruction of Sodom and Gommorah because of their "abundance of idleness". He contended that the "one great reason why God destroyed the earth at

these times... was because man had become so lazy" (*UCR,* July 14, 1899, p. 9). College Business manager, E.R Palmer, in 1899, was more explicit in his definition. Physical exercise at Avondale included "work with the axe, the grubhoe and the 'forest devil'." Two and a half hours per day including this type of exercise done "thoroughly and faithfully...we believe...are among the most important particulars of our young people's education" (*UCR,* July 14, 1899, p. 10).

Within its philosophy of the use of time and its interpretation of the end of finite time, Adventism brought the Sabbath--through its American Christian cultural interpretation--to Australia. Its ultimate significance was anchored to Revelation 12:17 where it was interpreted that "the remnant" was to be identified on two lines: The keeping of the Ten Commandments and holding to the faith (testimony) of Jesus. Linked with Revelation 19:10 this was clearly interpreted as "the spirit of prophecy". It fitted convincingly into Adventist theology. The Church upheld the Ten Commandments with special attention to the fourth and it had its own authentic prophet in Ellen White. The "Message" or the "Truth", as it came to be known, was founded on the Three Angel's Messages of Revelation 14:6-12.

During 1886 the fledgling Church published in Australia a paper titled *The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times,* with a circulation of 8000 copies. Its masthead signalled that it was: "Devoted to the promulgation of moral and social reforms from a purely Bible standpoint" (*Bible Echo and Signs of the Times,* January 1886, p. 1). A shifting emphasis would appear to have occurred in the following twelve years. There appeared to be an increasing acceptance of Ellen White as the Church's own inspired authority and alongside the Bible and the imminence of the Eschaton she was the vital doctrinal key to the Church's mission and identity. In April 1898, the Australian Adventist Church published a lengthy document stating that the end of all things was at hand. "God", it said, was waiting for His people to position themselves to be trusted with "the blessings of the latter rain" (*UCR,* April 1898, p. 37). The thrust of the message once postulated that people were asleep to the imminent return of Jesus Christ, and this was implied to be closer than a few years away with "the seven last plagues about to fall" (*UCR,* April 1898, p. 39). By understanding and preaching the Third Angel's Message, the world could be warned and those believing could be saved. The paper advocated that to survive through the very last days: "Only those who were spiritually and physically strong could properly represent the advantage of living in obedience to spiritual and physical laws" (*UCR,* April 1898, p. 54).

5.2 Australia the new bastion for religious liberty?

For Australian Adventists in 1898, the impact of "a corps of thirteen medical workers consisting of two physicians, ten nurses, and a trained baker" operating in Australia, was thought to be a significant factor in the facilitation of drawing God's work to an end on earth. Significance was also attached to the work of the Adventist health reform in the form of the work of the Sanitarium and the Health Home in Sydney as playing a role in God's return to earth (*UCR,* April 1898, p. 54). This message from the third angel of Revelation 14 was the last warning to a sinful world before the Second Coming of Christ. A last day remnant would herald the message of a final repentance call for everyone to become Sabbath-keepers or be inflicted with "the mark of the beast" of Revelation 14:9-11 alleged to be characteristic of the Roman Catholic sponsored change to Sunday through Constantine and others. Although developed on lines of differing emphasis, the Protestant view that Roman Catholicism harboured diabolical doctrines and dogmas was as fiercely contended by Wesleyan Methodists as it was by Adventists. Methodism believed Catholicism would confront it in "another great conflict with Protestant civilisation" (*Methodist*, 11 August, 1900, p. 7). At the same time that Adventism feared a Papal conspiracy in America to pervert the course of religious truth and freedom on the Sabbath issue, Methodism viewed Romanism in a more politicised sense as "a breeder of sedition and hatred" against the British Empire (*Methodist,* 22 September, 1900, p. 1; *Advocate*, January 3, 1891, p. 337).

If fundamentalism can be defined as the quest for the primacy of truth then it aligned almost totally with conservative Protestantism (Marsden in Cohen, (ed.) 1990). On the other hand Adventist orthodoxy, on J. D. Hunter's concept, is a "consensus through time" based on the cultural context of its time, in relation to its perceived revelation through Ellen White. In aligning with the Fundamentalist inerrancy of Scripture notion that orthodoxy became bogged down after her death. George M. Marsden opined that from its origin in the 1920s this "fundamentalism [was] orthodoxy in a desperate struggle with secular modernity" (Marsden in Cohen, (ed.) 1990, p. 42). Without that challenge of modernity, Hunter argued, there would have been no Fundamentalist reaction.

On the proposition that fundamentalism was an attempt to make history right

again, it could be said that Ellen White, at about the same time, experienced posthumously a similar elevation by having her own writings aligned to the perception of being inerrant and therefore the authority from which history could be corrected. During her promotion in authority, New England experienced a "tremendous optimism that God was doing a wondrous work in this world." As heirs to the Reformation, America was seen as the land of righteousness, a "Christian commonwealth" and a "righteous empire". Modernism was seen as the corrupting influence that would steal from its people the true faith (Hunter in Cohen, (ed.) 1990, p. 59). This was the perfect seedbed from which Adventism could rise to the fore. The view was factored into Adventism's eschatological warnings, which, having once viewed America as the harbour of religious liberty, now painted the image of a spectre interpreted as a dark and sinister symbol in the Apocalypse.

It had been the nation apart, the land of refuge and freedom of speech for all religion, having escaped the British chains of the establishment and imperialism. As early as the 1850s Adventism "began to question the triumphalist nature of the American destiny" (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 46). Adventist international missionary, J.N. Andrews first identified the two-horned beast of Revelation 13 in an 1851 *Review* to be none other than his own country, America. These lamb-like horns were interpreted to be symbolic of the twin principles of American civil and religious liberty--Republicanism and Protestantism eventually repudiated by the concealed mysterious beast with the mouth of a Dragon. It was an interesting and advanced scenario. "This American dream," advanced Bull and Lockhart, "threatened to undermine the Adventist hope" (Bull and Lockhart, 1989 p. 48).

Between 1895-1910, Adventist schools throughout the world had grown dramatically from 29 to 680 (George Knight, 1995, pp. 98-9). George Knight summarised the cause for the 1890s period of Adventist education expansion:

> The elementary school movement also stimulated expansion in the schools' secondary and higher education. This occurred in part because of the increased need for Adventist elementary teachers, but, more importantly, it resulted from the belief that every Adventist young person should have a Christian education (George Knight, 1995, p.101).

The expansion was not without some powerful misgivings about the definition and inroads of a worldly education system. Early Adventist educationist Edward Alexander Sutherland, instrumental in reforming Battle Creek College in 1897, removed its degree programme originally based on the classics. He proclaimed that

degrees were "the 'germs' of the disease that permeated that Protestantism from which the Third Angel's message was calling people" (George Knight, 1985, p. 38). This notion had been derived largely from Sutherland who opined that: "a degree is a sign or seal of authority...originated by a pope as a sign of his authority over the educational system" (Sutherland, *Review and Herald*, October 10, 1899, p. 10; November 14, 1899, p. 740). Because the State had now assumed the role of conferring degrees, Sutherland argued that only the students' college should have the right to grant degrees. In accepting state-conferred degrees Adventist colleges were aligning themselves with an apostate institution and accepting the sign of a worldly system. Sutherland took the Adventist view of the day that with the papacy shortly to assume control of the American State, such a degree would be seen as "a seal or a mark of the beast" (Sutherland, 1977, pp. 137-8). George Knight saw Sutherland as "in effect the anti-accreditation reformer among Seventh-day Adventists in the nineteenth century" (George Knight, 1985, p. 38).

Ellen White, on the other hand, also recorded an unfavourable comment at this time about acquiring degrees in the Battle Creek College context. Her disgust for degrees, however, was in context with "procrastination" over chasing "degree after degree" for degrees' sake. She warned that: "Precious probationary time will not permit of long protracted years of drill" (White, 1923a, p. 356). Sutherland appeared to have also been absorbed by a contemporary Bible Institute movement of millenarian persuasion, who were persuaded that because time was now of the essence, short course missionary "gapmen" were a more pragmatic approach to warning the world than the educated clergy who would consume four or more years of training (Sandeen, 1978. pp. 181-2).

5.3 The sin of sloth

Continuing on from the Hughes tradition at the Avondale School, there appeared to be an even greater preoccupation by new principal, Charles A. Irwin, in the disciplined time-regimented life to combat sloth and focus the student on the goal of the College experience. A 5:00 am rise followed by compulsory worship attendance at 5:30, preceded an hour's study before breakfast after a day's study and physical labour the lights went out at 8:45 pm following the gong of a retiring bell at 8:30 pm... somewhat reminiscent of monastic lifestyles (*AA* 1904, p. 25; *ACFM*, March 5,

1902). In this regimentation of time, Hook observed that: "Work and study with little relief was the controlling ethos of Avondale. Any diversion required justifying by some educational value" (Hook, 1997, p. 74). Penalties for non-compliance with worship, study or class attendance requirements without an excused absence were severe. Three unexcused absences provided the unfortunate with a College dismissal. (Hook, 1997, p. 74). The faculty exercised this option on at least one occasion when, in expelling a student, it decided to "hold him to the regulations of the school" (*ACFM,* June 22, 1902).

During these years at Avondale College, under the authority of Ellen White's sociocultural practices, its authority to discipline students for breaking the Church standards was exercised vigorously. Current College Board member and SPDSDA executive secretary, Dr. Barry Oliver, has listed a number of lifestyle behaviours that were admonished by her to be kept for fear of eternal punishment. It should be noted that alignments in such sociocultural standards in other normative Protestant Conservative groups were not unusual. The 1850s offered a reasonable spread of advice including diet, dress, sleep, exercise, the dangers of masturbation, the control and reduction of sexual appetite, some of which was vividly expressed and considerably inaccurate (See Conway (ed.) 1982, pp. 252-258). But from Ellen White they were often prefixed by the words "Heaven condemns" "Heaven is displeased " or "I was shown". This approximates the following revised list:

attending opera, the circus, and the theatre
wearing jewellery, fancy ribbons, collars and using cosmetics
feminism
drinking alcohol, tea and coffee
smoking tobacco
homosexuality
masturbation
horse racing
unchaperoned dating
reading novels
playing cards, chess and checkers
wearing collars
looking at pornography
wearing a wedding ring
playing tennis, cricket, croquet and bowling
watching and playing football
riding bicycles
living in big cities
attending fairs
listening to worldly music
(Modified from Oliver, 1997b, p. 9).

5.4 An Eschaton most imminent

Patrick, quoting Froom, accords accurately the Adventist eschatological underpinning for mission. Its "...apocalyptic is presented as the ground of the Adventist's 'special mission'" which was considered by the traditionalists as the fulfilment of "an uncompleted Reformation in direct line of such spiritual dissentients as the Waldenses, Wycliffites, Hussites, Lutherans, Baptists and Wesleyans" (Patrick, 1987, p. 308). As a result of the Church's continuing obsession in 1905, concerning the efficient use of time and the unfolding of latter day events that would usher in eternity, there was a feverish thrust towards warning people about the Eschaton. Even serious Bible education was relegated to second place. Australian Adventist Church historian, Milton Hook, remarked that Bible teachers did not remain for any significant length of time to develop a course curriculum and Irwin did not appear to make this a priority (Hook, 1997, p. 62). In 1906, Avondale students spent substantial time studying Ellen White's *Testimonies* concerning the College and its work (Mills, *UCR,* May 14, 1906, p. 4). It is likely that the programme was a stopgap measure in lieu of the awful reality that the College had either no one qualified to lecture in theological subjects or no person who would stay long enough. In difficult times even the faculty read aloud Ellen White's *Testimonies* on education in their meetings, hoping for spiritual and practical guidance (*ACFM,* July 22, 1906; March 31, 1907; see endnote 1).

The 1905 Week of Prayer readings for the College had a considerable spiritual and cathartic impact on the students. A report by G.B. Starr in the *Union Conference Record* stated:

> The call to repentance was most marked. Not one sin was permitted to remain hidden. Students would leave the room to seek opportunity to confess to teachers or fellow students. Wrongs of every sort were righted...Sins were called by their right names, and confessed and forsaken. Hard hearts were broken, and all with scarcely one exception, including the teachers and workers, received a new and fresh experience.

The theme of the efficient use of time was again highlighted in 1906 when O.A. Olsen on visiting the College, observed: "Everybody everywhere was just as busy as could be...The perfection of the organisation of all the departments and the smoothness with which they are running, is truly a marvel" (Starr, *UCR,* July 15, 1905, p. 2).

The revered words of Ellen White, published earlier in the Church's January 1902 magazine, would now hold every sincere Adventist in a state of expectancy that the world was about to end. In a tantalizing article that placed the Church on red alert for impending destruction, the editors repeated Ellen White's earlier warning in 1902:

> Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full...This time is right upon us. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the earth...
>
> Satan will bring in pleasing fables to meet the minds of all those who love not the truth. With angry zeal he will accuse commandment keepers...Knowing he has but *a short time* he will work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish (White, *UCR,* January 1, 1902, p. 2).

The Australian Church paper reinforced this urgency when in April it published the most sensational warning yet: 'The Latest Testimony--"Only a Moment of Time Left"' (Nichol, *UCR,* April 1, 1902, p. 14). Principal Irwin's apparent answer to this situation was pragmatic. In a short address to the Avondale students he is recorded telling them to "mind their own business" (Irwin, *UCR,* February 1, 1902, p. 7). Several years later it would appear that Irwin was not particularly concerned about the imminent Eschaton's pressures on time. In his end of year address to the College for 1907 he encouraged those who were in pursuit of further study following their graduation, to obtain "thorough training" (Schowe, *UCR,* November 4, 1907, pp. 3, 4). This may well have demonstrated a divergence of view between the extreme fundamentalists and those who saw merit in the completion of a good education. Such a divergence seemed constantly to fly in the face of the ever-present tensions of "The Coming Crisis" and "The Time of the End", as presented by Ellen White to Australian Adventist constituents in 1906, through their Church newspaper. In her article, "The Coming Crisis", she expressed the view that

> in the near future...the same spirit which actuated papists in ages past, will lead Protestants to pursue a similar course....
>
> Protestants are working in disguise to bring Sunday to the front as did the Romanists. Throughout the land the papacy is piling up her lofty and massive structures, in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions are to be prepared. And the way is preparing for a manifestation, on a grand scale, of those lying wonders by which, it were possible Satan would deceive even the elect (White, *UCR,* February 1, 1906, p. 1).

Imminence of the Eschaton continued to wax and wane in the thinking of the Church and the College, but never to the extent of the crescendo of the 1905-1906 era. There was always the constant reminder laid before youth to be cognisant of "The

last sign of the close of probation" (Whittacker, *AR*, April 26, 1920, p. 2), "the need of a quick preparation in view of the conditions of the world" (Allbon, *AR*, March 22, 1920, p. 7), and "Getting Ready for the Judgment". All centred on the idea that one's character had to become perfect, graphically exemplified in A.S Thorpe's 1921 *Australasian Record* article.. A good or bad character would be determined by the Judgment, the first stage of which is investigative, a process now in progress for more than seventy years according to Adventist reckoning. Thorpe continued:

> Reader, are you and I ready for that dread examination, which will decide the fate of every soul? Against its findings there can be no appeal. Once for all it will place us either inside or outside of the eternal kingdom Rev 22: 11. But are we ready? Are all our sins going before to judgment? The chambers of our dwelling may appear clean, but examine them with a microscope and crevices filled with dirt stand revealed. Examined with the rush light of your own feeble judgment, the character may appear perfect, and yet too late for remedy... Let us use the divine microscope, the sin detector (Thorpe, *AR*, October 17, 1921, p. 4).

The culture of the fear of failure and damnation appeared to be a reaction to the Church's anxiety that Ellen White may not have been accorded sufficiently with the respect of a prophet, lacking during her lifetime. The failure of the prophecy for Christ to return since the College's inception has not been a significant dilemma for the College in rationalising the non-event, and no significant pain or loss of face was evident. As already stated, Seventh-day Adventism set no dates for the end of the Eschaton, nevertheless, as Jonathan Butler remarked: "To believe in the Second Advent is to acknowledge delay and disappointment." It has always been the lot of Christian apocalyptic believers to be plagued by failure, as was the postponement of Christ's return for the early Christians. Indeed this style of belief system created for Niebuhr the "disinherited" class, and those in situations of adversity, a certain "animation" and a continual desire for the Church to read the political and spiritual portents and to see themselves as in an "apocalyptic perspective". Butler opined: "They have seen their time as the time of the end" (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 7).

That the end had not come precipitated several explanations, not the least being the view that Christ has not completed his Investigative Judgment of the world. This defied logic. The Church, proposed Dybdahl, believes and preaches that the world was created in six literal 24-hour days and yet Christ has had to occupy more than 100 years of earthly time to make up his mind about who will be saved from the books of judgment (See Dybdahl, *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 32). A second reason proceeded

from the view that Adventism has not yet fulfilled its commission to preach the Gospel including its Three Angel's Messages to "every creature..." A third and "most common" past pronouncement was that Christ's character had not yet been "perfectly reproduced" in his followers. In Ellen White's *Christ's Object Lessons* she offered an explanation of this Adventist textual icon and religious "stick". She referred to "character" and "fruit" in the same context.

> If you have accepted Christ as your personal saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness... As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the spirit of unselfish love and labour for others--you will grow and bring forth fruit (White, 1900, p.68-9).

5.5 Armageddon and World War 1

Jonathan Butler suggested that Adventist evangelists had placed undue pressure upon their hearers. "During the Civil War, World War 1, the 1930's depression, World War 2 and the upheavals of the '60s, Seventh-day Adventists have particularly exploited their Adventism" (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 11). But World War 1 was not only significant to Adventists but for many Fundamentalist-inclined Churches, triggering an intense interest in Bible prophecy. Nancy Ammerman recorded there were at least three International Prophecy Conferences held between 1914-1918 (Marty and Appleby, 1994, p. 23). Many evangelists interpreted World War I as Armageddon. The subject of "Armageddon" was to become a consuming issue for Adventists with its imminence and outbreak. For Adventism it was quintessentially "the battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16: 16: See endnote 2).

Australian Evangelist, Religious Liberty director and Avondale College Board member, A. W. Anderson, was emerging as a significant spokesman on the war for the Australian Church. In describing the outbreak of World War I as "the greatest crisis of history" he told the Church that this was not necessarily the end of the world. Other Bible events were prophesied to occur before Armageddon (Anderson, *AR*, October 12, 1914, p. 12). Armageddon might have been closer, in the view of Church professor H.R. Salisbury, "if the Church had done its work." He made the call to the believers in "the final struggle with strong faith", to sever all connection that "binds us to the earth" (Salisbury, *AR*, December 7, 1914, p. 1).

Australian Conference President and College Board Chairman, C.H. Watson, in suggesting that the Church now measure the Eschaton "not by years, but by days and

hours", longed for "the magic of that efficiency" to finish the preaching of the Gospel in a world unprepared for Armageddon (Watson, *AR*, December 14, 1914, p. 2). But the College appeared to become more cognisant of the patriotic efforts of Australians when it accepted the presentation of a commemorative brass plaque in 1920 from the father of local shopkeeper, Eric Peet, in remembrance of the soldiers' sacrifice. It duly took pride of place in the chapel (*AMCBM*, June 23, 1920).

Armageddon barely rated in Australian Church literature after the war. Greater concentration was devoted to "the close of probation" an Adventist eschatological interpretation of spiritual conditions and the cessation of any further opportunity for people to respond to conversion immediately prior to the return of Christ. In 1919 the *Australasian Record* saw fit to publish on page one a revisitation of the timelines of the Eschaton, "Has That Time Come?" It recorded Ellen White in 1904, stating:

> soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations--troubles that will not cease until Jesus comes...the judgments of God are in the land... We have no time to lose. The world is stirred with the spirit of war.

This article reflected on the possibility that the Church was now entering the final days before the translation of all Sabbath-observing Christians: "It would seem that this time of trouble began in 1914, but is the Spirit now being given?" (Westbrook, *AR*, February 17, 1919, p. 1). A.W. Anderson fired a new salvo in 1932 suggesting that based on the 1844 date identifying the end of the prophetic 2,300 days of Daniel, then a special people would rise up at a time when "the hour of God's judgment" was nigh (Anderson, *AR*, September 5, 1932, p. 1-3).

According to Bryan Wilson and F.D. Nichol, Adventism tended to thrive under adversity rather than prosperity. Yet out of this Adventists developed a fascination for the quality of time and life, concentrating on a state of well-being. In the light of the Eschaton, Jonathan Butler suggested: "every hour may be an individual's 'last hour', every hour is precious and rich with meaning" (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 11).

Numerous examples have been presented on how Adventism, attempting to look through the eyes of Ellen White, had firstly and foremostly viewed the world through an apocalyptic perspective. Both she and the Church believed that the fulfilment of the Eschaton should have occurred before her death. Nevertheless, her sense of imminence of the Eschaton remained in the Church and in Avondale's education system for many decades following, albeit with decreasing fervour as evidenced later

in this thesis. Jonathan Butler rightly observed: "The heart of her message continues to be 'the end is soon'". The ethos of apocalypticism has been maintained in Adventist education to a degree, and reapplied to every newly significant political and religious situation, continuing to provide a worldview in each new generation and pervading an ever enthusiastic, but more critically discerning, group of students. The crisis aspect of the Adventist message, the urgency of time generated by "Ellen White's sense of immediacy", continued to hold together the essence of Adventism (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol. 10, no. 2, p. 11). But that notion of immediacy is now in question by a growing number of disenchanted or sceptical members. Fritz Guy raised the question in 1981 *Spectrum*:

> "Does the fact that Christ has not yet returned call for a re-examination of Adventist eschatology? Can the Church believe and proclaim an 'imminent' Second Advent for an indefinite length of time? Is there any way to continue an authentic Adventist theology?" (Guy, *Spectrum*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 10).

The reapplication of this spirit of expectancy is vital to her survival as *the* authority in the Adventist belief system and to the zealousness of its members (Butler, *Spectrum*, vol.10, no. 2, p. 11). I will return to this theme again in the next chapter where the context of time and its urgency will focus more on the need for moral perfection and personal preparation for the tests of the Investigative Judgment, particularly between the two World Wars.

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1. The experience of College lecturer, Charles Vere Bell, (1869-1948) is worthy of mention here. Having come from a line of distinguished medical practitioners from Uppingham, England, he accepted the Church under a strong belief that the Eschaton was only months away. At that point, converted to the "Truth" with only a few months to complete his medical degree, the "brethren" (Adventists) convinced him that he should work with them instead, "as Christ's coming was too near for him to complete his studies". He surrendered the chance of becoming a qualified doctor in favour of preaching the Adventist message (Warden, April 17, 1997; Life Sketches of My Father, [n.d.]). Further influenced by this Adventist pastor, he continued to be convinced that the end of the world was nigh and came to Avondale in 1907 to lecture on Physiology and Hygiene. Apart from these subjects, he taught bookkeeping, and Bible. In 1909, with no experience in industry, Bell was elevated to the onerous responsibility of Cooranbong Sanitarium Factory Superintendent, (*UC Minutes* April 26, 1909) until the end of 1909, when the College surrendered control (*ASBM*, September 16, 1907; Machlan, *UCR*, October 24, 1910, p. 40).

2. During the 1890s, the Church generally had assumed that Turkey as "the Sick Man of the East" would catalyse the ushering in of the Eschaton (See *Bible Echo*, November 20, 1899, p. 380). By 1914, Anderson was defending Adventist religious liberty protestations, arguing that resisting " tyrannical measures" by the Government protects people outside Adventism in alerting them to the meaning of these events in a latter day context (Anderson, *AR*, September 28, 1914, p. 13).

Chapter 6

The figuring of the Eschaton driving an era of moral perfectionism c. 1919-1943

6.1 Reactionary and Fundamentalist forces on College education

This chapter examines some of the main reasons for Adventist reactionism to liberalism and modernism and its fallout following the First World War. From the literature investigated, it would appear that this was a watershed period that saw the Church tending to imprimaturize Ellen White's theological beliefs and sociocultural standards to the extent that the culture and time from whence they were derived was ignored.

The Church's reaction to these new and threatening secularistic and empirically based ideologies was met by engaging in a form of Protestant fundamentalism which was embodied more in an attitude than by any particular denomination. Based on a progressively authoritarian model of legalistic practices, pressed by Church leaders after her death in 1915, it was thought that the observance of her sociocultural standards toward the perfection of moral character would usher in the Eschaton. In effect the belief in her authority and inspiration as prophetess as being "word inspired", eventually driven hard by the Church's administration it will be argued, affected a sociocultural imprimatur upon its members and Avondale College.

This sectarian fundamentalism caused a deleterious effect on intellectualism and higher education in the Church and especially at Avondale. Yet this "high culture", was claimed to be the celebration of the highest achievements of the human mind, albeit through the power of God of the "Remnant" of the Church. This cultural set of mores was regarded as the ideal, heralding a state or process towards human perfection, in terms of perceived absolute or universal values (See Bates, 1986, pp. 8-9; Williams, 1981, p. 43). Consequently, what I will attempt to document here will be a root cause for this tension and what some present scholars may consider as an indiscriminate use of her writings without any serious contextual checks or christological balances. Those who acted as the vanguard of this insecure, isolationist

epistemological structure--aided by the Adventist hierarchy, emphasized above all else, the need to prepare themselves if the Eschaton were ushered in at any moment (Cf "Lewis Walton and SDA Fundamentalism", *Spectrum*, vol 19, no 1, pp 51-57).

A senior Avondale College lecturer in History, Dr Donald Hansen, described the period of Australian history outside of Adventism, between the two World Wars, as one of apathy, uncertainty and indifference and to some extent disillusionment as the churches struggled through social unrest, economic depression and political uncertainties. From an Adventist perspective there was little general interest from society in the Church's mission due to their preoccupation with material pursuit and pleasure. Liberalism had filtered into most of the mainline churches with the exception of the Baptists and the Roman Catholics. Although greater scholarship might have been evidenced, there was also an increase in timidity with sermon presentation accompanying this trend. While there was generally a desire by the churches to present a united front to society, militant Protestants demonstrated sectarian fear and anger with the Catholic Church until the mid 1920s (Hansen, 1978, pp i-xvi).

In distinct contrast to Adventism's approach to the world, a popular belief during the two World Wars among mainstream church clergy, particularly the more liberal, was to provide a better 'Christian' social setting, considered of more use than ranting about social evils and the observance of sectarian standards. By the end of the 1920s most Protestant colleges in the United States, according to Nancy Ammerman, were in secular hands and most denominational seminaries were promoting the historical-critical method in the study of Scripture. Ominously, a decade later there would be "virtually no evangelical or fundamentalist presence in major American institutions" (Marty and Appleby, 1994, p. 32).

At the other end of the spectrum, aligning with Adventist faith generally, were Protestant conservative calls to the holy life where the doctrines of the infallibility of the Bible, the Ten Commandments, Heaven and Hell and the awful reality of sin were highlighted. The majority of Methodists followed the Baptists' "trust and obey" biblical model. These were predictably offensive to the Liberals who worked their religion from a scientific empirical paradigm (Hansen, 1978, pp. 134-137). Generally speaking, by the 1940s, the Liberals saw Fundamentalists as "obscurantist and obnoxious" institutions which had shown equal disregard for scholarship in their sectarian quest for converts (Marty and Appleby, 1994, p.32).

6.2 Moral purity driven by the distinctive dogmas of a hierarchy promoting a final generation theology

For the Church administration, events between the two World Wars were seen to endorse distinctive eschatological beliefs based on the 1844 significance and the subsequent interpretations of a heavenly sanctuary and the Investigative Judgment, stamped as the "truth" by Ellen White. An increasingly reactionary view of Ellen White's work, militantly promoted by Australian and North American administrators, had a significant effect on College theological and sociocultural perspectives, driving it to the belief that moral perfection must be obtained. Liberalism, modernism and the Catholic Church's conspiracy to enforce Sunday observance and cessation from all work placed the Church and College, by virtue of its prophetic mandate and understanding, in a constant state of readiness for the Eschaton.

The imminence of a Second World War caused the College to be prepared for the worst although there was, overtly at least, little comment about its impacts. To take us back to the effects of the first War on the College, Hook summarised the era before the new principal, L.H. Wood, arrived in 1923, as a dark period made worse by the selection, prematurely, of inexperienced or ultra-conservative principals. As the College emerged from the war years it could well have been excused from the ideological struggle over its curriculum policies. The College graduate did however remain suitable for Church employment: stable, loyal and hard working. Despite the harsh social restrictions there were many who could boast of fond memories of friendships and excitement in escaping scrutiny after breaking College rules (Hook, 1997, p. 124).

By way of illustration, the arrival of Wood, superseding L.D.A. Lemke, appeared to do little to assist the academic status of the College. Wood was proclaimed by Union Conference President and College Board chairman, J.E. Fulton to have "long experience in technical training". This fitted him, said Fulton, to do "excellent service for young people" and to give the College a renewed industrial emphasis (Fulton, *AR,* December 11, 1922, p. 7). In Wood's first year he and the College were cognisant of maintaining their "garden in the wilderness" and "The Lord's Farm" as a successful working industry (Mills, *AR,* April 14, 1924, p. 4). There was considerable preoccupation by the Church over what it headlined on its front pages as world

"chaos" and "perilous times" as the "Precedent to the Second Coming" (Enoch, *AR,* January 3, 1923, p. 1; Fulton, *AR,* February 5, 1923, p. 1; *AR,* September 17 1923, p.1; Daniels, *AR,* May 26, 1924, p. 22). Fulton endorsed the work of Wood in 1924 commenting on the "sweet spirit" and "the large band of workers at the Avondale Industries" (Fulton, *AR,* May 19, 1924, p. 6).

From the days of Adventist conservatism and the reactionarism of Fulton (Fulton, AR, February 23, 1925. pp. 1-2) to A.W. Anderson, they beat the Australian drum of eschatological doom through their presentations of the imminent arrival of the Eschaton. Anderson was convinced that the "close of probation" was at the door in 1925. He suggested the world "was facing a crisis, the magnitude of which it little realises" (Anderson, *AR,* August 24, 1925, pp. 1-2). Allied to this view were the last horrendous events signifying silently and imperceptibly the closure of the door of grace and mercy to all sinners within the heavenly sanctuary—the close of probation. At this point of time those without "perfection of character" would walk without grace to judgment.

In quoting Ellen White, G.W. Wells put the question to his Australian Church: "Have you, in these last precious hours of probation been putting the very best material into your character building? Have you been purifying your souls from every stain?" (Wells, *AR,* May 18, 1925, p. 21). Wells thought perfection of character to mean that the laws of God encompass "every nerve, every muscle, every fibre of our being" and perfect obedience is only acquired by living his perfect life.

Bull and Lockhart interpreted the general American scene in the 1920s to have been dominated by white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPS). Seventh-day Adventists as a "subculture of American Protestantism" (Bradford, 1994, p. 17) shared the dream that the USA was the last bastion of hope, and the "New Israel" of God (Bradford, 1994, p. 11). The age of withdrawal into the Fundamentalist camp was inevitable for Adventism. Not to resist, they considered, would have witnessed a downward slide toward the hellish alternative of the evil Modernist, Liberal and Rationalist camp of higher critical thought where the inspiration of Scripture and the accuracy of biblical history were being eroded. This trend was a threat for those espousing a distinctive Adventist identity, let alone those who sought to hold fast to their historical Protestant positions. Of the 1920s, George Knight made the astute observation:

> During the decade, Adventism was literally forced into the arms of fundamentalism

> in the face of unprecedented polarization taking place in Protestantism. At this point it is critical to recognise that there was no neutral theological ground in the 1920s. Either one was a liberal or a fundamentalist, and Adventism certainly had much more in common with the fundamentalists than with the liberals... (Knight, *Ministry*, August 1994, p. 12).

Yet, Avondale College senior lecturer in the Faculty of Theology, Dr Graeme Bradford, considers that Ellen White would not have consented to some of the hermeneutic for her writings. Citing Bull and Lockhart, he described the Church's descent into a more rigid formalistic attitude as driven in part by her death and the authoritarian insecurity of Protestant fundamentalism. This may be summarised by a conflict between the Adventist conservatives, James White and president A.G. Daniells, who sought to allow only the Bible as the sole arbiter of the Church's faith and practice, and the Church reactionaries. These included J.S. Washburn and Claude E. Holmes, who attempted successfully in the 1920s to drive the Church into the authoritarian stance that Ellen White was inerrant. Robust intellectual debates from the Church's main newspaper, *the Review*, all but disappeared and there was a reduced impetus for the push to higher education (Bradford, 1994, pp. 1-25).

Seventh-day Adventist historian, Don McAdams in Spectrum, provided an explanation of this reactionary phenomenon:

> It is the task of the second generation leaders to hold the movement together without the charisma and prestige of the founding fathers. Faced with the possibility of disintegration, the second generation leaders elevate the symbol of the movement on to a lofty pedestal and claim great virtue, wisdom and authority for the now dead founder. Nothing gives the second generation leaders more authority than to claim all wisdom for the founder and claim for themselves the exclusive right to interpret his legacy (McAdams, *Spectrum* vol. 10, no. 4, p. 27).

6.3 Safety only within the Adventist school system

The warnings from Ellen White that it was no longer safe to send Adventist children to a public school were to be heeded constantly (White, 1913, p. 205). The Roman Catholic Church held an almost identical position. Although the Adventist Church despised its dogma it still held a fascination for Catholicism's administrative style and authority in sociocultural standards. Cardinal Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, was quoted in the Adventist Church press in 1923 stating: "No non-Catholic teacher, however high his moral character or extensive his knowledge, can ever stand in *loco parentis* to Catholic children" (*AR*, March 12, 1923, p. 3). The Adventist Church missed few opportunities in citing authoritarian allies for support from other churches

wherever possible. College lecturer, Albert Edward Speck cited Dr W.B. Riley for support against Modernist erosion:

> Up to the present moment, Modernists have busied themselves almost wholly in subjugating the schools and in capturing key laymen. There they have seen their greatest success. Modernism reasons well that, once the school is in hand, and a few key laymen, the churches will quickly capitulate. With a Modernist in every pulpit, modernism will make rapid progress in the pew. That is the new Jesuitry. The reasoning is sound; the results are not debatable! (Speck, *The Signs of the Times,* July 31, 1922; *AR,* September 18, 1922, p. 6).

Likewise, Greenaway in 1930, saw no impediment by refering to statements made by the Catholic opposition, once again quoting Catholic bishop Dr Mannix and the Rev. Father A.G. Clarke in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

> The Church looks upon nuns as her greatest treasure...If the teaching sisters were taken away from Australia, nine-tenths of the Roman Catholic Churches would fall into decay... It was a great sin for Roman Catholic parents to send their children to non-Catholic schools (*SMH,* April 14, 1930, in Greenaway, *AR,* July 28, 1930, p. 2).

In the great evils that universities could represent, the Church also had an ally in one of their revered reformers, Martin Luther. Quoting him in the Church newspaper's "Education" news column, Greenaway wrote:

> I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates to hell, unless they diligently labour in explaining the Holy Scriptures and engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place their child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the word of God must become corrupt ("Education Department", *AR,* February 22, 1926, p. 4).

6.4 The emphasis on Ellen White's authority *above* Scripture

In 1924 Speck placed the onus of responsibility on Adventist Church schools stating emphatically: "Let it be burned upon our minds in letters of living fire that *the church which cannot save its children cannot save the world*" (Speck, *AR,* October 6, 1924, p. 3; Emphasis in text). This contributed to the post-World War I revival of Ellen White's influence as the "Spirit of Prophecy" of Revelation. Quoting the American Church journal *Review* in 1906, *Review and Herald* editor F.M. Wilcox presented the case for the need to respect Ellen White as a prophet. In her authorship of now more than forty books, he quoted her, saying: "Of myself I could not have brought out the truth in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of his Holy

Spirit" (Wilcox, *AR,* September 26, 1927, p. 2).

> I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger; that he called me in my youth to be his messenger, to receive His word and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus.
>
> *Early in my youth I was asked several times, are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title* (Wilcox, *AR,* September 26, 1927, p. 1; emphasis mine).

Wilcox was endorsing what the Church at large had felt. Ellen White must now be recognised universally as a true biblical-styled prophet. That she did not call herself a prophet was seen as no impediment to the fact that she was. Wilcox claimed she had no "controversy" with those who gave her that title, although Ellen White's writings are devoid of any prophetic symbolism and Wilcox admitted that she claimed to give no new light (Wilcox, pt. 2, *AR,* October 3, 1927, p. 1). Yet he was prepared to placate the "spirit of prophecy" of Revelation as *the* Spirit of Prophecy of Ellen White, concluding: "We thank God that He gave a prophet to the remnant church" (Wilcox, pt. 2, *AR,* October 3, 1927, p. 2).

The case for Ellen White's prophetic role was again presented with renewed vigour in an eight-week front-page presentation by former General Conference president, Avondale College pioneer and Board Chairman, A.G. Daniels. He had just returned to Australia for the last time and had given a round of addresses, including several at Avondale College, and these were widely reported. Daniells observed that in recent years a revival had occurred in her *status owing to the value she had placed on the Bible* blocking any inroad to higher criticism or any "sceptical destructive criticism" (Daniells, *AR,* September 17, 1928, p. 1).

But the tendency of Adventist fundamentalism through Washburn, Holmes and others was now to drive a belief in an inerrant Bible towards giving Ellen White's writings a similar status. Despite her not having secondary education, they claimed that Ellen White "had knowledge directly from God and as such was always accurate on any subject on which she wrote whether it be astronomy, geology, dietetics, theology, medicine, or history" (Bradford, 1994, p. 19). Regrettably, the General Conference and the Ellen G. White Estate, a family-controlled Adventist dynastic-styled institution, it was alleged by Bradford, did nothing to discourage this view for the next fifty years. Ellen White's statements indicating that the final generation of Adventists will have to experience a world crisis described as "the time of trouble"

(White, 1911b, p. 614), and the belief that to emerge victorious Adventist characters will have to be "perfectly reproduced" like Christ's character (White, 1900, p. 69) without an intercessor to forgive them, were all part of a new reactionary theology, led by influential American Adventist author, M. L. Andreason in the 1930s; who taught that in being victorious over every sin, those in the final generation of the Eschaton would be prepared for translation (See Bradford, 1994, p. 36).

Confluent with my findings and that of others, including George Knight, this dogma held sway over many members for decades ahead, Bradford (Bradford, 1994) proposing that this period signalled a setback for the Adventist Church. Pragmatically, in the short term at least, it could be argued that socioculturally it held an already close-knit Church community together more effectively. But it could also be argued that Adventism out-fundamentalised itself by having two inerrant authorities and that when the preferred text for usage was Ellen White, then her long-term credibility was endangered by being placed virtually above the Scripture as an authority.

Adventism, as stated previously, continued to look for the Eschaton in every worldwide religious or political trend and applied an interpretation using selected Bible prophecies that appeared to threaten the Church's beliefs, structure and lifestyle. The Religious Liberty secretaries, usually from the Australian or North American field, often drove these. Their sensational reports were capable of sending more than ripples around the Churches and education institutions as they digested the ominous commentary. Sermons varied from character building ("Character Building", *AR*, March 3, 1929, p. 2; Reeve, *AR*, July 29, 1929, p. 2) and achieving a perfect character at College (Schowe, *AR*, December 10, 1928, p. 3) to A.W. Anderson's alert to the Church of Ellen White's prophecy that the Jews would never again control Jerusalem and that "the Old Jerusalem would never be built up" (Anderson, *AR*, October 6, 1930, p. 4). A revered Bible teacher, Alfred J. Kranz, exhorted the faithful students in 1930 to prepare for the Lord's coming and to respect the view that the "Lord's coming is the 'golden thread that holds together the whole Bible. Let us all be looking...waiting...hasting...and praying...for his appearing" (Mustard, *AR*, August 18, 1930, p. 4).

Despite the Church once again having been fired up to be prepared for impending doom in the late 1920s and '30s, the College, as a tourist and pleasure destination, appeared more interested to be seen to carry on as usual. College lecturer, Mabel White described a typical weekend in May of 1929, stating:

> Today the Australasian Missionary College is a place of interest to tourist parties and pleasure seekers. In the summer time ferry boats and launches make weekly trips to the school bringing a goodly number of sightseers.

Mealtime culture was also seen as significant:

> There is the dinner bell. If you wait a moment we shall watch the students file in and take their places at the table. Look at them! A happy, hearty and healthy band of young people. At every table we find a host and hostess, and they in carrying out their responsibilities see that each member of their table family is well provided for (Mabel V. White, *AR,* May 13, 1929, p. 4).

Mabel White painted a picture of young men and women living in a near perfect world of order, contentedness and industry (White, *AR,* May 13, 1929, p. 4). This idyllic description was to some extent supplemented by another glimpse of Avondale male and female student boarders, reported in the August *Record* in 1929 by H. O'Hara and Marion Young. In the quest of military-like management of time male students were exhorted to do as much as possible in the shortest time through "order and punctuality" (O'Hara, *AR,* August 19, 1929, p. 5). Female student boarders, like the young men, launched their day with "drill" to bring "happy, healthy girls...the glow that is in our hearts into our faces". Worship, followed by breakfast and classes, brought the students together for lunch to be "once more seated at merry midday tables". Afternoon industry work or dormitory cleaning "provided also some needful exercise, and an opportunity to sing as we work." Young described their idyllic experience, "of the scampers along the road to the 'tank' at night," (a water tank approximately one kilometre from the dormitory)...as "exhilarating in the fresh cool evenings." She narrated further the all-too rarely experienced recreational value of the Wattagan Mountains. "Inviting are the gum-covered hills surrounding us...to be off and away, carrying the usual equipment--a frying pan. A few hours out in the open is better than a tonic." Young concluded the report on a sober note:

> Is this too ideal a picture? No, we are all very human, very, but we have an Ideal. If we come here without it, few surely go away without having obtained the spiritual experience that comes from a new vision. Such is the inspiration of the fellowship of Avondale (Young, *AR,* August 26, 1929, p. 5).

Ellen White's prophetic guidance was held generally at least until the mid 1970s.

In the words of George Knight:

> The more rigid view of the inspiration of both the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White would shape Adventism for decades and would not face significant challenge within Adventism until the late 1970s and 1980s (George Knight, *Ministry,*

August 1994, p. 12).

Considerable tension if not odium, was in store for anyone who thought otherwise. In the words of a critic of Seventh-day Adventism, Donald Barnhouse, writing in Walter R. Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism,* published in 1960:

> *only...those Seventh-day Adventists who follow the Lord in the same way as their leaders who have interpreted for us the doctrinal position of their church are to be considered true members of the body of Christ* (Barnhouse, cited in George Knight, *Ministry,* August 1994, p. 13; emphasis mine).

6.5 A zenith in moral perfectionism and the obsession with Ellen White's sociocultural standards

There are parallels in this decade between the Quaker's Azusa College and Avondale (See endnote 2). Not surprisingly, Azusa accorded modernism with the same disdain as Avondale. Eli Reece, Azusa College's 1919 president railed on those who would entertain such a notion as having "elasticity enough in his conscience to start a rubber factory." Reece elaborated that such persons being as:

> ...Bible penknifers, miracle rejectors, God minimizes, man magnifiers, hell expungers and those with animal ancestors, belong to another family altogether and are on the road which leads to a different place than that which inspired the activities and hopes of the martyrs and early friends (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 749).

Burtchaell observed the absence of such authoritarian-based black-and-white standards in the Azusa programme but the same disdain for measuring academic excellence. In 1920 the college set down one year without any particular focus on academic excellence. Cultural standards, alone, appeared to take precedent in deportment; "above reproach", a spiritual life; "genuine and growing", and Christian service intended to be "satisfactory and helpful"'. (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 750) By the end of the 1930s the school still remained unaccredited. At Avondale, in further depreciation of academic excellence, Dr George Boyd told his students in 1937 that *the only real purpose in life was character formation.* "Character," he told the College, "is the web of life, woven in the loom of time. It is stretched on the hooks of adversity, washed in the valley of tears, and whitened in the frosts of disappointment" (Boyd, *AR,* March 22, 1937, p. 1).

The now highly respected Australian and world Adventist Church leader, C.H. Watson, in addressing the Teachers' Convention at Avondale in 1938, contrasted with Boyd's view, suggesting that Ellen White was ahead of her time, and that an albeit

balanced higher intellectual attainment was now required:

> I believe sincerely that the instruction received through Sister White, is so up-to-date that we have not as yet caught up with it. That instruction calls for high intellectual attainment within our own educational system. The needs of our work demand that we earnestly strive to meet that call. But while we should be intellectual, it must be moral and it must be spiritual...You should labour untiringly to develop our children and youth in moral and spiritual living (Watson, 1938, con, p. 3).

In the same year, the Australian Church appeared to have reached a zenith in the obsession with moral perfectionism. The editor of the *Record* stated that the "essence" of Christianity was synonymous with the "perfection of character" ("The Essence of Christianity", *AR,* September 19, 1938, p. 3). Wells continued the theme on the *Record* cover page emphasizing that: ...*"if the remnant church attain to the perfection of character God designs, that she give due heed to and cherish the clear instruction that has come to her through the Spirit of Prophecy"* (Wells, *AR,* October 17, 1938, pp. 1-2; emphasis mine). In the context of a record number of students graduating in 1937, ("Australasian Union Secretary's Report", *AR,* September 26, 1938, p. 2) the popular charismatic, E.L Minchin, stirred his College audience in various addresses, including: "The Sealing Work" of God for translation, "Embracing Organisation" and "The Purpose of the Movement" (Campbell, *AR,* October 31, 1938, p. 5; emphasis mine).

There may have been some respite from the bombardment of Spirit of Prophecy admonition however. The work and personal qualities of John Wesley were highlighted before the College and Church in 1938, when in remembering the bicentennial of Methodism, Alfred Kranz focused on "that prince of God, John Wesley". In his sermon, published on the cover of the *Record*, he reflected on Wesley's secret in evangelistic success. "We, as Seventh-day Adventists, need to learn the secret of Wesley's power and 'recapture the spiritual glow' that illuminated his heart." Adventism's nostalgic revisitation of the early pietism of Wesley and Ellen White's early connections added special identity to the appreciation that he was "of greater historic importance than all the splendid victories of land or sea won under Pitt" and "the most influential mind of the last (eighteenth) century" (Kranz, *AR,* June 6, 1938, pp. 1-2).

If Watson had his mind on the here and now, by signalling in 1938 the need for students to be presented with a denominational university where they could get their medical training--until then only obtainable at state universities (John W. Knight,

1978, p. 34)--then three years later, he considered the Eschaton had all but arrived. Having become very alarmed at the war's devastation, he warned Adventism in a three-part series that "The Hour is Come", with a clock face registering that it was almost one minute to twelve o'clock. In a moment of triumphalistic pride for his Church, he cried: "*Brethren, this is a wonderful hour, and ours is a wonderful work. Let us go through the gate, let us gather out the stones, let us lift up a standard for the people*" (Watson, *AR,* October 16, 1941, pp. 1, 2; October 13, 1941, pp. 1-2; October 20, pp. 1-2; emphasis mine). In August 1942, Watson went one step closer to heralding the arrival of the Eschaton when he stated to his Australian and College constituents, "The Hour of His Judgment *is Here*" (Watson, *AR,* August 31, 1942, p. 1; emphasis in text). Yet unlike the Jehovah's Witnesses' successful campaign to attract members on the imminence of Armageddon (Hansen, 1978, p. 398), the Adventists seemed reluctant to go down that road again.

Strongly evident in the late 1930s was the powerful hegemonial institutional control not better illustrated than in circumscribing students' desire for excellence in various specialist fields. Student interest clubs, including academic literary or debating societies, were discouraged (*AMCFM*, July 27, 1938). Instead students were directed to align with faculty initiated and controlled meetings. Aspiring College soloists seeking specialist training--at considerable expense--from well-known Newcastle-based baritone, Colin Chapman, were refused permission by the faculty. The College programme was declared to be quite adequate, the faculty stating that it provided "instruction along musical lines to cover the needs of any course; voted that we adhere to our policy and therefore refuse the request" (*AMCFM*, March 21, 1939). Chapman appealed the students' case three times. The College faculty revealed its unambiguous message of authoritarianism, stating:

> ...it is not in the best interests for college students to be absent from the college for such periods as requested by D. Stacey, and further it is not the policy of the college to permit students to take part in programmes *not under the control of the institution* (*ACMFM* September 13, 1939; emphasis mine).

In this chapter I have endeavoured to present the case that between World War One and Two a watershed period saw the Church seeking to imprimaturize Ellen White's theological beliefs and sociocultural standards without due respect to her culture or time from whence they were derived. The Church's reaction at this time could be best described as engaging in a form of Protestant fundamentalism and

sectarianism which was reactionary by nature to the imminent dangers of modernism, liberalism and empiricism. This incipient insecurity drove the Church to seek ever higher standards from its Church members and College students and to be set apart from "worldly standards" for fear that they would not be ready for Eschaton.

In the next chapter I will offer some strong evidence for a significant transition in opinions regarding a number of specified sociocultural standards and philosophies. These standards were severely jolted by a loss of cultural purity and focus on moral perfectionism, through the War, which had in turn reduced social isolationism and had increased uncertainty about interpreting world events. Several College administrators and scholars who saw the need to balance the College's promotion of character development with outcomes more consistent with a university-styled academic standard would further exacerbate this loss of cherished purity.

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1. Neither Barnhouse nor Martin is a Seventh-day Adventist.

2. Azusa Pacific University, as it is known now, was founded in 1899. It is situated in Azusa California.

Chapter 7

Post Second World War winds of change c. 1943-1959

7.1 A new sense of need for relationship and values focus

World War II had an effect on Adventism that would alter its focus on moral perfectionism for all time. The War would set the course for a paradigm shift from eschatological to a greater soteriological and ecclesiological balance and a more human-faced biblical ecclesiastical and collegiate structure. At Avondale, winds of change were gently elevating sociocultural standards and relationships, the faculty now sensing the need to be less aloof to the students' needs, especially at student-faculty level. A graduates' tea in 1942 was witness to a unique experience where both faculty and staff members came together to celebrate the students' graduation (*AMFCM,* November 4, 1942). The *Record,* in a somewhat rare moment of reflection, published a front-page story on "Values that Last", highlighting the need for the Church to emphasize the ethic concentrated on by Paul, that unconditional love was the greatest gift in the world. In an emotional description of its empathetic effects, C.G. Chappell wrote:

> Love is something that, getting into my heart, makes it so to beat as to break off the lock of my front door and the latch off my front gate, and sends me out to "rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep." To love is to be possessed by a good will that is aggressive, sacrificial, and Christ-like. To have such love is to possess the greatest thing in the world (Chappell, *AR,* August 2, 1943, p. 1).

The front page of the *Record* had historically been reserved for a strong doctrinal exhortation or a warning of the imminent Eschaton. In the following years after 1945, an increasing array of articles on values, personal witness and geographical events would appear. But the continuing challenge of evangelism, to save people from the damnation of spiritual wickedness, remained. Despite "the tenseness of the situation" greater evangelistic time was encouraged; "a fuller and more consecrated service for the finishing of the work" was sought by the Church's administration. This included people who showed interest in Adventist radio broadcasts. Up until this time there was an absence of exhortation to spend pastoral time in visitations ("Evangelism",

AR, August 2, 1943, p. 2). But by the War's end, and with no Eschaton in sight, the Christo-centricity of Church education was beginning to emerge as evidenced further by subjects including "The Cross of Christ" (Staples, *AR,* October 28, 1946, p. 1) and "To Live is Christ", a sermon presented to College graduates at their 1946 graduation by Australasian Division secretary, L.C. Naden (Naden, *AR,* January 6, 1947, p. 2).

Until now the advice given thirty-one years before by Professor Frederick Griggs in 1916, that the College should pursue a path culminating in offering degree courses, had been stymied by sectarian attitudes of Adventist administrators paranoid that they could lose control of hallowed Fundamentalist beliefs and management structures. How had this occurred? Hook observed that the War had removed all confidence in the myth of geographical isolation. This signalled to the Church and the College that their own policy of deliberate and cherished isolationism was under threat from technology, communication, transportation, and community ideas shared from other universities that were attended by Adventist lecturers. To continue in the Church's strident policy of isolationism, when its believers were now exposing their children to other education fraternity, became an anomaly. Church members increasingly sent their sons and daughters to these Philistine institutions only to discover that "it *was* possible to engage the benefits of secular education without compromising religious viewpoints" (Hook, 1997, p. 193: italics mine), and that the Church actually applauded and almost revered their newly achieved degree status (Hook, 1997, p. 192). However, Schowe maintained, in his history of Avondale, that even before the end of World War II the plan to develop degrees was under way in 1942 but that they were suspended temporarily "owing to the complexities" of the War (Schowe, 1951, p. 72).

As Hook observed, if World War II destroyed the myth of Australia's safe geographical fortress, made secure by its isolation, Avondale's security from its deliberate isolationist policy was also unravelling. Modern transport and communications had exacerbated its anti–community stance and were now forcing it to mix with "the enemy", secular educational administration. The Church's administration recognised that to further block Avondale's direction toward accreditation and scrutiny by external sections of higher learning would not meet with the approval of Adventist parents already channelling their children to secular humanist universities (Hook, 1997, p. 193). Consequently, a new breed of College

administration in January 1947 desired its constituency to be directed in an upwardly mobile direction socio-economically and educationally. It now viewed white-collar careers as more desirable for its members and students (Hook, 1997, p. 207).

7.2 The higher education and soteriological focus of Murdoch and the Church administration reaction

Although the incoming principal to Avondale in 1947, William Gordon Campbell Murdoch, was reared as a dairy farmer's son in western Scotland, his agricultural experience did not gild the "blueprint" notion for Avondale, so long held by the conservative faithful. Indeed it would undergo an upgrade and reinterpretation. Conversely, Murdoch who held a BD from London University and a PhD from Birmingham University, having had "a flirtation" with universities, was now able to use his experience to work ultimately in the College's interests. As the highest qualified principal the College had ever called, this new approach underpinned by the rigours of *secular* universities, was credited as "living proof" that a "Christian faith could survive encounters with radical classmates and lectures by non-fundamentalists" (Hook, 1997, p. 190). Such experience assisted the Church in appreciating that denominationally recognised degrees had priority over secular recognition, a notion which would have been held by the majority of Australian Church administrators.

Murdoch alerted his constituents in the second year of his term of office that more attention to intellectual pursuit was required at the College. In a powerful argument for a College upgrade, he quoted Ellen White from an almost unassailable position: "Balanced by religious principle you may climb to any height you please...to this end they may strain lawfully every nerve...The Lord has set no limit to the intellectual attainments of His young people" (Murdoch, *AR,* November 22, 1948, p. 2). In 1950, he was invited to look at the legal prospect of presenting Australian denominational degrees, (*AMCBM,* March 15, 1950) after having approved six students for degree work in 1948 (*AMCBM,* April 21, 1948). This politically astute direction by Murdoch caused Adventist historians, but not necessarily his contemporary administrators, to hold him with a "high level of respect" (Hook, 1997, p. 213). Nevertheless, the winds of change were perhaps most evident with the

College's higher education focus culminating in the 1954 University–type degree course, a BA Theology followed in 1956 by a BA in Education.

7.3 The eschatological and standards focus driven by American Church leaders

Up until 1950 and almost without exception, when American General Conference administrators delivered a message to their Australian constituents, the midnight hour of apocalyptic fulfilment was laid upon the Church. At the end of that year, when Adventism was experiencing respectable growth and development, the vice president of the General Conference addressed the Australian Church at its headquarters, stating that the hour had struck (Olson, *AR,* December 11, 1950, pp. 1-2). Australian Trans-Tasman Union president, W.E. Battye, continued in this theme, telling the Church that "This is the hour for which all the centuries have waited. Surely *we know* the time" (Battye, *AR,* January 22, 1951, p. 1; emphasis mine).

Like reading the face of a clock and winding up its spring, the explicit implication that the Adventist movement could read the time parameters for Christ's return was being reworked once again by senior Church administrators. Battye, to his credit, however, had support from some non-Adventist religious sources, including the editor of the *Christian Century*, Dr Charles Morrison, H.G. Wells, Dr Raymond Fosdick, and the Dean of Salisbury (Battye, *AR,* January 22, 1951, p. 1). In the continuing focus on amusement standards, American Church author, C.B. Haynes, obviously feeling a slippage in distinctive Church sociocultural grasp, asked of the members the rhetorical question, "Has the Time Come for Us to Alter Our Standards?" His solution continued in the Church Traditionalist separationist line, stating: "To do this it makes a separation between this people and the world" (Haynes, *AR,* March 24, 1952, p. 1; April 21, 28, 1952, p. 1).

But in a somewhat stunning if not unintended rebuttal, associate editor of the *Review and Herald,* Frederick Lee, delivered a critique impinging on Avondale's sociocultural policy, divesting himself of an original interpretation on separateness in the context of *physical* isolationism. He suggested it was wrong to build "Zion cities on this earth or exclusive communities to which they [should] flock for refuge from the corruption and the dangers of the world." The doctrine of separationism was here

defined as applicable *only* in the context of spiritual attitudes in believers (Lee, *AR,* December 7, 1953, pp. 1-2).

At the 1952 College graduation address General Conference president R.R. Figuhr preached on the fundamental standards of the Church, "loyalty, humility and purity" (S.C., *AR,* January 5, 1953). But, if College standards were an issue, the notion of "knowing the time" did not appear to trouble Murdoch or feature in his printed addresses. His message contained a more soteriological implied ethos: "Be not afraid. No fears can disturb your tranquillity when Christ is near" (Murdoch, April 9, 1951, p. 1). His restructuring and rebuilding plans did however attract a self–conscious proviso from a College reporter announcing the ambitious new College plans. "With the foresight that does not detract from a conviction of the nearness of our Lord's return, plans have been drafted..." (Ford, *AR,* June 11, 1951, p. 6).

7.4 Murdoch's struggle for College denominationalisation and an inclusive worldview, against the College's "blueprint" resurgence

Murdoch, it would appear, was neither academically nor socially intimidated by the Adventist culture of "them and us"--a perfect church in a dirty world. But it was a difficult call to be skilfully negotiated with the Australian Church leaders' promotion of Christian education. They continued to maintain the expression of Revelation 14 for Avondale College, defined bluntly and simplistically as the "separation from the world, and the teaching of truth, from God's word" (Peterson, *AR,* January 17, 1949, p. 2). Murdoch was involved in the local community as vice-president of the Newcastle Royal Life Saving Society, (Hook, 1997, p. 211) suggesting further evidence of his inclusive cultural attitude. He sacrificed the Church's sectarian evangelistic interests by reducing the time for Mission Appeal campaigns, (*AMCFM,* March 10, 1947) and increasing study hours in the library (*AMCFM,* June 16, 1947). He allowed greater choice of food for students and supplied free copies of Hebrew and Greek Scriptures to his Biblical Languages students (Hook, 1997, p. 211). Plainly Murdoch's goal was to steer the College professionally toward being a *denominational* educational institution working at tertiary level and toward encouraging a greater degree of *personal* responsibility. His focus and thrust for Avondale might be understood best in the context of being the first significant

College administrator to attempt a theological/revisionist reform through a soteriological basis for student mission and service.

Hook's view that Murdoch had convinced the Australian administration that his directional thrust of upward and accredited academic standards was the better direction was not entirely true, it appears. Rather, he seems to have eventually stirred an arsenal of reactionary ideas relating to the perceived original purpose and work of the College. West Australian Conference president W.J. Richards, having just returned from an overseas tour of Adventist colleges, had been enthused over the purported Avondale "blueprint" of a balanced agrarian/industrial training college (Richards, *AR,* July 28, 1952, p. 3). Likewise, Trans-Commonwealth Union Conference president and former principal T.C. Lawson wished to see the College brought "into line with the 'blueprint'" (Lawson, *AR,* August 11, 1952, pp. 3-4). The confluence of these articles exhorting reactionary views, together with Australasian Church secretary F.A. Mote extolling the virtues of Avondale as a model of country living, industrial training and self support, and boasting that it was "the most revolutionary, unique and inspiring example of Christian education", were no coincidence. It would appear that their notions had brought them headlong into collision with Murdoch, who appeared to be acting as a catalyst in the marginalisation of the mythical "blueprint". It was Hook's view that:

> At this stage in the College history there seemed to be little administrative desire to advertise or develop the practical arts. Both agriculture and the trades had virtually become service departments of the College, and providing they remained profitable then management was content with the status quo. The developments of agricultural courses were not high on the priority list (Hook, 1997, p. 207).

On this notion from Hook, I would argue that it is not sustained from the evidence of this lobby group. It is probably nearer reality to say that the Church administration appeared to be growing out of sympathy with the viability of Ellen White's direction that the farm should be "a living parable to the students" or Schowe's view that: "It would be impossible to conceive the existence of the school even for one year without the existence afforded by the farm" (Schowe, n.d. [1951] p. 89).

Nearing the end of Murdoch's reign a curious article appeared in the Church press under an unsigned banner, "Australasian Missionary College--Principal's Report". A motherhood statement, uncharacteristic of the emerging Murdoch paradigm, appeared, emphasizing for the first time that "spiritual preparation must take precedence over every other aspect of our college," and that "In God's plan Avondale

was to be the model for Seventh-day Adventist colleges throughout the world" ("Australasian Missionary College--Principal's Report", *AR,* January 21, 1952, p. 6). Yet despite this and other reactionary articles by the *Review and Herald* editorial staff in America, espousing the idea that "as mere literacy has spread, so apparently have taste, decency, and the power of reflection diminished", (Lee, *AR,* May 18, 1953, p. 3) it was scholastic success that continued to dominate the College's expansion (Clapham, *AR,* February 25, 1952, p. 8).

The fundamentalist-styled educators and Church administrators who had for so long pressed for a sectarian system of education, arguing against degree programmes and promoting the practical arts of industrial courses, had unknowingly already lost the war but would continue to fight a battle. By the end of 1953, it appeared that Murdoch had run his course and although the progressive wing, mainly academics and students were deeply saddened by his departure, the Church conservatives probably breathed easily, believing they would see a return to the old landmarks alleged in the Avondale "blueprint".

The emergence of a more practical and human approach among students, from an ideology of the absolute need for loyal service, constant activity, euphoria, progress and expectancy of the Eschaton, to life as it really was, became more evident in College life. A former student, revisiting the College described it in 1951 without the usual triumphalistic jargon of the Church newspaper. The alumnus reflected:

> Evening study follows, and wistful eyes watch the slow-turning hands of the clock till at last the lights dim and to rooms and bed student life drops thankfully to sleep, while out in the night the mopoke mourns its dirge, and the howling and barking of the canine tribe cuts through the still air. The hours pass by into morning...and Monday morning sees the class-rooms crowded with students—some weary looking, some vacant, some nonchalant, some determined, some cheerful, yet all with brain and hope.
>
> And this is Avondale--a great factory for moulding men and women...
>
> Planned of God, built by faith, and established in prayer and sweat and tears. Avondale must live though other things must perish" (An Old Student, *AR,* July 9, 1951, pp. 6-7).

Fears of being overrun by external forces, counter to the Church's mission and identity, remained however, and with good reason. Of the United States college scene Burtchaell described at Lafayette College (See endnote 1) the all-too-familiar scenario of a college losing its grip on the goal of Christian education during the 1930s. Presbyterianism had already lost its identifying landmarks. Following the Great

Depression, with its sights firmly set on increasing its standards for higher education, Lafayette saw waning interest in religious meetings, Bible and religious fervour generally. The chapel meetings became a vehicle for the expression of secular announcements, concerning anniversaries, special events and other matters related to college life. Meetings were occupied by celebrity guests or came in the form of pep rallies. (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 158) It was a far cry from the era of the 1880s when it was proudly remembered that the college was founded on prayer and maintained through *compulsory* attendance at religious activities (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 151-2). By 1943, obligatory worship had disappeared.

During 1948 it became increasingly evident that as the nature of the students changed so must the college bend to the desires and expectations of its clientele. The college was now described by its president as "fundamentally spiritual, a voluntary fellowship" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 155). There were some telling reasons for this inevitable loss of identity. As Burtchaell observed, Lafayette, even as early as the 1880s, was administered by a "very Presbyterian President but with a "not very Presbyterian student body". Already there had been a strong push against any cultural attitudes regarded as sectarian. The desired student was then assessed as "credibly converted", "pious" or a "church member" (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 141-2). The College became endowed by Carnegie money and propelled by the Carnegie philosophy that all Christian education should avoid sectarian elements, looking beyond their own self-interest and partisan attitudes. This eventually led, in 1905, to a new form of evangelism, that of scientism by one of its faculty. Burtchaell described it as "a subversive threat to faith in a Christian college". The faculty member's academic emphasis facilitated a potent engineering faculty during the following ten years (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 145-8).

There is some evidence at Avondale that if it ventured into the lion's den of "Babylonish" believing that it held an unassailable theological position on the "truth" before its academic non-Adventist critics, it would be rewarded. In a rare opportunity to present Adventist faith to a non-Adventist academic audience, Bible teacher, Pastor N.C. Burns, in 1953 delivered his "twelve planks" of the Adventist doctrine at St Andrews Divinity College, University of Sydney. Burns denied that there had been any modifications to the Church's beliefs, citing the *SDA Year Book* as the Church's "universal authority". So confident was he that the Church was entirely consistent in its doctrinal beliefs, he challenged the Sydney University students, many of them

postgraduates, to "produce even one statement from Seventh-day Adventist publications which disagree with what he had presented." Among his topics, included were "The gift of prophecy in the remnant church", "Accepting the Bible and the Bible only as our rule of faith", "The judgment", and The 2300 day prophecy" (The Editor, *AR,* August 10, 1953, p. 5).

At this time institutional responsibility and control alone were seen to be increasingly ineffective in empowering individual Church laity to service and witness. A College alumnus and senior Church youth leader, Pastor Kenneth H. Mead, fired a salvo of critique on its ultra-conservative stance at the administration collectivism.

> *Its members, depending on institutions and departments, congregate as an exclusive society of morally good people. Unless we break the bands of conservatism and individually soil our robes with the toil of Christ-like labour, we shall never reach the lost world around us* (Mead, *AR,* March 21, 1955, p. 12; emphasis mine).

That the youth of the Church were now beginning to emerge above the traditionalist view that children (and youth) "should be seen but not heard", coincided with Avondale's largest graduation of degree students on record in 1957. Church administration had apparently decided that the youth of the Church, now having come of age perhaps, would be a useful evangelistic tool when utilised in an organised manner. Adventist youth-inspired programmes dubbed, "The voice of youth", grew Australia-wide (See "The Voice of Youth", *AR,* 26 May, 1957, p. 8).

Avondale College and its students' achievements, it now appeared, were seen as the Church's most prominent avenue for its voice of youth ("Large Graduating Class at AMC", *AR,* July 22, 1957, p. 7). This also seemed to coincide with a more introverted and pietistic ethos flowing through at College level when the Graduation Address in 1956 was reported in depth. Dr Lionel Turner, as speaker, focused on the central themes of Christianity, emphasizing that all Christian faith and practice must be illuminated by "Life in Christ" as the "light of men". This significant service was a small but important step towards an increasing departure from the traditionalist emphasis on loyalty to "the organisation" and the Adventist Church. The awareness that one's focus of loyalty and moral perfection was slowly shifting towards the merits of Christ's vicarious act of atonement would gradually centre on perfection in His sacrifice rather than man-induced behavioural perfectionism (Turner, *AR,* January 1, 1957, pp. 1-2).

In the meantime, General Conference president, R.R. Figuhr endeavoured to convince the Church laity of the administration's "earnest effort...to effect

economics". Predictably Figuhr was concerned that his membership would also "not forget" its stewardship to the Australasian Church organisation (Figuhr, *AR,* February 18, 1957, p. 2). Because it was a privilege to be a member of God's Church it should awaken the highest ideals and loyalty to standards (Figuhr, *AR,* May 6, 1957, p. 6). Because the Church's *distinctive* teachings were largely held in the "inspired commentaries" of Ellen White, it would not have been surprising to see the traditionalist arm beating the distinctive truths of the Church against the most central ethos of the Pietists and the New Testament Scriptures—the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In 1946, Wilcox, by now editor of the *Review and Herald* for 33 years, *warned Adventists not to rank her writings in different categories of authority, but accept them as inspired non-canonical messages of a "divine commentary" or "inspired commentary" nature* (Wilcox, *AR,* August 5, 1946, pp. 1-3). Ten years later Avondale College Board chairman F.G. Clifford called upon his readers to recognise their dependency on Ellen White's writings in order to secure "up-to-date, day-to-day counsel" (Clifford, *AR,* August 20, 1956, p. 1). But there was otherwise little new light on the Eschaton's imminence excepting the fact of the world's ability to now destroy itself in its "prodigious preparations of death-dealing devices" (The Editor, *AR,* January 4, 1954, p. 1). Further concerned by the perceived loss of interest in the basic tenets emphasized by Ellen White as the "Old Landmarks", Clifford enunciated these on the front page of the *Record.* He listed them as:

> The sanctuary and its cleansing;
> The first, second and third angel's messages;
> The Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus;
> The Sabbath of the fourth commandment;
> The non-immortality of the soul
> (Clifford, *AR,* February 3, 1958, p.1).

This new offensive to shore up the Church belief system, combined with the Church Sabbath School lesson emphasis that "true happiness" was found in "adherence to the standards", (Lowe, *AR,* November 10, 1958, p. 14) ensured that the tradition of the Church fathers would be kept on line. Continuing pressure on external deportment was applied by R.R. Figuhr, who reminded Church members of their obligations to its standards on female dress (Figuhr, *AR,* March 2, 1959, p. 12). This may not be coincidental with the arrival at College of a physical landmark--a commemoration stone and plaque to Ellen White's alleged dream and "divine guidance" about the College's location, since disputed ("A Monument of Divine

Guidance", *AR,* January 5, 1959, p. 1).

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1. Lafayette College was a Presbyterian men's college founded in 1826. It is located in Easton, PA.

Chapter 8

The maintenance of traditional cultural standards at Avondale, against the tide of modernistic sociocultural trends c. 1960-1970

8.1 The McDowell charismatic authority factor

If Murdoch was seen as "the prince" of College principals, E. Gordon McDowell, 1959-1971, might be regarded as the lion in the protection of Ellen White's mores. Through his charismatic and forceful style, by which he became totally involved in all facets of the College, there was soon left no doubt that this rugged, energetic and athletically-credentialed administrator would push through the vision that he brought to the institution (Savige, 1979, pp. 90-91). Alan E. Savige accorded McDowell with

> having a rather determined mind as many a student discovered to their detriment. Inclined to be impetuous when he failed to gain his point, McDowell had a reputation for being able to force through a committee, actions and policy that were to be to the benefit of Avondale (Savige, 1979, p. 92).

McDowell was a "local" born in New Zealand and the first Australasian principal for twelve years. Well qualified to hold the position, he held a BA and MA from the University of New Zealand, a BEd and an EdD from Columbia University. As an "all round" administrator he focused on the building of physical infrastructure and the furtherance of tertiary recognised degrees. Savige observed that McDowell had a sound working knowledge of Adventist education, having been on significant Australasian committees since before 1950. Savige opined:

> Such qualities enabled him to extract every possible point to the advantage of the redevelopment plans, which he considered so necessary if Avondale was to be transformed into a fully-fledged tertiary institution (Savige, 1979, p. 92).

Through the early McDowell and the College Board administration era, students would still be held firmly by the Church's paradigm that separation and exclusiveness in faith and practice through deliberate social isolation was the only method by which "the perils of worldliness" could be shut out. This again meant that the youth of the Church must refrain from association with worldly people or the pleasures they experienced (Minchin, *AR,* October 26, 1959, p. 12). But on another front there was

increasing acceptance that the laymen of the Church might play a more significant role in evangelism than originally credited, evidenced by the announcement of the first Australasian Layman's Conference held in late 1959 (Hills, *AR,* November 16, 1959, p. 1). The Church also celebrated the restoration and official reopening of Ellen White's Cooranbong residence, "Sunnyside", having reclaimed it after it fell into disrepair and disrepute (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 212). Clifford remarked at its opening: "This building is not a shrine. It is a reminder that a prophet dwelt among us" (Clifford, *AR,* January 2, 1961, p. 8).

8.2 Further winding back of the Eschaton and a sense of need for personal standards-based judgments

In reviewing the Adventist prophetic world interpretation, there were three major events still to be fulfilled to bring in the Eschaton. This appeared to have Church administrators, including the College Board chairman and Australasian Division president, F.G. Clifford, struggling to understand where the Church was standing eschatologically. He nevertheless maintained that current world events established the cause for Adventism's peculiar existence (Clifford, *AR,* January 2, 1961, p. 1). For him the papal rise to power in the West since the nineteenth century, the centre court performance in the Ecumenical Movement and the threat it now posed for Protestantism, weighed heavily in the Eschaton's schema.

Sunday legislation, for Adventism, had appeared to come precipitously close on several occasions to bringing in wide-scale religious intolerance and persecution. The advent of the nuclear arms race and the escalation of the Cold War, while not having a direct bearing on any specific Adventist Bible prophecy, was causing grave concern in Western society and therefore added to the Church's continuing eschatological alert. Indeed the Church itself even made its own physical preparations for nuclear attack (See Stewart, *AR,* March 20, 1961, p. 1).

Sections of the Church also viewed the Middle East and the Jewish question as a seedbed and flowering plot for ongoing prophetic fulfilment. Finally the universal belief that the Gospel must be heard throughout the world seemed tantalizingly close but still too far away to herald the immediate return of Christ. However, this did not prevent General Conference administrator, J.E. Edwards proclaiming that "only a moment of time remains". It was another repeat of Ellen White's proclamation of

1906, reinterpreted five decades later. Edwards was quick to seize on her exhortation, for support, adding: "What we are to do we must do quickly. We must double our energy. We must double our diligence and service... We are approaching with lightening speed the final moment of time" (Edwards, *AR,* January 4, 1960, pp. 10-11).

The College Board Chairman and General Conference hierarchy maintained their pressure in 1961, focusing believers' minds on loyalty to the Church and not "tampering with the fundamentals" of the Church's faith and practice (Clifford, *AR,* July 3, 1961, p. 11). Figuhr admonished the world Church again to "press together that we may go unitedly forward" with loyalty to the organisation and the Church's principles and with "unswerving allegiance...that holds through everything" (Figuhr, *AR,* March 29, 1965, p. 16; "Loyalty", *AR,* April 26, 1965, p. 13; *AR,* May 3, 1965, p. 6). That the Church was still very much concerned with "measuring up to Heaven's expectations", (Pierson, *AR,* July 23, 1962, p. 12) must have been grist to the mill for Avondale administration to hold a firm line on student standards.

After his election to General Conference presidency in 1966, Robert H. Pierson asked his members if they were: "two years better prepared to meet your Master. Has victory over sin become a reality in your life?" (Pierson, *AR,* July 29, 1968, p. 4). For some it had the familiar ring of the 1930s fundamentalist perfectionism of having to earn one's way to heaven and develop a final generation character that was ready for translation.

Former General Conference president, R.R. Fighur, described an unashamedly works-orientated belief on how "the starry crowns" would be given to those who "have loyally 'stayed by their stuff'" and who have been "found in Sabbath School each week, eager for the truths of God's word" (Fighur, *AR,* April 11, 1960, p. 1.) In a moment of scriptural emphasis he also was able to "thank God for the Bible", (Figuhr, *AR,* February 10, 1962, p. 5) somewhat of a departure from earlier leaders who were more likely to praise the "Spirit of Prophecy". Indeed Ellen White was now being presented as a woman with a hospitable and compassionate heart (Mount, *AR,* August 19, 1968, pp. 12-13; August 26, 1968, pp. 10-11). And while there was an increasing scholarly thrust to do tertiary quality Bible study, there appeared to be little written evidence for an urgency in the imminence of the Eschaton being translated into the College's routines except for the continuing push to maintain the Church's high traditional cultural standards of behaviour.

A crack in the door to the emergence of more personal, spiritually weighted standards and a values emphasis upon relationships and inclusiveness was further evidenced in 1963. A General Conference secretary report to local conferences advocated the "cultivation of the fruits of the Spirit" and the need for improved community relationships and co-operation, largely lacking in former administrators' exhortations ("Are You...?" *AR,* July 29, 1963, p. 6). But this new approach to wooing one's neighbour to the Church was not deemed "Christian witness" but rather became better known in secular corporate language as the art of "*public relations*" evidenced in a College Board member's report to the Australasian Church (Frame, *AR,* January 6, 1964, p. 11). The emerging and significant theme of a public relations programme is discussed later in this thesis.

8.3 Evidences of increasing divergence from denominationalised sociocultural standards with some American parallels

Despite a more relationship-oriented direction from the American administrators, sociocultural critiques of Avondale College in the early to mid-1960s from Godfrey (1997) reveal a series of social standards that remained fideistic and sectarian. His assessment of Avondale's sociocultural standards and philosophies was arguably the only serious critical review of the 1960s decade. Therefore, there is little social critique in contrast and his comments must be understood in this context.

This was a time when tertiary education student percentages were rapidly rising against the net student intake. McDowell announced with some pride that having taken 10 years for the enrolment to rise from 200, in the middle of the Murdoch administration, to 409 in 1960, the 1962 enrolment now saw the highest percentages of BA graduations in teaching and theology in the College history. Of the undergraduate students 78 were enrolled in BA Theology and 56 in BA Education (McDowell, *AR,* January 7, 1963, p. 18).

The name, Australasian Missionary College, was changed to Avondale College in 1964. It belied the perceived coming of age by administration to distance itself from a missionary college for overseas missionaries, towards a more career and academic oriented place of learning. The reasons for surrendering the word "Missionary" in a Board action during November 1963 emerged from two pressing factors, according to Hook. The name "Avondale" had long been an endearing lingering term and the word

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"Missionary" was rapidly falling from grace in overseas countries as being acquainted with third world orders. Furthermore, the 1964 Martin report gave new meaning and value to private tertiary institutions. The Federal inquiry provided the "watershed" for the acquisition of the status of Colleges of Advanced Education, breathing life and prestige into their identity and operational viability (Hook, 1997, p. 256).

The change of name bore some parallels with Azusa College, which had dropped the term "Bible" from its title in 1957 (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 756). This presupposed the ethos that it was no longer totally different or sectarian from other Christian institutions. It also indicated the maturing of an academic programme well underway towards certain academic excellence and containing inherent challenges to the ethos and culture of the past. In 1965, with more sophisticated and comprehensive outlooks towards higher education, a self-study was prepared and described by Burtchaell as already "strikingly mainstream". With references only to "general attitude" and "commitment to the educational philosophy of the College" there was no hint as to any doctrinal standards required to pass in order to graduate.

This type of result has been quite stunning. If one is to compare the American private college scene, Azusa College became the first Bible-based college to "achieve regional accreditation without substantially changing its curriculum" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 758). While this result attracted a dramatic increase in student numbers the college, in its desire to have transformed the lives of its students, was accepting many more students far less prepared for such a goal. It caused the president to exhort every staff member to work in the vision that all was being done in God's name and that "a radiant and victorious Christian experience" was essential to operate on this plane. On this theme I will seek to draw further parallels with Avondale in a later section examining the changing ethos of the mission statement and objectives.

The Azusa motto was redefined in its 1966 self-study as placing "God first" through acquiring "a meaningful Christian philosophy of life in the light of their Christian heritage" and training students "for Christian life and service" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 759). In this, Burtchaell reflected that there was something less than the former "radiant and victorious Christian experience" often extolled. The transformation and emphasis was rapid. Azusa, by 1970, was "no longer a trainer of missionaries". However it still advocated students enrolling in a college "committed to both the person and work of Jesus Christ" with "an environment unique to this day and age" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 760). Drinking, gambling, smoking, and "immoral

conduct" were still being singled out for disciplinary action. Dress codes, as stated in the *Azusa Pacific College Catalogue* in 1971 especially for females, were presented in a proactive manner: "We want our co-eds to look attractive and feminine at all times" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 761).

In contrast to the continuing fascination for outward standards, Burtchaell suggested that the objectives of Concordia College, published in 1958, clearly held an ethos of "uncommon character" in its avowal to have "Jesus up front". Heavily laced with the Lutheran teachings, its focus was more towards matters of the heart and individuals' spiritual sensitivities. He summarised it as:

> A firm faith in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin... A sincere acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the revealed truth of God... an assent to the Lutheran Confession as the correct expression of that truth... cooperation in promoting the purposes of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and a high standard of ethics in the profession of the Christian teacher... A respect for the dignity and worth of the individual as a redeemed child of God... (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 522-3).

But also at this time, the Church was keenly aware that each student must graduate with Lutheran needs in mind, be prepared to teach religious subjects at its schools and make the work of Lutheran Church schools a lifetime vocation (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 523).

Of Avondale's isolated environment Godfrey suggested that it "physically, religiously, academically and sociologically" influenced the ministerial graduate into being socially "ill equipped to debate different religions or sociological issues. They were followers rather than independent thinkers." He pushed a sensitive button with his allegation that the Church's ideals and promotion of an education system, did not instil in students "the ability to 'think deeply, act skilfully and not be mere reflectors of other men's thoughts'" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 15). John W. Knight was also critical describing the course as "introverted, fideistic and sectarian". Adventists, he said:

> are essentially socially and politically conservative. They show middle class concerns with material prosperity, respectability and social stability...they are also concerned to preserve their identity, their symbols and their shared experiences in a social and religious community which gives cosmic meaning to their lives and enables them (as Scripture puts it) to be in but not of the world (John W. Knight, 1984, pp. 424-5).

But Godfrey's criticism of its conservative stance of "anti-union, anti-Australian Labour party, anti-Papist, anti-communist", and possessing a Protestant work ethic revealed his own political subjectivity, albeit an accurate observation, generally. He considered that most students "were not intellectuals though some were extremely

smart and were obviously restricted by their socio-economic situation, their religious upbringing and their attitude to education." Godfrey advanced the cause against Adventism, rubbing salt into this sensitive wound, by drawing to its attention that: "An Avondale education appeared to be designed to produce an outlook that was *incapable of change, irrespective of evidence to the contrary"* (Godfrey, 1997, p. 15). By 1962, however, more responsibility was given to students to govern their own clubs. Four clubs under faculty scrutiny now met on Monday nights and a College newspaper and magazine were flourishing, propelled and written by students (Hills, *AR,* June 4, 1962, p. 2).

During the 1960s, the College saw its subjects History 1 and 2 aligning to an approach better accepted by Australian universities. But in Godfrey's eyes, the College standard was still "of lower academic rigour". The lecturers were deemed "competent" but continued to interpret history "in the light of supposed divine intervention" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 7; see endnote 1). For Godfrey, it appeared that the Adventist religion, having continually adopted this triumphalistic position, became simply "unbelievable". Because Seventh-day Adventism was "conservative, cautious and conventional...It just did not fit. It did not add up" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 15). Whether it added up or not, it was still at work as an identified institution firmly rooted to its mother Church and thoroughly identifiable with it, unlike many American contemporary colleges that had similar beginnings. It was showing relatively robust student enrolment and looked set for healthy growth.

Burtchaell's examination of Lafayette College in 1966, showed an enrolment of three times the size of Avondale--at 1600 and a faculty of 160 (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 165). Unlike the firm grasp held by the Australasian Conference of Seventh-day Adventists by 1967, on account of a Federal funding situation, Lafayette had removed all references to the Presbyterian synod from its charter (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 166). Six credit hours of religion remained mandatory for graduation. But despite a college church membership of 400 the Wednesday chapel service was witness to "flagrant" absenteeism and any desire by the college to enforce attendance was met no longer with indifference but by hostility from Catholics and Jews (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 167). The president, Roald Bergathon, removed its compulsory attendance in 1964, effectively signalling the death knell of serious Christian enthusiasm, faith and practice and sending a message to Avondale that compulsory attendance appears to ensure or facilitate greater interest in Christian mission (See endnote 2). With all

compulsory community religious worship abolished there was need only for a part-time chaplain to be retained. By the end of the 1960s Burtchaell interpreted the college's religious status as one of increasing diversity and indifference (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 168-170). By the 1970s religious activity might best be described as "much ado about nothing" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 172). A 1981 report lamented that Federal funding was increasingly sought over church funding. The college had dropped its demand that all lecturers be professing Christians, as recently advocated in 1961. In 1993, with "a faculty of distinction", Lafayette was an undergraduate college independent of religious affiliation, but "with too few to form a workable (Presbyterian) congregation" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 176).

Godfrey, in trying to rid Adventism of its sectarian isolationist vestiges, offered some advice to Seventh-day Adventist educators. He suggested that they "mix socially and professionally with a wider band of educators." There should be "open and frank presentations and comparisons of Adventist religious education views " with other educators in order to examine "sectarian elements that should be lessened or omitted in favour of wider Christian paradigms." His critical perspectives led him to actively campaign against Adventism and warn non-Seventh-day Adventist educators and Education Boards of Review to be wary of putting public monies into Adventist "sectarian education" allowing "indoctrination" to occur at public expense. Furthermore, he opined: "Accrediting organisations should give long and careful thought before they accredit schools or institutions with narrow programmes." Because they are "limited educationally" with "small enrolments" they should be "given in depth and careful scrutiny" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 16). John W. Knight concurred, suggesting that one of the underlying problems with Adventist fundamentalism was in:

> the social basis of morality and the deep structural causes of inequality, disadvantage, deprivation and exploitation. Hence members typically accept and use inhumane economic and social systems whilst attacking those ideologies that seek to change or remedy them (John W. Knight, 1984, p. 425).

8.4 "High noon" for Avondale's sociocultural identity

By the mid-1960s conservative Adventism at Avondale College, with a student enrolment at a record mid-500s, appeared to be at high noon in its sociocultural contrast with the world around it. My reasons for this claim are revealed in later

chapters under sociocultural headings. But the "bricks and mortar expansion" period of McDowell appeared to endorse the sectarian culture that had held sway in the College for seventy years although, perhaps ironically, McDowell saw major changes in the recognition for College education's secular acceptance, during his record 11-year reign. At times characterised by controversy, his track record as an experienced educator and dedicated leader helped shape Avondale towards College of Advanced Education status in the 1970s.

McDowell, in reflecting on Godfrey's criticisms of sociocultural reactionarism, defended the College's stance. The attachment of a secondary school to the College campus and the generally lower age median of those enrolled for tertiary courses, including certificate and diploma courses, prevented offering full responsibility. McDowell stated:

> With fourth and fifth-formers in that day, we required more control. Furthermore, in regard to the College student, you can only abide by what your constituents demand. Nevertheless, when I advocated slacks at picnics in 1960 the (College) Board did not understand" (McDowell, January 14, 1999).

The average age of indoor men in 1965 was twenty and indoor females eighteen years of age (McDowell, *AR,* March 28, 1966, p. 2).

Godfrey, argued that Adventist education, in basing its educational principles on the ten commandments, had excessive "sectarian bias", (Godfrey, 1997, p. 3) although Geoffrey Maslen disagreed, stating that Adventist academic policies:

> intend to provide a liberal but 'God-centred' professional and vocational education while helping students develop intellectual excellence, demonstrated by the ability to 'think deeply, act skilfully , and not be mere reflectors of other men's thoughts' (Maslen, 1982, as quoted in Avondale College, *Annual Calendar 1966*, pp 3, 11-12).

But Godfrey observed that Theology, as the prestige course, continued to take precedent over other disciplines, stating: "...the Theological course was the glamour course with grudging respect being given to the Bachelor of Science degree students who were perceived to be academically superior." Despite this belief, the position of editor of the College student annual, *Jacaranda*, president of the graduation class, assistant deans and other prestigious appointments always seemed to fall on ministerial students (Godfrey, 1997, p. 5). There was intense religious fervour among the students generally, especially the "theols", (ministry students) who, prior to their graduation, were all hoping to impress the Church selection panel. Ministerial

students were generally deeply committed to service, and evidenced this by visiting homes with the *Signs of the Times* magazine and giving Bible studies (See endnote 3). Avondale's course structure, for its showcase Bachelor of Arts Theology course in the 1960s, was formed out of 20 units covered over four years. Predictably, there was a strong emphasis on the Adventist perspectives (See endnote 4). Avondale ministerial students, suggested Godfrey, were more exposed to "evangelistic/ministerial training than a theological education." Ministerial "utilitarianism" was applied where possible to their subjects (Godfrey, 1997, pp. 4-5).

Historically, Adventist education, opined John Knight, had served a dual purpose: as a vehicle to convert its children and as an effective tool to evangelise potential new converts (John W. Knight, 1985, p. 23). Evangelism was the goal impressed on all students embarking to their first church or churches. This was an administrative philosophy of the Church although a numbers game for ministers to chase wasn't widely broadcast to Church members. Godfrey suggested that in the 1960s:

> A Seventh-day Adventist minister was less concerned with Church ministry than evangelism. Baptisms gained through evangelism would ensure that one became ordained and gained the title of Pastor (Godfrey, 1997, p. 10).

The main evangelistic thrust came through the use of archaeology to "prove" that the Bible was an unerring, thought-inspired guide to spiritual truth. A typical billboard example of this was the Adventist evangelist's title DEAD MEN DO TELL TALES. On many first night occasions Adventist evangelists could fill public halls or theatres with non-Adventists to present biblically relevant archaeological finds and mysteries that gave authenticity to prophecy in the Bible, especially the Old Testament. It can be argued that from this heightened emphasis on evangelism there was a backlash with a "high apostasy rate" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 10). Godfrey illustrated this problem with Church statistics for 1970 (where in he cited) showing that:

> 1,829 members apostatised from the Church in the Australasian Division with a total membership of 93,432, that is two per cent...equivalent to the total membership of South New Zealand. (Statistical Report ...' *AR*, 19 July, 1971).

He wrote ironically of this statistic: "A significant number of Seventh-day Adventists died spiritually in the shadow of a pulpit while their pastors were deeply involved in evangelistic programs and endeavours" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 10).

Godfrey further criticised the Avondale College grading system in 1966, which, he said, "almost removed the democratic right of students to fail except in a few

difficult units..."; consequently, the "academic record of Avondale students lacked a depth of scholarship." He accused students of being generally "not academically inclined" and that, in fact, an "element of anti-intellectualism existed" (Godfrey, 1997, pp. 3-4). This view deserved some scrutiny in context of the early 1960s where there was a thrust by the College Board to genuinely assist its lecturers to post-graduate status (*AMCBM,* February 21, 1961; *AMCBM,* February 21, 1961; *ACBM* February 3, 1964; *AMCBM,* June 6, 1961; May 21, 1962; *ACBM* June 10, 1964). Ronald Laura (see endnote 5) suggested that among Avondale students, especially those studying theology, there was a more "reflective paradigm of acceptance" in contrast to the inquisitorial and argumentative method evidenced at Australian secular universities. Avondale students tended to accept a rhetorical dispositional lecturing style rather than engage in vigorous critical inquiry. This may be explained by the fact that most students in training for ministry were already Seventh-day Adventists and armed with a homogeneous ethos and a not too dissimilar fundamental knowledge pertaining to their calling. Laura maintained that this notion was not peculiar to Avondale and would be experienced among most Evangelical Fundamentalist Colleges (Laura, October 12, 2000).

In an unprecedented arrangement during 1961, the College permitted Dr Eric A. Magnusson to present at Newcastle University as a lecturer on the basis that it would not incur any debt or a reduction in his teaching hours at Avondale (*AMCBM,* October 25, 1961). Further desire by the College to see its lecturers and prospective staff enhance their skills was evident in the new policy to allow lecturers' spouses to enrol in one subject per year, free of charge (*AMCBM,* June 6, 1961). However, in the Board's desire to enhance the status of the College through the Science Faculty it now had to work through the high cost financially of its decisions as a result of a proportionately small number of students enrolled in its courses (*ACBM* October 14, 1965). Not surprisingly, the teaching strategy continued to conform to a biblical presentation through the words of Ellen White and historical mainline Seventh-day Adventist belief. A number of the lecturers were perceived to have been on the "cutting edge" of Adventist theology (Godfrey, 1997, p. 8). Despite this, the rule that "religion and morality took precedence over scholarship" appeared to endure (John W. Knight, 1985, p. 29).

But more changes to its education thrust were imminent if one compares the early pivotal education statements of Ellen White with the comments of the College Board

Chairman elect, Robert R. Frame, at the official opening of Watson Hall at the end of 1964. His promotion of Avondale education said little of the gains in character development. Instead he highlighted the coming of age of Adventist tertiary education to the level that they "can don the scholar's cap." Frame was adamant that this course of direction did not compromise the original mandate for proper education:

> Has there been any change in our outlook on education to bring this about? Have we moved away from our distinctive teachings of the church? No, the recognition that has come is but a natural consequence of what we have believed and emphasized from our earlier years (Frame, *AR,* January 18, 1965, p. 10).

Indeed foundational spiritual values continued with morning and evening worship meetings, a spiritual icon of the success of the Seventh-day Adventist tertiary educational home school system (White, *AR,* July 7, 1967, p. 6). Dean of Men, Donald Bain, extolled the College's commitment telling the Church "Avondale College promotes the faith of our Fathers" (Bain, AR, July 17, 1967, p. 7).

In the rush to provide lecturers with higher degrees came further pressure on the accommodation facilities for the College in 1962. Rules were relaxed for male students allowing them to live with close relatives in Cooranbong by approval of the faculty. Students over the age of 21 and 25 respectively received more liberal consideration (*AMCBM,* October 25, 1961). Freedom also came to faculty members Ford and Magnusson who were not only given the College's blessing to live away from the campus but were assisted with housing loans (*AMCBM,* July 3, 1962; September 18, 1963). It was as if as a result of these men becoming the leading lights in College scholarship the College had now to pay a price in being more liberal socioculturally to hold them. The idea of the faculty living on the campus as quasi-parent figures was now in transition. Even within the College, seniority in student years was now weighted in the direction to give longer serving students preferential treatment in the quality of their accommodation (*AMCBM,* October 2, 1962).

Up until the 1960s, academic prowess outside the Church had not been rated as having any great importance (Lloyd, 1988). Godfrey does credit the College in the context of some popular myths among Adventists that Ellen White was not opposed to seeking degrees or government accreditation. He further conceded that the College staff, if sometimes "sociologically and religiously naïve...in their every day dealings and attitudes to the student body, were undoubtedly Christian" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 4).

The pounding of the perfectionist drum in the early Church and its reverberations

on College students in the 1930s and 1940s would inevitably spring ferment in a spate of fringe groups and radicals in the 1950s and 1960s. The rise of Ford signalled that ten years later perfectionism, revised by rebel leader, Robert Brinsmead, in the 1960s, would experience a blowtorch to its very foundations. Ford's erudite grasp of the errors of the fringe radicals and his clear refutations were seen as a panacea in the 1960s for centralizing Adventist belief in atonement and salvation theology (Hook, 1997, pp. 235-6). Ford preached passionately at College, and wherever he was asked to deliver, provided the antidote for the moral perfection dogma and legalistic behavioural modification. He retained virtually all of the Adventist traditional theological beliefs but had revised them and tuned them into celebratory beliefs with the Gospel of Christ pervading all and being central to all. The Three Angel's Messages of Revelation 14 had been transformed from a doctrinaire formulation of somewhat esoteric knowledge into a positive living hope for a meaningful victorious future wrapped up in a biblical life-giving Christ. The new pietistic theology raised the ire of the traditionalist literalist old guard in the Church. Hook summed up aptly the mood of impending theological storm. "But Ford's presentations also aroused foes. With the tips of their rapiers they made testing jabs at some of his peripheral armour" (Hook, 1997, pp. 262-263).

Sydney University lecturer and Adventist, Dr Russell Standish, aligned with some ministerial friends to attack Ford in the 1970s with the Fundamentalist Seventh-day Adventist position on the age of the earth on the old premise that all of Ellen White's writings were inerrant. A second strand to the attack revolved around the literalist interpretation of the biblical language describing the heavenly sanctuary that implied a fixed geographical position for God, and confusing the case for the Protestant position on omnipresence and mercy. The College Theology Department—with the support of McDowell--was in support of, if not invigorated by, the new Adventist emphasis by Ford (Hook, 1997, p. 263).

Those inflamed by the reactionary old guard generally had little formal education. This included, predominantly, the older and often retired Church evangelists who had rigorously instructed their converts through public evangelistic programmes in the literalist biblical descriptions to support the Church's distinctive perfectionistic identifying beliefs (Hook, 1997, p. 265). A more extensive examination of the Church administration's behaviour to the Ford phenomenon will be dealt with in a following chapter.

The end of the 1960s culminated virtually with the end of the McDowell "dynasty" of sociocultural control. Signs of changes in approach to Church standards were appearing. The *Record* allowed articles impressing readers to become more individually motivated. Citing Ellen White for support, one writer suggested the need for a "positive quality of independence and earnest endeavour" (Cannon, *AR*, January 9, 1967, p. 5). Hook suggested that pointers to change were also in evidence at College. Tennis had now gained official acceptance. Writing love letters no longer attracted censure. Non-Seventh-day Adventist musicians were welcome. Elementary psychology had gained respectability. Selections from Shakespeare were now kosher. As Hook observed, it was a far cry from the year of 1918 when two of Australian Adventists most reactionary College Board members, Ludwig Lemke and A.W. Anderson, "tore up the English curriculum". The College "blueprint", once held high by College die-hard administrators and constituents, with the exception of a short concerted effort at Avondale in 1974, was fading for lack of funding but more importantly the age of inevitable modernisation. The practised College philosophies of the 1890s, though still "revered" in the 1960s and 1970s, had all but become a good idea of the past. Of the dairy, apiary, poultry farm, orchard and vegetable gardens, only the dairy was making any money.

But if the aim of educating students to be effective Church employees remained, the methodology was in a significant transition period. By 1970, the Church seemed ready to embrace changes (Hook, 1997, pp. 269-269). Kenneth H. Wood, *Review and Herald* editor, declared, "motives are more important than the acts that spring from them" and in a rare moment of fearlessness, turned the spotlight on the manipulative motives employed by Church administrators.

> *Leaders should ask a series of pointed questions regarding the motivations they employ in raising funds or arousing to service. They should ask, How far can we go In appealing to lower motives without compromising the Christian faith? Are we justified in employing unworthy motives so long as this brings in the money or stimulates to Christian service?* (Wood, *AR*, November 9, 1970, p. 12; emphasis mine).

It was a timely message and assisted in setting the stage for the future basis of a more privatised standards-treatment by the Church and College.

I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter how the College, under strong consolidated leadership from McDowell, having elevated the educational standards--and achieving further success in accreditation--tended to hold back the winds of

sociocultural change during the 1960s. His administration had facilitated an increase in its physical structure and prestige in the minds of its constituents as evidenced by the rapid rise in enrolments. In summary, the 1960s was the age of building with bricks and mortar. It was also an age for the maintenance of low-trust factors in the students' responsibility for his or her personal behaviour.

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1. If there have been arguably three major "phases" in Adventism's ability to examine its own religious and historic development, the first phase was contended as the era of history written by James White and J. N. Loughborough c. 1850-1900 called "providential history". Their interpretation of their genre is described by Ronald Graybill as an era of "direct and active leadership of God in Adventist experience. It ignored almost totally the general political and social history of the times which it covered." More recently, a new "wave" of Adventist interpretation arrived with the apologists, Leroy Edwin Froom and Francis D. Nichol who defended the faith and historic context of Adventism (c. 1950-1975). Of this period Graybill observed: "Their histories were more conscious of historical context, more rigorous about sources, but still primarily defensive" (Graybill edited by Scott Gaustad, *Spectrum*, vol. 7, no. 4, (1976) p. 46). The third and most recent phase, particularly evident since the 1980s, has tended to either disregard or ignore the *direct* intervention of God in history.

2. The attendance was reduced to twenty with Jews and Catholics significantly absent.

3. A monthly Church newspaper that promoted the Church's teachings deemed relevant to the contemporary world in anticipation of the Eschaton

4. According to Godfrey, Greek 1 and 2 were "extremely difficult for most students". It was the only subject listed for five periods per week. The unit took up to 50% of a student's time each week during the first year. Godfrey asserted that apart from Greek and the Theology component, the other "stand alone subjects" including Psychology, Public Speaking, Music, Art, and Science for Theology students were of "low academic quality" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 7).

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Chapter 9

Further College trends towards a soteriological-balanced values system paradigm c. 1970-1980

9.1 An administration attempts to hold back further winds of change

The 1970s was a period of acceleration of the College accreditation process, the transition to greater personal student behavioural government and for inroads of influence by the secular world. On the broader front, the Church had noted the changes to the ecumenical movement and was pleasantly surprised by the perceived positive attitude that it held towards Adventists (Cottrell, *AR,* May 22, 1967, pp. 3, 16; June 5, 1967, p. 3).

The College entered 1970 with no powerful admonition or exhortation, characteristic before World War II, to be ready for an imminent Eschaton. The College Board Chairman L.C. Naden, could only muster a "wish and a prayer" for the constituents. In a frank and illuminating editorial he told his readers: "We don't know what the future holds for us from day to day. Let us not worry about it." There was no evidence of any special knowledge or knowing what the prophetic time clock was showing.

The US lunar landing had tended to cause Adventists to step back for another look at their own cosmological vision (Naden, *AR,* January 5, 1970, p. 4). General Conference president Pierson was equivocal in an eschatological context: "We are here, and we should not be here! We have been here long enough. As we face the seventies it must be with new resolve. Something must happen to us" (Pierson, *AR,* September 21, 1970, p. 4). A further perplexity confronted the Church with newly released survey figures by the American Institute of Public Opinion in 1970, suggesting that Adventists in the United States were largely unknown although 65% said they had *heard* of Adventists. This was reduced, given that a percentage of these confused Adventists with Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses (Frame, *AR,* March 3, 1971, p. 4).

Pierson now promoted a notion that it was "the Christ-centred doctrines" which were holding the Seventh-day Adventist Church together. Yet this remained balanced

by "believe His prophets and everything will be all right!" If this was neglected, then the Church, having lost touch with its foundational faith, educational institutions and missions, would fall away (Pierson, *AR,* August 28, 1972, p. 4). Chairman of the New Testament Department at Andrews University, Walter Sprecht, writing in the "Adventist Confession of Faith" series and published in the *Australasian Record,* believed that this meant the Church, in being more than a sect, or denomination, "was a world wide movement to prepare human beings to face the final judgment" (Sprecht, *AR,* March 27, 1972, p. 10). Pierson then reaffirmed his belief that the Church was in "this final hour of earth's history...and must give strong support to the standards and principles that have distinguished the remnant church throughout its history and kept it separate from the world." (Pierson, *AR,* April 24, 1973, p. 4). This assessment, affirmed by Wilcox, who was now the longest serving *Review and Herald* editor, *would see Adventists in the Kingdom of God should they not lower their standards and be seen "at the theatre, the movies and commercialised sports; at public bathing resorts; at bridge parties, dances and other gatherings of worldly pleasure"* (Wilcox, *AR,* July 17, 1972, p. 11; emphasis mine).

Academics including Dr Leslie Hardinge, lecturer at Pacific Union College Theology Department, persisted in holding to the traditionalist line by declaring in the same "Adventist Confession of Faith" series "Sister Ellen White was the last in a long line of prophets." *The "testimony of Jesus" in the Book of Revelation were the words of Ellen White herself* (Hardinge, *AR,* May 8, 1972, pp. 10-11; emphasis mine). Alfred S. Jorgenson, a former Avondale Bible lecturer, told his constituents in 1974 that: "the reading of Ellen G. White Books *makes a moral demand akin to that which one experiences in the reading of the Scriptures*" (Jorgenson, *AR,* June 16, 1975, p. 3).

9.2 Magnusson begins to facilitate cultural revision

However, while administrators and conservative theologians were continuing resolutely on their journey, promoting the fortress-styled, exclusive Church triumphant, a form of new orthodox Adventism was creeping into the views of many Church scholars. The new academics were now emphasizing the concept of the Church as the "salt" of the world and the notion that Christ must be emphasized as the cleanser of the condition of the heart and the key to changing attitudes. The salt

symbol promoted the ethos of a mingling community, bringing savour to those outside the Church's beliefs and lifestyle--and more significantly, its friendship.

During 1970 the College was slowly, if not inadvertently, having the door to sociocultural and economic rationalisation opened though a milestone decision by the Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventists, led by Frame, to formally become a recipient of financial aid from the Commonwealth Government in the form of "Capitation Grants" (*ACBM*, March 4, 1970). This was followed up in the same year by authorisation for the College to seek student teacher scholarships (*ACBM*, November 18, 1970). College scientists, including Magnusson, were granted leave to attend Australasian science conferences, setting in train more frequent secular conference participation by other lecturers (*ACBM*, February 4, 1971; March 22, 1972). Despite such progressive steps towards an external secular inclusiveness and acceptance, the College Board would reaffirm its philosophy for existence and mission. In April 1971 it voted to ensure that:

> The pre-eminence of Bible subjects and the SDA philosophy in the Christian approach to secular subjects be maintained.
>
> Good scholarship and student initiative is encouraged by personal contact between teacher and student, by emphasis on intrinsic motivation, and by careful attention to the balance between spiritual, intellectual, physical and social pursuits (*ACBM*, April 17, 1971).

This openness was being translated into an evangelistic witness among Australian Adventist youth seeking their voice to be heard as a Christian and not a sectarian message (Beatty, *AR*, May 22, 1972, p. 6). In the 1975 General Conference motto of "Now is the Time", Frame no longer promoted the paramount distinctiveness or exclusiveness of the "landmark" doctrines, or Ellen White's special knowledge, as the saving element for a remnant church, although he chose to emphasize the Eschaton. Climaxed by Christ's return, this was reaffirmed as contingent on His character being "perfectly reproduced in His people". Frame's thrust was somewhat incongruous in that the Church, now consisting of 2.5 million members world-wide, accepted that two billion people had not yet received any meaningful message about the Christian Gospel and that it was not until the whole world had heard it, would Christ return (Pierson, *AR*, October 13, 1976, p. 3). Yet Frame highlighted the need of speaking to people freely and with enthusiasm. This included Adventists speaking more about heaven than earth. In this way God would place the Church in the best light and would be unified with it (Frame, *AR*, September 22, 1975, p. 1).

As Avondale College Board Chairman, Frame continued in 1974 to push the eschatological notion that the Church must again "note carefully that it was only minutes to midnight" (Frame, *AR,* April 1, 1974, p. 4). Yet from the General Conference to the Division Education secretary, the Church was also now emphasizing the more experiential ethos of coming alive with Christ, (Pierson, *AR,* September 14, 1974, p. 3) and the need for Christian education in context with the Gospel commission (McDowell, *AR,* September 16, 1974, p. 14). The College became less coy in referring to "The Leading of the Holy Spirit" (Fehlberg, AR, March 29, 1976, p. 7) and Christ as "our Righteousness" ("Christ Our Righteousness", *AR,* May 31, 1976, pp. 1-3). This remained adjacent to the General Conference thrust in 1976 to promote the traditional and historical doctrinal approach of the triumphalist and exclusivist nature of Adventism. In the "Week of Prayer Readings" read in all Adventist Churches world-wide, the subjects included "A Unique Church", "A Unique Message", "The Hour of His Judgment", "Babylon is Fallen", "Worship and Obedience", "Truly Members of His Church" (*AR,* October 10-16, 1976, pp. 5-21).

To a significant extent on the local scene, the stage had now been set at Avondale by the highly respected professional groundwork and networking of Magnusson. He would prove to be the greatest if not the most prestigious scholar that the College held in its first hundred years of existence. Knowing and holding the respect of many scholars in Australian universities, (Savige, 1979, p. 134) between 1963-1967 he had convinced educators from the Prime Minister's Department to award Commonwealth Scholarships to Avondale's BSc London students (Magnusson, *AR,* August 7, 1967, p. 6). Magnusson's academic strength and respect, especially among non-scientific audiences, was also respected by his College peers and students for his ability to convert sublime and complex language to profoundly simple concepts (Savige, 1979, p. 134). The reason for Magnusson's thrust into producing a College of science teaching credibility was that he saw the new "Scientific Revolution" with similar significance to the Industrial Revolution. Good Adventist scientists would enhance the Church's progress in the arena of health food, medical science and other allied programmes (Magnusson, *AR,* August 7, 1967, p. 6).

In the first year of Magnusson's administration of 1972, the College was involved in some strong promotion as illustrated in the following statements.

> *IT'S TIME to study at a College where Christian Service is held up as a high ideal. Where you can expect to be inspired to take a hand yourself to warn the world of Christ's second coming. Where the idea of ordinary success runs a very poor second to the idea of service and ministry. Where "calling" is a much better word than "career".*
>
> *And Bible teaching is important even in classes where it is not a textbook. The greater the clamour against the relevance of Christianity, the greater the necessity for a college like Avondale to demonstrate that it really is relevant...*
>
> *IT'S TIME to attend a college where human wisdom is given as much respect as it deserves. Avondale would have collapsed long since if its Faculty had depended on their own wits. Avondale has no more immunity against fanaticism and extremism, or lukewarmness and ineptitude than any other group. The big difference is that Avondale has retained the impetus of Ellen G. White's influence on its founding and planning. The disastrous results of relying on personalities have only been too obvious in the sorry history of Battle Creek College. In the 1890s Ellen White was determined that the Adventist Church would have another chance to do the job properly* ("Times Have Changed", *AR*, November 20, 1972, p.10; emphasis in text).

With the changing job landscape, Magnusson suggested in 1974 that Avondale was a higher education institution primarily dedicated to altruistic pursuit. It was not a College where its students should contemplate as their primary goal to "get a job where I'll have financial security." A state school's real disadvantages lay not in the Christian taboos experienced there but from "selfishness becoming the motivating factor. Service and life-giving are left out because they are too hard" (Magnusson, *AR*, December 2, 1974, p. 6).

Examining the factors attracting potential students to Avondale, John W. Knight deduced from his survey that "at secondary and tertiary levels, the student who had first experienced secular education, and then concluded with sectarian education, was more likely to remain in the sect." If the reasons for this stability are complex, a factor for consideration is a perception that a more caring and motivated interest by the Avondale lecturer enabled the student to reach his goals more effectively. The move from a liberal secular culture into a confined restrictive and sectarian control, observed Knight, appeared to be managed by the student through a "more humane" approach by the Adventist teacher who was "more personally concerned with their students" (John W. Knight, 1973, pp. 191-192). An increasing trend for the brighter Adventist students to enrol at secular universities to embrace medicine or law placed Avondale second or third on the list. But it did not necessarily mean that the College was seen as an inferior choice. It was more likely to have been that it simply could not offer the course.

Until the early 1970s, Godfrey believed that the ethos of Adventist service still took precedent over academic considerations. Youth must be kept from straying from "the truth" an in-house term widely used by Adventists to denote the exclusiveness and apparent infallibility of the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The perceived continuing decline in Church and College traditional cultural standards, documented in my future chapters, caused a former departmental director of Avondale, psychologist Dr Colin Standish, to advocate that further erosion of sociocultural standards must now cease among youth, implying that the damage to the faith might be irretrievable (Standish, *AR,* December 3, 1973, p. 5). Yet there was still little possibility of questioning any doctrinal faith, owing to, in Godfrey's mind--such a "tightly knit community of people with virtually identical religious belief" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 4).

The 1970s also heralded for Adventism a greater diversity in lifestyle behaviour and a change in society's attitudes toward the role of those in authority, developments that in turn impacted on Avondale's culture. But this was not before College Board Chairman, Robert Frame, keen to revitalise the Ellen White imprimatur on a rationalising education system, assisted in setting up a programme of Spirit of Prophecy Weeks around the Church's Conferences (*ABCM,* March 22, 1972). He announced in 1973 that Adventist educational institutions, including Avondale College, would receive special attention for several days annually. Seventh–day Adventist Colleges were called upon "to give this important gift its rightful place in all their classrooms and to increase the course work in this area" (Frame, *AR,* June 18, 1973, p. 4).

It was an increasingly human face of Ellen White that would be portrayed, the White Research Centre controlled by grandson, Arthur L. White in America, now freeing up access to personal documents about her life. In a nine-part series she was reviewed for her virtues as a homemaker, neighbour, speaker, writer, counsellor, personal worker, steward of means and God's messenger (Arthur L. White, *AR,* March 5, 1973, p. 2; see also weekly articles in the *Record* through to April 30, 1973). Attention was also given to the establishment of a collection of Church and College heritage history for future research (Parmenter, *AR,* November 19, 1973 p. 1).

9.3 Traditionalist forces gather

With the acceptance of a further five courses by government authorities, Adventist researcher Alan Savige considered that 1974 was a time when the College was "on the brink of a new era". The College had become so serious about its investment in academic studies that to revisit any past programme of restoration to manual labour activities, as pushed by some concerned students and staff, would be an impediment to its progress (Savige, 1979, p. 154). In 1959, now former College lecturer Dr Lionel Turner alerted the Adventist constituents to an education system that would have to prepare for a lesser emphasis on manual training offset by greater emphasis on science and technology and specialization generally. This required the Church to think in terms of investing in populated areas--large beautiful schools with large sums of money (Turner, *AR,* August 31, 1959, p. 13). If the Church never acquired significant money for this idyllic vision, Magnusson was at least largely pre-emptive in designing and giving the College excellent facilitation in strengthening its science department (Savige, 1979, pp. 118-120). This was seen as a possible conduit to providing the Sydney Adventist Hospital and the Sanitarium Health Food Company with a secure, stable and dedicated workforce (See endnote 1).

However in 1975 Magnusson wrote that the College's progress in several areas would enable the Church to experience "future vigour". Included were student financial aid packages from the Federal Government and recognition of Avondale's own degrees. An added bonus for Avondale was the incentive that *every* student in 1977 would receive some financial assistance from the Federal Government for approved courses, further removing the need for student manual labour, but creeping nearer to the danger line where complete autonomy might be threatened (Stokes, *AR,* November 15, 1976, p. 11).

Magnusson appeared to be well aware of the significance of maintaining a strong sociocultural standard identifying with the mother Church. But it would be with the input of student defence and appeals. This would be enhanced by a full time Dean of Students, appointed in 1971 to represent students in faculty decisions. To this end, student ideals and standards, nurtured with pastoral care, remained a strong focus during his administrative period (Magnusson, *AR,* September 22, 1975, pp. 19-20). Yet, he also continued to emphasize the importance of keeping an imminent Eschaton ahead of financial security before the students (Magnusson, *AR,* September 22, 1975,

p. 21).

Several short-lived attempts were made at this time to revert to the blueprint model. Concerted calls came from students via the *Jacaranda* (*Jacaranda* 1975) and concerned College administrators (Elliot, AR, June 30, 1975, pp. 6-7). Frame confirmed the significance of the College stating in 1976 that Avondale was the strength of the Australasian Adventist Church, recognising that "as goes the College so goes the church" but predictably, he did not affirm the blueprint theory (Frame, *AR,* October 25, 1976, p. 4).

Magnusson met some of this resistance to College change in 1974, despite the fact that 112 students graduated, 56 of these being degrees or diplomas. Savige, in citing the *1974 College Calendar* and *Jacaranda*, referred to a situation caused by concerned students that the original "pattern" or "blueprint" had been discarded. The students maintained that Ellen White's standard for the school "giving students a practical fitting up for service in many lines of Christian endeavour" and "...great advantages accruing to the students and teachers through daily contact with the practical affairs of everyday life." must be restored to College life (*Jacaranda,* 1974, cf. A.E Savige, 1979, p. 140). The *Jacaranda* published this message from the prophetess in bold black print.

> *Now He is telling us that if we walk in the light He has given, Avondale will become the training ground for many mission fields...*
>
> *He has planted the Avondale School and we have the plainest evidences that He will be glorified by it* (*Jacaranda* 1974; emphasis in text).

Yet in striving to hold its own from the past, it would appear to be searching for a revised identity. The emergence of a second College motif, symbolizing the world with a superimposed eye, was published. The facilitation of greater expressionism through pottery and photography was now further evident in a three year Fine Arts Diploma course validating the visual arts as against the Church's former ambivalence if not opposition to creative arts and the display of the human body ("Art at Avondale", *AR,* September 11, 1972, p. 3). The College, published yet another motif, this time incorporating a cross, perhaps emphasizing its continuing and growing academic recognition of being more soteriologically and values focused (Draper, *AR,* November 15, 1976, p. 11).

9.4 Battle lines drawn in the Ford controversy over the validity of distinctive doctrines "supported" by Ellen White

If the College was striding towards a more equitable place as a recognised tertiary institution, then also looming was a new theological battle following Ford's return from Manchester University in 1973, having just completed his second PhD. During the 1960s Ford, as an ardent supporter of the inspired literature of Ellen White, had applied her writings to convince the Australasian constituency of its authentic drive in elevating the College to higher academic status (Ford, *Avondale News*, May 1964, p. 7). But the "dissent" towards Ford, which had first appeared from his aggravation of the reactionary, moral perfectionist conservatives, once students themselves at Avondale between and during the two World Wars, now intensified. Some significant veteran traditionalist ministers and laymen, describing themselves as "the Concerned Brethren", focused on his apparently revisionist Gospel preaching emphasis on grace and set out to attack his views.

When the Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventist preaching itinerary endorsed Ford's revival influence on the College and Church youth, the Concerned Brethren created an anonymous campaign of smear and innuendo on College lecturers and administration. Special attention was reserved for those who questioned aspects of righteousness by faith, the denial of the Adventist literalist interpretations on the heavenly sanctuary, and the fundamental doctrine of divine inspiration of an inerrant Ellen White (Hook, 1997, p. 288).

In a meeting between the Reactionaries and Church administration set down at the Australasian Division offices in February 1976, a virtual standoff occurred. No compromise or resolution was struck. The controversy grew with another meeting between Bible lecturers and administrators at Palmdale, California in April 1976. Included were Ford and other College academics and administrators, but with no Australian reactionist/conservatives present, they returned with a misguided "sense of vindication". Their Pyrrhic victory was short lived, however. If the Church was truly global in its uniform understanding of doctrinal issues, many of its American scholars were uniformly pluralistic in their approach to the Fordian dilemma, leaving the solution in limbo. Hook summarised the meeting's position paper as skimming over the real issues and accepting the "Wesleyan/Tridentine tenet that righteousness is 'imparted' to humans and in this way enables a believer to be victorious over sin."

The implications were for a person to theoretically move toward the status whereby they were without sin, and hence the vindication of the reactionist/traditionalist's viewpoint.

Superseding the former College Board chairman, Lawrence C. Naden, came Keith Samuel Parmenter, who with no tertiary qualification, (Hook, 1997, p. 289) believed he was able to comprehend, it would seem, the significance of the doctrinal controversy administratively and theologically (See endnote 2). During 1977 the changing theological emphasis continued toward a more soteriologically-based theology with the *Record* editor promoting the "Four Essentials" in Adventist religion. In a revisionist-style mode that would earn him few brownie points among the Church administrators of the old guard, Robert Parr challenged the Church:

> Could it just be that we have been preaching the wrong thing, even a false gospel? Could it be that we have not been preaching Christ and his righteousness, the great message of justification of faith and putting too much emphasis on doctrine and prophecy? (Parr, *AR*, June 13, 1977, p. 4).

It was an impassioned plea calculated to rattle the gates of the very bastion of historical Adventist conservative thinking for fifty odd years. But the thrust towards emphasizing a personal experience through an authentic relationship with a crucified Christ was a growing chorus from Avondale scholars, especially Ford, who found in Parr an empathetic penman.

The acceptance that people could fail and that despair and desperation were aired as acceptable experiences in the Adventist walk indicated the erosion of the old triumphalist traditionalist paradigm (Ford, *AR*, August 8, 1977, pp. 6-7; *AR*, August 29, 1977, pp. 10-13). There was now a greater acceptance that change was inevitable in the Church and that it must be anticipated, as indeed Ellen White had warned (cf Dederen, *AR*, October 3, 1977, pp. 11-13; Parr, *AR*, December 5, 1977, p. 4).

Yet despite new goals being set for world baptisms by Pierson and Parmenter, accompanied by the renewed rally cry to "finish the work" before it was "too late", these leaders still proclaimed the traditionalist triumphalistic, "unshaken confidence" model. It was the "steady as she goes" philosophy, revealing no new initiatives for the Church to hold out hope, (Parmenter, *AR*, January 9, 1978, p. 4; "Unshaken Confidence", December 3, 1979, p. 4) that appeared to have heralded the problems for the Church and College in the 1980s. Alfred S. Jorgenson, now Australasian Field secretary, continued to deflect the Church away from examining itself by warning that

its greatest enemy was the world--Satan's body of believers (Jorgenson, AR, July 10 1978, pp. 6-7). So confident was he about the veracity of Ellen White's prophecies that he was led to state: "The integrity of Seventh-day Adventism and indeed the bona fides of Ellen G. White as a true messenger of the Lord to the remnant, are staked on the Saviour's soon return" (Jorgensen, cited in *AR*, April 14, 2001, p. 9).

Pierson was now seeking to understand where Church members stood on the increasingly vexing matters of the place of Ellen White and the role of women in the Church (Pierson, *AR,* March 13, 1978, p. 4). The American-based Ellen G. White Research Centre wished to examine the increasing perception of the "wax nose" of Ellen White, and how various Church factions were applying her for their own ends (Delafield, *AR,* August 21, 1978, pp. 6-7). More articles appeared softening her image as a stern legalistic enforcer, emphasizing the soteriological aspects of Ellen White's messages to Adventism with presentations on being "Accepted in Christ" (White, *AR.* October 23, 1978, p. 6) and "Christ Our Complete Salvation" (White, *AR,* November 20, 1978, p. 6). In fact, in creating a human face for God, the Church was now seeking to canvass what Jesus may have looked like physically, (Zurcher, *AR,* August 27, 1979, p. 6) in contrast to its original notion that to publish an image of Him was a sin. And to further demonstrate that the Church and Avondale were ready to think seriously about presenting its human face, mingling as salt with the world at large, in contrast to Jorgenson's anti-cultural model, the now former College Board chairman, Naden, proclaimed in 1980 that Adventists must take seriously Christ's exhortation that the Church was "the salt" of the world (Naden, AR, January 7, 1980, pp. 10-11).

9.5 A more open soteriological thrust driven by Magnusson

There is further evidence in the late 1970s that Avondale was departing from the traditional religious admonition usually reserved for Church dignitaries by inviting a psychologist, Dr Merrill Jackson, to give the opening College address to the 1978 College students on growth and development in *personal* and psychological maturity. (The Growth..." *AR,* May 29, 1978, pp 6-7, 14). Magnusson now raised the spectre of the future survival of Avondale. He continued to maintain the primacy of a college driven by mission and spiritual ethos, citing two US researchers who concluded:

> ...there is little danger that the church-related colleges will disappear from the American scene, provided that they are willing to hold tightly to the basic religious,

> spiritual and moral principles which animated their establishment (Magnusson, AR, February 6, 1978, pp. 10-11).

Now seeing hope for Avondale in its continuing commitment to a strong religious philosophy and academic programme, he saw it as contingent on the Church remaining committed to funding Avondale as an effective bastion against secularism, depersonalisation and materialism.

One outcome of the College's desire to energize its mission and evangelical focus was to operate several Bible land tours to the Middle East for staff and students (Magnusson, *AR,* September 3, 1979, p. 2). On the other side, suspecting that the distinctive doctrines of the Church might be slowly losing their hold, the College was invited to play host to a Sanctuary Seminar in 1978 to again highlight the significance of the 1844 Sanctuary message anchoring the identity of the Church as the true remnant of God (Scott, *AR,* May 8, 1978, pp. 8-9). At this discourse, Division Ministerial secretary, Arthur Duffy affirmed the proposition that "not one pillar should be removed" from the distinctive truths of the Church (Duffy, *AR,* December 10, 1979, p. 6).

Anxious that the changes taking place on a more general theme in the Church, were "a decline from pristine purity rather than evidence of continued divine guidance", (See Bull and Lockhart 1989, p. 87) The General Conference administration, through Pierson, reacted to the drift away from the sectarian Adventist dream for doctrinal purity. The problem, as he saw it, could be identified in part as stemming from Adventist academics. Emphasis on the peculiar doctrines of the nineteenth century, he said, was now being diluted, threatening Adventism's distinctive identity (Pierson *Review*, November 26, 1978, pp. 10-11). However, this particular viewpoint may not have accommodated fully the ebb and flow of concern over the imminence of Christ's return and the prospect of its present believers being translated rather than resurrected (Bull and Lockhart 1989, p. 87). The essence of Adventist belief, the sociocultural restrictions of the Sabbath's observance, the Second Coming and salvation, he believed were being too radicalised from the way marks of Adventist traditionalist thought.

But if as a College it was still stridently upholding the distinctive dogmas it was slowly sliding towards secular sociocultural norms. Its claim to still be run as a Christian home ("Avondale,"... *AR,* October 22, 1979, p.11) of the past now lacked the "parental" watch by staff and principal experienced up until the 1960s. Many of

them now lived off campus after class hours. Magnusson appeared quite able as a facilitator for theological and behavioural revisionism to quietly chip away at the hegemonial-styled administrative model. His even more aggressive approach to a higher education focus through science upgrades further assisted in lowering the social barriers to external recognition and dialogue.

The College's spiritual charisma subsided into the shadow of confusion and identity crisis with the transfer of Ford to an American Adventist College in 1978. The tide of dissent from the Ford controversy caused a loss of morale and eschatological mission on behalf of the many who were shocked at his later dismissal (Hook, 1997, p. 288). Seen now as the dissenter, he was the unwilling catalyst for an undercurrent of bad blood by secretive and subversive rear-guarders, some of who lived just outside the College gates in Cooranbong and were engaged in psychological warfare and slander intended to undermine the authority of and respect for the College. But none of this friction appeared to surface in official Church or College publications, their work largely remaining outside the inner sanctums of College doors, the Australasian Division headquarters or the Church press. As an exchange for Ford's shipment to the American Pacific Union College, Gordon Smith Balharrie was chosen to shore up traditionalist beliefs. This proved generally to be unsatisfactory. While many students may have appreciated the new lecturer, his quest to recruit more College ministerial students fell largely on deaf ears (See endnote 3).

Towards the end of Ford's tenure at Pacific Union College, his presentation of the Investigative Judgment in 1979 at an Adventist Forum meeting, proved to be a bold theological, but unwise political, decision. The General Conference asked him to spell out his beliefs, giving him six months on full pay to do so. The document prepared, though technically strong, (over 900 pages) sealed his fate as an employee of the Church (Hook, 1997, pp. 290-291). In the next two chapters I will attempt to offer evidence to support the view that the Fordian crisis was perhaps the single most significant *internal* cause for the College's virtual surrender of Ellen White's authority as the source of Adventist faith and sociocultural practice.

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1. Madigan suggested in 1998 that although medical students were required to have the highest tertiary entrance scores, i.e. above 98, Avondale, in not offering medicine or law, had nevertheless enrolled some highly prized students with tertiary education scores of up to that standard (Madigan, April 5, 2001).

2. He appeared to assess Ford's non-traditionalist views from the standpoint of what an

unfinished Avondale Ministerial short course in 1944 could afford and in confluence with other senior administrators' views relegated Ford's revisionist direction as non-biblical. This is dealt with at greater length in the next chapter.

3. According to Hook, Balharrie became focused on being an "inveterate sightseer" of the Australian continent, choosing to instruct his students in a singularly one-way form of pedagogy--tape recordings of his lectures. By his frequent and unsatisfactory absences from campus, as head of the Theology Department, he was dubbed "the Recording Angel" (Hook, 1997, p. 290).

Chapter 10

The Fordian fallout and the decline of the significance of the Eschaton, Ellen White's authority and sociocultural standards c. 1980-2000

10.1 The 1980s commence with *annus horribilus*

The 1980s could be interpreted as a watershed heralding significant delegitimation of Ellen White's authority and further erosion to the emphasis on the Eschaton. Notwithstanding the external influences of postmodernism, the globalisation of the economy, and the rise of modern communication technologies, it will be argued that the internalised effects of Rea, Numbers, and Ford, in particular at Avondale, impacted on the College's sociocultural direction and led ultimately to a further marginalisation of sectarian philosophy and control.

This decade would be regarded by many in the Church, especially in Australia, as the most difficult in living memory. It is said that Avondale College experienced in 1980 an *annus horribilus* through the shock sacking of Ford and the sensational media speculation reporting events surrounding the death of an Adventist pastor's baby daughter, Azaria Chamberlain, in controversial if not unusual circumstances at Ayers Rock. SPDSDA Public Relations director, Ray Coombe, summarised the first eight years of the 1980s decade as a period of "theological and internal problems that have spilled over into the media." The most negative media image for the Church culminated in the Chamberlain tragedy, which received, according to Coombe "unprecedented publicity" with "many negative images...reinforced in the public mind" (R. Coombe, *AR,* March 5, 1988, p. 2; see endnote 1).

Wolfgramm suggested that in 1981 the Chamberlain saga acted as a catalyst to polarize the Australian public further toward a highly prejudicial belief that they belonged to a "crackpot religion". Twenty years on, he states that Adventism is now "(metaphorically speaking) yawned at. They aren't quirky cultists, they're boring, (so I'm told)." He subscribes to the view that the Church (and by implication Avondale) has been better understood from the fallout of the legal injustice that the Chamberlains were subjected to. They were a catalyst to wiping away some of the

belief that Adventists were "sectarian 'deviants'" in hiding, or having "something to hide" (Wolfgramm, January, 2001).

On an international front, William Johnsson remarked that: "the decade of the eighties was the most turbulent and difficult in my experience. During the first half the church was wracked by forces that seemed ready to tear it apart" (Johnsson, 1995, p. 7). On the College scene the continuing fallout of the Fordian controversy found no shelter in the Division's desire to have the theological angst disappear. An attempt to mollify the College academics' scepticism over the administration's loyalty, trust and intentions fell short in its purpose at a youth camp retreat for College staff and Australian Church administration. The barrage of reactionary diatribe and innuendo had not abated and the SPDSDA administration had not responded publicly to quell slanderous accusations. Private assurances of support were all that the College lecturers would receive. The administration had been beaten into submission by a minority old guard of the Church. By the mid-1980s enrolments had slipped to a new critical low (Hook, 1997, p. 302).

10.2 The old guard tightens its authoritarian control

There were no explicit purges at Avondale nor in Australasian Division administrative circles, but the agenda had been set for the first four years of the eighties decade. Hook recounted the events at Avondale with one of the first casualties being Magnusson. There is no prima facie evidence that Magnusson ever openly defended Ford, but Hook has suggested that he had been a "stalwart colleague of Ford...His departure was a considerable loss to the institution" (Hook, 1997, p. 292). Enrolment waned. The glory of the theology course was departing after eighty-three years. Other members of the faculty were also transferred out. Dr Trevor Lloyd, a known supporter of much of Ford's theology, was downgraded to the headmastership of a Victorian Adventist primary school.

The *Record* editor, Robert Parr, having served ten years and being respected as a lover of Gospel preaching, was also transferred out. In his place arrived South African, Geoffrey Edward Garne ("New Editor Coming", *AR*, November 10, 1980, pp.1-2), who set about to defend the attackers of Ford, notably Lewis Walton and his reactionary book, *Omega*. The smearers of the College's good name were never

censured. The SPDSDA leadership never openly defended the slandered Salom or other lecturers including Dr Norman Young, in Theology. Hook recorded that in 1982, the normally conservative and quietly spoken Salom, former head of the Avondale College Theology Department, was overwhelmed by indignation over false accusations about his beliefs suggesting that he might be a Fordian clone and that he was teaching heresy. Responding to one of the Concerned Brethrens' slanderous letters he erupted:

> Every one of the half dozen sentences devoted to describing me is a lie...
>
> I cannot defend myself against these scurrilous charges contained in this paper because I do not have access to the Adventist public, which has received this paper. I must depend on you to defend me and others like me.
>
> ...just as I have defended leadership at the level at which I operate, I expect leadership to defend me, and others like me, at the level you operate (Hook, 1997, p. 300; see endnote 2).

The Church hierarchy, it was alleged by some historians and scholars, had been sloppy in allowing Lewis Walton, an American Adventist lawyer, to publish in the Church's official press a series of alleged half-truths that imprimaturized the ideology behind historical traditions of Adventism and returned the Church to sectarianism. This included the view that Christ had not returned because Adventists had not been good enough. Later, another philosophical view presented by Walter Douglass was also published in the name of the Church press. Titled "How to survive the Eighties", it ran a view that strong Adventists alone would survive the forthcoming horrors leading up to the Eschaton. They reiterated the Darwinian ethic in his evolutionary theory of the survival of the fittest, by suggesting throughout the book "Tomorrow is not for the weak" (Lian, *Spectrum*, vol 19, no 1, pp. 50-57).

It was not only the Fordian challenge to the Church's traditionalist view of the sanctuary doctrine that the College Board Chairman, Parmenter, had to now confront. He was forced to present "the facts" as revealed about Ellen White's use of the works of others and her decision not to document those sources as revealed in Walter T. Rea, *The White Lie* (1982). Parmenter's hasty defence could only be considered as simplistic in its suggestion that Rea's attack was proof that the Church was in the last days and that it bore the mark of the evil one "doing all in his power to denigrate—and where possible, utterly destroy the confidence of Seventh-day Adventists in the ministry of the Spirit of Prophecy." Parmenter asserted that Rea's work would "destroy all confidence in the inspiration of and authority of Ellen G. White's

writings" (Parmenter, *AR*, July 28, 1980). But as the Avondale College Board chairman, he assured the Committee how much he held Ford in "the highest esteem... with a powerful ministry," but then demanded that Ford "lay his views aside".

Former General Conference President Robert H. Pierson was less subtle. He told Ford that he was "sadly wrong" and that he was "morally and intellectually dishonest" to draw his salary while "undermining the Church". Another Union Conference president W.D. Blehm, went a further step to alienate him by railing "*Anything that divides this church or leads to doubt is wrong...We need each other today. We've got to forget our suspicion of administrators. This is where I stand." Ford replied that blind loyalty was counterproductive to belief. "Some confuse loyalty with not asking questions. I am not committed to all the Church has taught, nor are you. None of us believes everything the church has taught down through the years. On that basis we all ought to be excommunicated"* (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 12-14). The final upshot as determined by the Church's examination was that "he had failed to meet the criteria set by the administration to retain his employment (by)...almost unanimous decision." Ford was then fired by his employers--the Australasian Division (Godfrey, 1997, p. 13).

This subsequent removal of Ford's credentials drew a marked distinction and a growing crevasse between the Adventist scholars and the Church administrators following the Glacier View Sanctuary Review Committee meeting from August 10-15, 1980. In the lead-up to the dismissal, the General Conference president, Neal Wilson, set the tone for the meetings with what might have been construed to be a conciliatory attitude towards Ford.

> I want Des Ford, his wife Gill and their son Luke to know that we love them very much, and that we appreciate all that he has written. Des is not on trial before this group, though some of his views are on trial... Please be honest and say what you think lest people misunderstand you. Here in this meeting you will have immunity...We greatly appreciate the work of our Bible scholars on the new statement of Fundamental Beliefs adopted at Dallas. They will be partners of ours in reaching decisions on doctrine (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 5).

10.3 Desmond Ford is sacked

Ford, though willing to listen, was not about to retreat from the pressure clearly being applied by administrators. Biblical scholars generally looked on feeling helpless to

rise to his defence. Senior Church administration continued to hold the view that *"there are no errors in Ellen White's writings. Beware of historians."* (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol.11, no. 2 pp. 16-17). The General Conference President's Executive Advisory Council, (PREXAD) therefore, in agreement with the Australasian Division administration, led by Parmenter, removed Ford's Ministerial credentials in September 1980. PREXAD had brought the *essence* and *mission* of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the crossroads. *Spectrum* editor Roy Branson asked the question, "Was the Church now to be seen as "genuinely Christian" or "truly Adventist"? if the Church surrendered its traditional understanding of the Investigative Judgment having commenced in 1844. The Church, he claimed, "would lose its reason for being a distinct denomination." The prospect in the minds of many administrators was that if the Church were to totally acknowledge the death and resurrection of Jesus as the one divine act responsible for our salvation, "it would sound the death knell of Adventism" (Branson, *Spectrum,* vol.12, no. 1, pp. 2-3). The administrators appeared to have taken a position not dissimilar to that of the Roman Catholic Church in that tradition could not be over-ruled except by decree of the supreme executive body, the pope. Many scholars feared that the Bible had become a casualty in the quest to be the ultimate arbiter over tradition.

The reaction at Avondale College could be summed up in the *Spectrum* assessment of the academic fraternity in general. "The abrupt and unexpected turn of events of the first week in September 1980 came as a seismic shock to the academic community of the church" (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol.11, no. 2, pp. 19-20). Hook described Ford's friends on the Pacific Union and Avondale campuses as "numb with incredulity" (Hook, 1997, p. 292). Even before his momentous lecture (at Glacier View) his years of teaching at Avondale College, his numerous articles and books published by the Church, and his participation in the ongoing debate on righteousness by faith had made him a world figure in Adventist theological circles (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 19-20; see endnote 3).

Godfrey described the decision to sack Ford as sending a shock wave around the Australian Church. Many "were deeply alarmed by the outcome", especially those who had been students under Ford. Ford's dilemma, contended Godfrey, "went to the very heart of Seventh-day Adventism and his dismissal could not be ignored." Ford had unerringly preached to his students and audiences the Reformation Protestant stand in *sola christus, sola scriptura, sola fide*. His cause for sacking "deeply hurt"

many parishioners; for the "perceived abuse of power...and an obvious lack of understanding of the significant issues at stake...the administration could never be forgiven" (Godfrey, 1997, pp.13-14). In interviewing 43 former pastors, Adventist Monash social historian, Dr Harry Ballis, claimed that the loss of ministers "was unprecedented in magnitude".

> More than 180 pastors exited from the Adventist ministry during the 1980s. This figure is equivalent to an astonishing 40 per cent of the total ministerial workforce in Australia and New Zealand--a statistic unprecedented at any other time or in any other place (Ballis, *AP.*, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 3).

Patrick calculated that between 1980 and 1988, 185 of 455 ministers (or 41%) exited from their calling in Australia and New Zealand (Patrick, *AP.*, 1995, vol. 7. no. 1, p. 28). The resulting shock waves caused Adventist administrators to press together, declaring that, "we are now living in the most solemn period of this world's history." Although the Division secretary was quoting Ellen White out of context they had now joined forces declaring with grim faces that this was "The Course We Now Pursue" (*AR*, September 22, 1980, p. 1). For an overwhelming show of solidarity to the Church members, every senior Australasian Church administrator was asked to testify to their undying loyalty to the distinctive doctrines of the Church and their loyalty to Ellen White as an inspired authority for the Church. The General Conference via the Washington-based Ellen White Research Centre denied suggestions by the *Guardian* in London and the *Los Angeles Times* that a scandal had erupted in the Church over the revelations and affirmed that she was a true prophetess of God ("No Adventist Scandal", *AR,* December 22, 1980, p. 3).

10.4 The aftermath: A triumphalist hegemonial administration removes its offenders and the rank and file told to tow the line

Referring to Ford's dismissal, Adventist author and academic, Steve Daily, was critical of the Church's decision to "discipline, judge and mistreat some of our greatest preachers of the Gospel." Apart from the rearguard action from some intrepid Adventist scholars in 1980 and 1981 writing in *Spectrum*, little had been reported about Ford in the Australian context by Australian Adventists, especially by his peers, for fear they might also be blacklisted or asked to leave the Church work. Ford's dismissal removed an ongoing nightmare for Parmenter, who would now be able to

find an easier path to get the Church back on its sectarian fundamentalist track. This he did with apparent success for a while, but ministers in the Australasian Church began to leave their posts in droves.

The task of salvaging the tide of dismay and low morale at Avondale befell a distinguished Harvard educated PhD graduate, Dr James John Charles Cox, who proved to be politically and theologically astute. Cox set about smoothing troubled waters by first giving public assent to the 1980 statement of Twenty-seven Fundamental Beliefs of the Church. This had been conceived by the General Conference at a time when it was experiencing unparalleled internal attack on the authoritative and divinely inspired status of Ellen White and her writings, and was published on April 25, 1980. Hook indicated that Cox appeased the majority of members of his Australian constituency (Hook, 1997, p. 303). Although his stay was relatively short-lived his impact on the College appeared to be highly beneficial. He negotiated the two difficult political courses over the Ford and Chamberlain sagas. To his further credit he superintend a new master's degree programme mainly for experienced ministers, and assisted in elevating the status of recreational pursuits, appointing the College's first PhD lecturer in leisure studies, Dr James Hanson.

But despite the reactionary tide swamping revisionists, other respected ministerial protégés of Ford now engaged in post-graduate programmes and were not silenced in the Australian Church press until Parr was gone. Among them was Pastor Graeme Loftus who wrote possibly the most definitive Australasian comment witnessed in the *Record* about the relationship of Adventist theological perspectives and culture. He informed his readers during 1980 that Wesley's Methodist emphasis on the human will when taken to extremes, resulted in perfectionism. Ellen White grew up in an environment where the perfectibility of man and holy flesh were countenanced though she did not appear to ever accept this view. Nevertheless Loftus considered that the cultural transplant in Australia of this United States based religion bore significant evidences of moral perfectionism in the 1950s and 1960s, the fruits of which he boldly proclaimed to be "spiritually bankrupt" (Loftus, *AR,* December 22, 1980, p. 6).

Garne set about as a facilitating editor revitalizing the distinctive truths of Adventism to correct revisionist scholars and ministers who were challenging the administrators' authority on the use of Ellen White's writings. Not surprisingly an unsigned article in the *Record* appeared early in 1981, titled: "Ministerial

Responsibility Requires Ministerial Loyalty" (*AR,* February 2, 1981, p. 3). Following it came a plethora of articles on doctrine and prophecy at the rate of almost one per *Record.* The tension appeared to affect Parmenter's health ("Stop Press Message from Division Headquarters", *AR,* March 30, 1981, p. 2). The hierarchy called for "renewal". Australian Church stability began to look shaky. Ministers, in particular those from the Australasian Division, were now deserting. The administration rolled out warnings in the *Record* about apostasy, and the importance of the ten commandments, judgment, sanctified people and the imminent Second Coming—all within the context of the renewed eschatological basis for revival and mission empowerment (Garne, *AR,* March 30, 1981, p. 4). On the sanctuary doctrine, a gratuitous assertion was made by another unsigned writer that the *"foundation of (Adventist) faith" was available only through "the correct understanding of Christ's ministration in the heavenly sanctuary"* ("The Sanctuary Truth", *AR,* March 30, 1981, pp. 6-7; emphasis mine).

At Avondale, Parmenter, through Cox, was able to extract from the anxious College academics a confession of faith that was loyal to the new Twenty-seven Fundamentals of Adventist faith. This included the role of Ellen White in being the Church's authority on doctrine and the historical interpretation of Adventism on the heavenly sanctuary. Furthermore, the Board Chairman received an assurance that all staff would "without reservation seek the redemption of every student who chooses to study under their guidance" in line with the Church's distinctive teachings and mission for all those choosing to serve in the Adventist Church (Parmenter, *AR,* October 5, 1981, p. 4). No other Australasian Adventist group or institution appeared to have been targeted in this way. Yet to ignore it or to dissent would have almost certainly meant the loss of their jobs.

A thorough series on the distinctive doctrines of the Church now appeared titled "What Seventh-day Adventists Believe" and was published in the *Record* during the later half of 1981. They again emphasized the imperatives of believing in the divine inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Adventist interpretation of the sanctuary in heaven. Not to believe, said Garne, was *"like pulling some of the individual threads out of a fabric and expecting it to remain intact. You know what happens when this is done: the whole fabric unravels and falls to pieces"* (Garne, *AR,* November 30, 1981, p. 4; emphasis in text). He reiterated the same message in a 1984 editorial, devoting his entire page to the validity of the sanctuary service and

Investigative Judgment now under way for 140 years (Garne, *AR,* October 13, 1984, p. 2).

10.5 Evidences of subtle discontent

That the Division administrators sought to have their rank and file pull in behind them, was not to be forthcoming in every case, however. In Parr's testimony to his Church allegiance, he protected himself from major criticism, but not by endorsing the distinctive truths or Ellen White's authority over the Church even though that might have been expected. Parr defiantly wrote: "The Bible and the Bible alone is to be our creed... 'It is written' The Bible our rule of faith and discipline" ("Our Leaders...", *AR,* December 14, 1981, p. 5). By now suspicion, fear and backstabbing had escalated in the Church. Parr noted that what "bothered him most" was the ability of Church members to "assassinate the characters of their brethren" (Parr, *AR,* October 20, 1984, p. 2).

James Cox was again asked in 1981 to testify his allegiance to Adventism. He did so but in making it known that his loyalties lay first and foremost to Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord, being "firmly grounded in the Holy Scriptures, 'the infallible revelation of God's will'...profoundly informed by the Spirit of Prophecy, *a continuing and authoritative source of truth...*" (Parr, *AR,* December 21, 1981, p. 3; emphasise mine). It was a carefully worded document provided by one astute enough to understand his bounds without being impugned and signalling that Ellen White was no longer *the* source of truth. Cox's push for the MA programme, set in 1981, was also a subtle and sophisticated answer to the reactionary forces of Australian Adventism. This unparalleled series of events signalled to the Church that grave insecurity was creeping over an administrative hierarchy and that its reaction to change demonstrated a resistance based on the fear that their power and control would be eroded if not lost entirely. This administrative culture and process is analysed in more detail in chapters 11, 12, 24-25.

In the meantime the higher education programme at Avondale moved on relentlessly. The professional MA degree attempted to concentrate on relational and pastoral psychology, having moved well away from the pre-1970s propositionalism of theological belief and the moral perfectionism and legalism focus of the pre-1950s. In 1984, a senior lecturer in English, Peter Kuch, while maintaining a view that

"Avondale's philosophy of education is based on the Christian view of life, presented in the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White," signalled the value of the individual student and his self worth. The College appeared to now be in an inquiry mode concerning the individual and his quest to determine his own standards out of a cosmological awareness of true values and a respect for others' views. The students' rewards in the "mutual pursuit of truth" would be according to Kuch:

> greater self-awareness and poise; an understanding of man's past present and future; a developed sense of values; a love of learning where eagerness is tempered by humility; an informed respect for others' points of view; and the ability to communicate effectively. The constant challenge held before all members of the college community is to unite knowledge with understanding (Kuch, *AR,* August 18, 1984, p. 4).

Ministerial training was described as "still a high priority" but it was losing ground to the more secularly orientated courses. Avondale promoted its new and successful business degree course with its first student graduating at the end of 1984. The College continued to challenge young people to believe in its education system, which opposed values, "tarnished by humanism, secularism and materialism". But it had barely surpassed the student intake of the 1960s and was still only attracting little more than 400 indoor and 100 outdoor students. Ball tried to assure his constituents in 1985 with his comment: "Avondale's commitment to Christian ideals and the preparation of its students for service remain unchanged." That goal, he suggested, would never be altered while Avondale existed. Indeed it was "unique and irreplaceable" (Ball, *AR,* October 5, 1985). The reaffirmation was timely, but it was also in significant transition, for the College had appeared to have almost given away officially its penchant to quote Ellen White for its inerrant sociocultural support.

Again, in 1988, Ball gazed into the future of Avondale in the light of new major Federal Government initiatives in tertiary education. Countering the latest trend to reward national economic-focused higher learning institutions he was silent on the Ellen G. White authority paradigm. He instead remarked that Avondale remained unique in that it catered for the needs of *"the whole person"* rather than the economic rationalist agenda of the State. Avondale's teachers remained, he said, "committed to the Adventist Church and its philosophy" (Ball, *AR,* July 30, 1988).

In 1991, new General Conference president Robert S Folkenberg, in the tradition of former World presidents, renewed the call for loyalty to the *Church.* This, he expounded, would enable the Church as a corporate institution to go forward and

"turn the world upside down." *Loyalty and authority in the Church, he reiterated, brought with it "true unity".* But Church dialogue for the rest of the decade as we have tried to show, has exhibited increasing dissatisfaction with this well-worn sectarian-styled fatherhood statement driven by a proclamation-styled "top down" hegemonial control model. In his exhortation he appeared not to recognise increasing changes to mission focus, later discussed in this thesis, which would reveal mounting evidence of the decreasing will of scholars and other professionals in the Church to canvass the Folkenberg notion that as the "gospel trumpet needed to be sounded clearly and distinctly...it was a message needed for this age" ("GC President...", *AR,* November 9, 1991).

During 1992 a curious precedent was set by the *Record* editors and by implication endorsed by the SPDSDA, pleading with members who had problems not to leave the Church (Editorial, *AR,* July 18, 1992). This more relationally-underpinned plea implied that no particular conditions were being attached, unlike the earlier exhortations that only those pure in distinctive Adventist doctrine and who aligned to the Twenty-seven Fundamentals were worthy of being called Seventh-day Adventist remnant church members.

The entry of Dr Steve Thompson in 1991 from the principalship of Newbold College to head up the Avondale Faculty of Theology appeared to mark an awareness of the broader training of ministers. He considered that there was "no one particular type of ministerial student" sought, but that they were required to have an "open active mind" and to relate socially and to have recognised their call to mission ("Avondale," *AR,* May 11, 1991). The promotion of a social emphasis was consistent with *Adventist Review* editor William Johnsson's report that Church administration's triumphalist, authoritarian attitude and management style, still evident in the early 1980s, had softened noticeably toward a more relational emphasis being applied with lessons having being learned before 1992. He remarked that "the key" to good leadership was the ability to *listen, set an example instead of giving orders and to operate in a more collegial style, less directive and with "a high degree of delegation."* Johnsson claimed that, "above all, our people are looking for spiritual leaders *who know their Lord, who can preach powerfully from the Word, who can pray with power"* (Widner, *AR,* July 20, 1991).

The quest for the Church to hold fast to all its distinctive heritage and traditional views about everything while maintaining a correct understanding of the role of the

spirit of prophecy was a challenge that defied the reality of history. Serious issues emphatically and consistently addressed, including modesty and the evil pleasures of entertainment, could not be maintained in a world of upwardly mobile, socio-economic and educational paradigms. As Oliver correctly stated, whatever the Church has done, "we cannot retreat into the supposed safety of a nineteenth-century mid-west-of-North America cocoon and expect to fulfil the global mission" (Oliver, 1997b, p. 7). Hook added that Puritans, in fleeing religious intolerance and espousing religious freedom, became themselves most intolerant, persecuting those with divergent viewpoints.

Though the College had survived financially and academically and had lost none of its scholarship appropriations, Avondale College Foundation's financial support for its building programme momentum had lost something of the golden spirit developed in the 1970s. Hook observed: "However it was the soul of Avondale that experienced a remarkable change in 1980" (Hook, 1997, p. 294). This may be traced back to the "creeping awareness of change" in the Avondale fabric of a fellowship family and the students' attitudes to personal responsibility. Hook supported his assessment from the 1978/79 Self-study:

> Large cracks in Avondale traditional family atmosphere also began to appear. Many faculty members were living at a distance from the campus and were less inclined to attend vespers and Saturday evening entertainment. With a relaxation of campus leave rules new regulations allowed students to be off campus more frequently too. 'It is disturbing', the self-study reported, "that a high proportion of socio-cultural Saturday night fare provided attracts very few indoor students, the bulk of whom contrive to be elsewhere' (Hook, 1997, pp. 294-5).

From my analysis, two core reasons for the establishment of Avondale had now been virtually undermined: Firstly the establishment of the College as an institutional "home" where faculty, staff and students would regularly associate in all the activities of a boarding institution, and secondly the College's isolation, enabling students to be controlled and mentored by administration and prevented from being snared by a morally corrupted worldly environment outside the College gates. The confluence of both factors severely impaired the continuation of a sectarian-styled cultural focus.

The changing face of social dynamics alarmed the faculty considerably. Those who had fond memories of the previous three decades now gravely faced such a transition. The institution of "the Blueprint programme" to restore some of the College's heritage was an untimely attempt to patch an already yawning rift created by a quest for academic prestige to attract the constituents, and a lack of

understanding together with vision-impaired authoritarian sociocultural controls.

10.6 The Madigan factor and the open door to privatisation of a standards-based paradigm

Dr Geoffrey Madigan's presidency from 1991 saw the continuation of the struggle for the College to expand its influence in the community. He sought to have it re-invent itself as a place where constituents and prospective clients would see the attractive uniqueness of a purpose built College of Christian values and purpose. Parents could take pride in sending their children to obtain "a sound footing in the Australian academic scene...and to become more well known so that we don't always have to explain Avondale on first introduction" (Manners, *AR*, April 2, 1994, pp. 6-7; see endnote 4).

Having a scientific background predicated by a PhD from Monash and with sixteen years experience in lecturing including Head of the Science Faculty at Avondale, Madigan in the vein of his two predecessors, appeared not to want to be seen to officially promote a sectarian ethos or assent explicitly to Ellen White's authority. He seemed well aware of, and sought to address, the expanding sociocultural gulf between traditionalist-historical authoritarian Adventism and the accelerating influences of postmodernity and its sociological directions. Madigan, I would argue, more than any former Avondale administrative head, adopted a behavioural/revisionist sociocultural approach and was explicitly if not refreshingly bold in his enunciation. In approaching the sociocultural evolution at College in 1994, he remarked at length, stating:

> ...we have to decide how we're to approach that problem. Coercion at draconian levels doesn't work. Some seem to believe that just because young people have chosen to come to Avondale we can wave a magic wand or something and suddenly they will do all sorts of things we believe they ought to be doing.
>
> The attitude of young people to authority is also one of these things that has changed ...they aren't impressed by position or edict.

On the matter of the College's standards Madigan was somewhat more conciliatory and philosophical:

> We still have our standards. If a student acts in a way that he or she has no intention of living within the intention of what Avondale wants, then the time will come for us to part company. But we try to keep in mind...are we serving the best interests of that student by parting company earlier than later? We think we should work through everything we can before we get to the point where we say to the student, "You don't

belong here."

Madigan had made it clear that certain rules, including dress codes, had to be weighed against the students' legal and psychological age to decide in context with their own boundary testing. The College, he said, must accept a more inclusive approach, to "rather attack the cause than the symptoms." He opined:

> Too often we put up barriers by jumping on issues students think are peripheral and make such a big fuss over them that we never actually get up to the point of dealing with the deeper questions. When we handle the big issues most of those other things will clear up automatically (Manners, *AR,* April 2, 1994, p. 7).

A survey in 1993 had returned answers from 18,494 Adventists world-wide, indicating that 73% agreed that the Church's standards for alcohol, tobacco and unclean meats were "reasonable". A significantly lower group ranging between 56-64% accepted that the Church held valid standards on dancing, music, movie attendance, military service, divorce and business practices ("GC," *AR,* November 27, 1993).

In confluence with these findings and the 1994 review of Avondale College's sociocultural priorities, one could reasonably argue for the cogency of the sobering and near prophetic-like prediction on the Church's sociological perspectives by Dick Duerksen. Writing in the same year he predicted in the *Record* that a future Church would experience challenges including the increasing diversity of socioculturalism in opposition to cultural orthodox Adventism driven by Adventist parents and Adventist ghetto communities. There would seem to be a decrease of interest in SDA distinctive doctrines and an emphasis on the validity of the ethic and ethos profiles embodied and symbolised in Jesus Christ's life and death. This would include a normative tendency not to appear different in apparel or risk-taking lifestyles or entertainment except to operate in a radicalised Christ-like manner. Vegetarianism, the choice of music, the discrete consumption of alcohol and other lifestyle choices will not be driven by the corporate Church requiring a uniformity of commitment but by the individual reasoned response to the faith and practice of Jesus Christ and a validation of diet and lifestyle choices driven by scientific discovery and general confirmation as relatively safe behaviours (See Duerksen, *Adventist Review* cited in *AR,* October 1-November 6 1994).

In the meantime, Ball as the SPDSDA president and the new College Board chairman took a stoic-like, defender of the true faith approach by requiring his

Conference presidents, in 1994, to sign a statement of loyalty to the Church's "Twenty-seven Fundamental Beliefs" as a show of strength and solidarity to the Australasian Church. This was instigated out of anxiety that "the Seventh-day Adventist Church had fallen into widespread apostasy", a concern arising from "charges by a small group within the Church" who considered that they were the only true defenders of the SDA religion (Ball, *AR,* July 6, 1994, p. 3). Fortunately the Theology Faculty at Avondale College were exempt from this process. Senior lecturer in Theology, Robert McIver, asked a thorny question in a two-part series for *Adventist Review* and the *Record,* concerning those who could *not* give assent to all of the Twenty-seven Fundamentals. He cited a youth rally leader who said that in having "just read through the Twenty-seven Fundamentals I find that I agree with twenty–four of them. Does this still make me a Seventh-day Adventist?" McIver recorded that "none of the subsequent speakers attempted to answer this youth leader's question" (McIver, *Adventist Review*, pt. 2, September 22, 1994, p. 10). The silence could be regarded as indicative of its ultimate unworkability.

Ball conceded in 1995 that the Australasian Church probably had "a reputation for being a hotbed of theological controversy" and "a strong spirit of independence--in thinking and in action." This independence should always be rooted in a "sound biblical basis for its teachings and lifestyle" (Adams, *AR,* June 24, 1995, p. 8). But he went further to warn of the evidences of relativistic and humanistic thought now creeping into the Church's Christian beliefs.

The local Federal minister, Bob Brown MP, gave unexpected relief to Ellen White's threatened status in 1995 by affirming her revered Church status at Avondale as "the most prolific female writer in the English speaking world." The mayor of Lake Macquarie, Councillor John Kilpatrick, reaffirmed her by stating: "We in Lake Macquarie are the richer for her faith, her work and her vision." That neither of these men were Seventh-day Adventists, probably supplied a much needed public relations lift, but not sufficient to alter the course of her demise from her former status ("Sunnyside...", *AR*, December 16, 1995, p. 10). For in presenting Avondale as a College where Christianity must be integrated as "a part of the whole" (Manners, *AR,* April 2, 1994, p. 6) nothing was now said about the role or authority of Ellen White.

Gerhard Pfandl, continuing in his role as SPDSDA field secretary, now made a stunning admission, quite unthinkable thirty years before, stating that her writings were *"not necessary for salvation"*. (Pfandl, citing White, vol 5, 1948, p. 665, in *AR,*

November 23, 1996, p. 2; see endnote 5) Indeed the College would still preside over the teaching of her distinctive truths in the late 1990s, seen as fundamental to the identification of the Church but now compartmentalised in Avondale's Ellen G. White Research Centre. While a core credit component in almost every faculty, through the subject "Adventist Heritage", the writings of Ellen White appeared not to be given the same import witnessed prior to the 1980s.

Madigan, despite the more open approach to College standards and an emphasis on personal standards, was still able to claim that they were derived from a unique set of Christian values, through the welcome comments by the Federal Minister for Education, Dr David Kemp, when visiting the College in August 1999. In his address before the College assembly, Kemp considered that Avondale was occupying a "unique feature" in the higher education realm and was playing a "very important role" promoting "a value system which is strengthening Australia as a country" (Roberts, *Avondale Reflections*, November 1999, p. 5).

The concern to be an education centre, providing that distinct advantage, continues to be addressed by the College. According to Avondale alumni publication *Reflections*, Avondale is highly rated in the country's *The Good University Guide*. The *Australian* quoted Avondale as "a top performer" in graduate satisfaction and was accorded top ratings with twenty per cent of other Australian universities, in the categories for "obtaining a job", "graduate starting salary", "positive graduate outcomes" and "student–staff ratio". The accent was on personal and private achievement of one's own goals. Dr John Cox, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, reiterated the importance of personalised service for the student, remarking in 1999, "Avondale has a reputation for taking mediocre students and making them good, and taking good students and making them excellent" (*Avondale Reflections*, November 1999, p. 4; see endnote 6).

At the commencement of the 2001 College year, Madigan referred to the Avondale experience "as an adventure of the mind...that takes place in a faith context." College Public Relations editor Bruna Tawake, quoting her favourite author, Mark Twain, added that the students should allow their private imaginations to unwind and do a little dreaming of their own and '"...throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.' I hope that your 2001 experience will be the exploring, dreaming and discovering journey that you want it to be" (*Connections*, 1-7 March, 2001, p. 1).

1. Ray Coombe further stated:

> The Anti-discrimination Board analysed the situation perceptively in 1982: 'There can be no doubt that the combination of the Chamberlain case and reports of a theological schism in the Church have had deleterious effects in the eyes of the general public.
>
> Before these events, the Church had a rather benign image, which it will take some years to regain, unless the Church involves itself in an active publicity campaign to promote a more positive image. This has been the experience of other religious minorities with an unfavourable image' (R. Coombe, *AR*, March 5, 1988, p. 2).

Scragg proposed that the Chamberlain saga had become by 1984, of equal significance with the Ford fallout for the Australian Church (Scragg, *AP*., vol. 9, no. 1, p. 16). However, Wolfgramm, with the benefit of hindsight and his sociological discipline, countered Coombe's opinion, and enlarged on Scragg's observation. He asked the question:

> What did Australians think of Seventh-day Adventists before the disappearance of Azaria? More to the point, what did they know about Seventh-day Adventists? 'Not much' is the correct answer to both these questions (Wolfgramm, January 2001).

2. A radical follower of Ford, College theology student Michael Bond satirized the Concerned Brethren's slanderous literature with an anonymous reply that provided comic relief. But it also drew attention to the Parmenter-led Division administration and their strange silence and apparent social insensitivity in the face of false accusations about their own College employed brethren. A sample of Bond's literature is headed in a spoof version of *Adventist Observer.*

> Thank you for all the letters of slander, malice and sordid rumour which continue to stream in and we especially wish to thank those who sent in donations to ease the financial burden of this project. (nudge, nudge, wink, wink...)

Bond's pamphlet provided further would-be answers espoused by some of the Concerned Brethren, including, "how to pick out who is a rotten Fordian" (See *Adventist Observer,* February 1982).

3. Former Avondale student, Australian author and business magazine editor Lowell Tarling wrote to the General Conference president an impassioned letter of dismay. "I didn't go to church today. Yesterday I got the news that you axed Des Ford and today I am staggering from the blow...I thought you were tolerant and pluralistic enough to handle Ford. I could handle Herbert Douglas's perfectionism...I could tolerate anything just so long as we had sermons on the Cross. And now you have axed the man who spearheaded the movement which brought Calvary into Seventh-day Adventism...And then there's the purges, when will they come?" (Tarling, September 6, 1980).

4. Despite his intentions to have Avondale become well known its centenary celebrations occurring during March 28-9, 1997, were remarkably low key. According to the *Newcastle Herald,* approximately 1,000 people only, attended to commemorate

> 100 years ago, (when) Avondale College and its five staff opened its doors to just two pupils. Today there are 150 staff and 725 students, studying a range of courses including degrees in arts, education, business, science and aviation.

The celebrations--echoing the opening of the College in 1897, were again modest, if not remarkably small and largely unknown by the local non-Adventist community. A small sprinkling of former students, staff and Adventist members around Australia attended. Invited politicians included Bob Brown MP, local Federal Member and a stalwart of Adventism, (who at the last minute withdrew) Bob Baldwin, MHR for Paterson, Steven

O'Doherty, New South Wales Shadow Minister for Education, and Alan Davis, Deputy Mayor for Lake Macquarie. Some historic re-enactment and an acrobatic aircraft display were included in the festivities (*Newcastle Herald,* April 29, 1997).

5. In context to this admission he referred to Ellen White as one in whom every Church member "should rejoice and be thankful that God has granted this Church the prophetic gift." He cited her as the pilot and

> a wonderful help in applying the Bible to our time—the time of the end....
> The inspired writings of Ellen G. White are God's message for a particular people—the remnant church at a particular time; the time of the end.
> (They) are a great help to those who are saved. The written testimonies are not to give us new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed (Pfandl, citing White, in *AR,* November 23, 1996, p. 2).

6. The Valuegenesis survey of 1995 on Australian Adventist youth, revealed that 45% of the youth attended state schools while 46% attended their denominational schools. Of significance was that teachers in SDA schools were perceived to reward their students less (44%), than non-SDA schoolteachers, (53%). But in contrast, more SDA students, (56%) felt that their teachers cared about their work than in the state schools, (39%) (O. Hughes, (ed.) 1993, p. 61).

Part III

TRACING SELECTED SOCIOCULTURAL STANDARDS INDICATIVE OF COLLEGE REVISIONISM TOWARDS A "POST-ELLEN WHITE" ERA

Chapter 11

A new culture transforming focus: An era of significant revisionism

11.1 Analysing the heart of Avondale's sociocultural dilemma

Part III of this dissertation is now at the place where I should focus on the perceived significant reasons and periodicities wherein there was cogent evidence for the desire to effect a general paradigm shift in specific sociocultural standards at Avondale. The Church's global theological conformity had provided a powerful facility in vesting hegemonial control to choose a paradigm for the members of its special community. The College community had been an educative source of prophetic mission and personalised ministry, its identity surviving from the powerful exhortations from its various tiers of management (See Kuhn, 1973, p. 168 for a *raison d'etre* and a discussion by Murphy, 1990, pp. 56-63).

The Church bureaucracy had jealously guarded Avondale, as indeed all its educational institutions for over 80 years, from deviating from the crucial set of ideals and eschatologically based mission beliefs brought by Ellen White in the context of Church faith and practice. They had always feared that her authority and inspired status could be relegated, at worst, from the status of having exhibited signs of a supernatural process and origin, to the realm of being a non-prophet rated phenomenon, downgraded to a similar status of the charismatic Martin Luther and John Wesley. Should this downgrading or delegitimation process find a firm

foundation in the Church, it would be bound to impact on the sociocultural controls of Avondale College. I will now attempt to provide further cogent evidence indicating that such a process is occurring and the underlying reasons why it occurred.

As described earlier, the impact of Ford's part in the growing soteriological emphasis at Avondale and the Church in general could have some profound implications, as a catalyst at least, on mission and administrative process. (See endnote 1) Oliver provided a critique on the Church's management style and focus, suggesting that in 1989 its traditional historical emphasis on eschatology and mission must become more balanced by a soteriological emphasis. Since 1970 and more particularly following 1984, there have been moves for a more equitable basis for mission. A core feature of my dissertation is that during this time, apart from external secular forces and postmodernistic influences, a general paradigm shift in mores was now underway at Avondale College, due significantly to the influence of Ford--his ministry, doctrinal stance, demise--and the ensuing fallout. *It is my proposal that this has been in part due to the destabilization of Ellen White's authority as the inspired interpreter of Scripture and her consequent posthumous surrender to the General Conference administration induced de facto imprimatur, emphasizing an even greater eschatological basis for mission.*

One of the key evidences supporting the paradigm shift was the change in emphasis and the loss of explicit comment on sociocultural standards and statements anchoring Ellen White to College philosophy of education and mission, particularly noticeable since the early 1980s. It is significant to note, I believe, that during 1979, the *Adventist Review* restated that *it was absolutely vital to Adventism's identity to hold the sanctuary doctrine as a landmark truth and that it had been anchored by Ellen White.*

> These landmark doctrines are to be received and held fast, not in a formal fashion but in the light of divine guidance given at the beginning of the movement and made our own. Thus we become part and parcel of the movement, and the beliefs that made the original Seventh-day Adventists make us Seventh-day Adventists too (Land, 1986, p. 224).

This would, in my view, tend to continue the Church's focus on emphasizing implicitly the need for an explicit sociocultural standards-based paradigm and aid in obstructing further the soteriological and ecclesiological direction of Church scholars. I have endeavoured to document for several years around 1980, that various books published by revisionist scholars sent the Church hierarchy into damage control mode.

In return, regular articles appeared in Church magazines, including the *Record,* which produced a defence for the distinctive doctrinal beliefs under attack. These included the Adventist interpretation of the biblical sanctuary, the eschatological interpretation of the Investigative Judgment, and the dangerous attempts to delegitimate Ellen White's status as the inspired author and commentator on the Bible's theology and sociocultural standards. Once having conceded that there was evidence of a reactionary stance by Church administrators I will now endeavour to show that since that period of time, *the College in particular--and the Church in general, following in its wake--has become less strident as an apocalyptic mission-focused and separatist "world rejecting sect" and has concentrated increasingly on a "world transforming" paradigm, less fearful of contamination* (See Wolfgramm, 1983, pp. 10-11).

Ford maintained in 1999 that his theology was "not controversial for most SDA scholars", and claimed that the Investigative Judgment "explanation" was not accepted by early Adventists for thirteen years after the 1844 experience. Ford further maintained that Ellen White had a "pastoral gift" of prophecy differing from the canonical prophets and never claimed infallibility. "She was not to be used as a source of doctrine and that the Bible--and the Bible only--is our source of doctrine" (Ford, *Adventist Today* Forum, December 30, 1999. pt. 2, p.1). Adventist worship had always been culturally loaded to fasten in the minds of the true believers the need to focus on the Investigative Judgment of the Saints. Of prime example were the Church hymnal songs written in 1886 as evidenced by F.E. Belden who wrote "The Judgment is Set" and thereafter left the Church:

> The judgment is set, the books have been opened;
> How shall we stand in that great day
> When every thought, and word, and action,
> God the righteous Judge shall weigh?

and R. F. Cottrell's hymn "O Solemn Thought"

> O solemn Thought! and can it be
> The hour of judgment now is come,
> Which soon must fix our destiny
> And seal the sinner's fearful doom?
> (*The Church Hymnal*, pp. 481, 482).

Part of the cause for the Church's uncertainty over the Adventist interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine's real worth as an authentic centre piece of Scripture can be assigned to Ford who aired his long-held suspicions about this "judgment" belief (See endnote 2). The meetings were ultimately concerned with Ellen White's authority in

matters of Church doctrine, Ford being painfully aware that the central Gospel message of forgiveness, through grace by faith, was not being understood or focused on by many sincere Adventist believers. Adventists feared the Judgment even after they had received Christ and His forgiveness into their lives. Their sins, they were told, were not unconditionally forgiven because of the Church's insistence that the Investigative Judgment, as presented by ministers and administrators, may find them wanting due to some unconfessed sin at some future time. Ford's stance was that Ellen White had been "misused" and "was a creature of her time, as the twelve disciples were of theirs." Inerrancy, therefore, was an inappropriate word to describe her "inspiration". Ford indicated that: "Her writings can be used doctrinally when what she writes is clearly supported by Scripture" (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 9-11). He had long believed that a wrong attitude prevailed, pressed by administrators, that Ellen White's writings, as the last word in doctrinal decisions, overshadowed the Bible (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 58). In quoting from his 991 page defence, "Daniel 8:14, the day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment", Ford stated: "never did Ellen White claim to be a medium of truth that superseded Scripture...We do her wrong, therefore, to make her writings the sovereign interpreter of the Holy Scriptures" (Cottrell, *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 35). Having flagged the general course of argument that significant changes have developed in approach to the authority of Ellen White's writings, I will now explore the revision model as a facilitator in my theme of inquiry into evidences for a general paradigm shift in sociocultural philosophies and standards at Avondale.

11.2 The Wolfgramm Revisionist model

During 1983, Wolfgramm (See endnote 3) completed a thesis titled, "Charismatic Delegitimation of a Sect: Ellen White and Her Critics". It pointed to the evidences that Adventism was now "undergoing conflict and crisis over the status" of Ellen White. The theory behind the Wolfgramm postulate can be derived from the observation that there are four main factions vying for ascendancy in the Church having emerged during the last one hundred years of Adventism, otherwise termed the *Reactionaries*, the *Traditionalists,* the *Revisionists* and the *Rebels*.

The Reactionaries attempt to legitimate Ellen White in varying degrees, as an inspired and unique authority that holds the key to special knowledge for survival of

the Eschaton and character preparation. In particular, the Reactionaries claim more for Ellen White than she suggested for herself, with a tendency to have her overshadow all former inspired knowledge with the belief that everything she wrote was infallible to the word and that following the "blueprint" of her philosophies would create a pure church. The Reactionaries are often less informed administrative personnel or laity who hold to a position of authority that Ellen White might not have imputed to herself. They will often present her in an authoritarian mode. They have difficulty grasping issues leading to fact or natural reality and usually hold to a socially-separationist position.

The Traditionalist position is one that is exhibited ostensibly through the pronouncements from the General Conference and may be defined in concept as not dissimilar to the Reactionaries but more cognisant that her references to "present truth" implied the need to adapt to changing contemporary circumstances. For both groups she was *central* to defining the Church's mission and purpose, its structure and organisation and was also the "co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist church" (Wolfgramm, 1983, p. 4). Wolfgramm defines the Traditionalist as essentially "mainstream normative defenders who subscribe to the leaders' input into the legitimacy of Ellen White" (Wolfgramm, 1983, p. 24). This position is found almost without exception in the administrative type, who was usually not educated past first degree level and who was strongly hegemonially focused and Church loyalty-based.

The Revisionists seek "a partial renovation of her status", attempting to revise her authority downward in a critical and more limited context. While still accepting her as a charismatic figure they will tend to "embrace her at arm's length", depending on the intellectual insight of a "perceived rationalist integrity". Her authority to reveal truth or knowledge is contextualised by the present. The veracity of this knowledge shifts in consonance as dynamic truth. Positions held in the past are continually matched with perceived limited critique or rationalist integrity (Wolfgramm, 1983, pp. 1-4). The Revisionist will see her as a *resource but not the source* or primary authority of truth.

The Rebel hierocrat and layperson seek to decimate and separate the Church from any vestige of Ellen White's credibility or unique authority. They are generally seen to be hostile to the Church and will rarely survive in the Church systems (Wolfgramm, 1983, p. 1). For the purposes of this thesis I have not explored the impacts of this group and am of the opinion, that from the small amount of material surveyed, its

impact on Avondale and the Adventist Church, generally, is minimal. Occasional dismissals of lecturers have occurred at Avondale when they took marked or radical Revisionist positions sometimes bordering on a Rebel stance, but these were rare up until 1977.

Patrick operated on a similar model to Wolfgramm's in 1998, approximating the *Reversionist* stance to Wolfgramm's reactionary model and a *Transformationist model* to parallel Wolfgramm's revisionary category. Patrick defined this to mean that Church members "recognise both the valuable contributions of Ellen White's ministry and the validity of the new research, *then reformulate their ideas to accord with new data*", factoring in her historical and cultural contexts. This would facilitate discovering the "*essence*" of her counsel and method. A consensus should resolve tensions and allow greater progress (Patrick, *Adventist Today*, March-April, 1998, pp. 19-20). The stance by Church administration that Ellen White was only for the Church, is neither ethical nor acceptable according to Patrick. He suggested that to fulfil the Church's mission now, "*Ellen White cannot be secreted from the realities of the contemporary world as a private concern of Seventh-day Adventists.*"

The Patrick antidote for Adventist fundamentalism was perhaps one of the most concise and compelling revisionist constructions yet placed on Ellen White up until the time of this thesis. He stated:

> 1. Ellen White's writings make a striking appeal to timeless truth *even though they are historically conditioned to a significant degree.*
>
> 2. They contain *certain* unique elements *even though they are related in an evident way to both the Adventist and non-Adventist literature of her time.*
>
> 3. 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*
>
> 4. She made copious and effective use of the Bible in her writings *even though she employed Scripture in a variety of ways, not all of which express the meaning and intent of the Bible.*
>
> 5. While she often helped the church develop and express its theology, *her doctrinal understandings underwent both growth and change during her seventy-year ministry.*
>
> 6. She retained a position of control over her literary output, *but her literary assistants and advisers had more than a minor mechanical role in the preparations of her writings for publication.*
>
> 7. Her writings reveal a remarkable literary beauty, *but her use of sources and the*

> *role she assigned her assistants/advisers indicate that this literary excellence should not be used as proof of her divine inspiration* (Patrick, May 18, 1998; emphasis in text).

The Revisionist model is evidenced in the preference for scriptural sourcing in particular the New Testament focus on the redemptive work, life and teachings of Jesus Christ *above* other forms of epistemology. Murdoch, in my opinion, is in case the first outstanding example of a Revisionist at Avondale. In the context of transforming the mission of his students from an eschatologically focused paradigm of personal moral perfectionism to a soteriological-based paradigm of Christ-centred grace he endeavoured to more pointedly submerge the moral imperfections of students and Church members within the grace and forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ. Apart from noting his significantly socially relaxed and more inclusive approach to the outside world, there appears to be little evidence of a desire by Murdoch to revisit the emphasis of many cultural mores maintained at the College prior to World War II.

Magnusson, some twenty years later, again claimed explicitly that soteriological groundwork and with the powerful foundational inroads of Ford was able to apply a more biblical values-focused set of cultural mores, resorting far less to the use of Ellen White for authority and supplanting it with scriptural principles and morals. In this multi-dimensional revisionist description the new intellectualism, in part through science upgrading, seems to have assisted in the evolution of a number of facets in the overall paradigm shift away from the authoritarian use of Ellen White.

Mindful of already stating that it is not my desire to canvass the effects of postmodernity on Avondale at any length I should nevertheless refer briefly here to some comments from social scientist, Dr Anthony Giddens. His 1991 remarks may be seen to bear significant reflection to this thesis, in particular Madigan's outlook, if modernity and its tendency to deify technological information is seen to be a facilitator of "difference, exclusion and marginalisation" (Giddens, 1991, p. 6). The sociological dynamic characteristics of modern institutions appear to have undercut social order in traditional habits and customs. While rejecting the notion of a present postmodernity, modernity, for Giddens (Lyon, 1994), has dismantled a "protective framework of the small community replacing these with much larger impersonal organisations" (Giddens, 1991, p. 33). By appearing to deliver a better life there have been ambiguities and dangers in offering the carrot of emancipation that in

consequence has eluded many. In denying them self-actualisation this emancipatory mirage has brought instead mechanisms of suppression. The former identifications with kinship, loyalty, and traditional religious duty or obligation tended to be positions of "low trust" and relational worth if they were more likely to occur in the presence of managerial or supervisory staff. In contrast are those of "high trust" situations, practised away from supervisory control (Giddens, 1991, p. 19), which has caused the need for personal commitment and the "phenomenon of the internally referential system".

In other words, I would suggest with Giddens, that the new focus of revisionist thought is indicative of a quest for self-identity and authentic meaning based on a relationship, the commitment to it and to others as stakeholders, and to the ultimate "'search for intimacy'" in the wider impersonal universe (Giddens, 1991, pp. 6-7). This trust may be said to have emerged as the essential ingredient of a "crucial generic phenomenon of personality development" in being "directly linked to achieving an early sense of ontological security" (Giddens, 1991, p. 3).

If the Glacier View meetings had been designed to weld trust and rapport between Church administrators and academics, its intentions and the subsequent outcome served to deepen distrust. In the dismissal of Ford, many Adventist scholars had experienced a vicarious pain and now felt censure because of the perceived miscarriage of justice through ambush. This administrative coup, according to Cottrell could have been inspired by hidden agendas experienced by Ford's accusers, either through jealousy of his charismatic incisive dynamism or the belief that he was "an evil genius", through his alleged manipulation of people's hearts to the assurance that their belief in God secured them for a place in heaven (Cottrell, *Spectrum,* vol. 11, no. 2, p. 21). Ford had asked questions that would have encouraged further theological development and biblical exegesis and for this he was castigated, marginalised and by many Church administrators implicitly demonised.

On this matter, Dr Fritz Guy contended in 1983 that: "A church cannot say to its theologians and biblical scholars, any more than a teacher can say to its students, 'You must not ask *that* question. You must ask only *safe* questions, the ones to which we already know the answers'" (Guy, *Spectrum,* vol. 12, no. 1, p. 12; see also Hook, 1997, p. 293). Guy observed that the Church is not seeking "present truth" but only holding on to "former truth" the lack of openness of which is tantamount to holding a royal commission of inquiry, having already pre-arranged its outcome. Guy stated that

insecurity covers up truth, but openness is likely to clarify and not diminish that truth to which a church is committed" (Guy, *Spectrum,* vol. 12, no. 1, p. 12). As late as 1995, Johnsson maintained the hard traditionalist line suggesting that it would be better if independent thinkers, (like Ford) "broke away and started a new denomination. "

> Our people would recognise them for what they are and have nothing to do with them. Or if they renounced the writings of Ellen G. White or rejected the foundational truths of our message, they would be exposed (Johnsson, 1995, pp. 64-5).

Johnsson further expounded his view of Adventism that a person "is directly out of line" if they dissent from any one of the "twenty-seven cardinal teachings" (Twenty-seven Fundamentals) of the Church. He regarded it as an attack on the "Unity of the Body of Christ." and was unequivocal in his implication that Ford had been "attacking the church, its ministry, leadership and conduct..." (Johnsson, 1995, p. 65) He lamented:

> We Adventists used to be people of the book. We used to study for ourselves to "test everything". (I Thessalonians 5:21) We criticized Roman Catholics and other Christians because they permitted a pope, prelate or preacher to do their thinking for them. But now we are Corinthianizing...taking its force from the gross immorality of that city, it meant to throw off all restraint, to go to the dogs in dissolute living (Johnsson, 1995, p. 91).

Ford would question, no doubt, which "book" Johnsson was referring to.

11.3 Ford's revisionism of Ellen White: The new focus on soteriology and its balance with the former emphasis on eschatology

To review what has been said so far about social responsibility and exclusivity, I would propose that the position on social exclusivity and its future as a device for cultural protection was becoming quite clear. Inclusion not exclusion must be the key to the ultimate survival for the College to become a university. But history will not be, and has not been, kind to those who hurried it. In an indirect sense Ford probably propelled the College toward the non-sectarian cultural climate, by pricking the bubble of doctrinal invincibility and theological arrogance cherished so long by a conservative majority of senior Church administrators, operating from a hegemonial context. The drift of ministers out of the Church, mainly for reasons of disenchantment with the Church's administrative handling of matters often allied to

Ford, was caused primarily through an intolerant attitude, either towards people or their ideology, regardless of their positive personal intentions to assist the Church. This view was supported generally by Australian senior Adventist administrator, David C. Currie, who suggested that generally, the style of leadership was lacking in affirmation, and loaded with criticism (Currie, 1997, pp. 48-49).

As already discussed, Ford contended that Ellen White herself had no particularly narrow or rigid views on her role as a bona fide prophet. Both she and husband James White, according to Ford, repudiated the mantle of either possessing or being "the Spirit of Prophecy". Her works, Ford said, must be considered foremost in the context of "her time and place" in history (Ford, February 27, 1998). Yet if Magnusson favoured Ford's soteriological interpretation, he was also clear that an employing Church organisation had the right to discipline its employees if they did not "maintain a positive commitment to the beliefs of the church" and "teach only those things which are in harmony with the fundamental tenets of the SDA Church." On balance, however, Magnusson saw no difficulty in teachers being "able to discover truth for themselves, to love it for its own sake and encourage the same attitudes in students in whom the 'thinkers-not-mere-reflectors' concept is to be encouraged" (Hook, 1997, p. 293).

In an unusually brave move to publicly discuss the Fordian crisis, Coffin offered in the 1989 *Record* "opinion" column, his diagnosis for the shifting Church paradigms of the 1980s, which he described as the "relevance crisis." Suggesting that Ford acted as the trigger for the avalanche of Church unrest, he opined that there had been a combination of external pointers leading up to and exacerbating the event. Coffin's factors included an increase in transport mobility following World War II, television, the encouragement to question everything following the erosion of confidence in authority and distaste for authoritarian style dictatorships and a focus on the individual's rights. These were precipitating ingredients for the Ford showdown with an authoritarian dominance for administrating Ellen White's writings.

Ford, on the other hand, as a charismatic phenomenon in the Avondale and Australian Church scene, was described as having "great intellect" and "an impressive lifestyle regimen". In him, the Church (and I would suggest the College) saw "a ray of hope...a satisfying alternative to what their church life had been." Ford, while able to support in dynamic fashion all the distinctive Church doctrines, namely the heavenly sanctuary interpretation and the legal implications of salvation, was able to render

what other Church leaders could not: "a personal fulfilment and meaningful religious experience" (Coffin, *AR,* October 28, 1989).

The loss of Ford to the Church and the vacuum it caused may well have brought in a new wave of irrelevance for Church youth in particular and many members aged between 25-40 years in general. Reflecting on his own demise, Ford, in 1998 observed that although it was more of a theological issue, he believed the administration generally had taken the easy road out, opining that: "administrative committees in the past have often opted for peace and have sometimes sacrificed truth" (Ford, 1998). The maintenance of unity was paramount with "the pragmatic guiding star for busy and threatened administrators being to keep the ship from rocking...The urgent continually crowds out the important" (Ford *Adventist Today* December 30, 1999, pt. 3, p. 4). On this matter, popular Australian author and sociologist Hugh Mackay reported that the context of the current Church struggle towards theological honesty was a secular phenomenon of the last decade in the twentieth century:

> Because we are living through an Age of Redefinition many of us are suffering from anxiety, stress, and insecurity that are the inevitable consequences of having to adjust to such radical, social, cultural and economic upheaval. The question is How Will We Cope? (Kaldor, et. al., 1994, p. xiii; Mackay, 1993)

Spectrum editor, Roy Branson raised questions regarding the objective outcomes of the Fordian fallout and whether the potentially disastrous event and the subsequent appraisal would cause renewal or apathy. Those who desired to champion the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as the complete act sufficient for salvation found it offensive to add the Investigative Judgment as necessary for salving power, implying that Christ's act of salvation was not completed as a work of redemption but required supplementary arrangements following the 1844 heavenly sanctuary activities. Those not accepting the first proposition of a complete atonement at the cross would ask if the Church was Christian. Those believing in the Investigative Judgment would be asked if they were truly Adventist.

As crystallized by Fritz Guy, the problem focused around "the heart of the Gospel...justification, the *new status* of the Christian; and the other is that the heart of the gospel is sanctification, the *new life* of the Christian" (Guy, *Spectrum*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 9). The authority of Ellen White and her inspired teachings was seen to be under grave threat. In the light of Ellen White's own admission that the Bible alone is "the standard by which all teaching and experience is tested," it placed the Church in an

ambiguous situation (White, 1911b, p. vii; Branson, *Spectrum*, vol. 12, no 1, pp. 2-3). Guy contended that without the 1844 doctrine, which was critical to the self-understanding of the early Sabbath-observing Church pioneers who gave enormous emphasis in relation to other pietistic doctrinal beliefs, the Church would lose its cause for existence (Guy, *Spectrum*, vol. 12, no 1, pp 6-7).

On the other hand, if certain peculiar beliefs were treated as a nineteenth-century phenomenon of necessity to get the Church started and now in the twenty-first century, it realised that it had been a nostalgic and cultural phenomenon peculiar to Adventism, would the cause of the Church with its biblical Sabbath and Second Coming emphasis relatively intact, be ultimately gravely affected? Branson thought not. For him the Church's obsession with its exclusive beliefs was a "besetting sin", a preoccupation with itself causing a loss of power to speak dynamically and to communicate the Gospel to the larger community (Branson, *Spectrum*, vol. 12, no 1, pp. 2-3).

In concluding this segment it seems fair to say that for a range of reasons we have now been confronted with an inchoate but already significant departure from the undergirding of Ellen White's cultural pronouncements. These pronouncements by administrators lacked in part, it would appear, a more lateral and essential understanding of the role of leader and servant. I will attempt to provide further evidence of servant leader in my next segment, focusing on Ellen White's understanding and subsequent observations by contemporary scholars.

11.4 The servanthood management style of Ellen White

Towards the latter years of her life, Ellen White directed the Church to consider more seriously the model of "Servant Leadership" and the delegation of responsibilities, evidenced by Christ's example in Matthew 20:25-28 (See Currie, 1997, p. 12; Greenleaf, 1977). This desire for a conversionist and transformationist (See endnote 4) style was in preference to the more traditionalist style, whereby the servant did what one was told by being able to enter into any dialogue. In her speeches to the General Conference of 1901, she called for a more informed and laterally based delegation of responsibilities. Oliver documented Ellen White's despair over the General Conference authoritarian management styles in 1903 allowing power to be vested exclusively in one or a small group of ministers in their penchant for

centralization and control over the Church. Of General Conference president, A.G. Daniels, she warned that his was not to "exercise kingly power over your brethren" something that Daniells appeared never to fully accept (Oliver, 1989, pp. 201-202, 212). The Church's senior administration seemed to be locked into an inflexible and predetermined policy causing it to be somewhat insensitive to the Church's "diverse cultural and sociological needs" (Oliver, 1989, p. 206). Although Ellen White supported the principles of organisation Oliver postulated that the administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have been resistant to needed changes in organisational decision processes that she advocated albeit with sensitivity and caution. They are concerned that on the basis that the Church's organisation had been given by divine revelation any changes would appear to give the impression of disunity (Oliver, 1989, pp. 327-328).

Oliver also maintained that the "denomination should not be so rigid that it is unable to allow for the adaptation of its structures." It should concentrate not only on its task in mission but as a result of "the paucity of well defined ecclesiological thought in the Church, it should also recognise "those elements of New Testament ecclesiology which address the being of the church." He further suggested that there has arisen a need for a hermeneutic for Ellen White's writings on the basis that there has been a failure to use her writings in a consistent and literary context leading to the "distortion of her primary emphasis". This included the need to recognise that the delegation of authority and the acceptance of diversity are major components in causing "the nature of the church's unity in Christ" to be "unique and indispensable". Oliver remarked:

> Anthropological, cultural and sociological diversity facilitates the growth of the church and the realization of its mission. The church which subordinates the need to recognise diversity to a demand for unity is denying the very means by which it is best equipped to accomplish the task (Oliver, 1989, p. 336).

The notion that unity or strong centralized authority was the exclusive prerequisite for mission, is to deny the scriptural authenticity that both unity and diversity have a place in the facilitation of the Church's goal accomplishment (Oliver, 1989, p. 342).

Folkenberg foreshadowed in 1995 that he considered "leaders must function in an open candid manner that engenders trust" and that it was unacceptable "for those elected to have a dominant voice in selecting those who will consider their positions." ("Folkenberg", *AP*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 4-5). American Sociologist, Caleb Rosado

expanded the dialogue on leadership bearing on the core of the revisionist paradigm. He delineated two models:

* The model of coercion and fear that engenders *servitude* to oneself and destroys trust in others.

* The model of *servanthood,* the freedom to choose for oneself, and to fulfil others as the recipients. This in turn builds trust. Rosado further elucidated:

> Servitude is forced social status, imposed on a person by another, depriving that person of his/her human dignity and the freedom to choose his/her own course of action and life options. Servanthood, on the other hand is a voluntary action. A person of his/her own free will chooses to be of service to others. Human dignity is at stake in servitude—but it is enhanced in servanthood. Jesus condemned servitude but he encouraged servanthood.

Rosado implied astutely that the Church's mission focus has in the past been inward and upward to the beat of the call of the hierarchy based on "a patriarchal understanding of God". He observed that:

> There is something so self-deceiving about self-serving action. It leads one to believe that one is in the right, when at times they may be definitely be in the wrong...
>
> At the heart of all forms of oppression...lies a patriarchal understanding of God, to which appeal is made to legitimise and justify human exploitation and dehumanisation (Rosado, *AP.*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 7).

Raymond Cottrell warned that Church officials who closed their minds usually resorted to legislate for the sake of uniformity to obtain more rigid control. He proposed that such a fortress mentality was particularly evident in Adventism:

> The hierarchical structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—unique among Protestant Churches—contributes in a major way to closed-minded leadership. Aspirations for acceptance and upward mobility within the hierarchy tend to lock its members into a mood of responsibility to the hierarchy rather than an attitude of providing the church at large with genuine servant leadership (Cottrell, *AP.*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 9-11).

Such was the concern over the inefficiency, unprofessionalism and unfairness in the Church leadership structure. By 1995, seven reports were published in *Adventist Professional* in quick succession in Australia relating to the perceived "crisis" in Church management (See *AP.* vol. 7, no. 1 and 2, 1995). Calls were made for leaders to learn more effective networking skills and to be tuned by a quality management programme that respected as its ultimate goal the ownership of mission among the laypersons of the Church (Patrick, *AP.*, vol 7, no. 2). The effects of this increasing social spotlight are further elaborated upon in future chapters where I describe and

trace chronologically, the evolution of a number of selected philosophies of various sociocultural standards or mores at Avondale. If some of these commenced a revision process following World War II the most significant and more comprehensive facet transitions to the overall paradigm shift in the cultural philosophy of Avondale became more evident, as suggested, following Ford's demise.

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1. Apart from Ford's stunning removal, due to certain sensitivities, I have refrained from alluding to other lecturers who have had their contracts terminated.

2. Such meetings were held to listen to points of view by intellectuals often on the cutting edge of Adventism. Following the revelation of his "heresy", he was instructed to take six months leave with full pay to present to the Church's administrators and theologians (mainly administrators) at Glacier View Ranch, near Boulder, Colorado in August 1980.

3. Dr Robert Wolfgramm is a lecturer in sociology at Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

4. Wilson suggests that various responses to the world and its methods of changing culture may be divided roughly into four basic categories: The Conversionist, Revolutionist, Gnostic, and Thaumatalurgical responses. The Conversionist Response is defined as a personal change through *subjective experience* causing a whole new world view to be adopted by the subject with his life being transformed behaviourally through a perceived new inner power from the "heart" by God. This was especially espoused by Salvation Army, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Baptist and other Evangelical Protestant-styled churches which had their closest links with original Protestant orthodoxy and the Wesleyan Methodist movement.

There will be stringent tests for entry into the sect and a tribunal or mechanism for expulsion for non-adherence to its standards. A sect will stand as an ethical protest group against a wider society seen largely to be damned. It has a special interpretation of the history of the world and its own role in world affairs. It will re-evaluate the world in the terms of the sectarian present. Wilson suggests that a sect is a "saved" group of persons or a group seeking to be saved from the world or prevailing situation of society which is deemed evil, either by resurrection, translation or transmigration (Bryan Wilson, "Sect or Denomination: Can Adventism Maintain Its Identity?" *Spectrum*, Spring 1975, pp. 34-43).

Chapter 12

Taboos on attending opera, theatre, dances and other entertainment

12.1 Introduction

Having now formally attempted to lay a model (the Wolfgramm model) down as a basis for determining a general paradigm shift it will be my intention to document some of the more significant changes in College culture, which before the 1970s were powerfully driven by the Church hierarchy using Ellen White as their divine source for their authority. In doing so I preface my discourse with John W. Knight's cogent observation that lifestyle behaviours and the student's concept of his faith, practice and profession will be determined by "his concept of the known and knowable, his definition of reality. This perception of reality in turn shapes his social behaviour" (John W. Knight, 1978, p. 18). Knight further postulated that sociological and sociocultural change, would be, in part, effected within Seventh-day Adventism by the consequences of interaction and conflict between members of the Church with higher education and those persons with lesser skills. It is then feasible, and able to be demonstrated, that those with the greater knowledge will eventually drive the education system to a more denominationally orientated ethos profile and paradigm of sociocultural philosophy. *This is based upon allowing the individual, and not the organisation, to make his own standards judgments driven by Christo-centric values.*

Apart from the effects of the Ford, Rea and Numbers' assault on the inspired veracity of Ellen White, from the evidenced direction of Magnusson, Cox, Ball and more particularly, Madigan, I will endeavour to show further the trend towards a personalised Christian values system, in part effected by those with higher learning backgrounds as advanced by Knight (John W. Knight, 1978, pp. 19-20). This notion is further supported by Wolfgramm, who considered that Ford, with his double doctorates:

> ...smashed forever the authority of the untrained pastor and raised the stakes for people with degrees. It was the end of the Adventist cowboy reactionary minister and the beginning of the professionally trained minister with degrees. Until a credentialed ministry arrived her [Ellen White]works had maintained pole position (Wolfgramm, January 21, 2001).

12.2 Entertainment venues as "schools of depravity"

In considering the array of cultural mores demonstrating a departure from the authoritarian use of Ellen White I will begin by directing our attention to the Avondale students who were steadfastly forbidden in the College's first sixty-odd years to become involved in the evils of attending the movie theatre. This notion was underpinned by Ellen White's belief that evil people frequented such places. These, she stated, were "promiscuous and degraded assemblies"... "a school of depravity'... (White, 1930, p. 399-400) and were "heard from the abyss below" (White, 1943, p. 191). Challenges to this notion began to alarm senior American Church leaders including R.A. Salton in 1920, when he warned in the *Record* that even "to ask such a question" as to attending a theatre should be dismissed as mere rhetoric (Salton, *AR,* May 3, 1920, p. 3). The reaction was a response to the increasing interest by Adventists in the rapidly expanding movie industry. Along with Australian Adventist educators and evangelists he had been acutely aware of Ellen White's uncompromising comments on the theatre:

> *There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imaginations, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements...The only safe course is to shun... the circus, and every questionable place of amusement* (White, vol. 4, 1948, p. 653; emphasis mine).

Transferring this admonition to moving pictures, Salton ranted that there was nothing so "demoralizing and corrupting as the ordinary moving picture show". His erudite source was the anecdotal impressions of a woman who suddenly fell sick in a theatre and was duly reported in *The Christian Herald.* "God showed me" the woman wrote, "the sinfulness of picture palaces, in the first Epistle of St John...'love not the world, neither things that are in the world'" (Salton, *AR,* May 3, 1920, p. 3). Similar sentiments were repeated in the *Record* in 1926 when it was suggested that A.W. Anderson "dealt with this moving picture menace in a very strong way". Anderson, in disregarding content, stated that, "no film was clean enough for an Adventist to see". His reasons were twofold: firstly the effect of its content and secondly the effect that it would have on those weak in faith. Anderson reasoned that if an Adventist attended

an educational film it would be seen as permission to see other picture shows that would "lead down to destruction and death." He opined: "The angel of the Lord will accompany you to the door, but he will not cross the threshold; you enter alone" (Allum, *AR,* April 12, 1926, pp. 1-2). The stand by the Church administration continued to support this notion into the mid-1960s when the invasion of television into private Adventist homes and the use of it *by the Church*, severely rationalised the logic of their argument.

Dancing was also targeted, being condemned in 1932 by Union Conference president and College Board chairman, W.G. Turner. In applying a version of Ellen White's philosophy, he railed:

> So immoral are the associations of the dance, either public or so-called private, that all competent authorities unhesitatingly condemn it...No Seventh-day Adventist can find Christ in the dance hall, and where He cannot be found, His followers cannot enter.

Ellen White was called in for support, describing dancing as " a school of depravity, a fearful curse to society" (Turner, *AR,* June 7, 1932, p. 5). Carlyle B. Haynes' condemnation of "dancing, theatre going, card playing, and competitive sports" in the *Record* during 1934 was on the pretext that the Church was duty bound to "remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set." In this context, Haynes was dogmatically opposed to all forms of drama or the re-creation of events by:

> pageant, play show, performance, or representation of any form whatsoever which requires or employs any acting, make-up, costuming, or taking of character parts, even of biblical and religious incidents scenes and characters (Haynes, *AR,* June 11, 1934, pp. 1-3).

F.M. Wilcox joined in the chorus with the fear that Adventism was marching to a demise socioculturally in parallel with other "great denominations" (Wilcox, *AR,* June 18, 1934, pp.1-2; June 25, 1934, pp. 1-2) to a path of doom in espousing "pleasure parties...where young people assemble together for mere amusement, to engage in cheap, non-sensical talk, and where loud boisterous laughter is to be heard" (Wilcox, *AR,* July 2,9, 1934, pp.1-2). The implication was that fine arts could never be conducted with any freedom on an Adventist campus. Wilcox and Haynes left the reader in little doubt what *their* church would exemplify when they dogmatically asserted: "These have been our standards from the beginning. They are our standards now. They are going to remain our standards" (Haynes, *AR,* June 11, 1934, pp. 1-3).

Wilcox considered that to follow this path of standards in consecration to God, would allow the faithful to "dwell in God's holy hill" (Wilcox, *AR,* June 8, 1936, pp. 1-2). In 1936, the call was made to remove offending dancers and theatregoers from Church membership. In an unsigned cover article, presumably by the editor of the *Record,* Viola Rogers, the view was promoted that dances in homes and theatre attendance were so depraved that "faithful labour be put forth to reclaim such individuals from the errors of their way [and] if this proves unsuccessful they [should] be dismissed from church membership" ("Denominational Standards", *AR,* February 10, 1936, p.1). College Board Chairman, W.G. Turner warned College students of the example of Methodism, which had lost its "old-time militancy". He likened it to being drugged, a warning to College students not to let the Adventist Church suffer a similar fate due to a loss of standards. Here was a recipe for the Church to lose its drive and mission (Turner, *AR,* March 30,1936, pp. 1-2).

Arthur W. Spalding then took up the cudgel on dancing, reasoning that it caused men and women to commit the sin of embrace. Such sensual behaviour was reserved for married couples alone. Permissible dancing, he said, occurred in a biblical context only between the same sex, singly or in groups. Heterosexual dancing was immoral because it evoked "high tension", "eroticism" and "illicit relationships" (Spalding, *AR,* September 22, 1941, p. 2). Having now begun this general course of argument concerning particular sociocultural standards, I will attempt to build the framework for a revisioned, "post Ellen G. White" era. This will be derived from the context of Church administration being unable to discern between that which was "static" or genuine "landmark" biblical values and that which was "dynamic", i.e. the ever changing mores of Church standards, possibly best understood in the context of Ellen White's "present truth" philosophy.

12.3 Evidences of Avondale's higher education effects on the rationalisation of its entertainment standards

John W. Knight, in his 1978 doctoral thesis, confirmed the fears of Adventist administration on the dangers of higher education at non-Adventist tertiary education centres providing a wake-up call for Avondale College in its quest to find university status. His work demonstrated that sociocultural change occurs to a varying extent in Adventists seeking higher education at state operated universities. Within a secular–

humanist inquiring environment they were liable to be influenced by dissonant perceptions to Adventist traditionalist beliefs. Knight observed that lay members in the Church who followed the ideal typical belief paradigm often experienced low levels of inner tension toward their faith and cultural practices. Such members' belief structures were usually "normative, sectarian, fideistic and closed". Knight defined stereotypical or traditional Adventism as being set in a closed social community, slotted into a cosmic understanding and absorbed by its self-contained esoteric knowledge and rhetoric (John W. Knight, 1978, pp. i-ii).

Yet with the convergence of Adventist faith and sociocultural practice toward mainline denominationalism and higher education, the threat to Adventist beliefs at state run universities should now be presumed to be decreasing. Knight reasoned correctly that an Adventist who attended a state-operated university professing "to have the Truth and is confident of its invulnerability, should not fear to have it subjected to severe, even hostile criticism" (John W. Knight, 1978, p. 8).

The Church's sectarian attitudes at Avondale then, having caused a cultural time warp against external cultural mores during its regressive period, with the advent of accreditation and postgraduate degrees, now witnessed significant internal cultural change in entertainment standards. Indeed, the transition in cultural and community standards, of which certainty and security were the ethos of Adventism, has challenged Avondale College to appreciate its more recently conceived wider obligation to becoming aware of society through matters of social justice, social inquiry and respect for individual conscience. The external pressure for this shift is explained in part by Hugh Mackay who suggested that we are now experiencing in the new millennium a sociocultural "rip":

> We are in the midst of a significant culture shift in which the old and new values, old and new attitudes, are finding ways to coexist in a genuine pluralist society where possibly for the first time, we are understanding what diversity really means (Mackay, 1999, p. xviii).

Evidences of this cultural rip I would suggest are not just available to Adventists studying at a state university. This revision in entertainment standards is not hard to find at a contemporary Avondale. The final College social event of 1999, announced in the *Avondale College Church Bulletin* that there would be a "Pre-millennial Pool Party" is evidence that sectarian sociocultural controls appear to no longer dominate College administrative thinking. The above description reads like any other secular

university advertisement for an end of year function but without the alcohol, drugs or cigarettes. The advertisement stated: "Tonight is the last night we will be together. Join us at the pool for an awesome Millennium Pool Party. Live band, Karaoke Competition, Mr and Mrs Avondale, 1999" (*Church Bulletin*, November 13, 1999).

The increasing accommodation towards experiencing and comparing secular standards appeared to stir Avondale Theology graduate and Church youth leader, Ranald Urquart, in 1995. He warned the Church that it was from Scripture alone that the Church youth were now inclined for reasons to find meaning in the Church's sociocultural standards and that they must own and understand the values behind any of the Church's hegemonially-imposed standards, previously nervous to any wider social exposure.

> We have been unable to defend logically and scripturally beliefs deemed to be cultural by our youth. A good example of this is watching movies at the theatres. In times gone by, these places were promoted as dens of iniquity. Now the rhetoric has worn thin because many of those people who condemn the theatre watch the same movie on video six weeks later.
>
> It is little wonder that 90% of our youth see nothing wrong with going to movie theatres. Young people say *what* they watch is more important than *where* they watch it (Urquart, *AR,* May 6, 1995, p. 9).

During the late 1980s the international movie "A Cry in the Dark", otherwise known as "Evil Angels", was visited in the cinema by most Australian Adventists. As a first time experience for some senior Adventists faithful to the Church's traditional standards, the general and pervading understanding among Church and College administration was that *not* to see the Azaria Chamberlain saga portrayed on the screen would be to ignore the most sensational story in the twentieth century about an Adventist couple's struggle against principalities in high places and spiritual darkness. But anecdotal evidence combined with a general consensus among many Church members appears to indicate that this provided a significant entering wedge for conservative Adventists to frequent the cinema more often. There is now no apparent restriction on College students visiting the movie theatre just as there is no comment on what students should see on their television sets. The College does have concerns about students frequenting nightclubs and bars, but it would appear to be difficult to discipline offenders under the climate of a Madigan revisionist and more tolerant atmosphere.

Chapter 13

Literature censorship: Novel notions

13.1 Introduction

Perhaps one of the most dramatic and defining transitions in the shifting paradigm facets of sociocultural behaviour at Avondale can be seen in the external influences and pressures of higher education on literature selection to conform to academic standards of the state. This had been exacerbated originally by the lack of study books, acutely evident at Avondale from its inception, from the Ellen White belief that the Bible was to be the ultimate if not only key to real knowledge. Character development, manual labour, firm purposeful discipline, and an education that developed the whole being through the "harmonious development of the physical, mental and spiritual powers" were designed to prepare students for the "joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come" (White, 1903, p. 13; see endnote 1).

13.2 The course is set

Previously, in 1896, the first texts to be applied for students' instruction were written by American Adventists. They included Bell's grammar books and A.T Jones' three volume set, *Empires of the Bible (Board Minutes*, October 19, 1896, p. 88; Gilson, 1963 p. 101). As the Avondale curriculum took shape, the Ministry and Missionary Department engaged in a course of basic and pragmatically focused training stating that:

> a study of history, interpreted in the light of the Scriptures; language study, including reading, writing grammar, rhetoric and literature; sacred music, including voice culture and vocal music; and hygiene including physiology and simple nursing, will constitute the leading features of this department (Avondale School: *UCR*, January-February 1898, p. 10).

A core and compulsory requirement to pass the course was an understanding of the Bible and its prophetic history, as interpreted by the College Bible teacher. C.B. Hughes outlined his own curriculum sources.

> We are taking up the study of the book of Acts, the "History of the Reformation" (D'Aubigne) and "The Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists" from the standpoint of early Christianity, the Reformation of the sixteenth century and The Third Angel's Message.

In quoting D'Aubigne for support it was his notion that:

> Christianity and the Reformation are the two mightiest revolutions that the world has ever known...Christianity and the Reformation are simply two phases of the one and same great revolution (Hughes, *UCR,* April 1, 1901, p. 11).

Within the minds of many early Adventist educators in Australia were the desires for an effective library. In 1893, when addressing the needs of their first Adventist school in Melbourne, Australian Church education secretary, Edward E. White reminded the constituents that: "One of the indispensable appendages of a good school is a good library" (White, *AR,* July 7, 1967, p. 6). This philosophy, however, was not translated into practice. A request for a College literary society in March 1900 at the only available time of Saturday evenings was met with some astonishing logic. *(ACFM,* March 5, 1900) The faculty reasoned that students involved in the society were "likely to have their minds upon it through the Sabbath and thus [would] become a very undesirable thing" (*ACFM,* March 5, 1900). Such a radical activity would only be acceptable if administrators from the publishing fraternity supervised the agenda, which should be steered toward a Missionary Society project. (*ACFM,* March 5, 1900) It was a predictable decision in the light of another faculty deliberation at the commencement of the year when they decided to monitor students' reading habits in order to eradicate the noxious behaviour of reading "novels, unprofitable books or magazines" (*ACFM,* January 22, 1900). But when the faculty were invited to examine ways of profitably occupying student time during the Sabbath hours they appeared to show little enthusiasm. Faculty meetings appear to have failed to discuss the matter and no report appears to have been published (*ACFM,* April 3, 29, 1900).

Church president and College Board chairman, George Irwin, reinforced the strict standard for literature at the College by publishing in the Church magazine, "Proper Books and Literature", from the *Testimonies* of Ellen White. In the most comprehensive set of guidelines ever written for Avondale, deprecating novels, he wrote a summary of Ellen White's philosophy on literature:

> The reading of evil deeds may lead to committing some wicked deed...
> Love stories and frivolous tales are a curse even if a good moral is taught...
> All novels are pernicious...

> Satan seeks to make crime popular...
> The conscience becomes blunted by reading crime...
> Novels weaken the intellectual and physical powers...
> The Bible and the Bible alone, has given the true lessons upon purity (Irwin, *UCR*, October 1, 1901, p.1).

13.3 Conflict over the College proscription on educational books

The censorial administrative approach by Irwin led Schowe to remark that the progress of the library "during the first ten years must fall under the category of a supplement to the Book of Lamentations" (Schowe, [1951] p. 91). Any books that were transferred from the first Melbourne school were not recorded and the only reference to a library at all was in the School *Calendar* of 1908 where a statement was made that the library had been "enlarged and classified' (Schowe, [1951] p. 91). No direct assistance by the Australasian Union Conference would be granted until 1940, and then only token grants ranging from 50 to 75 pounds per annum until 1950 (Schowe, [1951] p. 91).

By 1913 sectarian-inspired curriculum content had become even more prominent. Students were instructed and tested on Ellen White's two major religio-historical works, *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *The Great Controversy,* a tradition followed for another sixty years, and Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation* which later fell from grace due to its prophetic interpretation growing out of favour. Another affirmation of the inspired status of Ellen White's writings appeared in a 1915 *Australasian Record.* Without citing Ellen White as the "Spirit of Prophecy", the writer, E.E. Andross, implied that his readers would receive enrichment when they accepted her in this light:

> It is God's desire that in everything his children 'be enriched, be made fruitful in "all utterance and in all knowledge." But the measure of our enrichment will be the measure of our acceptance of the gift of prophecy (Andross, *AR,* September 13, 1915, p.1).

By 1916 the Australian Church had all but been indoctrinated into the concept that the spirit of prophecy of Revelation 19:10 was synonymous with the "Spirit of Prophecy" of Ellen White. E. Hilliard wrote of a spiritual "darkness covering the earth and gross darkness the people" (Hilliard, *AR*, October 2, 1916, p. 1) and the efficaciousness in promoting Ellen White's "inspired writings" as the prophetic light

for this era. Notwithstanding this precipitation of Ellen White's powers, the Australasian *Record* published at random, admonition sourced from outside its own institutions and the works of Ellen White. The comment was predominantly conservative Protestant thought of Methodist or Reformation ethos, but the Church also promoted favourable scientific reports on health-related issues to support her philosophy. Championed also was Luther's Reformation stand, strongly endorsed by Ellen White in her compilation, *Gospel Workers*. This initiative to maintain such traditional Protestant standards was no better evidenced than in the *Australasian Record's* publication of Luther's "Qualifications for Ministers". In quoting his philosophy the writer suggested that Adventist gospel workers should

> teach plainly and in order...have a good head...good power of language...a good voice...a good memory...know when to stop....be sure of what he means to say...study diligently...be ready to stake body and soul, goods and reputation on its truth...suffer himself to be vexed and criticized by every one.

The editor of the *Record* invited members to purchase books on ministry from *any Methodist bookshop* ("Gospel Workers..." *AR,* October 4, 1916, p. 6). Up until this point Avondale education could not be unreasonably described as offering conservative Protestant sociocultural standards, but with the exception of literature, due to its increasing focus and digestion of Ellen White's growing number of publications from the Church's American publishing house.

The 1921 College Calendar (*Annual Announcements*) advertised grammar, speech and writing techniques in its curriculum. Yet, under "English language and composition", non-church literature, "never mind how high in literary merit", (1921 *AMC. AA*) would be excluded from the teaching curriculum. Fiction, stated Ellen White, emanated from "polluted streams" of men's sinful thought (White 1903, p. 188). She further expanded: "Let them see the sinfulness of exalting such men as Shakespeare, calling the attention to those who did not in their lives honour God or represent Christ" (White, 1946, p. 172).

In the same year, the College library underwent a formal classification using the Dewey system with the first thousand books achieved in July and the second thousand in 1926 (Schowe [1951] p. 92). Greenaway reminded the College and its library, as well as the Australian Church, in 1930, of its responsibilities to follow Ellen White's guidelines regarding the exclusion of books containing:

> False science,
> Infidel authors,

High and low class fiction,
History that loses sight of God and praises men,
Myths, fairy tales and fictitious stories
The use of rewards and prizes
Training in customs and amusements of worldly society
Greek and Latin classics

A passionate Greenaway concluded his four part front page series in the *Record* with the words: "Have we not cause to 'praise Him for such a good and perfect gift as this divine education system'?" (Greenaway, *AR,* August 4, 1930, p. 1). Schowe was less ecstatic. He observed that "no attempt was made for reading room arrangements (or browsage) until 1945" (Schowe, [1951] p. 92).

13.4 The installation of secular literature is stymied by Church administration policy

Library books began to trickle in during the Murdoch era. College Bible lecturer, Alfred F.J. Kranz brought 30 pounds worth of American reference books in 1948 (*AMCBM,* October 26, 1948). Another fifty pounds was allocated to new books in 1949 (*AMCBM,* February 28, 1949). McDowell sought a radical 410 pounds for reference education books in the same year to drastically improve the impoverished showing of library resources (*AMCBM,* July 4, 1949). It heralded the shift of emphasis from the importance of character development in education, previously maintained by the College in its first 50 years, to a more serious commitment to academic development. In a science upgrade the need for reference books and a full-time qualified librarian became glaringly apparent (McDowell, *AR*, August 28, 1950, p. 6). Kranz was appointed the new librarian following Schowe in 1949 and he made an impassioned plea for donations to purchase more books. But the estimated 4000 books that had accumulated (the College had alleged there were 6000) (Hook, 1997, p. 199) were judged to have been largely out of date.

During 1950, College pedagogy lecturer, Dr Lionel Turner added his weight for a new College library, describing the disadvantages that would be experienced by Adventist ministers when confronted with other denominational clergy with superior education. Optimistic that Avondale might emerge into contention for university status in the 1950s, Turner rightly believed that the library "would be hopelessly inadequate to support a university programme", adding that "...it would be quite impossible to do university work or work of a genuine College standard without a

greatly enriched library" (Turner, *AR*, July 10, 1952, p. 2). This continuing appalling lack of books for student use into the 1960s was an evidence of the Church administration's lack of focus, social paranoia and continuing emphasis on an apocalyptic ethos in scholarship (Hook, 1997, p. 199).

The early part of this new decade saw the College emerging towards an era of religious enlightenment and physical expansion. In his critique of the College's educational policy and relevance, Godfrey contended that generally the ministerial course "adequately prepared Seventh-day Adventists in Adventist theology and ministry..." But he was critical of the "somewhat educationally, politically and theologically naive" status of the graduates (See endnote 2). Avondale's relatively effective protection of its own religious culture in the curriculum allowed no Australian history content, general sociology or the sociology of religion. The neglect in these areas, Godfrey claimed, "disadvantaged" Avondale students and would cause them to: "experience a measure of difficulty in fully understanding the socio-religious, political and philosophical climate into which they would be placed as church workers" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 11). In Godfrey's insistence that Adventism has remained a sect despite seven or more generations of existence, he listed in some detail the theological diet on which the young Avondale ministerial student of the 1960s was fed, describing it as a "sectarian program mixed unevenly with elements of evangelical and conservative Protestantism" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 8). This philosophy of interpretation assisted in presenting "the hand of God in history" peculiar for Adventist purposes (See endnote 3). The latest phase, since about 1970, described as a period of "historical scholarship" by Church historians, placed an interpretation of Adventist history in the mainstream of historical scholarship debate. It was now increasingly open to non-Adventist scholars' analysis as a "useful" and "credible" research tool for the purpose of utilizing "the best canons of historical scholarship to their religious heritage" (Graybill, *Spectrum*, vol. 7, no. 4, p. 46).

Roger Harder, College Library catalogue controller, recalled that as late as 1976 there was a paucity of classic books stocked by the library.

> I noticed in the late 1970s that there were critical works on a variety of authors but few of their actual works. The Shakespeare collection was strong, as were a few other prominent authors, but for others it was very much one sided. For instance you could read about George Eliot but you may not have found any of her works. Some books regarded as too hot or explicit like some on sex education had an "X" marked on the spine. Books and documents by persons who were no longer Adventists were reclassified in the Division Heritage Room under a special category (Harder, 2001).

The notion that all secular works were unacceptable to Ellen White is arguable. She emphasized that there should be clear relationship between acquiring knowledge and its Christian outcomes. On the education of youth with this theme in mind, Ellen White stated:

> We should not restrict the education to which God has set no limit. But our attainments will avail nothing if not put to use for the honour of God and the good of humanity. Unless our knowledge is a stepping-stone to the accomplishment of the highest purposes, it is worthless (White, 1923a, p. 541).

There is a perception in the 1990s, according to Oliver, that superficiality and the over-emphasis of Church standards in the past are of very deep concern for many Adventist young people. Australian youth hold some intense concerns that the Church does not credit them with the ability to be able to think for ones self (Oliver, 1997b). This is alarming in the light of Ellen White's instruction that the Church should "develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts" (White, 1903, p.17).

This view is not peculiar to Adventism, however. Niebuhr alluded to the Christian's accountability for his education in his support for the view that a Christian's obligations lie with his achievements. He stated:

> The conservation, selection and conversion of cultural achievements is not only a fact; it is also a morally inescapable requirement...If he [the Christian] is to confess Jesus before men, he must do so by means of words and ideas derived from culture (Niebuhr, 1951, p. 70).

Adventists, in expecting others to be convinced of the "superiority of their ideas" from their imparting of the Adventist message in a vacuum from an understanding of the larger cultural picture of the world, are asking for acceptance from the vantage of a very narrow standpoint in life. Niebuhr proposed that the balance for Christianity would be seen in the translation of ideas of a culture into Christian worldview terminology. The education of an Adventist ministry, that does not allow them to negotiate convincingly the values of Adventist belief and culture in practice, falls short in equipping them to present a relevant and enduring Gospel. Adding weight to this revisionist philosophy, George Knight has contended that while Adventist education should not be expected to create experts in all fields of knowledge from a non-Christian perspective, the onus remains for it to deliver a "culturally literate" Christian. While not basing their understanding of Christianity on contemporary cultural trends, they "*should be able to present the Gospel in relation to the scientific*

and literary background to the people with whom they are seeking to communicate" (George Knight, 1985, pp. 120-121; emphasis mine).

13.5 A commitment to academic excellence in literature over sectarian standards for character development

Consistent with this thrust toward a revisionist status in literature we will now focus further in this present segment on the task of demonstrating even more compelling evidence for the evolution of a paradigm shift in the College's philosophy of literature. During 1985, retired Church administrator and College lecturer, W.A Townend, boasted for the first time that Avondale had acquired "a big academic heart". The evidence given to support a Church newspaper headline was the complement of 70,000 books in its long-overdue expanded library. Writing for the *Record* he notioned: "There probably is no other church-related tertiary level school in Australia with a library bigger than Avondale's" (Townend, *AR,* June 29, 1985, p. 10). In this statement lay the implication that Adventist eschatology, as a determinant for the Adventist apprehension of time, was now being revised to allow students to imbibe and process a new imperative, accelerated by higher education and propelled by secularism and scientism. In the name of academic excellence students were sanctioned to inquire into literature of a more empirical and/or fictitious nature. Once we concede that this had indeed occurred at Avondale, and with further supporting evidence in this chapter, we may argue, quite compellingly for a facet of the paradigm shift in the Church's revisionary perception of what "true" and "proper" education had become. The influence of higher education from external secular pressure had now impacted on the former paramount character development paradigm to the extent that academic performance was now the more preferred standard for excellence.

As previously evidenced at the commencement of this chapter, there is no doubt that Ellen White saw Adventism and novel reading as incompatible with the ideology of the remnant Adventist Church. She appeared unequivocal in this call. In comparing fiction to alcohol the remedy for both was total abstinence. This included fiction which contained "no suggestion of impurity and which may be intended to teach excellent principles". Such works, especially for young students "excite the imagination and give rise to a train of thought which is full of danger" (See Bull and Lockhart, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 18; White, 1905, pp. 445-456).

Postmodernism was described in 1985 by Johnsson as an age of selfishness, where "feelings were everything", offering only "a sea of meaninglessness". The two key bastions that could shut out this evil and usher in Christ-like holiness, wrote Johnsson, were the Adventist concept of the sanctuary in heaven and the Adventist health message of vegetarianism (Johnsson, *AR,* August 24, 1985). To defend the Traditionalist standards paradigm he continued to focus on the perfectionist theme that Christ was our *example* in contrast to the newer soteriological emphasis that Christ was our *saviour.* This emphasis was maintained by the General Conference in its emphasis of the Church as being primarily a "prophetic movement" (Christo, *AR,* August 31, 1985).

As late as 1988, an Australian Union Conference education director elect, Dr. John G. Hammond, wrote in the *Record* that modernism and its total rejection of the supernatural elements in Christianity, by the replacement of the authority of man, had "legitimised errant lifestyles and practices." The Adventist student who sought training at state universities might be described as "foolish as a frog". He warned: "Christians who claim advantages that may be gained in a non-Christian educational setting must realise the eternal peril their words may generate (Hammond, *AR,* March 19, 1988). Hammond's understudy, Phil Hann, at the time studying for a MEd at a state university, fired a salvo against the more authoritarian-style advice. Writing in the same Church paper, Hann asked if the Adventist Church's leadership with its "conservative religiosity" had left a negative mark on youth in a postmodern orientated society:

> What happens, then, when we encourage an authoritarian belief system? Authoritarianism is based on domination and power belonging to a select group. It results in defensiveness to all who are different. The individual is governed not by an internalised belief system but by the demands of an external authority (Hann, *AR,* March 19, 1988).

In direct contrast to Johnsson's lament and Hann's warning came explicit challenges from within the Church. The traditional grounds for defence were now either silent or more dove-like in citing Ellen White as their inspired authority. Coffin wrote in his *Record* editorial that any lament over the decline of Adventist standards should not necessarily be connected with a decline in the Church's spirituality. Laying the ground for Madigan's revisioning statements he discerned the notion of static in contrast with dynamic truth when he argued for a set of *principles* over *standards* to determine behaviour. He proposed:

> *Standards are largely subjective. They're somewhat arbitrary. And they change over time...the principle behind the standard, on the other hand, is far more objective. All Scripture usually establishes such principles more clearly...*
>
> *I believe we shouldn't give church members, particularly our youth, a comprehensive list of 'dos' and 'don'ts. Rather we should equip them to make decisions about the rightness or wrongness of whatever decision they might have to face—decisions based on Bible principles* (Coffin, *AR,* April 16, 1988; emphasis mine).

On the basis of comments emanating from middle management workers and the former evidence from Scragg, as the College Board Chairman, I would suggest that his leadership during the mid-eighties to early nineties, in maintaining certain controls on the content of the flagship paper, *Record*, and in tandem with his specialist knowledge and ultimate veto on Church media remarks, facilitated an approval and perhaps promotion to a new legitimacy for Adventist sociocultural behaviour as dynamic "truth" among constituents and College administration alike. The question should therefore be asked: Why was there *now* no apparent assent to the authority of Ellen White during his term as presidency on such a vital issue as Church standards? Was she relegated from being the source of truth to being a resource among other valued writers? Was there already a general paradigm shift evident when it was to biblical values, exclusively, that certain members of the Church hierarchy were explicitly anchoring their authority?

Believing that Adventist students who attended secular universities were becoming more conservative, assistant editor of the *Record*, Gary Krause, wrote in 1988 that students should be allowed to exercise their right to adopt a spirit of inquiry when preparing at secular universities. To compete in the marketplace of ideas was essential for Adventist health. (Krause, *AR,* July 23, 1988). Sensing the constant pressure that Adventists were still talking to themselves and that they were only now coming through a public relations trial by media, (See endnote 4) that polarised the Australian nation, Scragg asked the constituents to join the Church administration in "finding more effective ways of reaching our secular societies" (Scragg,", *AR,* October 22, 1988).

Some ten years later, a more explicit revisionist challenge was issued from the College Humanities Faculty--that the perceived threat emanating from postmodernity and secularism is but a challenge for important truths to be learned. Recent secular

ideas were not all wrong. Senior lecturer in Media Studies at Avondale College, Dr Daniel Reynaud postulated in Avondale's in-house academic magazine:

> All truth is God's truth even when it comes wrapped in secular philosophies complete with human mistakes. It would be reckless and unwise of us to discard postmodernism entirely without giving it a fair hearing lest we discard some gems with the dross (Reynaud, 2000, vol. 2, no.1, p. 1).

Reynaud proposed that this cultural way of thinking was more acceptable to the youth and younger generations of Adventism. He chided traditional Adventists who had dwelt on the word of Ellen White as infallible rather than recognising that the authenticity of her work lay in her *thought*s rather than her words. Reynaud quipped: "That Ellen White and her son W.C. White denied verbal inspiration of either her writings or the Bible seems to have escaped many Adventists" (Reynaud, 2000, vol 2, no. 1, p. 2). Such a view would almost absolve any Adventist student from feeling guilty about not abiding strenuously by most of her sociocultural standards, once so emphatically stated by Church administrators as a message direct from the throne of God.

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1. It was her stated position that "in the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one" (White, 1903, p. 30). Furthermore, the administration's view that academic or degree recognition by the state was undesirable would afflict Avondale early in the twentieth century and set back its education standards for many following decades. Such a philosophy would hark back to Ellen White's momentous speech, delivered on July 22, 1899, when she stated: "Our school is not to pattern after any school that has been established in America, or after any school that has been established in this country" (White, 1943, p. 374).

2 Little was taught of the ideologies and philosophies of the outstanding recent theologians, Tillich, Barth, Kierkegaard, or Niebuhr. Godfrey suggested that the Bachelor of Arts in Theology would have been better named "Bachelor of Arts in Seventh-day Adventist Religion".

3. According to Land, the Church was not then particularly cognisant of a careful documentary examination of secular history. As an Adventist historian he interpreted the Bible to be a book that presented God as an immanent *and* transcendent being. This would preclude the validity of the philosophy from early Adventists who believed in God's "intervention" in history in the context of providence and miracle, to mean that: "there would be no history at all without God's active involvement." Land asserted that the problem for Adventists has to "identify specific events in which God has intervened" (Land, *Spectrum*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 2-3). He further expanded the Adventist horizon of interpreting history in the light of the validity of moral judgment by Christians as a suitable standard from which an instrument can be used to measure human error:

> It should be recognised that cultural and social developments are just as important as political ones...The Adventist historian will probably be interested in what happens to man's concepts of himself and his world as a result of both accepting and departing from Christian beliefs, and how his beliefs affect his actions.

The tension between Ellen White's interpretation of history, and mainstream historical scholarship debate today was not seen as an obvious problem for the genre and society of her time. Land sees her call, for "a theological approach to history" as "legitimate" in that it required "a different level of explanation." As for the contemporary Adventist historian, Land suggested he should investigate the relationship of his "propositions" on the basis that "unique insights" can advance "a professional, scholarly approach to history" maintaining the bona fides of Ellen White's theological authority (Land, *Spectrum*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 5-6; see also, Eva, *Ministry* October 2000, pp. 4, 29; Booth, Ministry, October 2000, pp. 5-7; *Ministry* is endorsed by the General Conference).

4. Michael and Lindy Chamberlain had finally been exonerated after an eight-year protracted legal battle over allegations that she took the life her child at Ayers Rock, and that a dingo was not responsible (For a concise media critique of the sociological impacts on the Church and society, see *Spectrum* vol. 19, no.3, pp. 11-21).

Chapter 14

Vain dress, plain dress, cosmetics and jewellery

14.1 Plain and vain dress during Ellen White's era

In this chapter I shall examine another identifiable criterion, that of dress and adornment mores within Adventist culture, again so vigorously adhered to in the first seventy years of College life but which, it is argued, has all but been revised by the end of the twentieth century. In prefacing my remarks I refer to the work of Giddens, in linking psychological and sociological behaviours. He suggested that derived from the identity of the self, in tension with the corporate institutionalised church or college structure, were regimes based on eating, fasting and other ascetic deprivations, which may include regimes based on the visible appearance of the body, often due to religious values or the concern about over indulgence. Likewise, self-adornment of the surfaces of the body was likely to reflect personality in demeanour and sensuality (Giddens, 1991, p. 99). He described dress as "a means of self display, but (which) also relates directly to concealment/revelation in respect of personal biographies; it connects convention to basic aspects of identity" (Giddens, 1991, p. 62).

Dress criteria may be first traced in Adventism to a series of resolutions on dress passed in 1866 in which it was asserted that one's clothing should be "scrupulously plain". The reason for such a Church law, according to George Knight, was enacted:

> [out] of the present corrupt and corrupting states of the world, and the shameful extremes to which pride and fashion are leading their votaries, and the danger of some among us, especially the young, being contaminated by the influence and example of the world around them (George Knight, 1995 p. 110).

The obsession with outward adornment, including feathers, flowers or anything different to the plain bonnet, can probably be traced back to a radical wing of the Protestant Reformation, including the sixteenth century Anabaptists. Land noted that this group of earnest believers "opposed jewellery, hair ribbons and other accessories." Both the Quakers and the Puritans also established a penchant for "plain tradition" by opposing ornaments made of gold, silver, feathers, ribbons and lace. But Methodism, accepting my analysis in chapter one, was probably the strongest and most direct sociocultural influence on Adventism, earlier "condemned jewellery,

including the wedding ring, as well as ruffles, feathers and corsets (Land, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 42). Consistent in both was the view that these adornments were exhibited by "a vain heart and as such are not to be tolerated in any of our members" (George Knight, 1995, p. 110). However, for Ellen White, the style of clothing was not just a fashion issue. It was also perceived as affecting good health and one's economy. (Land, *Spectrum*, vol 20, no. 2, p. 43) Further evidence of the perceived need for plain dress was confirmed in early 1900, when the College faculty voted to study carefully Ellen White's counsel on habits in dress in relation to "health and good taste" (*ACFM,* January 22, 1900).

Other "anti-scriptural" adornments according to Ellen White not only included the wearing of gold, silver, pearl, rubber and human hair, but the adornment of expensive homes and expensive furniture (Land, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 43). There appeared to be a general silence from Church administration over the admonition on homes and furniture following her death although several references exist in Ellen White's writings (See endnote 1 citing Land, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 48). Dress trimmings were also condemned along with fancy hairstyles (George Knight, 1995, p.110). One of the often used passages in Ellen White to relieve married people of all unnecessary jewellery was: "...We need not wear the sign, for we are not untrue to our marriage vow...Not one penny [should be] spent for a circlet of gold to testify we are married" (White, 1885, vol. 1, p. 601).

By 1898, however, Ellen White appeared to be conceptualising her admonition from the standpoint of a spiritual conscience motivated from the heart of the individual. In aligning such behaviour in preparation for the "crisis" and being able to "stand" when "put to the test", she wrote in September, 1898:

> Do we confess Him (Christ) in our dress, adorning ourselves with plain and modest apparel?...There is no use in telling you that you must not wear this or that, for if the love of these vain things is in your heart, your laying off your adornments will only be like cutting the foliage off a tree...You must have a conscience of you own (White, *UCR,* September 15, 1898, p. 98).

The Avondale sewing department teacher, B.M. Harlow, added her weight to the significance of outward apparel. She said that even very small children including boys should be encouraged to sew, including hemming and buttonholing. She stated unequivocally: "When we lose taste for order and neatness in dress we virtually leave the truth..." (*UCR,* July 12, 1899, p. 16). In her mind possibly, was knowledge of Ellen White's focus on the relation of true religion, to external appearances and "the

misuse of any of our powers...The sum and substance of true religion is to own and continually acknowledge by words, by dress, by deportment, our relationship to God" (*UCR,* July 24, 1899, p. 8). In the same month it was resolved at senior Australian Church level that a "Dress Reform Bureau" must be set up to "promote proper and healthful dressing". To rationalise this imposition in the name of education, the "manufacture and sale of healthful clothing and patterns" was advocated (*UCR,* July 24, 1899, p. 16).

This was by no means a sectarian edict exclusive to Avondale at this time. The *Free Methodist* was quoted in a 1901 *Union Conference Record* edition (in a rare publication of another church's viewpoint) criticizing the vanity of inappropriate clothing. On the matter of "outward adorning", the Methodist newspaper suggested that:

> Mr Wesley's words will never be out of date...Worldliness gets into the church by comparatively slow degrees...It begins by putting on just a little. Just enough to take the cross off...just enough to put the curse of God on... ("Vain Dress", *UCR,* April 1, 1901, p. 6).

Methodist practice was again cited in 1912 for the "time in Methodism when a member of that church could be known by the plainness of his dress, which stood in contrast to that worn by professors of religion of other churches." But on this occasion the young men were named as offenders in the parading of:

> gold watch guards and chains, fancy waistcoats, flashy ties and socks, in fact change with every change of fashion, when the Lord beseeches us "to not be conformed [fashion according to the R.V.] to the world" (Fulton, *AR,* November 25, 1912; see endnote 1).

The dress problem was highlighted again in 1927 with a reminder from a reprint of Ellen White's writings stating: "No Education can be complete that does not teach right principles of dress... Fashion is a mistress that rules with an iron hand... A person's character is judged by his style of dress." (White, *AR,* April 4, 1927, p. 1) But if there was doubt that Seventh-day Adventism was at the forefront of dress reform the Church had sourced other allies who supported it in its concerns. The *Record* in quoting from an unnamed "common fashion magazine", condemned mothers as "a pretty poor failure" who allowed their daughters to purchase:

> dresses so thin and transparent as to be absolutely indecent with sleeves so short and necks so low as to transcend the lines of decency, and a skirt so tight that the figure is displayed at every step with stockings of the thinnest transparent silk...
>
> There is in fact no mirror that so clearly reveals the character as a woman's dress. It

is unerring and absolutely self-revealing... (Smith, *AR,* October 17, 1927, p. 2).

A *Sydney Morning Herald* article in 1929, written by Roman Catholic Archbishop Dr Kelly, to be strictly enforced in response to "the command of the Pope", by "the religious teachers of Roman Catholic girls", was reprinted in the *Record* under the title: "Modern Dress: Rules for Girls". Indeed, much of the admonition was more direct and specific than anything written by Ellen White (See endnote 2).

Kelly advocated rules for girls from four to ten years, to wear dresses to the knee and sleeves to the elbow: girls ten to fourteen years, to wear dresses two inches below the knee; and girls over fourteen to wear dresses "at least four inches below the knee when sitting." Flesh was not to be seen more than "two inches below the pit of the throat" and "V" necks were banned. He laid down rules for bathing costumes to be two-piece neck to knee and banned photographs of females while in their costumes. Biblical authority was offered from Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." Kelly further referred to the "deplorable evil of immodest fashions in dress, which under evil inspiration, are calculated to arouse the worst passions and lead to sin" (*Sydney Morning Herald,* in AR, September 30, 1929, p. 6). This article may have been the catalyst for the Avondale College Board to decree some changes to the dress policy in order that girls' hair "should be simply dressed avoiding extreme fashions" and that their black dresses should be seen to be "covering at least the major portion of the calves" (*AMCBM,* December 4, 1929).

14.2 The post-World War 2 revolution

Dress codes remained strict for male students in the summer months into the 1940s, with the call for them to observe the rule to wear coats "to all exercises of the college...including classes and meals" (*AMCFM,* October 16, 1940). Substantial relief came in summer 1942 with the faculty allowing boys to work in singlets for the first time, but still not in shorts. Wearing coats to classes or meetings was no longer mandatory with the exception of weekend services. In lieu of the coat, a khaki shirt with a necktie was deemed acceptable (*AMCFM,* October 21, 1942).

In the meantime the College girls were experiencing increasing discomfort in the

summer months from the enforced wearing of stockings. During summer of 1942 they sent a petition asking for relief from this unnatural encumbrance--and to "go without stockings". The College appeared to dismiss the underlying reason for the change in dress code and instead investigated the availability and price of the offending articles. (*AMCFM,* February 10, 1942) Eight months later, the girls were given permission to dress without them, with the exception of classes, meals and meetings (*AMCFM,* October 21, 1942).

In the same year, the young men were instructed to refrain from the "wearing of shirts unbuttoned down the front" (*AMCFM,* November 11, 1942). A new dress code including a College blazer and badge were to be considered. (*AMCFM,* October 4, 1944) Three years later, College students were demonstrating unusual spirit in petitioning the College to repeal the earlier draconian laws of dress. The faculty and Board were unrelenting to student concerns, insisting that the culture of the College must be upheld; and this included "no letting down of standards in the matter of attire" (*AMCFM,* March 26, 1945). Unrest continued, to the extent that the faculty decided to allow a question box to answer student queries (*AMCFM,* April 24, 1945), and permitted students once a month to sit at the dining table with their choice of friend (*AMCFM,* May 7, 1945).

Of the American college scene, Burtchaell observed that in the post-war era a heavy emphasis remained on the moral decorum of dress at Azusa. For example *The Student Handbook of Azusa College* of 1947-8 stated that clothing at the swimming pool had to be beyond reproach. Bathrobes were to be worn to and from the pool. No one should swim alone. There was to be no audience of the same sex. Two-piece bathing suits were not acceptable. On-campus affection between married couples was inappropriate on the basis that visitors would not know the context of their display (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 755).

The obsession with sexual vices continued from the General Conference with an attack on "promiscuous bathing", where "boys and girls" were allowed to bathe in the same areas, and where "even greater evils attend the popular bathing resorts." Quoting from the *Moody Monthly,* Wilcox found support for his dire warning:

> The underworld never played a more successful game at lowering the ideals and conduct of young people than when it got the opposite sexes mingling together in the present styles of bathing suits... "God says, 'I will that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel.' Present bathing suits are most immodest, and how dare Christian people, then take up with so evil a practice, seeing how strongly God condemns it? How can we condemn nudism as evil and indecent when our own young people are

> half nude and more? This is one of the most dangerous and most sinful conditions that have ever blinded the eyes of good people. In the name of all that is pure and good, let's quit"(Wilcox, *AR,* November 20, 1939, p. 1).

Attracting the *Record* editor's ire in 1946 was the Church members' increasing use of wearing lipstick, described as a sure "mark of apostasy". This behaviour demanded, in her opinion, "a very definite denunciation to the persistent and repulsive practice" (Editor, *AR,* August 19, 1946, p. 2). For veteran Australian Church missionary, A.G. Stewart, "the crowning grace of a woman is her modesty," and vividly coloured lips neutralized the message of the Gospel (Stewart, *AR,* June 6, 1950, p. 2). In staking Adventist identity to sociocultural mores, the *Record* editor remonstrated with his fellow Australian members in 1952, asking "Are We As Seventh-day Adventists Losing Our Identity?"

> The discarding of worldly attire, gaudy apparel, unnecessary jewellery, with the accompanying 'makeup', lipstick, and fingernail painting, definitely help to confirm that whilst we are in the world, we are not of the world.

The standard set was an icon signifying the proudly displayed outward sociocultural hallmarks of a "peculiar people". The fear gripping leading Church administrators and magazine editors was that dismantling any of the standards was equated virtually with the dissolution of the organised Church (Editor, *AR,* July 21, 1952, p. 1).

By 1955 the Australian Church administration appeared to be recognising the losing battle to maintain certain standards in dress. If self-denial was the continuing Christian duty, the question now being asked by members of the College Board was "...if customs change, where shall we draw the line? The question is how far and how much?" (Australasian Division Committee, *AR,* October 30, 1955, p. 13) The President of the College Board, F.G. Clifford, responded by publishing a 22-point statement outlining the Church's doctrinal position (See Clifford, *AR,* November 14, 1955, pp. 1-2).

Standards for deportment remained strict at College in 1965. Indeed, it could be argued that the line drawn between the dress codes of secular youth and Avondale was visibly distinct. Fad hairstyles and tight clothes were banned. In the use of cosmetics the student was instructed:

> Every Christian girl realises that the use of rouge, lipstick, eyebrow pencils and coloured nail polish or other objectionable cosmetics cheapen a young person in the opinion of refined and cultured Christian people. They are not worn.

> ...Jewellery, including rings, bracelets, earrings and necklaces are not worn (*Avondale Student Handbook* (nd) 1965, pp. 36-38).

A new approach to jewellery became evident by the mid-1960s. Former College ministerial student and revered Australian evangelist, George Burnside, recognised that although standards of dress and ornamentation might change "the principles of right conduct" remained the same (Burnside, *AR,* June 8, 1964, p. 10). However, W.G. Turner delivered a broadside to Adventist women who, he claimed, were "lowering standards and raising hemlines" (Turner, *AR,* April 11, 1966, p. 14). Avondale was moving through a period where all eyes were on women's legs and the amount of visible flesh.

The advent of the mini-skirt in the mid-1960s brought added pressure on the College to prevent the exposure of more female flesh. Advice was given to the Church that due to fashion's decrease in hemlines, more girls' clothes should be made at home. *Record* writer and American Adventist college lecturer, Joe Engelkemier, informed Australian Adventists that: "we are living in a Babylonian society perhaps more Babylonian than Babylon itself" (Engelkemier, *AR,* July 29, 1968, p. 7) and based on the claim that the Bible "forbid(s) 'display of the body'", women in the Church should cover up (Engelkemier, *AR,* September 23, 1968, p. 13). Perhaps surprisingly, in the College's quest to remove from view all female flesh, a plea from female students to allow them to wear slacks rather than skirts while mountain hiking, was refused by the College Board as late as 1967 (*ACBM,* June 8, 1967; see endnote 3).

14.3 The revision of apparel codes and the appeal to personal Bible-based values

During 1973, General Conference delegates, perceiving that they must shore up the reasons for maintaining dress and adornment standards, issued the following proclamation, now tagging it with a New Testament exhortation:

> Your beauty should reside, not in outward adornment—the braiding of the hair or jewellery, or dress—but in the inmost centre of your being with its imperishable ornament, a gentle quiet spirit, which is of high value in the sight of God.

The concession was made by the Church, which stated that, "we acknowledge that the quality of an individual's Christianity cannot be gauged solely by external criteria." Furthermore, the Church broadened its net by seeking its members to continue the

application of pietistic values through "self denial, economy, and simplicity...[to] be applied to all areas of life." This must include "homes, churches and institutions" (Pierson, *AR,* April 24, 1973, p. 4).

In 1974, apart from the usual requirements asking students to be dressed sensibly and neatly with appropriate footwear at all times, the College decreed that male students must also adopt a standard with their hair. They were to be:

> clean-shaven and well groomed at all times. Hair may not be worn longer than the top of the collar or cover the ear lobe.
>
> Modish and exaggerated styles are out of place on this campus. Sideburns must not be permitted to grow bushy or extend below the bottom of the ear (*Avondale Student Handbook,* 1974, pp. 10-11).

Beards could stay providing they were trimmed neatly. However, "flamboyant and drooping moustaches" were banned. To survive they had to remain within the confines of the upper lip (*Avondale Student Handbook*, 1979, p.12).

Although women remained regulated on their hemlines, the College now felt relaxed enough in the mid to late 1970s to:

> permit the wearing of tailored slack suits which incorporate fingertip length jackets fastened to the hem...[yet] jeans, jumper/shirt and slacks combinations may not be worn except for certain specified recreational activities (*Avondale Student Handbook*, 1974, pp. 10-11).

Under Magnusson's administration, one-piece-bathers were permitted. Eye and cosmetic make up were deemed "out of place" but did not now attract the original ban sustained on all forms of jewellery. But by 1976 a subtle relaxation was being effected with jewellery also now being given an "out of place" status rather than the former "not permitted" taboo (*Avondale Student Handbook*, 1976, pp. 11-12).

In 1978 the College was more specific about women's slack suits, informing the wearers that slacks may only be worn "if the jacket COMPLETELY covers the seat" (emphasis supplied). The College also felt compelled to comment that "Sheer tight-fitting, low-necked or low-backed clothing and men's-style T–shirts are never appropriate" (*Avondale Student Handbook*, 1978, p. 13). *During 1982 the students received the right to make their own discretionary choices about their clothing, guided by the "principles of simplicity, modesty and femininity". These, it was recognised, "transcended the ever changing demands of fashion"* (*Campus Guidelines*, 1982/83). Jewellery remained "out of harmony" with the college guidelines. Here lay a graphic example of the paradigm shift from a sectarian

administration-pushed set of standards being overhauled by a Christo-centric focused values paradigm whereby the student proceeding from these principles could derive his/her own standards for apparel.

Cosmetics in the 1980s were now accepted as an everyday necessity for female students. It could here be argued once more that on the level of apparel and adornment choice a traditionalist Church and College administration had capitulated. A facet of the paradigm shift was evident whereby the rules set by the institutional authority were becoming privatised, allowing the individual to make his/her own value judgments. By 2000, it was not uncommon at College to see rings in earlobes, belly buttons, eyebrows, and studs and rings in noses and tongues.

The same note of concern was expressed about the Azusa University's future in the deportment of many of its students during the late 1990s. Burtchaell observed an almost unfettered Azusa "moving with the times", echoing the "dress code" at Avondale in the late 1990s:

> So there are bare female midriffs and male earrings and enough hair to sustain a shampoo factory. Staff members in the know speak disappointedly of student sex nowadays that was never dreamed of in the past. This symbolises some wear and tear in the Holiness tradition (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 774).

The past rules for dress lengths above or below the knee, mores of purported morality, were in reality a discriminatory practice when the height of a female or the length of her leg was ignored. For a girl of 185cm to have the same 50mm distance above the knee as a female 300mm shorter was quite unfair. Far better, perhaps, would have been the principle of self-regulation based on cleanliness, neatness and modesty. In its condemnation of other churches for their reliance on their traditions as religious authority, the iconic standards and the systems derived to set them up remain enshrined in Adventism. George Knight observed: "Such restrictive behaviour can create a road block instead of a pathway to heaven" (Gillespie, 1993, pp. 201, 203).

> Denominational traditions take on a life of their own. Many people, unfortunately, equate changing the tradition with destroying the faith of the good old days (Gillespie, 1993, p.197). Thus Adventism, like the Ancient Jews and the Christians of the early church and Reformation, has come full circle. From a people fighting against the bonds of tradition, it has become entangled in its own tradition, with no satisfactory way to resolve many of the serious difficulties that face it (Gillespie, 1993, p.207).

There were an abundance of lifestyle behaviours that Ellen White propounded in her cultural milieu that most Protestant Evangelical Christians would have accepted 100 years ago. This same set of standards today appears to be either quite irrelevant to

the majority of responsible and inquiring Christians. Of some concern to the feminist movement in Adventism, suggested Land, was how the male population escaped restrictive mores including moustaches and goatees when women's clothing remained the centre of criticism for so long? Why did the continuing attack on jewellery, pushed by a Church male-dominated hegemony, say nothing about the occupation of fine houses or purchase of expensive furniture? (Land, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 42) Of real concern for the Church is that the underlying values for such standards have also been lost. In a manifesto "Seventh-day Adventists Believe" published in 1988 by the US based official Church paper *Review and Herald*, the following statement appeared:

> We are called to be Godly people who think, feel, and act with harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord, we involve ourselves only in things that will produce Christ-like purity, health and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quite spirit (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 1988, p. 278).

This general statement under-girding Church standards might well be acceptable to the majority of Church members today. The following explicit attempt by the Church hierarchy to clamp down on such unacceptable behaviour might have been well received forty years ago when any display of jewellery would have stood out like a beacon. But evident is a new wind of tolerance in the Church today and this bold hermeneutical approach witnessed in the personal standards code now would cut sharply into the beliefs of a significant number (42%) of American Adventist church members (Case, 1996, p. 178).

> Therefore, in view of these scriptural teachings and principles laid out above, we believe that Christians ought not to adorn themselves with jewellery. We understand this to mean that the wearing of rings, earring, necklaces, and bracelets and showy tie tacks, cufflinks and pins--and any other type of jewellery that has as its main function display--is unnecessary and not in harmony with the simplicity of adornment urged by Scripture (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 1988, p. 278).

Paul draws such standards from scriptural passages:

> I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God (I Timothy 2:9-10).

The apparel at Avondale, it is argued, approximates this description. Many former Avondale Alumni, including Peter Rampton, (See endnote 4) on revisiting the campus

in 1999, expressed concern at the sociocultural transformation. He suggested that the College had become distinctly "worldly". He stated:

> Since my time at Avondale in the late 1960s, I have seen a more radical shift in traditional Adventist Christian sociocultural standards than had been occurring in the United States over the same time. It was ironic to walk into my old room and see the wall plastered with rock photos. Back then the College faculty was in control and we followed like obedient children. To now be told by my daughter that the College actually permits Saturday night organised dancing programmes and to learn about students walking about with rings and studs in their ears, noses, belly buttons, and tongues seemed a betrayal of the standards of simplicity and modesty. Here there seemed an incongruity in that they were now no different in appearance than the world (Rampton, December 10, 1999).

George Knight suggested that as a result of Ellen White's prolific writing, it was virtually inescapable that from the concrete and personal situations that she addressed, the basis for value judgment and behaviour had to be set for the Church. Such behavioural deduction or speculation has not always carried the place of significance or insignificance that it deserved, especially into the twentieth century. Secondly, the Church's early interest in the formation of standards "was nearly always related to practical, concrete, and quite specific problems in their daily existence." Thirdly, and of more recent concern, was *the method by which standards were set.* "Adventists had no systematic procedure for the formation of standards." Fourthly, Knight stated that: "the repeated similarity of their ad hoc answers to meet specific situations gradually grew into a system of Adventist cultural tradition." Such tradition includes the "grab a quote" to solve a value judgment or a standard in behaviour especially involving dress, jewellery, hairstyle, hats and other behaviour, not necessarily found directly in the Bible but with some explicit reference in Ellen White (Gillespie, 1993, pp.194-7).

By the end of the 1980s, Ellen White's authority on dietary and jewellery standards appeared to have been invariably sidelined even if Avondale continued to refrain from allowing meat dishes in the College cafeteria. Questions were being asked concerning the use of dietary standards for prospective members as "entry-level" or "boundary marking" behaviours. Professor of Behavioural Sciences at Pacific Union College, Greg Schneider, warned that any entry-point decisions towards loyalty and identity with the Church, signifying a change toward a unique and better lifestyle, might become flawed in the mind of the believer if deficiencies in legitimacy or usefulness became apparent (See Schneider, *Spectrum*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 47-48).

The stance against jewellery was seen as discriminatory towards women. Men

could own expensive cars with an accompanying high depreciation tag yet were not demarcated as wasteful, decadent or surrounding themselves with outward adornments. They could claim its purchase in the name of functionality or being required as a creditable sign of their work status. In addition, this show of wealth was not a matter for discipline or even entry into the Church, although the member's behaviour may reek of symbolizing loyalty to the dominant "principalities or powers" of this age (See Schneider, *Spectrum*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 47-48). The problem in the nineteen-nineties, hypothesizes Schneider, is that from a sectarian paradigm Seventh-day Adventism has moved into a "corporate-bureaucratic" model of "permanency and power" where the institution treats its members as "recalcitrant employees" (See Schneider, *Spectrum*, vol. 22, no. 2, p. 49).

In 1990, the American Adventist medical school, Loma Linda University, through its associate professor of New Testament Studies, Madelyn Jones-Haldeman, issued a somewhat revisionist statement on adornment titled: "Biblical Positions". She observed that: "For Jews, ornamentation related to their belief in God—wives always adorned themselves for their husbands and Israel adorned itself for its God." Cutting across former interpretations by Church leaders on Ellen White's inspired pronouncements on jewellery, she argued that the New Testament "did not declare gold, silver and jewels sinful", but recognised that there were conditions for church members as individuals or collectively in its display (Jones-Haldeman, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 54). Jewellery and apparel that was relatively inexpensive and discrete was a legitimate option for both men and women. Jones-Haldeman's conclusion was that "It is illogical to assume we can delight in God's dwelling place, that is as ornate and beautiful as humanity can make it, yet we humans cannot delight in *beautifying* our bodies as the temple of God" (Jones-Haldeman, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 55; emphasis mine). Though such a powerful medical university might feel immune from any serious repercussions for this remark it was not a statement one might expect to see issued from Avondale, at least not yet, despite an absence of any explicit current ban on jewellery.

In concluding this section, I have tried to show how there has been a revision of the identity in dress codes having been drawn away from that of an institutionalised, corporatised identity to one of self-awareness and self-actualisation. Loyalty, as a value becoming personalised, is beholden to God as Saviour and Lord and to the reactions of others rather than a corporation or institution. Whilst the danger for

excess from emancipatory causes may remain, it is now more likely to be as a result of peer pressure, economic resources, personal pride or shame (Giddens, 1991, pp. 68-69, 99). In this way the Church and College, perhaps unwittingly to some extent, in offering standards or guidelines for its people for a more bland and uniform dress code in earlier years, had also buffered them from that contemporary excess.

From the documented description supplied here concerning jewellery and apparel, it is my proposal that there is sufficient evidence to suggest a revised status of the Church's view from the standpoint of values and modesty from Ellen White to Scripture. We have observed a broader consideration over the argument from outward adornment or functionality (See endnote 5). The value discernment in the illustration of straining a gnat to swallow a camel, expressed by Jesus, appears to have been accepted by a growing body of Adventists as the new approach to making valid assessments about Christian lifestyle values (See Romans 2:1-4; see endnote 6). The question that now confronts the Church and College administration, having been a strongly patriarchal-administered body wielding a heavily institutional-enculturated hegemonial management style over its membership, is how it will allow the freedom for its members, using their own individual and private standard-judgments, to decide for themselves a hermeneutic for understanding Ellen White's authority on standards in a sociocultural context.

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1. Ellen White proclaimed in 1908 that "Fashion rules the world" and that it was "a tyrannical mistress". Her reasons for her continuing crusade against the wiles of "inconvenience and discomfort" in fashion was that it caused the poor to feel discriminated against and was a potential "sacrifice to life itself". She asserted: "God expects His commandment-keeping people to be distinct from worldlings" (White, *UCR,* March 16, 1908, p. 1). She again regaled her errant members by offering some specific admonition.

> An overdressed, outwardly adorned person bears the sign of inward poverty. A lack of spirituality is revealed...
>
> The trimming of Ladies' hats with high-standing bows is a needless expense, and is unbecoming to a Christian. In the house of God the over-trimmed hats are a positive annoyance. The congregation desire to see the face of the speaker as well as hear his voice; but the ladies' hats with their high-standing ribbons and bows, obscure the view (White, *UCR,* October 26, 1908, p. 1).
>
> Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out the spirituality of our people. Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist Churches, and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God (White, 1885, vol 4, pp. 647-648 cited in Watson, *AR,* July 26, 1915, p. 1).

2. Ellen White appears not to have been exposed to this new wave of sensually directed fashion.

3. In response to the "mini-trend", the Avondale College Board and Australasian Church president L.C. Naden delivered an unprecedented set of guidelines for the Church including students and staff. These were:

> in keeping with Christian principle of modesty, simplicity, and best office practice...
>
> Personnel are requested not to wear tight sweaters, form-fitting apparel and sheer shirts or blouses.
> Ladies are requested to take care:
> a. That necklines be modest and not low cut in front or back or worn off the shoulders.
> b. That dresses be of modest length when the wearer is standing or sitting
> c. That the obvious use of cosmetics be avoided so as not to negate the ideals of 1 Peter 3:3,4
> d. That hair be groomed simply, shunning fads and extremes.
> e. That jewellery such as rings (except the simple wedding band for wives) bracelets and necklaces not be worn.

Naden then added the source for this decree. It originated "...we should state, at our headquarters' office in Washington D.C." (Naden, *AR*, May 5, 1969, p. 4). The *Avondale Student Handbook* also remained relatively definitive.

4. Peter Rampton, who resides in the United States, holds three master's degrees in the disciplines of religion, health and business. He attended Avondale as a student during 1968-1970, and is a former minister and fourth generation Adventist.

5. More recent allegations have arisen which suggest that Ellen White herself wore "a heavy metallic chain which hung suspended near her waist" (Land, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 47). This has thrown the question about jewellery or any other Church standards into an arena for the reassessing of the efficacy, relevance or fairness of judgments and condemnations on personal matters.

6. In line with other tertiary institutions Avondale has been required to set up a Higher Research Ethics Committee in an attempt to avoid discriminatory behaviour and judgments without prima facie evidence and to protect people from unfair disclosure of personal details. Apart from the secular pressure for natural justice and professionalism, an ethical basis can be found in the New Testament which provides a view that God has given the gift of freedom to serve one another *in love* and therefore without devaluing or prejudicial actions (I Peter 2:16).

Chapter 15

Physical activity in "proper education": The evolution of manual labour towards competitive sporting events.

15.1 Sport, "the curse of the colonies"

A fourth sociocultural icon of Avondale's past was its strong and determined resistance to organised sports competition on campus. In this chapter, I will attempt to engage in a closer examination of the historical context of traditional orthodox Adventist practice and attitudes to physical contest. This will consist as before, in documenting evidence for the Church's recreational policies and its stages of transition at Avondale leading to a facet in the paradigm shift from its rigid standards approach to a revisioned recreational, athletic and competitive sporting philosophy.

Following 1883 there had been in the eyes of Ellen White an unacceptable lack of manual job skill training at the main Adventist tertiary education institution at Battle Creek College, Michigan. The College had become more involved in competitive and contact sport including baseball and football. She complained to the new principal W.W. Prescott (Gilson, 1963, p. 115; see endnote 1) and convinced him of the error of America's sporting culture. The College's recreation programme was thus tamed to "...give the physical benefit desired without arousing up the spirit of contest, and without having it on the basis of athletic sports" (Vande Vere, 1972, p. 63). This cultural reform had also evolved as part of the new behavioural code of the Church in its preparation for, and hastening of, the imminent return of Christ (John W. Knight, 1973, p. 158). Through Ellen White, the pagan works of literature had been expunged from the Church's classrooms and it was now time to turn their attention to sport and remove all worldly physical pursuits from the school recreation ground. This ethos of purging the "impure" was not exclusive to Adventism or uncommon in Conservative Evangelical churches of the day. John Knight accurately captured this austere ethos:

> Vice, sin, and sport were prohibited. Close supervision of every student would prevent the corruption of the innocent by the wiles of the others. Character development was more valuable than intellectual progress, and externals in

behaviour reflected the interior state of the spirit (John W. Knight 1973, pp. 158-159).

Competition was acceptable only in striving for academic excellence. As the book of life, the Bible and its study were compulsory if one wished to graduate. As flagged earlier, cricket, football, tennis, and other team games might occur provided one wasn't caught. Chess, checkers, and the like were viewed as time-wasting games inspired by the devil. Between a background of Primitive Methodism and elements of New England Puritanism, the phobia for sporting events reigned supreme among the virtually "star spangled banner" caste of early College faculty and administration, but not sufficiently to the satisfaction of the real force behind the College. For instance, the playing of cricket was "a species of idolatry...not useful"...because it caused "too much excitement" (White, 1913, pp. 343-344, 350). An argument for refraining from watching and playing football was based on a notion that as Christians we should not play because Christ's disciples did not (White, 1923a, pp. 225-229). Football was declared "A school of brutality" (White, 1903, p. 210).

Although co-educational, Avondale students' sporting opportunities were consequently given a very low priority. Competition was acceptable only in striving for academic excellence. As the book of life, the Bible and its study was compulsory if one wished to graduate. Cricket, football, tennis, and other team games were permitted, provided one didn't get caught. Chess, checkers, and the like were viewed as time-wasting games inspired by the devil (White 1885, vol 1, p. 514; White, 1930, p. 392). Between a background of Primitive Methodism and elements of New England Puritanism, the phobia of sporting events reigned supreme among the virtually "star spangled banner" caste of early College faculty and administration, but not sufficiently to the satisfaction of the real force behind the College. But not so in other more established Bible colleges in the United States. Founded in 1826, (Burtchaell 1998, p. 128) the all male Lafayette had, by the 1870s, begun ominously to give way to some popular sporting activities, firstly by eliminating its Saturday afternoon religious services (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 139). By 1888, this religious college could boast of just thirty-three percent of its students being Presbyterian, with forty-six per cent claiming no religious affiliation although seventeen percent were "bound for Christian ministry" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 142).

The strength of anti-cultural attitudes it could be argued was not felt more glaringly than one balmy Autumn day of April in 1900, when following a religious

celebration for the College's first anniversary, some of the faculty and students engaged in an afternoon of cricket and tennis. The decision had been based on the faculty understanding that a game of cricket on the Sunday afternoon was better than "wandering aimlessly around" (*ASFM,* March 12, 1900). Ellen White appeared to be scandalised by their behaviour. Placing herself offside with C.B. Hughes, she sent a stiff letter of censure to the School Board (White, Letter, April 13, 1900). Ignoring her admonition, the College conducted similar activities the following Sunday afternoon. Retribution was swift. The College management and faculty were ordered into a meeting at 5:00 pm. Predictably, the Board capitulated and "...recommended the faculty to devise plans to furnish something better to occupy the spare time of students [rather] than sports" (*ASBM,* April 14, 1900). Ellen White was uncompromising of the Australian cultural way:

> The school at Avondale is to be a pattern for other schools that shall be established among our people. Games and amusements are the curse of the Colonies, and they must not be allowed in our school here...One thing is to be plainly and decidedly carried out. Amusements are not to be part of the education given to students in our school in this place" (*Announcement...* 1910, p. 42; White, Diary, MS 92, 1900).

It was self evident that largely Americans in America had driven the interpretation of behavioural standards. As Tom Dybdahl observed: "The result is that in its lifestyle and outlook, Adventism has virtually become Americanism. We accept America's basic social, cultural and economic values" (Dybdahl, *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 34). A frustrated Avondale Bible lecturer, Pastor S.N. Haskell, issued a warning to those who would follow in his footsteps. "Whoever has charge of dealing with colonial colts will not have an easy time of it, even if they are old religious men and women" (Hook in Clapham, [ed.] 1985, p. 156). Hughes had obeyed directives that the College would not allow the bruising game of football, but despite his American heritage he was prepared to allow cricket and tennis--quite remarkable in the face of Ellen White's pressure to conform.

At the time of Avondale's inauguration in 1897, students were required to do three hours of manual labour daily and their duties were very practical. They were organised into bands to clear school grounds, a road to the Avondale church, planting a vineyard, painting, laying floors, gardening, kitchen and laundry duties (Report by Hughes, 1898; Gilson, 1963, pp. 102-3). The teachers engaged freely with the students with little formality (Nicholas letter, September 15, 1898, Gilson, 1963, p.

104). From the documented flow of literature from students and teachers alike, Gilson is satisfied that "in its earliest years Avondale was achieving its objectives" (Gilson, 1963, p. 105).

Appearing shortly after Ellen White's return to America was the ill-fated Australasian Adventist *Good Health* magazine, published between 1904-1905. It became the organ of information alerting the public to the Adventist health message. It contained some reports on athletics, competition and sports generally, derived largely from anecdotal evidence. Clearly desirous to discredit sport and uphold physical labour as the healthy God-ordained way of exercise, the *Good Health* writer cited "a well-known medical journal" to promote the notion that there were dangers from involvement in the Australian outdoor games. The playing of "golf, football, cricket, baseball and many other popular outdoor means for getting health, *are dangerous*..." The writer claimed that the poisonous products produced from vigorous exercise, actually weakened organs instead of invigorating them. It cited champion athletes who as a result of this intemperate behaviour developed "heart strain" leading to premature heart disease (*Good Health*, March 1, 1905, p. 53). As a result budding athletes could expect to develop "hypertrophied" or "diseased hearts". A warning was issued to educational institutions:

> Thick-skulled and hard-muscled youth is not an ideal to get enthusiastic over. If you want your idle, sporty and boisterous boys to become true students--manly studious and intellectual--then abolish sports! Insist upon moderate exercise, but out with 'athletics'. It works incalculable injury physically, mentally, and morally.

Furthermore, it was alleged athletics brought in the spirit of competition doing "ethical injury" to the character of its participants (*Good Health*, March 1, 1905, p. 54). It was a far cry from the activities some fifty years later when the Church was courting two of the most competitive athletes in the world, vying for their media attention in the hope that the publicity generated through these men would bring people into the Church as evidenced later in this chapter (See endnote 2).

A respite from the eleven-hour day of regimented study, worship, manual labour and classes was gained when the annual school picnic, pushed by the student body, was allowed in 1904. (*ASFM,* May 12, 1904) That could take the form of an idyllic cruise down Dora Creek on to the Lake or a vigorous day tramping on the Wattagan Forest bullock trails, in not entirely practicable clothing as early photos suggest.

Never seen in the "obscene" swimming costume, female students were recorded

clothed in "semi formal wear" sometimes "on narrow rock ledges posing in bulky ankle-length dresses" (Hook, 1997, p. 74). Gilson observed that to introduce organised games for the purpose of relaxation and recreation would have been vigorously resisted on the pretext that it was a wrong employment of the muscles for non-useful labour and was not part of the lesson learned from the teachings of Christ (Gilson, 1963, p. 141). In this singularly narrow philosophy Gilson explained that Ellen White was opposed to any recreation in the context of excess, absorbing energy required for useful work, and hindering genuine success in education and vocation. Furthermore, she expressed a concern that sporting recreation might render participants insensitive to "useful, healthful exercise of body and mind, such as would make students efficient in helping themselves and others" (White, 1913a, p. 354).

Ellen White had remained unrepentant concerning the Australian penchant for its sporting culture and unequivocal in her condemnation of the Australian way of life, which she believed spawned an idolatrous culture.

> In this country, Satan has in a most striking manner enthroned himself to control the leading men in the government of the nation. The education which they have received from childhood is erroneous...The many holidays have had a baleful influence upon the minds of the youth...They have a tendency to encourage an artificial excitement, a desire for amusement. The people are led to squander precious time that should be employed in useful labour to sustain their families honestly and keep clear of debt.
>
> Never can the proper education be given to the youth in this country, unless they are separated a wide distance from the cities The customs and practices in the cities unfit the minds of the youth for the entrance of truth. The liquor-drinking, the smoking and gambling, the horse racing, the theatre going the great importance placed upon holidays--are all a species of idolatry, a sacrifice upon idol altars (White, 1923a, pp. 311ff).

Following her departure from Australia, Church standards for both school picnics and recreational activities were firmly operated by the book-- the *Testimonies* of Ellen White (*ASFM,* March 22, 1903). The sports of her day had been presented to her by God "as a species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations" (White, 1913a, p. 350). This statement also emanated in the mid-1890s, towards the commencement of her sojourn in Australia.

Yet Ellen White's sensitivity concerning other cultures could have caused her to suggest caution before those who might take cultural offence. For example, in matters of marriage custom she trod softly when she wrote: "In countries where the custom is imperative, we have no burden to condemn...let them wear it if they can do so

conscientiously" (White, 1923b, pp.180-181). The use of the words "custom" and "conscientiously" provide an indication that she was sensitive to issues involving some Church standards when considering them to be a matter of personal choice or cultural sensitivity. This was not the case with Australian sport, however.

Yet, the report of a "very pleasant holiday" for "the Industrial School and their teachers" in 1900 was one of the first suggestions that relaxation and recreational pleasure might be countenanced at the College. Twenty-five industrial students along with a few friends and the staff, on account of working with "such marked industry and faithfulness", were rewarded with a trip on a chartered seventy-passenger steamer down Dora Creek, across Lake Macquarie and on to the Pacific Ocean ("Educational Notes", *UCR,* February 1, 1900, p. 8). This experience could have evidenced a ray of sunshine in the future philosophy of the College toward recreation. With the exception of Ellen White and her stalwart friend, Stephen Haskell, the old guard view that recreational pleasure through team sports was "a sin", seemed to lose ground to general faculty acceptance of its need based on student pressure. The College faculty received increasing requests from students for time out in recreational pursuits (See *ACFM,* September 6, 1900, September 6, 1901; see endnote 3).

The desire to minimise sports at least and at best remove this form of activity per se, was of course in lieu of the supplementation of the physical exercised derived from College industries. Females were not expected to be physically orientated. Consequently it wasn't until 1917 that a College female student, R.R. Lewin, was accepted for the Industrial Course (*AMCFM,* March 25, 1917). But the door was ajar for more relaxed recreational pursuits as a result of the industrial emphasis experiencing a redirection through the Board's decision to reduce its work requirement by an hour each day in 1917 (*AMCBM,* November 1, 1917). Yet firm resistance remained for another thirty-odd years before certain significant freedoms were sheeted home for the students.

It may have been no coincidence that the faculty meetings in 1916 were often heavily weighted by clergy for whom there were no teaching duties, and therefore they placed a heavy clamp on any sporting activities (*AMCFM,* July 10, 1916). In June 1916, Church dignitaries swelled the faculty ranks from an average of 10 to 24 and were a potential deterrent to allowing sporting type programmes (*AMCFM,* June 25, 1916). Schowe, as a chief exponent, presented the pragmatic advantages of industrial exercise and its accompanying education philosophy:

> It furnished useful work in the place of gymnastic games, it cherished a spirit of helpfulness, since each one endeavoured to bear his share of the burdens of the institution, it taught students to be practical, it was a saving in cash to the institution which made it possible to assist more students. It was a potent factor also in developing good judgment and financial ability (Schowe, [1951] p. 49).

15.2 Stringent manual labour tasks as the only means for proper physical exercise give way to informal games programmes

By 1917, the end of year "annual outing" was being billed as something of a Christmas-like celebration. As the "outstanding event" of the year for students, it was described as bringing "a certain grateful freedom from the daily round of duty". It is unlikely that such behaviour at the picnic, including "friendly games", "running contests", "rounders", and "well contested flag races", (C.S.P., *AR*, February 5, 1917, p. 6) would have passed the scrutiny of Ellen White, but her death two years before had heralded, predictably, an era of increasing Fundamentalist attitudes within the Church, reeling from the loss of their living guide and counsellor. Student life, however, may have experienced a slight relaxation from physical work-dominated programmes with a budget for a gymnastics programme on Saturday nights, first permitted during 1918 (*AMCBM,* April 22, 1918). The earlier dabble in recreation pursuits, often on demand from restless College students, had come in the form of College picnics and then later graduation picnics once a year. Hook interprets this frugal spirit toward students' convivial recreation and social needs as an exhibition of their considerable power and control by the faculty heads that were unstable and insecure (Hook, 1997, p. 123).

Following the Great War, there is some evidence that the College began respecting the notion: "All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy". Consequently, it would appear, a second outing was arranged for the College students on Easter Mondays. Under the approving eye of the matron, "Games fully provided exercise for all unused muscles" for the "healthful enjoyment" of the students (Allbon, *AR,* July 26, 1920, p. 5; see endnote 4).

The editor of the *Record* departed radically in 1926 from the austere views of the period when he wrote in the *Record* a brash and seemingly provocative College news headline, "A School at Play". They played "throwing the bean bag" and "twos and threes" during the Easter Monday picnic on the Lake via the "Avin". The whole event

was with the blessing of the accompanying principal L.H. Wood who thanked God in prayer for the recreation at day's end (Carver, *AR,* April 19, 1926, p. 4). This contrasted with comments by a fastidiously time-conscious M.E. Olsen concerning Seventh-day Adventists using their evenings "in pushing on to real attainment". Olsen suggested that passing the time was likened to throwing away money. He disdained students who "dawdle over newspaper or magazine or spend time in small talk." Olsen opined: "Every wide awake (SDA) Christian is altogether too busy doing real things to bother much with the semblance of things" (Olsen, *AR,* January 17, 1927, pp. 4-5; see endnote 5).

The dignity of labour and the image that "busy was best" was again associated with happy, refreshed and buoyant student demeanours in 1933.

> Smiling faces and cheerful voices reached us from the sides as we wended our way through the grounds. Students hurrying to and fro, books tucked under their arms, and carrying such contented looks and smiles on their faces.
>
> Three hearty, laughing boys came by us, pushing the milk trolley up from the dairy. Presently others followed with rake and hoe, fresh from the farm and surrounding garden (Foster, *AR,* June 5, 1933, p. 5).

And again at the commencement of the 1934 school year, many students, described as "the bloom of youth", were seen alighting a small, quiet country platform from a northbound Sydney passenger train, "struggling along with weighty suitcases and other travelling equipment", before an idyllic four-mile cruise up the "placid reflective waters of Dora Creek" via barge to the College (Wood, *AR,* March 5, 1934, p. 4). The College was reported in the *Newcastle Morning Herald,* to be operating a programme of "symmetrical development of the physical, mental and spiritual powers" (still no mention of the social powers) in its quest to offer "manual labour...combined with physical culture" ("Missionary College..." *AR,* October 9, 1933, p. 3). On the other hand, an Avondale writer, W.J. Hawken, attempted to beguile the prospectives, likening the College experience to "cherry pie and cream" (Hawken," *AR,* November 13, 1933, p. 5).

W.R Carswell, a student in 1899, boasted in 1933 that the College environment was "the most prosperous place in New South Wales" with its "wonderful paddocks of emerald green" (Carswell, *AR,* June 19, 1933, p. 5; Baines, *AR,* July 7, 1933, p. 6). The philosophy that "idle Christians were dead Christians" (Smith, *AR,* July 31, 1933, p. 7) inspired the ethic that constant activity would keep one safe from evil. And indeed there was constant activity, even in the water, when the College attracted

Newcastle press for its outstanding performance in its examinations with the Royal Life-saving Society of Newcastle in 1935 (See endnote 6).

In the same year, B.H. Schwartzkopf--in all probability the first lecturer to write of Avondale's education being a part of the "blueprint" of the "schools of the prophets"--in campaigning to turn the clock backwards using more practical labour, was alarmed by the winds of change. He recited the various manual means by which industrial and agricultural training was "the doorway back". He hoped that this would halt the trend to accepting the increasingly preferred prowess of cricket and football skills as evidenced at public and other private schools (Schwartzkopf, *AR,* February 11, 1935, pp. 4-5).

Church youth administrator, Russell L Blair, presented the theme in 1937, of having "A GOOD TIME"--recreating energy to carry on work. He enthused: "This is what we call recreation.". Amusement was defined as: "the idle wastage of empty hours". There were "good times in legitimate sports", he claimed, but athletic games "to excess", stimulated "the love of pleasure and excitement". From Ellen White's warning of sport, "that we shall allow the spirit of competition to develop into envy, fault finding and anger", Blair deduced that competitive sports must be shunned. "Competitive sports", he propositioned, "were not recreation " (Blair, *AR,* March 1, 1937, p. 4; see endnote 7).

In March 1940, the faculty now saw the need to allow students a form of Sunday afternoon entertainment, mainly in the presentation of musical items and films (*AMCFM,* March 20, 1940). Wallace Conley expressed this further growing awareness for the need in leisure time in 1943:

> College is not all humdrum repetitional activity of waking, eating, attending lectures, working, studying, and sleeping, but has its own compensations. Spare time is leisure time and is appreciated. The weekend is looked forward to. It is an island of refreshing in the hurrying stream of working days. Friday is shopping day, while on alternative weeks the young ladies and young men may go shopping. Friday afternoon is free (Conley, *AR,* December 6, 1943, p. 4).

The war years saw little change in the official College philosophy that to stop work, apart from the Sabbath and sleep, was sloth. 'Majorie Grieve wrote in 1943: "Avondale is a busy place always—each day is divided up into so many even parts, with no minutes just "left overs". *If the slogan, "keep busy to keep happy" is true then we have reached the pinnacle"* (Grieve, *AR,* July 19, 1943, p. 8).

15.3 The revisionary door is opened for internal sporting events

Surprisingly, the very writings used to stall Australian sporting culture at the turn of the century, as illustrated by Ellen White's embargo upon C.B. Hughes and his students from a gentle indulgence in cricket and tennis, appeared to be used more equivocally by 1940. In this year, a College Board sub-committee invited the full Board to review the past policy on College recreation philosophy. Again citing the "Spirit of Prophecy" for its defence it recommended the construction of a full sized basket-ball court, miniature courts for volley-ball, deck tennis and other games, two concrete cricket pitches with practice nets and the opportunity to play "informal football". In addition they recommended that students take physical education as a compulsory subject (*AMCBM,* Sub-Committee 23 April 1940; July 18, 1940). They fell short of permission for boxing gloves although consideration was given (*AMCFM,* March 27, 1940). In what appeared to be a stunning shift in sports policy, the College Board had applied the weight of Ellen White's writings to push through a revision of attitude to College sport and recreation programmes (*AMCBM,* August 19, 1940). Their premise was thus stated:

> The counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy indicates that recreation and physical training have an important place in our college, and
>
> Whereas at the Avondale Missionary College there is a present lack of facilities for suitable recreational and physical training of students it was voted:
>
> 1. That a gymnasium hall be erected and that suitable equipment be provided
>
> 2. That one basketball court and four miniature courts for volleyball, deck tennis etc be lined in for the girls; and one basketball court and three miniature courts be lined in for the boys and that equipment be provided for the above.
>
> 3. That on classifying in 1941, each student be required to take physical training as a compulsory subject (*AMCBM,* August 19, 1940).

The Board also voted significant changes to upgrade swimming, gardening and "two cement cricket patches and practice nets". The green light was given to "informal football" conditionally, given that neither it nor cricket would be played on a formal match basis (*AMCBM,* August 19, 1940). Although the policy reversal continued to segregate sport, the decision undoubtedly heralded a watershed in the history of recreational policy for the College and Church schools in Australasia.

But it did not pass without a fight. Hook described "poker-faced" faculty meetings occurring in 1943 in an attempt to combat the evils of table games.

Celebrated evangelist and College Bible teacher, John Benjamin Conley, was invited to prepare a four-page reactionary document. In a classic argument using silence to reveal Christ's purported attitude to recreation, Conley argued that on no occasion was there any record "where He educated His disciples (sic) to engage in amusement of football or pugilistic games to obtain physical exercise or the theatrical performances..." Hook observed that Conley had "in exaggerated terms portrayed the cricket and tennis games on campus in 1900 (he mistakenly said 1899) as an 'outburst of riotous pleasure'." Conley further argued that the suggested new recreation programme was "dangerous and likely to open a door in this college which is extremely hard to shut." He opined:

> For 200 students to be organised by a responsible faculty into a two hour programme of game playing which call into being mainly thoughts of rivalry from which the benefits are likely to be nil or negligible, with the associated waste of time, accompanied by the foolish talk and laughter and jesting which cannot be adequately controlled; with the excitement and hilarity, and with all the momentary forgetfulness of divine purpose; if not sinful is at best neither advisable nor expedient for an institution established for such sacred purposes as this one (Hook, 1997, p. 171).

If Conley was hoping for a reversion to the past he would have been disappointed by College behaviour at the end of World War II. In jubilant spirit similar to the College's anniversary celebrations under C.B. Hughes forty-six years before, the V.P. celebration day was characterised at College with a hike to Brown's fall or alternative games on the College lawn from 4:00 pm –5:30 pm (*AMCFM,* August 12, 1945).

The farm policy of the 1950s did not enhance the students' chances to obtain their outdoor exercise in the honest pursuit of meaningful, hard work. The advent of new farm manager Ian Donald Irvine as general manager of the rural industries, saw no interest in the mooted new agricultural classes. The Murdoch influence had caused agriculture and the trade departments to be downgraded to virtual service facilities, and the early work ethic, derived from complementing academic performance with manual labour, was steadily being eroded by mechanisation and the new technologies.

The isolation of the College, for so long facilitating control over student culture, had passed its zenith in effectively shutting out worldly influences, trends in recreation and the general use of leisure time. The rapidly increasing enrolment meant availability of student work was now highly competitive and harder to find. Students unable to expend their energy through manual labour had few options in their isolationist context. Gilson observed that a new form of physical outlet became

necessary and that "organised games seemed to provide a solution", thus cutting across the philosophies of Ellen White, W.W. Prescott and others (Gilson, 1963, pp. 206-207).

Inevitably rear-guard action would be waged against Adventists' apparent defection to the forbidden and perilous pleasures and gratification of natural appetite in the apostate version of Christianity. In 1953 *Record* writer Mead MacGuire severely criticized the Church's growing appearance of complicity with worldly philosophies of amusement and in even providing "amusement and entertainment for themselves and others in order to advance the cause of Christ." The writer re-emphasized the mainly traditionalists' line that "The love of mere amusement is entirely of the world, and is in direct opposition to the spirit of Christianity" (MacGuire, *AR,* August 10, 1953, pp. 3-4).

Hook placed the responsibility with the changing priorities of the Australasian Church members. In their own upwardly mobile socio-economic situations, they were encouraging white-collar careers for their children, thus relegating the experience and importance of manual labour from the blue-collar work place to their own home properties (Hook 1997, p. 207). This in turn affected the surge towards more sophisticated physical recreational pursuits for College students, placing the onus on the Board to reinterpret Ellen White's philosophy of sport and competition. Their version for the reasons behind the shift in emphasis toward social sporting evenings became apparent from their review of Ellen White's *Education.*

> There is a distinction between recreation and amusement. Recreation, when it is true to its name, tends to strengthen and build up. Calling us aside from our ordinary cares and occupations, it affords refreshment for mind and body, and thus enables us to return with new vigour to the earnest work of life (White, 1923a, p. 207).

But the games and physical sports originally deemed amusement and a frivolous waste of time at the beginning of the century were now defined in this way.

> Amusement on the other hand, is sought for the sake of pleasure and is often carried to excess; it absorbs the energies that are required for useful work and thus proves a hindrance to life's true success (White, 1903, p. 207).

In other words *it would appear that Ellen White's real objection to the "pleasures" of sport might have been the temptation for it to lead to such excesses that it rendered one ineffectual to function properly. Hence the College set out to provide physical recreational programs in the name of "social" development: "wherein the social side*

of the students can be fully developed in harmony with Seventh-day Adventist Christian principles" (General Working Policy of the Social Activities Committee n.d. [1961]). Of the new vision toward organised sporting programmes, Gilson saw no erosion of the underlying value to a balanced study programme. In his summation he suggested in 1963: "The principle of combining study with useful work remains a sound one. Conditions today require that it be applied somewhat differently" (Gilson, 1963, p. 209). The recognition of the importance of social intercourse and development had been finally sheeted home in the top echelons of the Church.

There was no turning back the clock with the virtual completion of the College Auditorium by 1954. As the largest sports and recreation gymnasium in the Lake Macquarie Shire, and one of the largest in the Hunter Region, it was generally adequate for all the students' needs for the next fifty years, proving second to none as a basketball, badminton, table tennis and utility indoor social venue. The temptation remained, however, to invite, and compete with outside non-Adventist teams and run commercially viable, competition programmes (Hook, 1997, pp. 226-7). It was a graphic testimonial to the emergent philosophy that Australian sport was kosher after all. Yet ten years later under McDowell, Godfrey claimed that competitive sports were virtually non-existent except for in-house basketball games on the College campus--always extremely popular (Godfrey, 1997, p. 7).

It was a far cry from the 1946 F.M. Wilcox exhortation to the faithful to heed his isolationist and exclusivist notions. Extrapolating the views and warnings of Ellen White, he admonished the faithful not to go anywhere, see anything or to relate with any recreational activity that might mean associating with "the world". Under the heading, "The Standard", Wilcox put his question to the Church:

> Surely, no one preparing for the coming of Jesus will be found at the theatre, the carnival, the movie house, the opera, the circus, the dance, the card table, or in attendance at commercialised sports. Public recreational activities, unless under careful Christian supervision, are frequently employed by Satan in destroying souls. We strongly urge separation from worldly associations at skating rinks and public bathing beaches. Friends, do not spend your precious hours in playing chess, checkers [draughts] (sic) or similar games that consume the time we should spend in missionary endeavour and helpful ministry, for such infatuating amusements are opposed to spiritual growth and have no place among us (Wilcox, *AR,* February 18, 1946, p.1).

If the Church was under constant pressure to go back to the landmarks and way marks of "the good old days", mixed signals had already begun to permeate the Adventist flock of God. E.S Kiek, a principal of an Australian Christian Education

College in 1946, was allowed a somewhat progressive article in the *Record*, urging Adventist readers not to be reactionaries or be dragged back to "the dead past" but instead live for today (Kiek, *AR*, February 25, 1946, p. 1). It was not enough to make a significant difference at Avondale for another 25 years however (See endnote 8).

The policy of social isolationism remained strong in the minds of Church administration following the war even if Murdoch fought against it. Constance Grieve extolled the virtue of the "picnic with a purpose". As a result of being in sufficient numbers the Adventist students took pleasure in providing "their own recreation and social activities". The Church continued in the isolationist and socially exclusive theme in 1946, that they could remain holy and undefiled in their own exclusive company, considering that they would be exposed to "the vortex of worldliness" if they began to excel at organised sporting functions (Grieve, *AR*, August 5, 1946, p. 8).

This value judgment would look somewhat hollow when in 1956 the Australian Church sang the praises of one of the national tennis stars, Ken Rosewall, inviting him to be interviewed in 1956 with open arms on the pretext that although he was not an Adventist, he was "a regular Bible reader and a keen temperance lad". Suffice to say it was a means-justifies-the-end public relations coup. The Church was able to high profile an advertised Adventist Bible course, arguably providing an incongruous reflection on the formerly cherished standards of the Australian Church pioneers and their fight against organised sport and amusements (Steed, *AR*, May 7, 1956, p.1).

Likewise the focus on 1956 Olympic games champion Murray Rose as a "health reformer" was sufficient reason to eulogise him and extol the virtues of strenuous competition before adoring fans among Adventist youth (Long, *AR*, March 25, 1957, p. 1). These Church-engineered publicity events, as a sociocultural phenomenon, may have appeared confusing in the light of the Australasian Church leader and College Board president, F.G. Clifford, espousing a Church that retained "the unchanging unchangeable truth", in the same Church newspaper (Clifford, *AR*, May 7, 1956, p. 5). This glorification of Australian sporting youth also spilled over to the Church's push for alcohol prohibition, dealt with in a following chapter.

Towards the end of E.E. White's tenure, the faculty also took time out in 1959 for a round of picnics (*AMCSAC* February 2, 1959). Despite a new 10 pm curfew on students to be back in the dormitories following their Saturday evening entertainment, the College was continuing to relax its stand over team sport, with table tennis and

badminton competitions now being permitted (*AMCSAC* February 2, 1959). Almost half the Saturday evening programmes were devoted to film or sports (recreational) evenings, the other evening dedicated to culture, including lectures and musical evenings (*AMCSAC* April 13, 1959).

In 1960 the first of a series of posters were printed outlining College sport and recreation evenings. The College administration was concerned enough about the needs of its students to publish a survey of students' social desires (*AMCSAC* July 2, 1963) and later presented a series of movie or feature styled documentaries including "Living Desert", "Christopher Columbus", "Fact and Faith Films", Temperance films" and "White Wilderness" (The Challenge of Lassie) (*AMCSAC* October 2, 1963). Generally speaking these social events were divided now into three categories. Physical: Hikes, picnics, games and gymnastics; Recreational: General and Orphean's concerts, films and homes evenings; Cultural education: Lyceum concerts, visiting speakers and documentary films (*AMCSCM* November 6, 13, 1963).

Reflecting on the College culture of the 1960s, McDowell, known to be a keen outdoor sports person, a keen mountaineer and having distinguished himself at Rugby Union in New Zealand, (Savige, 1979, pp. 90-91) appeared to have little desire to open the floodgates to sport. Godfrey indicated that little had changed in the fundamentalist sociocultural norms and suggested that it was difficult to be comfortable or accepted in society where some of the practices were focal points, including private devotions twice daily, vegetarian diet, wearing no jewellery and the non-participation in competitive sports.

Further acceptance of sport by the Church was its endorsement at the British Empire and Commonwealth games at Perth in 1962 where 100 Adventist youth were led by Avondale College preceptor elect, Walter H. Hammond. The event was ultimately to be a promotional for the new Church anti-drug magazine, *Alert* (Mowday, *AR,* February 25, 1963, p. 3). Yet if the Church youth could watch and participate in competitive sport pageantry, the College decreed in the 1960s, that: "Students do not play highly competitive (or) highly organised sports" (*The Avondale Student Handbook* (nd) 1965).

Another wedge in the door of tolerance came in 1968 when two tennis courts were planned for College students (*ACBM,* June 26, 1968). In 1969, the initiatives by some students to strengthen Adventist basketball and other sports, a further warning came from the College administration in its announcement of "Concern" about "the

competitive attitude that certain men have in respect to sport." It was voted that: "No groups be authorised to engage in sporting activities in the name of the College during term ends (*ACBM*, April 23, 1969). Competition that did not involve physical prowess appeared to obtain a much more favourable passage. Farm manager Ian Irvine had for some time been distinguishing the College with its Jersey and Friesian studs at New South Wales Agricultural Show. He was rewarded for his efforts on a number of occasions by congratulatory messages from the College Board (*ACBM*, April 23, 1969; April 22, 1970).

15.4 From organised internal to external competitive sporting events

The sidelining of the College farm industry production and the Sanitarium's gearing to increased automation had caused considerable stress for administrators in providing physical labour intensive jobs. Furthermore, the advent of Commonwealth education money for students relieved many from the need to work more than eight hours per week, if at all (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 238; Savige, 1979, pp. 140-141). The main body of concerned students and faculty members discovered that the practical impossibility of ongoing study loads and disjointed timetables had quickly diminished enthusiasm for the return to early College projects (Savige, 1979, p.142). This undoubtedly advanced further the cause for sophistication in recreational pursuits and sporting activities at a competition level. The "time is of the essence" philosophy, having produced considerable anxiety (Mackay, 1999, p. 18) on earlier believers for fear they would not "be ready" for Christ's arrival, was now receding to a belief carrying lesser urgency and focusing on satisfaction in the here and now.

The advocacy of physical exercise ranged from limiting it to work oriented projects, at the turn of the century to now exercising for enjoyment through to competitive exercise individually or team-wise (Dudley, 1986, p. 34). There had been strong debate led by some faculty members and students in the mid-sixties at Avondale College to resist all competitive sport on the basis that Ellen White regarded it as brutal, time wasting and gratuitous to the lower passions, and although much support was found in her writings, surprisingly the word "competition" rarely appeared. The result ultimately, did not stem the tide for increased sports competition.

James Cox was explicit in reminding Adventist constituents that the Ellen White

philosophy of true education and its relationship to the harmonious development of the physical mental and spiritual powers remained intact (Cox, *AR,* August 10, 1981, p. 8). That she did not mention social skills and ability was perhaps to the disadvantage of the College at this time. The physical needs had been met in the presence and leadership of Hanson. He inspired students to become more aerobically fit and pioneered a physical education training course for College students. A gym and squash courts were built in his honour, and were officially opened in 1984 (Hook, 1997, p. 305; see endnote 9).

Such a form of balanced physical education now supplemented the loss of manual labour programmes in earlier years, providing healthier Avondale students. The public relations arm of the College swung into action citing eight of Ellen White's statements giving a philosophical basis and authority for the new programme (Currie, *AR,* August 10, 1981, pp. 8-9). The status of physical recreation would now give a green light to more competitive teams' events contemplated at College. The profile of physical sporting programmes was elevated to departmental monthly meetings in the College Board room. Combined with the inauguration of an official College offering for physical education, it was seen as a major coup for the department. But the College was careful to state in its eleven-point manifesto that the primary aim of the programme was "to develop the Christian character and develop a living relationship with Christ" (Currie, *AR,* August 9, 1982, p. 12). By January 1987, Avondale had secured its health and fitness centre ("Avondale Builds ...", *AR,* January 31, 1987). In the same year the Church's Australian media centre was utilizing Australian television in its first full lifestyle program on health for the general public's consumption ("Media Centre ...", *AR,* March 28, 1987).

A sport and recreation-study ethic, despite a strong debate on the College's mandate in the mid-1960s that competitive and organised sport was bad, now found itself heading down the road toward becoming an official facilitator in the promotion of competitive sports. The Cooranbong Sanitarium Health Food factory, in rationalising the economy of its labour practices, now sought a greater percentage of workers from the non-Adventist community (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 238). Avondale's reputation as a self-supporting fortress-like Church community, while appearing on principle to hold up, was in reality crumbling. This facet of the transitional shift in paradigm would become very evident, particularly during the Madigan era of administration, having developed quietly through the Cox and Ball administration

periods of the 1980s.

Competitive sporting events and their identity with Adventism were particularly explicit in 1992 when the Church published an endorsement for competitive sport on the front page of the *Record.* An Adventist captain of a junior soccer finals team in Melbourne was given prominence in the Australasian Church paper for his sporting prowess ("Adventist Captain ..."*AR,* July 4, 1992). And again, in 1995, a Samoan Adventist basketball team from New Zealand was promoted in the Church newspaper for its prowess in a nation-wide 1400 participant Church basketball tournament. ("Heirs ...", *AR,* June 24, 1995, p. 8). Organised competitive sport, it appeared, had come of age as a kosher lifestyle in the Church. It was one more barrier dislodged towards opening the way for the College to conduct its own organised programmes with outside competitors. By the late 1990s a more radical proliferation of an "evangelistic" activity was being attempted through College sponsored competitive sports.

Writing in the College public relation magazine, *Connections*, Bruna Tawake, in 2000, put the view that College basketball and its premier basketball team, the "Wild Cats" had become "an irreplaceable dynamic for our college, a dynamic in fact that demands respect and inspires awe". The writer, who was not a basketball player, had "found out a whole lot of information that enlightened (her) vision of the 'favourite past-time' activity." In support, former student and Adventist filmmaker Gabe Reynaud advocated that, "such an identity (basketball) is fresh in its approach and deeply Christian in its philosophy." Reynaud also suggested that

> the international, interstate and multi-racial composition of the teams are the right ingredients for a successful combination that carries the name Avondale College with pride into afield that would have otherwise remained closed to Christian influence ("Avondale Men's Basketball Team *Connections,* June 14, 2000, p. 1).

A College lecturer, Michael Bartlett, told the local media:

> The nature of the NSW State League and the fact that the Avondale team had the only regional team to have made it to Division One has meant that the Westlake's "Wild Cats" have indirectly become representatives of the local community including Cooranbong, Morisset, Toronto and as far a field as Gosford ("Wild Cats on Top: Preparing for playoffs" *Lake Macquarie News*, June 8, 2000).

Tawake further described the basketball team as "legends" (*Connections,* June 14, 2000, p. 1).

Commentating on Australian societal changes, Mackay has suggested that there is

increasing evidence of communities' dissatisfied with bureaucratic impositions, challenging the system with vigour through community-led consultation (See Mackay, 1999, p. xix). Avondale has resisted for so long this trend but appears to have overtly surrendered to the non-risk behaviours within the last turbulent fifteen-year period. Whereas for nearly seventy-five years, dissenting views about almost any of the College's behavioural mores by equally earnest Christians were treated with quiet outrage, exponential change in sociocultural controls has now demonstrated that nothing is simple or clear cut anymore (See Mackay, 1999, p. xxiii). Mackay's notion of the postmodernist ethos profile, exemplified by a "relentless determination to have fun" and be amused, (Mackay, 1999, p. xxviii) appears to have inveigled its way into the College. *Sydney Morning Herald* sociology columnist Dierdre Macken put her finger on an Adventist obsession of the past:

> Control. Most of the time it was in someone else's hands and we were out of it. In social constraints, in pain relief, in our quest to know our bodies, from the genome to the epidermis...Often it was only our belly button we truly controlled. So we pierced it. Along with noses, lips, eyebrows, nipples and gulp—elsewhere. Body piercing the ultimate sign of control. If you could no longer define yourself by your job, home garden or suburb, you defined yourself with your body. Pierce it, paint it, tuck it up, suck it out and sculpt it (Macken, in Mackay, 1999, pp. 23-4).

In summarising and concluding this chapter, I have endeavoured to document the College's revisionist shift of the paradigm, evidenced by the countenancing of current competitive sporting events. It must be stated that in contrast to other facets, this facet of the paradigm shift has probably operated more independently of any of the causes associated with the Ford crisis or soteriological thrusts led by him. Rather, the revision of Ellen White's mores on sport was a pragmatic outworking when the need for manual labour from the College farm and Sanitarium factory diminished. The College was forced therefore to find alternative ways to provide its students meaningful physical outlets. In doing so it found it necessary to "reinterpret" the writings of Ellen White between the 1940s and 1950s and return a revisionist finding that would justify its reasons for building the largest sports auditorium in the City of Lake Macquarie. The opposition, climaxing in the 1960s McDowell era, lost ground in the 1970s as pressure developed for the students to find new ways to maintain physical and social growth.

The establishment of a Department for Physical Recreation classes in the 1980s, to attract a new type of student, cemented the validity of a sporting conscious College and now gave authority for outside competitive sporting events, formerly decried by

Ellen White. In the attempt to provide a documented description of the revisioning process I would argue that we find here one of the clearer evidences establishing the truth to my proposition, albeit chronologically ahead of most other sociocultural standards discussed here, that the College has now marginalised Ellen White's standards for Avondale concerning Australian sports.

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1. Prescott was a graduate of Dartmouth College in the 1880s, and became a significant Adventist educator.

2. Hughes believed that earlier comments on recommending teachers to be involved with student games were being followed at Avondale. He must therefore have been shocked by Ellen White's apparent reversal in policy. He was supported by most of the faculty, one of whom retorted, perhaps realizing that she had no formal training or experience as a teacher: "If she knew so much about running a school, he would advise her to come over and take charge " (Hook, 1997, p. 54). Ellen White explained that it was in the context of teachers of young children and not teenagers that her comments were directed (White Diary MS 92, 1900; note also Thomson's Diary 1907, July 18,19, Sept 30, 1907). Despite this disclaimer, all the hallmarks of Ellen White's behaviour in Australia on sport, appeared to contradict this explanation. Her views can be interpreted as a glaring example of the clash of two cultures; New England's Methodist inspired "taboo" (Towns, 1975, pp. 223-4) and the British way of life where sport was imprinted on its colonies as a form of religion in secular activity.

3. The evolution of cycling and the new creation of danger at night without lights (*AMCFM*, March 25, 1917) was an interesting phenomenon for the administration to grapple with in the context of Ellen White's edict: "The exhibitions in the bicycle craze are an offence to God. His wrath is kindled against those who do such things." (White, vol. 1, 1948. p. 66) In 1906 a local Martinsville congregation had assisted local Methodist lay preacher, Elliot J. Rien into the purchase of a bicycle to travel between congregations for the handsome sum of nine pounds ten shillings or about $2,200 in today's currency (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 151).

Whereas today, the riding of bicycles is seen to be a healthful and recreational pursuit, and such severe pronouncements would be scorned in the present day climate, the considerable expense when they were first marketed, was for some, purely a fashion statement and this Ellen White scorned. The context of her condemnation must therefore be analysed and checked for any relevance in today's world. Certainly in the context of the 1929 College year, the problem of the reckless night bicycle rider without lights reached a climax in attracting a suspension order from the College faculty (*AMCBM*, December 4, 1929).

4. Term ends were especially targeted for hikes up Mount Faulk Road or trips out to the Lake in hired launches including the "Bluegum" Avondale Industries barge that transported Sanitarium cereals and vegetarian products to the rail head at Dora Creek (Allbon, *AR*, June 26, 1922, p. 5). At the end of 1924, the College celebrated their new thirty-ton cutter "Avin" in "a festive trip" to Swansea Heads where they disembarked and played games and cruised to find new and delightful spots on the eastern side of Lake Macquarie in "wholesome healthful recreation" (Allbon, *AR*, December 1, 1924, p. 2).

5. One of the early-recorded picnic trips to the beach nearly ended in disaster in 1929. Two trucks, described as "crowded with happy holiday-makers", travelled to Terrigal beach some 50 km south from the College. A mid-term College picnic received a rave mention in the *Record* for November 1930.

Great preparation (that) had been made by Sister White and the kitchen staff for the

> picnic dinner. The spirit of festivity permeated the whole place and it refused to be damped when Wednesday morning dawned a sickly grey and the earth was heavily blanketed with cloud (Hay, *AR,* November 3, 1930, p. 4).

On their return trip one of the trucks overturned throwing "many occupants" on to the road. Miraculously, nobody was hurt. The *Record* writer, Dorothy Hite, gave thanks for a "remarkable demonstration of God's protecting care" (Hite, *AR,* September 16, 1929, p. 3).

6. The Society's examiner, Mr W. Reines, was reported to have been "astounded by the high standard of swimming and life-saving at the College." The *Newcastle Morning Herald* stated: "'It is most unusual for one batch of candidates to gain fifteen awards of merit.' said Mr Reines. 'To gain this award one has to swim 600 yards in twenty minutes while fully dressed...[he] timed one young man to do fifty yards in 24 4/5 seconds,--better time than that which usually wins the Northern District Championship'" ("Education..." *AR,* June 10, 1935, p. 7).

7. Before Easter 1938, the faculty met to over-ride the observance of Good Friday, with classes continuing unabated. However they allowed Easter Monday to be celebrated with a picnic at Dora Creek. (*AMCFM,* March 16, 1938; April 20, 1938) The faculty suggested a ladies swimming pool, but this radical idea lapsed (*AMCFM,* September 21, 1938).

8. Among these lifestyles, as warned against by Ellen White but *not* now regarded by a majority of Adventists as moral or health risk behaviours, were the following activities: attending opera, wearing fancy ribbons, playing tennis, using cosmetics, attending the circus, bowling, unchaperoned dating, playing chess and playing cards (Godfrey, 1997, p. 7).

9. In 1982, a Church pastor attempted to research the relationship between Adventists' spiritual satisfaction and their perceived aerobic fitness (See Chamberlain, M.L. (1982) "The Effects of Aerobic Fitness on the Well-being of Members of the Adventist Church" MA project (Thesis) Andrews University).

Chapter 16

The evolution of a music culture and its revisioning with community welfare in the context of good media public relations

16.1 Introduction: The Ellen White model for good music

The Adventist culture of music and voice, in particular singing, has been an effective evangelistic tool in the eyes of the College and the Church. But it has also been used in an entrepreneurial manner to advertise the legitimacy of Christian education at Avondale in some effective public relations campaigns advertising its flagship Symphonic Choir. An inquiry into this process is dealt with later in this chapter.

Doreen Fox, perhaps more than any commentator on Avondale, wrote in depth about the purpose and standards for music at the College. In describing its philosophy of Christian music she restated in 1957 Ellen White's observations of Jesus and his love of music as spiritual therapy. She stated that he "held communion with heaven in song, and as his companions complained of weariness from labour, they were cheered by the sweet melody from his lips" (Fox, *AR*, January 7, 1957, p. 2 citing White, 1959, p. 73). Fox further enlightened her readers on an ethos that was well ingrained into College life and worship.

> The ministry of music is no less effective today. It subdues "rude and uncultured natures", drives away gloom, soothes irritated feelings, and revives vital courage. Music has been given to us as a sacred trust. Instruction concerning its correct use is woven into many of Sister White's books; in fact, a compilation of her counsel presents the interested person with quite a deal of material to peruse (Fox, *AR*, January 7, 1957, p. 2).

Citing Professor Roland Foster at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music for evidence of Avondale's legitimacy in its education philosophy and immersion in sacred music, Fox added:

> Singing should not be regarded merely as a pastime, a hobby or as a means of personal gain. In its highest aspects it is a refining and uplifting, and an educative force, and if we fix our minds upon high ideals, and strive intelligently to achieve them, in improving our voices, we shall be broadening our minds and adding something valuable to our characters and personalities.

The School, according to Fox, "so very definitely established under God's

guidance", must of necessity follow "the art of sacred melody diligently cultivated". Again quoting from the philosophy of Ellen White, she stated:

> No frivolous waltz was heard, no flippant song that should extol man and divert the attention of God; but sacred solemn praise to the creator, exalting his name and recounting His wondrous works. Thus music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which was pure and noble and elevating and to awaken in the soul gratitude to God (Fox, *AR,* January 7, 1957, pp. 2-3, citing White, 1923a).

16.2 The College interpretation

In consequence, the early College administration held strong views on how and when even sacred music should be heard and played. College principal C.F. Machlan, in 1909, prevented any applause following a music rendition in the chapel and had the windows closed to prevent the female students from listening (*ACFM,* August 18, 1910; see endnote 1). Yet in Machlan's 1911 College year, music took centre stage in the worship and enjoyment of the College. Schowe's talents were featured strongly both at the organ and in other orchestral works (Robbins, *AR*, January 16, 1911, p. 7). He also busied himself in creating a choral group to perform various cantatas and other sophisticated works ("Avondale School Notes", *AR*, March 6, 1911, p. 8). But with Schowe's flair in choral and orchestral works, Avondale music came under increasing censorship from other conservatives for its apparent deviation from the approved repertoire of Christian works. The brass band also drew scrutiny from the faculty, being required to obtain permission before presenting any public performances (Hook, 1997, p. 90).

Yet even more conservative in the Church's standards of music than Machlan was Bible teacher, Pastor Reuben Hare. Considerable time was spent in faculty discussion in 1910 agonizing over "the Lord's will" in musical standards, but Hare's dissenting voice could not persuade the College to refuse hearing the performances of the best of the classical masters' works--a win for Schowe's broader musical ambitions for the College (*ASFM,* March 20, 21, 1910). The faculty also decreed to keep the wireless out of the College but to allow gramophones, providing they did not become "a nuisance" (*ASFM,* April 6, 1911).

From the early 1930s the purpose of music became a more serious consideration for the College student in both worship and praise. The arrival of a new music director, R. Will Johnson, immediately caused willing students to be tested for their

musical talent through overseas music exams. (Wilson, *AR,* April 14, 1930, p. 5) Prior to his arrival in 1930, A.F.J Kranz kept strictly to the Ellen White script when he wrote about the guidelines for youth for listening to music. He stated that music's sole purpose in God's eyes was for His praise. Musical items such as the "frivolous waltz" and the "frivolous ditty fit for the dance hall" were areas where "darkness envelopes" and "angels weep" (Kranz, *AR,* May 24, 1926, p. 2). Consequently, in the late 1930s any playing of jazz or ragtime music was immediately banned from College dormitories (*AMC Handbook, 1939*, p. 12).

16.3 The feared influence of Rock and Roll in College worship

The culture of secular music and the response by Adventism was not redrawn until some twenty years later when in 1959 traditionalist and associate *Review and Herald* editor Kenneth H. Wood wrote a scathing attack on the new music fad of Rock and Roll. Quoting an unnamed "well known and respected music composer", he complained that it was "a plague as far reaching as any plague we've ever had." Rock and Roll was a "creeping paralysis" and as "utter garbage...stupefies these kids". Wood argued that no self-respecting Adventist could entertain the belief that any Rock and Roll music would be heard in the Holy City (Wood, *AR,* March 2, 1959, p. 12). The Church castigated those who chose music with "sweetly sentimental melodies". These were "unworthy of the Church". An Adventist professor described it as "carnal heart" music--"sweet and sugary" and all too often heard in Adventist Churches (Hannum, *AR,* April 1, 1963, p. 11).

By the 1960s a spate of controversies had developed in the Church caused by the irresistible inroads of the influence of Rock and Roll style music, Country and Western or jazz. Given that in 1971 American Adventist academy music expert Paul E. Hamel was refusing to condemn jazz as unconditionally "bad", this already presaged the nature of things to come. The key to music quality, he wrote, was "in how it influences people's behaviour" (Hamel, *AR,* May 17, 1971, p. 6). Countering this notion, Australasian Division Youth Leader Pastor Clement V. Christian warned that the hypnotic effects of the Rock and Roll beat were anti-Christian and lowered the barriers to the moral defences (Christian, *AR,* May 31, 1971, p. 6).

A year earlier, Christian had spoken defensively of the Church's music standards controversy, remarking: "Yes it's that again. Dragging skeletons from the cupboard,

awakening old controversies, chewing over the 'rags' of the past, that's what we plan to do!" The arguments stemmed on this occasion from the place and use of theatre organs and the role of the gospel song. The College was invited to contribute at a Division symposium about the Church's worship needs at which they would discuss:

> Types of music suitable for Sabbath school, divine service, young people's meetings.
> Organ techniques suitable for church music.
> Types of electronic organs suitable for our churches.
> Music suitable for weddings, funerals, ordinances etc (Christian, *AR,* December 7, 1970, p. 2).

College Music Director Alan Thrift (See endnote 2) recalled that in the early 1970s two talented musicians, Wolfgramm and Tarling, brought the challenge of contemporary music styles to Avondale, being accepted ultimately by the majority of College students and staff (Thrift, 2001).

At this time, the College Board Chairman, Robert R. Frame, announced to his constituents a new set of Church guidelines for music. Quoting Ellen White, he stated in the form of an official Church pronouncement that music should "never compromise high principles of dignity and excellence in efforts to reach the people just where they are..." but that it should "be appropriate for the occasion, the setting and the audience for which it is intended" (Frame, *AR,* May 14, 1973, p. 6). Eventually, in 1974, College authorities would accede to the radio's presence in the halls, allowing it to be played "to enhance the residents' hall atmosphere and pleasure." This was a sure means of breaking down the prejudices long held against those forms of music thought to be evil. The restrictions for its use were mainly in the area of complaints over flouting the loudness code attracting possible confiscation or termination of the privilege (*Avondale Student Handbook, 1976*, p. 9).

There were now omissions that the battle in the Church against Rock music had "burst its secular bounds and now threatened to make secular and sacred music indistinguishable" and that it was an omen that "traditional church music seemed to be losing ground" (Mouzon, *AR,* March 3, 1984, p. 4). Such an invasion was considered an attack on the Gospel. Likewise, soul music, well known in black and charismatic communities, was deemed unacceptable to the *Adventist Review* for its perceived sexual overtones.

Television was considered by SPDSDA media director Russell Kranz as a big player in the promotion of rock music. The notion now abounded that "television had replaced parliament as the nation's most influential political institution". In a seven-

part series the Australasian administration delivered a substantial broadside at the negative influences of TV on the Church members. Driven almost solely by commercial interests, it was considered to have created a huge threat to beguiling and secularising Adventists and their entertainment standards (Kranz, *AR*, May 26, 1984, p. 6).

16.4 Worship formalism in Adventism

Despite some Church members obtaining security and stability in set worship forms, some of the negative trends apparently reflecting attendance drop were a worrying factor for Church administration. According to Oliver, worship should operate in a fluid social medium. He observed that as a result of the formalistic approach: "Adventist worship style and practice became almost universally static... Worship lost its flexibility, its spontaneity and for some its meaning" (Oliver, 1997a, p. 3).

Oliver feared that there was the inevitably of a developing Adventist culture of form and ritual which might impede younger generations of the Church from gaining a satisfying and embracing spiritual experience. Ultimately the method of inculcating converts to the church had been "primarily cognitive in their orientation to learning and life." This was no better illustrated than in the opinion that "evangelistic events during the first half of the twentieth century were perceived as a list of doctrines to be accepted and believed. Belief was primarily a cognitive process." In Oliver's view: "...cognitive people are normally highly structured people who gain a sense of security from the perpetuation of regularity in their lives." This process, of gaining converts among people who had a greater predisposition to the cognitive process for their religious experience and satisfaction, may have tended to perpetuate a tradition and mindset within their families for future generations, because it is within their culture to perpetuate routines and traditions. Those who were predisposed to structure and certainty, in remembering the past, are unlikely to stray unless a significant process of mind alteration or a deep yearning for relevance has intervened in the meantime. He identified the issue of rigidity in worship style and a lack of tolerance by Church authority in the past two decades of the Church, as a significant cause for casualty in attendance and membership. "The casualties of the conflict are littered all over the Adventist world – some still inside the Church and to our horror many outside the Church and Christianity all together" (Oliver, 1997a, p .4; see endnote 3).

The president of Walla Walla Adventist College, Niels-Erik Andreasen, alerted his constituents to the "kaleidoscope of worship experiences" in the book of Psalms. In defining worship as "an expression of thought and emotion in response to the awareness of God", (Gillespie, 1993, p.127) Andreasen advanced some guidelines of his own for authentic worship. Worship, he proposed, should be *"completely honest"*. It cannot be cheapened through material transactions or by formalisation. Righteous anger or expressions of deep need, thanksgiving or praise, through exuberance in the expression of "uninhibited shouting, dancing and musical sound" have their place. Worship should be *ordered* but not necessarily in a liturgical structure. It should allow the personal needs and "experiences with God" rather than "our feelings toward God" (Gillespie, 1993, p. 128). Worship should also be based on "righteousness" in our relationships and "justice" or ethical responsibility with others. Ultimately, worship is the vehicle whereby our faith is mobilized and sent into action (Gillespie, 1993, p. 131).

To summarise this section then, it may be fair to say that the aims and objectives of College worship and music have not changed. These have always been to glorify God, through Jesus Christ and to bring the worshipper into a closer communion though fellowship. But the means and styles of music have changed quite considerably. Thrift observed that styles have ranged from the traditional organ, piano and orchestral instrument backing for hymns and choral anthems to the guitar, drums and occasional arm waving charismatic-type responses and contemporary gospel "Hill Song" styles in congregational and choral response. All of these, he suggests, have been driven by the administration as much as the student population in the last decade of the twentieth century. However extreme variations of rap, heavy metal and other postmodern expressionistic forms, have not been evident at College worship programmes. He also noted that during the Ball administration era the traditional role of the Music Department as a vanguard of traditional church and classical music gave way to more contemporary styles in worship music (Thrift, May 2, 2001).

16.5 Music as an aid to public relations

In this segment I will attempt to chronicle the basic highlights of the College's successful ministry to the masses--from its public relations ventures through its music

talent. Except for their self-inflicted cultural exclusionary and anti-social policies the College was not averse to seeking favourable external press or public acclaim. The Church, observed Ron Lawson, while on the one hand, having pre-eminently disregarded secular politics generally, has a "burning desire for acceptance, for they fear that they are regarded as inconsequential, strange and heretical." Photo opportunities with senior government officials and significant political figures are recognised by the Church as a means of demonstrating that they are accepted by the world, and any acknowledged success is welcomed with pride (Lawson, 1991a, p. 14).

But this was a venture considered to be at risk from public criticism and scorn. The Church and College needed to court warily "the imperial power of the [atheistic] press", which it maintained caused hysteria and bewilderment through unreliable reporting. In taking the standpoint in the 1930s that its power for evil out-weighed the good, the Church took the position that the press's immoral stance moulded the public mind with propaganda rendering it unfit to be read (Christian, *AR,* May 15, 1933, pp. 5-6).

In becoming more socially accepted by the press and the community in the interests of communal good will and reciprocity, the College sporadically assisted various other groups, as exemplified in presenting Newcastle Hospital in 1927 with gifts and a collection amounting to thirty-eight pounds. The College entertained the public in the same year at an overcrowded local public hall with gymnastic displays and special music items that were appreciated by everyone (Osmond, *AR,* July 18, 1927, p. 5). The College band joined the School of Arts project at the same hall several months later ("News...", *AR,* October 10, 1927, p. 4). It broadened its sphere of musical influence in 1929 when:

> the band motored to New Lambton and played a number of selections in the park...The object of the entertainments was to raise funds to help the unemployed of Lambton and New Lambton. The mayors of both towns were present on each occasion and presided in the meetings held in their respective districts.

It received a pleasing compliment from the mayor of Lambton when he thanked the College band for being the first religious body to assist in this type of need (McDonald, *AR,* June 3, 1929, p. 4).

The Will Johnson term as music director in the 1930s witnessed some splendid public relations work in the Newcastle area as well as at College. In 1935, there

appeared to be a major breakthrough in social policy toward "outsiders" when a precedent was set by allowing eight non-Adventists to perform their skills with the College orchestra in the Elijah oratorio (*AMCBM,* August 13,14, 1935). Johnson's formation of a marching brass band found favour with residents in Newcastle with Johnson having created Avondale's first home-grown tune, the "Avondale March" (Band Correspondent, *AR,* November 28, 1932, pp. 5-6) "Death Unto Life", played at Maitland Hospital in 1933 (Jorgenson, *AR,* November 20, 1933, p. 5) and "Dauntless in His Service" (Hay, AR, November 25, 1935, p. 3). He was enthusiastically acclaimed by the College in 1932 for having presented with Newcastle artists for the first time renditions of classical music with "untiring zeal and organising ability" and for possessing wise and sympathetic leadership that would endear his term of service (Jorgenson, *AR,* October 3, 1932, p. 7; February 27, 1933, p. 5). By the end of 1932 Johnson had supervised a significant number of students with recognised external music examinations from Trinity College of Music, London, attracting considerable prestige for the College ("AMC News", *AR,* January 30, 1933, p, 4). He elevated music to a new plane of significance, as experienced in classical concerts, memorable oratorios and religious choral works now familiar on Sabbaths and at Saturday evening entertainment (Jorgenson, April 10, 1933, p. 4; November 27, 1933, p. 4).

16.6 Avondale carves an Australia-wide public profile

Not until 1947, however, did the music of Avondale, during the Murdoch administrative era, make a concerted effort to gain a profile around Australia *outside* the local Newcastle-Lake Macquarie area. A musical phenomenon, the newly formed eight-part a cappella Avondale Symphonic Choir, rapidly became a mission vehicle--if not a major expense item--and subsequent public relations coup for the College with non-Adventist audiences throughout Australia in various church and concert halls. Under the professional direction of "Professor" George William Greer, otherwise affectionately known as "Poppa Greer", a campus choir was assembled from auditions by volunteers (Anon, *AR*, July 14, 1947, p. 5).

In August the choir competed in the Newcastle Eisteddfod, achieving a creditable third place and receiving its first airing on radio ABC (Moxon, *AR*, October 27, 1947, pp. 4-5). It was a stunning opportunity to enjoin external talent from the College, not always Adventist, as in the case of the orchestral conductor, John Hurn

from Newcastle. The interest in musical development attracted up to an estimated 600 participating "students" in 1949 (Greer, *AR*, May 30, 1949, p. 6; Hook, 1997, p. 203; see endnote 4).

Some new and striking musical impressions through quality music productions now emanated from this attractively robed choir. (*AMCBM,* May 19, 1948) Under the new Murdoch social strategy, it became evident, according to College Bible instructor N.C Burns, that the Symphonic Choir, as it had become known, was dissolving prejudicial barriers in the community. Its public relations prestige was also helpful in loosening prejudice and purse strings in the Appeal for Missions campaigns (Burns, *AR,* June 21, 1948, p. 5; see endnote 5).

The fame of the College spread to Sydney. A recital in the Sydney Town Hall was headlined in the *Sydney Morning Herald* with the words: "Choir Showed Rare Quality"..."a choir of exceptional quality" ("Choir", *AR,* October 24, 1949, p. 5; see endnote 6). The choir now took on a media profile wherever it travelled. In Melbourne during 1948, it was described by one newspaper as "the human pipe-organ" (Ritchie, *AR*, September 1950, pp. 4-7).

In 1950 the northern visit by the Symphonic Choir, climaxing in Brisbane, received an outstanding response, amazing many that previously had little or no exposure to the Church. A senior Adventist minister claimed its effects were "immeasurable". A prominent Brisbane Presbyterian clergyman believed that people would have been influenced for the kingdom of God by the Choir's rendition of the most uplifting music ever heard in his church (See endnote 7).

Media music critic Frederick Rogers remarked in *The Brisbane Telegraph* that the choir performed "choral singing lustrous with a degree of polish all too rarely attained" with "excellently blended tonal quality, precision, clarity of enunciation and sensitive response..." converting trite religious songs "...into pleasant and often thrilling experiences" (Clapham, *AR,* September 18, 1950, p. 5). Following its outstanding appeal, the Avondale Choir contracted with Columbia to cut five separate records ("Avondale...", *AR,* October 30, 1950, p. 8). A second tour to Brisbane in 1951 brought a second accolade from the Brisbane *Courier Mail*: "Singing mostly without accompaniment, the performances of the choir, often divided into twelve parts, are not only an aesthetic pleasure, but a deeply moving spiritual experience" (WGCM, *AR*, January 21, 1952, p. 4).

The choir celebrated in the Newcastle Jubilee festivities, rendering its repertoire in the Newcastle Town Hall in June 1951. The *Newcastle Morning Herald* reported that its standard was such as to "do credit to any concert hall in the world, "having "almost flawless intonation" and a bass section "which one would associate with a Russian choir" (Greer, *AR,* July 9, 1951, p. 8). The College continued to receive critical acclaim for the rest of the year, offering the College the best press and radio public relations coverage in the College's history (See endnote 8).

Despite running the College into debt and probably being too ambitious in its tours, Hook agreed that Greer's thrust of his choir "into the limelight" was "making the most of the public relations opportunities".

> Yet he must be credited with sweeping the College to an inspirational high when there was ample cause for despondency over financial woes, building reconstruction at a snail's pace, and external recognition of the College barely visible on the horizon. College people sang their way through the Murdoch years, not allowing themselves to become pessimistic (Hook, 1997, p. 207).

In seeing the role of the press transformed from allowing it to mould Adventist minds with evil machinations and dangerous lies to a vehicle for benign manipulation, the Church now examined the possibilities of changing the public's mind to thinking more positively about Adventism. An Adventist press bureau was created on the presumption that Adventists did, according to W.G. Turner in 1949, "many things worth talking about...Dorcas work, mission activities, temperance and religious liberty, educational, medical and religious liberty," to name a few (Turner, *AR,* February 7, 1949, p. 3). Turner now directed Adventists to approach their local newspaper editors and load them with every item of Church news deemed relevant. Turner effused: "You will be astonished to find a desire on the part of many of these men to welcome the information you can place in their hands." Ernest H. J. Steed, an Australasian Division media director, often seen about the College campus, further legitimised the value of the press in his *Record* report, in which he quoted Ellen White: "I have been shown that the press is powerful for good or evil". Using the Roman Catholic Church, among others, as a standard of authority, Steed offered convincing reasons for the Church to now show its light (Steed, *AR,* January 21, 1952, p. 2).

Steed was prominent in exploiting Thrift's choir popularity in 1957 when it made its debut on TCN9 television. In a front-page spread of the Church's newspaper, he announced that the TV manager had rated Avondale as having "the best choir in

Australia" and that the managing director had remarked: "This is an outstanding Choir. Endeavour to secure another appearance." Their numerous performances in significant Presbyterian and Methodist churches now culminated with the crowning event of the visual media's acceptance (Steed, *AR,* October 7, 1957, p. 1). Again, in 1959, the choir excelled in its Melbourne performances with the NSW Governor, Sir Eric Woodward and his wife, Lady Woodward, present in the audience. A telecast on the ABC and exposure on 15 radio stations allowed an estimated 100,000 people to be exposed to their performances (Watt, *AR,* October 19, 1959, p. 1). The performance appeared to be seen by the Church as an aid to bolster its public relations credibility with the masses rather than primarily as a witness to the Gospel. To this end the *Record* headlined the event as a "good public relations opportunity" (Jones, *AR,* October 19, 1959, p. 2).

The new College chorale product of the mid 1960s, continuing under Thrift's baton and steady direction, gradually emerged with further trust from the Board. Consent was given for the Choir, now consisting of 55 well-tutored choral voices, to travel by air in 1967 to New Zealand. This was the first occasion that any students had been allowed as a group to travel to another country (See endnote 9). It was a leap of faith by the Board, given its tight control on students in the past--a watershed in the College's faith in its under-graduate product. The mantle of public relations was gradually handed to the entrepreneurial student body with its thirteenth year in 1966 (Steed, *AR,* June 27, 1966, p. 3).

16. 7 Public relations and community welfare

In turning our attention to another positive public relations venture, the Church, driven by its desire to find souls in need of spiritual healing, directed its attention to a more encompassing and concentrated form of social care. It cannot be overlooked that, in tandem with being seen as a sensitive caring church, Adventist administration had a continuing fascination for image making—being seen to do things acceptable by the public. Perhaps no better example can be given than that promoted by General Conference Public Relations secretary, M. Carol Hetzell. Her professional and authoritative photograph appeared in the *Record* for the first time at the end of 1972, making her possibly the first woman in the General Conference to have her photograph published in the Australian Church paper. The announcement indicated

that she was clearly attempting to change the perception held by the world that Adventism was unknown for being empathetic and understanding of the human condition.

In Hetzell's hard-hitting remarks to the Australian Church about its relationship to the community, she attempted to begin a revisionist approach to its well-entrenched culture of isolationism and fear of the community, by stating that Adventism must cease to act as if it were outside the community (Hetzell, *AR,* September 11, 1972, p. 11). The Australasian Church's media director, Max Townend, supported her observations complaining that Adventists were languishing "in their own little corner" because the Church "doesn't do anything for, or with the community". Citing Ellen White, Townend wrote: "True Christianity is not monastic, but rather is socially aggressive" (Townend, *AR,* October 14, 1974, p. 13). Of the Church's former evangelistic social outreach, Hetzell fired a warning canon shot across its hallowed mores:

> We were not demonstrating what the message had done for us. We might just as well have been men from Mars.
>
> To pass out warning messages of the ends near approach is necessary but it is not enough. The people need to know something about the messengers. We cannot wrap ourselves in a cocoon of righteousness and climb aboard a sleeping car to heaven.
>
> Christ never separated Himself from sinners. Rather He mingled with them, that they might come to know Him and through Him, salvation.

Hetzell advocated that the Church should be seen to contribute to helping a hungry dying world. In making Adventist Christianity real and believable she admonished the Church to become more involved in "health and welfare activities, disaster relief work, medical work, and assistance for the deprived." Drawing on the Billy Graham strategy for its crusades, she further suggested that personal visitation and preparation was vital as a first point of contact for the instilling of confidence for the Church and its people (Hetzell, *AR,* September 11, 1972, p. 11).

This revised pattern for good public relations appeared at College in 1973 in its new programme for public social service and action through the New South Wales Civil Defence and Emergency Services to the local community (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 227). But the big push for public acceptance did not precipitate out until the formation in 1984, of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Australia. Included in its manifesto was the desire:

> To awaken concern for the very poor, the deprived, the sick, the malnourished, and

> the victims of natural and man-made disasters...
>
> To develop plans and policies that not only meet emergency needs, but also seek to put in place programs that will provide long-term solutions...
>
> To seek co-operation with denominations, philanthropic organisations, government agencies...
>
> To communicate those Christian values which the Church holds by its very nature without using them as criteria for the giving of aid (General Conference Policy 1987-1988, pp. 201.202; Dunton, Buldur, et. al. (eds.) 1990, pp. 145-6).

The General Conference President, Jan Paulsen, suggested in 2000 that Adventism now had a distinguished history in assisting the sick and suffering in the local and global community. The reason, as stated, was an Adventist foundation based on Christ's interactions with his people:

> ... Jesus in his public ministry did not present a choice between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger; between being healed and being eternally saved; between being lifted up from deprivation and alienation and being offered eternal life. Neither must the church in its mission be caught between false choices (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p.145).

Paulsen reminded the Church that it should be constantly constrained by Christ's universal words for Christendom: "Anything you did for one of my brothers, however humble, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40). He asserted that in obeying Jesus' directive, the Adventist concept of the wholeness of men endorses the importance that eternal and temporal needs "mutually support and strengthen each other in an upward spiral of increased concern for both" (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p.145).

In an Australian National Church Life Survey (NCLS) conducted in 1991, with the exception of the Lutherans, Adventists, with their 37% uncertainty as to the balance of their evangelistic and social responsibilities, were the least sure of all denominations about their priorities. Other denominations, particularly the Pentecostal groups, appeared to place greater urgency on their commitment to evangelism than Adventists (Kaldor, et. al, 1994, p. 63). But for Adventists, it would appear that the quest was to find a happy balance. John Stott incisively remarked: Words without actions lack credibility. Actions without words lack clarity (Kaldor, et. al. 1994, p. 63).

Paulsen applauded the Church's emergence into "community life", a direction that Avondale had been focusing on in the last decade of the twentieth century. On visiting the South Pacific in 2001, he endorsed the revisioned focus of Avondale in stating: "Go out into the world. *Make all kinds of contacts*. Look for all the signs and

be responsive to them. Be creative. Be strong." In being supported by the Solomon Islands Anglican Church Bishop for his stand as an international church leader, Paulsen "challenged *all Christians to creatively work toward reconciliation* without resorting to violence" (Manners, AR, March 17, 2001, p. 5; emphasis mine). In a future chapter I will expand on this theme of a revisioned College ethos in context to social responsibility in mission.

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1. Machlan appeared to exercise considerable censorship as the president of the Avondale orchestra, although not necessarily its conductor (Hook, 1997, p. 90).

2. Alan George Thrift was chairman of the College Music Department from 1957-1990 and became the second longest serving member of any faculty in the College's history.

3. Surprisingly, the Adventist Church provided only slightly above average satisfaction in preaching and music according to the NCLS with 81% compared to the average of 78% in other churches. (Kaldor, Bellamy, Powell, Correy, and Castle, 1994, p. 168) The charismatic Pentecostal churches offered most satisfaction with an average of 92%. When asked about their positivity on congregational life, only 11% of Adventists felt excited compared to 33% in Pentecostal oriented churches. This was offset somewhat by Adventists scoring highest in positive feelings through their church's involvement. The significance of the act of worship by Adventists was not particularly strong (18%) when compared to other churches, but spiritual nurture was rated third highest among the churches with only the Westminster Presbyterians (78%), and the Christian Revival Crusade (69%), scoring higher (Kaldor, Bellamy, Powell, Correy, and Castle, 1994, p.187).

4. The advent of a higher-profiled and more professional music programme moved the College to spend money on a new grand piano and carpet for the music hall, new theatre seats and a sound shell for the chapel and the introduction of conducting classes for ministerial students (Hook, 1997, p. 204).

5. The College looked further afield for recognition, including the presentation of display items at the Science Centre Exhibition in the Sydney Town Hall (*AMCBM,* June 17, 1948). As a local community gesture, it gave favourable consideration in 1948 to granting land for the Ambulance brigade to build a depot (*AMCBM,* October 26, 1948).

6. The College was also looking further afield by opening its frugal coffers to the local young farmers club which received two guineas donation from the Board in 1948 (*AMCBM,* April 21, 1948) and in 1950, offering a young pedigree bull to the United Protestant Association at Wallsend (*AMCBM,* March 15, 1950).

7. The musical advisor to the ABC in Brisbane, Dr Dally Scarlett, was reported as saying: "I have heard some great choral singing of this order in my lifetime—but not in this country." In that vein he continued to extol the choir to the Mayor of Brisbane, informing him: "I speak quite seriously when I say that it would be of immense benefit to the choral music of Brisbane if Mr Greer and the choir would give demonstrations in the City Hall every day for a month." (Clapham, *AR,* September 18, 1950, p. 5).

8. A recording of the Symphonic Choir was laid by Columbia recordings and released in 1952, whereby it later received a further airing on Australian ABC radio (Greer, *AR,* May 19, 1952, p. 4).

9. The cost of the visit would be considerable, $8,125 of which the tickets would be $5,625 (*ACBM,* November 9, 1966).

Chapter 17

Audio, visual and print media dilemmas

17.1 The initial fear and loathing for film

The media, via film, TV and print, experienced a rocky, and in early times, vitriolic existence with the Church hierarchy. If the visual sense is responsible for up to ninety percent (Reynaud, 1999, p. 7) of learning in the medium of celluloid then the Adventist Church and other Protestant Evangelical groups knew something, with just cause, when they were admonished by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that by contemplating and watching things, people are at risk of experiencing attitudinal change. Therefore, with the increasing popularity of the motion picture, culminating with television and the Internet, the Church was destined to encounter a prolonged assault upon its secluded culture (See endnote 1).

If Adventism was virtually silent on the incidence and evils of the social effects of a Great Depression, unlike the Australian Protestant Churches, (Hansen, 1978, p. 203) the evils of attending movie theatres were hotly declared when first raised publicly in 1920 by Church administrators, as illustrated earlier in chapter 10. For them, the subject was unequivocally a *fait accompli.* While Adventist administrators were castigating Church members for thinking about attending the movies in earlier decades some of the Australian mainstream Protestant churches were experimenting with showing appropriate movies in their churches as a substitute for their Sunday evening sermon. In most instances it did not have the desired effect of drawing the fringe element or non-attenders to new spiritual awareness, or the desire to attend more regularly (Hansen, 1978, pp. 139-144).

The advent of the moving picture would have its way with Adventism eventually, however. The Australian Union Conference commissioned its first film, titled "Cannibals and Christians", to be shown to College students in 1929. The film highlighted a 2,400 km tour of the Church's missionary ketch, "Melanesia", around South Pacific Island mission endeavours (Powrie, *AR,* September 2, 1929). The Church's position seemed from the beginning to be more concerned with the immoral acts, so named than the violence against people and property, the implication being

that Adventists were in less danger to their souls through countenancing a murder than through premarital sexual intercourse (See Reynaud, 1999, p. 76).

The General Conference entered the fray with a concession that: "Pictures are not wrong merely because they move...There is legitimate use of motion pictures for purposes of education, enlightenment and recreation." But then it offered this encyclical:

> Theatrical films are evil in their influence, and consequently unacceptable, because they confuse the thinking of our people regarding the Seventh-day Adventist attitude toward the theatre, the opera and novel reading; because they create an appetite for emotional reaction that can be satisfied only by further indulgence; and because they make an unwarranted play upon the emotions. This is wrong, because emotional stimulation without appropriate action is destructive to character development. Pictures which play upon the emotions create an appetite for the sensational, causing the individual to live in the realm of the unreal, destroying responsiveness to duty, and resulting in emotional instability (Pronouncement, *AR*, July 4, 1938, pp. 1-2).

The Church decreed that from among its list of "unacceptable films" were those "popularised historical films which distort facts of history and pervert truth, or which present scenes of cruelty and bloodshed" and those "portraying Christ and inspired men" (Pronouncement *AR*, July 4, 1938, pp. 1-2). Less than twenty years later the Australasian Church newspaper would emblazon a major headline on page 1 in 1956 that "People are Hungry for Religious Films" ("People...", *AR*, October 1, 1956, p. 1). Wilcox's crusade did not abate in the shadow of a far more serious threat to the stability of the Church in 1939 when it was just four months away from the declaration of war. But this time, among the theatre, movie, ball game, and worldly party, he added the public bathing resort to the evil venues. In another cover page article of the Australasian Church press he published a litany of condemnation about the obscene pictures greeting the believers' eyes

> at every turn—in the picture magazine, on the billboard, in advertisements of various kinds. Satan is seeking through these means to turn our minds from God. We cannot afford to contemplate pictures of this character. By beholding we shall become changed.

His attack, presumably designed to cause Adventists to shrink away from further social engagement or public exposure, spread to "the great many stories printed in books and magazines (that) appeal to the sex impulse" and the radio's "soul-corrupting theatricals, sordid family experiences and unholy love expressed in jazz music" (Wilcox, *AR*, November 20, 1939, p. 1).

At Avondale, visitation to the Newcastle picture theatre and travelling into the hours of the Sabbath following faculty warnings attracted a dismissal notice for several College students in 1941 (*AMCFM,* April 6, 1941). The College now decided to select some of its responsible students to do their policing. Carefully chosen "prefects" reported to the faculty on "associations of the opposite sex" and "issue warnings" but without executive powers (*AMCFM,* April 9, 1941). This move, as it turned out, was fraught with danger. Within a month, the first recorded criticism from students was reported through several prefects that the faculty had lowered the College standards by showing sub-standard films (probably war newsreels) in the chapel (*AMCFM,* May 6, 1941).

17.2 Tensions over radio

The use of the radio, especially the service broadcast by mainstream Australian churches, was engaged in during the mid-1920s. But the enchantment was not considered to be beneficial by the clergy. Some considered it "a disintegrating force" because it did not contribute to the "warmth, heartiness and fellowship that go to make up a church" (*Australian Baptist*, July 6, 1926, p. 4). Generally the Protestant denominations had difficulty during the 1930s in determining the positive value of radio. On the other hand the Roman Catholic hierarchy seized on the opportunity proactively, developing two radio stations of its own in Sydney during the 1920s (Hansen, 1978, pp.147-148).

Avondale faculty resistance to radios, however, persisted for many years continuing long after World War II, but allowances were made following students' persistent requests to tune in to the European unrest over Hitler's ambitions in 1939. As late as 1934, F.M. Wilcox had informed the flock that listening to radios was the great threat to the sanctity of the Sabbath and should be closely monitored every other day (Wilcox, *AR,* August 13, 1934, pp. 1-2). Again in 1936 the *Record* attacked the two evils of the age, the motorcar and the radio. The unnamed author remarked, "if we are not careful, the radio will turn our homes into theatres and minstrel shows of a cheap and sordid kind". The author promoted the view that dances in homes or theatre attendance was so depraved that after "faithful labour be put forth to reclaim such individuals from the errors of their way if this proves unsuccessful they be dismissed from church membership" ("Denominational Standards", *AR,* February 10, 1936, pp.

1-2).

The radio was again given a two page front cover spread in 1937. Wilcox admonished his *Record* readers with the authority of his own personal convictions: "I would not listen to popular comedians who might pose as Negroes or otherwise, or to other theatrical performances" (Wilcox, AR, October 25, 1937, p. 1). And again two years later he lamented: "We are convinced that great evil is resulting from the use of the radio" (Wilcox, *AR,* May 29, 1939, p. 15). At College, standards were discussed among students in 1937 ranging from heart-to-heart talks about "Honourable Manhood" and "Beautiful Girlhood" to "What can we do to prevent the world from entering the home through the radio?" and "Is it right to dramatise and costume at Seventh-day Adventist gatherings?" (Minchin, *AR,* November 22, 1937, p. 6)

17.3 The War brings revision to attitudes over communication technologies

As in the revision of College attitudes to sport, World War II was a powerful factor in causing Church administrators and departmental directors to reject their own former authoritarian and controlling positions on the modern visual technology of filmmaking. Having been previously condemned as a device of Satan, including the production of religious films, the General Conference produced in 1946 a "revolutionary" tool for evangelists--Bible-based historic religious films. These were proclaimed as a kosher method for promoting the Adventist gospel ("Of Interest..." *AR,* August 19, 1946, p. 2).

By 1953, the Church was being softened up to the management of TV for its own ends. The Australasian Division secretary, H.G. Moulds, gave direction to the Church on how it could be involved in setting national guidelines through a royal commission into public viewing. The Church advocated that "religious programmes be approved on the basis of merit rather than numerical strength and influence of any particular body of Christians" (Moulds, *AR,* July 13, 1953, p. 5).

Australasian Church leaders had, by 1954, accepted the inevitability of radios and TVs in the homes of the Church members as the conduit for the most effective recent news and views (Editor, *AR,* January 4, 1954, p. 1). The Avondale Board Chairman elect, Walter Scragg, prepared the Australian Church in the use of television, stating

on page one of the Church's Australian newspaper:

> Undoubtedly one of the means that God has given to us to spread the message of God's love to a perishing world is the new wonder, television. This enthralling new agency is already resulting in people taking their stand for present truth (Scragg, *AR,* June 17, 1957, p. 1).

Again in 1959, he wrote concerning the importance of the usage of modern communication technology and of the changes in the Church's sociocultural standards about the use of radios:

> Old ideas are changing and it is becoming more and more difficult to reach the millions with the saving message of God's love...Peoples thinking habits have changed too and what suited twenty years ago does not necessarily suit today (Scragg, *AR,* February 23, 1959, p. 5).

Scragg and others, in attempting to utilize television for religious sectarian purposes, had unwittingly assisted in legitimating other programmes, including serials, movies and melodramas, alien to members' private culture and in conflict with the Church's sociocultural standards (See John W. Knight, 1978, p. 70). This technological push by the Church administration tended to sit uneasily with the medical arm. Adventist medico, Dr Harold Shyrock, wrote of the perceived menace of television in 1959: "How dare we, then, relax our vigilance by allowing them (Adventist children and youth) to come freely under the influence of TV programmes..." Citing Ellen White in the *Record,* he challenged parents to protect their children from this new invasion of the world (Shyrock, *AR,* July 6, 1959, pp.12-13). L.E. Folkenberg, speaking on Adventists' preparation for the imminent "sealing" for heaven, was also highly critical of TV destroying members' standards. "Is it not time that we awaken to the serious need of a genuine revival and reformation among us?" (Folkenberg, *AR,* December 7, 1959, p. 13).

Parr informed the Church that it was the "square-eyed monster" in Adventist homes that was a major cause of the lowering of Adventist standards (Avondale placed a ban on all radios and TV sets). The basis for all standards observation was the principle of decency, honour and moderation and these were ultimately personal issues. Little more appeared on the standards of television viewing until 1974. Now, Parr unwittingly began dismantling another Adventist taboo when he claimed that Adventists were being as sinful, wasting time watching television trivia, as they would be looking at pornography. An editorial two months later put these provocative remarks back into what by now was an alarmed Adventist membership. Returning to the subject of pornography, he described its ills, on this occasion, doing so without

any of the former comparisons to television (Parr, *AR,* January 14, 1974, p. 4).

Parr's sentiments about television were revisited a year later by a former Avondale student and teacher, Jim Ward. As provocateur, he was able to submit to the *Record* a critique on the electronic media under a new radical column titled "Opinion".

> The devil has pulled off an amazing coup in having the people of God accept these devices without question...
>
> It is obvious that the content of the modern media is not going to lead us heavenward. And if our salvation depends on having in us "the mind of Christ" then we won't want to subject ourselves to electronic processes that will block out the Holy Spirit while at the same time changing our minds so that they are capable only of sensational or "sense" perception (Ward, *AR,* January 6, 1975, p. 2).

17.4 Some unperceived threats to revisioned religion

When the effects of scientism set evangelicalism and fundamentalism on edge in the early twentieth century, according to Robert E. Webber, their "true science", rooted in the Christian conviction that there was a rational universe of order and design, found its "dualistic supernaturalism" in direct conflict with the "unitary naturalism" of scientism. God, otherwise termed "providence" and "meaningful purpose", was unacceptable to the atheistic theory of evolution (Webber, 1986, p. 173). In scientism was excluded moral absolutes, afterlife, or a need for the salvation from sin. The consequent development of a complex society by increasingly effective communication technology preluded the rise of a new form of "ethics" without an anchor to former values. This set the stage for Adventist scholars and others to consider that it was "conceivable that a tyrant or a ruling elite could use technology to rule the world" (Webber, 1986, p. 175). Seventh-day Adventism indeed predicted that a de facto ruler would one day try to dictate to this planet through a politico-religious totalitarian regime, but scientism in itself is not isolated as the principal ruling factor (See endnote 1).

Institutionalisation of the Church did not assist its administrators or ministers to seek after signs and wonders of a personal miracle nature either. In fact this was no better illustrated than at its ethos profile in sociocultural development during a hundred years of its history. Miracles did not appear to be sought, nor were they reported at Avondale although there was one report of a "healing" in 1932 by the

providence of God following distressing pain being diminished after a nervous breakdown (Warburton, *AR,* October 31, 1932, p. 5). Widely believed in the Adventist Church was the notion that "The Lord does not work through signs and miracles to convince men that He is the true God, yet Satan works through such means to deceive." The basis to this belief was set by numerous scriptural passages, including Paul's summation to the Corinthian Church:

> There will be false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing that his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness (Tutty, *AR,* December 7, 1942, p. 3; II Corinthians 11: 13-14).

That any depersonalisation occurred as a result of acquiring information mediated in the form of representations and messages of reality in the latter part of the twentieth century (Mackay, 1999, p. 99) seemed of little concern to Adventism. In fact the Church was more concerned that it had embraced this technology as a new-found powerful ally in communicating its own global cultural message to the world as seen its Net '98 and Net '99 electronic evangelistic series, beamed to Avondale College students. The Church appeared not to be particularly cognisant of the view expressed by Mackay that: "Communication is not simply the exchange of information: it is information attached to a personal relationship...Communication is something we do with another person" (Mackay, 1999, p. 101). Of greater threat to the inter-personal physical communication experience within the College community has been the media explosion in the late twentieth century and the exponential increase of information technology through computer based network information.

I have earlier described the history of Adventism's educational development as a culture centred upon "the message" and "the truth" at Avondale. Having been a culture of information that attracted sanctified and exclusive information for an exclusive community, Mackay's warning of the potential *consequences* of such depersonalising of information, at the peril of denying the social relationship significance, is of poignant interest. "We are in danger of evolving into a culture of information: a culture where information is treated as a valuable commodity of itself..." (Mackay, 1999, p. 104). In this case, as with children's electronic games, people are so involved and absorbed in the interaction with machines that they become increasingly isolated from each other, creating dangerous depersonalising and dehumanising of relationships and moral responsibility (See Mackay, 1999, p. 106).

With the development of a higher standard of lifestyle and socio-economic status, Adventism in Australia appears to be entrenched as a stable middle class community of believers linked to 10 million members worldwide (*SDA Year Book, 1998*). Reaching *all classes* of people is an increasingly difficult challenge to its middle class religious status because of an inherent complacency with their ultimate perceived mission in life. (See endnote 2) Dudley observed the fine point that: "...it is usually a mistake to think that the Gospel can be made acceptable to the world by relating it to their own finest culture" (Dudley, 1986, pp. 56-57).

The fundamental question remains for Adventism: How does the church incarnate the Gospel to a secular and increasingly scientifically controlled world? Just how will it now address the Avondale College motto of "a greater vision of a world in need" in the twenty-first century while hanging on to the coat tails of its nineteenth century culture? Niebuhr challenged the churches within the world of culture--the achievement of man--by placing this whole issue of understanding in God's world of grace, the Gospel in its fullness, in the following context:

> They will then in their fragmentary knowledge be able to state with conviction what they have seen and heard, the truth for them; but they will not become dogmatists unwilling to seek out what other men have seen and heard of the same object they have fragmentarily known (Niebuhr, 1951, p. 238).

The convert may have to undergo some pain through surrender and sacrifice of habits or customs that have a questionable place in the Christian's interests. Self sacrifice, shunning the vanities of life and ego and the acceptance of the humility of Christ as he dealt with others in the Gospel's context, all require perseverance through the grace of God.

The danger that culture-affirming Adventists may ultimately face is that of humanistic tendencies in their view of sin and salvation. Niebuhr observed that our civilisation is built on a legalistic interpretation for survival. There is no inherent mechanism for grace to have bills paid or the laws of the land to be waived. The penalties for non-compliance must be met or the system falls. But humanism denies the fundamental Bible tenet "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." In consequence it also denies the validity of the *grace* of God in acknowledging wrong behaviour. In the context of humanism's denial, he warned: "It becomes more or less clear that it is not possible honestly to confess that Jesus is the Christ of culture unless one can confirm much more than this" (Niebuhr, 1951, p. 115).

17.5 Reynaud's analysis and paradigm prescription

In the moving picture medium the attraction to the senses can be most compelling when the perceived reality of events and plot are identified as the viewer's own experience (See Reynaud, 1999, p. 7). Its primary function is not to educate but rather enculturate its viewers through their relaxation, into seeking after a life of consumerism and materialism. Reynaud, in publishing his College textbook in 1999, referred to the Church's equivocal relationship to film: on the one hand to revere and on the other to condemn the medium. The Church has attempted to present its side of the need for a cultural ideology that provides a better way of life through service and faith in God and salvation through Christ. On the other hand the tension is felt when television advertisers endorse secular humanistic and postmodernistic philosophies as being natural and "the good life" (See Reynaud, 1999, pp. 57-57, 70-71).

Reynaud provided a clue to the transition in paradigm thought by his implicit critical comments about the traditional sociocultural landmarks of his Church and Ellen White when he critiqued Evangelical Christianity in the twentieth century and its earlier blanket condemnation of novels, drama, movies, rock music and modern art. The media was a place where corruption abounded.

> The lack of artistic tradition among evangelicals is often reflected in the ugly architecture of many churches, where it has been labelled a sin to waste God's money on anything more than the strictly functional. Artistic innovation has been taken over by secular culture, and many Christians ignore or even reject the arts (Reynaud, 1999, p. 126).

He was more explicit in identifying Adventism and the cultural standards set down by Ellen White, when he remarked:

> While some Protestant groups are often self-proclaimed champions in restoring the fullness of the gospel, an examination of their philosophy can reveal otherwise. Theological aspects have relegated aesthetics to the fringe. The imperative of a Second Advent and the Apocalypse can make involvement in art appear frivolous for this world's art will be destroyed in the hell-fires while holiness becomes the deciding issue.

The Church's failure to reveal "...the fact that wholeness includes holiness and that *God demonstrated in creation a deep interest in aesthetics*," reports Reynaud "is a quality with which He has imbued humanity and in which He wishes to see developed in order to experience life fully." (Reynaud, 1999, p. 127; emphasis mine).

In such a critique, which appears to have been accepted by the SPDSDA

administration, we may see a distinctly revisionist thrust. Yet as late as 1986 the *Record* reported adverse findings on media watching by Avondale's post-graduate sponsor, Andrews University. Based on a 36 values survey, the university academics, including associate professor of journalism, Dr Kermit Netteburg, declared a further reason why the Church should shy away from television viewing. Television, said Netteburg, "teaches that salvation is irrelevant" simply by ignoring it ("Does Television..." *AR,* September 6, 1986, p. 11).

17.6 The Bull and Lockhart view of time and space

Bull and Lockhart provided perhaps one of the most insightful sociocultural critiques for Adventists, when in 1989 they observed that the traditional historical Adventist approach to artistic expression, by its very absence, might be in itself a significant aesthetic statement. Adventist Churches like Avondale, excluding the recent innovation of stained-glass windows, have traditionally resiled from the use of images and objects that might detract from the purity of their service ritual. Symbols of pageantry, statues of saints and even the cross, have been absent from Adventist places of worship. A pulpit, a baptismal font of sufficient volume to immerse adults, and a portable communion table--simple furniture--were all but deemed essential and functional for the Adventist service. This approach suggested that *hearing* the word was paramount and *visual* impressions ranked a poor second (Bull and Lockhart, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 15). The College Church, in remaining plain by other traditional denominational and Catholic standards, in 1986, nevertheless opened the door to a more aesthetic visual experience by the incorporation of rich solid Australian cedar doors and a set of substantial stylised stained-glass religious images showing Christ in various relationships with a society in need. It also set a precedent with its synthesis of a gold sheaf and cross on the front wall of the Church

In arguing from a sociological base, Bull and Lockhart proposed that Adventism, and we here include Avondale's former approach to a worship paradigm, evidenced a "preference for sound as a means of expression indicative of particular sensitivity to the modalities of time". This was interpreted: "To be an Adventist is to have an acute awareness of location in time." Wrote Bull and Lockhart: The concentration on the audible senses was an indicator of the superficiality of the "minimalist aesthetic of Puritanism" (Bull and Lockhart, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 16). Such a hypothesis

aligns with the view that Adventist worship, as a sociocultural event, was virtually suspended in time propelled by the Church's preoccupation for the imminent Eschaton, its 'final generation theology' and the implications of the Investigative Judgment. As a result of the exclusive Adventist perception of history seen as "a sequence of prophetically bounded time packages; they were almost alone in ...(giving) church members peculiar temporal obligations..." Time, whether a focus on a twenty-four hour long, seventh-day Sabbath, or a prophetic interpretation, was an Adventist's major vehicle for expressing an enculturated experience (Bull and Lockhart, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 17).

Another reason for Adventism's preference for *time* orientated value judgments and its disdain for *space* orientated values up until the 1980s was seen in a dualistic sense where it considered:

> that which is visible and tangible is, of its very nature unlikely to offer anything of spiritual benefit. Adventism's unenthusiastic response to the visual arts is ...a reflection of the general tendency to devalue those things that are extended in space (Numbers, 1976 p.129-150).

That temporal space was not the ultimate home of the believer is embodied in the often simple or plain architecture of Adventist churches. Such ethos extended to the plainness and simplicity of apparel, and in general, most surfaces and orifices of the body that might draw undue attention as an entity extended in temporal space. To align one's self to such practices, wrote Bull and Lockhart, meant that such "worldly" practices "locate the Church and its members in the static dimension of space and are thus liable to prevent them from moving freely from time to eternity" (Bull and Lockhart, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 18). They further argued that: "In general, Adventists have not been encouraged to engage in the visual arts for the reason that the decoration of space is a wasteful activity." Instead they have majored on communication through language via the Church's highly active and prolific publishing houses.

Until the serious arrival of the Adventist colporteur (door to door book salesman) in the 1920s, the importance of visual space and the Adventist artist had not been realised. The break with tradition by the Church's senior publishing house, the *Review and Herald*, occurred with the portrayal of several religious icons, in particular Jesus Christ, published in 1945. A distinct facet shift in the paradigm was occurring in Adventism's approach to space, heralding a new genre for Adventist art (Bull and

Lockhart, *Spectrum,* vol. 20, no. 1, p. 21). The more recent interest in the visual arts at Avondale, including the human body and the use of drama as a medium for communication in the worship service hour, appears to be another indication that the implications of an imminent Eschaton are being balanced off with an wholistic treatment involving a stronger identification with the whole being in a greater soteriological sense.

Reynaud has endeavoured to extend the argument for the Church's lack of interest in aesthetics by observing that, while in ethics and morality the Church has well developed codes, it has failed to discern or understand its role in clearly stating aesthetic principles in its process to make judgments about art. It has confused the issue by using a dualistic model of humanity borne out of its epistemological strength and has only seen art in absolutist black-and-white terms. In judging art he suggested that the Church has put beauty in the same basket as truth, rather akin to the scientist trying to solve a theological problem contingent upon proving the reality of God's existence (Reynaud, 1999, p. 128).

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1. That shift in paradigm facet is very evident today across almost every Protestant culture, but for the purposes of this work we focus only on an Adventist and Avondale theme as it strives for recognition as a respected bona fide denomination.

2. From the outset Avondale College authorities saw no aberration of faith in its embrace of modern technological change. In an era of increasing complexity and scientific application, there were significant modern technological developments in the Cooranbong district during the early decades of the twentieth century, the Avondale Health Retreat private hospital notwithstanding. Hook summarises:

> It was a memorable day when Cooranbong Post Office was connected to the Health Retreat by telephone in 1906, and extended to the main school buildings five years later. The electric light replaced kero in 1908, but it was not for another six years before electricity 24 hours of the day was here to stay (Hook in Clapham, (ed.) 1986, p. 157).

Schowe wrote of 1908 that the College bathrooms "were equipped with a constant supply of hot and cold water." Installation of electricity gave light to both dormitories and the dining rooms, "replacing the old tedious and risky system of kerosene lamps" (Schowe [1951] p. 29). By 1911, the telephone was hooked up to the College and:

> Novel conveniences proliferated - electric flat irons, a steam washing machine, steam water extractor and steam mangle were introduced in 1914. An electric vacuum cleaner and steam heating came in 1926. Two years later, an automatic refrigerator superseded the icebox (Hook in Clapham, 1986 p. 157).

The College did possess scientific equipment that was in demand by schools. In 1920, a request was accepted from Belmont Public School to borrow a Microscope (*AMCBM,* June 23, 1920). The College was excited over procuring a "full automatic refrigerator plant for the kitchen...one of the latest of its kind, [making] its own ice and requires practically no attention" (L.I.H. "Life at Avondale College," *AR,* November 12, 1928, p. 8).

3. Jesus warned his followers not to be weighed down by the dissipation and anxieties of this life, but always to be alert to the traps of this world that will catch you unprepared for eternity (Luke 21:34-36). Selecting the best in this world of relativity, rather than attempting to make black and white decisions, would appear to have more merit than risking the turning of one's back on society.

Chapter 18

The prohibition of alcohol

18.1 Introduction

In this chapter, which relates to the Adventist sociocultural perspective on alcoholic beverages, the official position of the College and the Church administration has been explicitly absolute until recently. No compromises on alcohol abstinence, or "temperance" so called, are evident in its published literature pronouncements in its 103 years of history (See endnote 1). The imbibing of alcohol, for whatever reason, unless included in a medical prescription, has been understood to be contrary to God's plan for a longer and more morally upright life. Alcohol was deemed responsible for crime, disease, social dysfunction and premature death. The Church continues to view alcohol as impeding the ability to understand, respect and enable the will of God ("Adventists..." *AR,* July 22, 1989).

But in the last fifteen years an increasing amount of evidence from scientific research has tended to indicate there may be certain genuine health reasons for discrete alcohol consumption. Adventist administration, however, has continued almost undaunted in its programme advocating intolerance, despite overwhelming anecdotal evidence that more Church youth and College students are crossing the borders of alcohol consumption on a regular basis (See endnote 8).

18.2 The College crusade for alcohol prohibition and its political gambit

Ellen White, likewise, took an unequivocal position on alcohol stating that even "moderate drinking is the school in which men are educated for the drunkard's career" (White, 1913, p. 436). Adventism's militant objections to the sale of alcohol in the first decade of the twentieth century, applying political processes, are well documented (*UCR,* May 16, 1909, p. 7; July 18, 1910, pp. 4-6). Following on from the Methodist and Baptist tradition, Adventism marked a strong and uncompromising stand on denying any positive use for alcoholic beverages on the basis and misnomer

that Adventists espouse "temperance in all things" --the only Christian way (Olsen, *UCR,* August 26, 1907, p. 8). As active teetotallers and believers in the evils of "the demon King--Alcohol", Methodists paralleled the Adventists in their war from the pulpit and through public agitation (Patrick, 1991, p. 185). They sought to shut down the "drinking dens" or hotels of every town and city in Australia (*Advocate*, 3 January, 1891, p. 333 cf *Methodist* 3 February 1900, p. 7; *Methodist*, 15 March 1902, p. 1). Like Adventists, the Methodist saw the alcohol problem as a threat to the sanctity of their (Sunday) Sabbath on the basis that it was "one of the strongest foundations on which our Christian civilisation rests" (See endnote 2).

Prior to the Adventist "invasion" of Cooranbong, the town could have been described as the "commercial sawdust fighting capital of Lake Macquarie" (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 9). Having evolved from the New South Wales Land Act of 1861, (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 43) until the early 1880s, it became notorious as a Catholic Irish stronghold of timber workers, bullockies and wharfies. Rarely did a day pass without a fight breaking out somewhere either in one of the three hotels, a wine bar, the streets or in the forests overlooking the community (See endnote 3). It might be considered unlikely that Seventh-day Adventists, knowing this, would have settled in the town. But, as stated elsewhere in this thesis, the town was a cultural shadow of its former self and the hotels were either closed or on their knees (See Chamberlain 1997).

The first strong Adventist protest against alcohol became evident in 1907 when the New South Wales Government offered a referendum to its constituents to choose the prohibition road through the cessation of licences to sell alcohol. In one of the few forays into the political arena, the Australian Adventist administration directed its members how to vote for prohibition (Starr, *UCR,* August 26, 1907, p. 7). Australasian Church president O.A. Olsen was adamant that sanctioning the liquor license distribution was an act of undistilled evil. He wrote: "Nothing but total extinction of this great giant evil can meet the needs of the situation" (Olsen, *UCR,* August 26, 1907, p. 8). In an editorial supporting a ban of all alcohol sales, the *Union Conference Record* argued that:

> Drunkenness with all its woes is found everywhere we go.... So long as law sanctions the sale of liquor, the victims of appetite can receive but little benefit through inebriate asylums ("Temperance..." *UCR,* September 2, 1907, p. 1; see endnote 4).

Avondale students operated with greater frequency in 1908 on various crusades in

the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie districts. Their forte lay in distributing leaflets on various matters of concern to Adventism especially in temperance, propelled by the pending new government liquor laws and the prohibition of the sale of alcohol (Allbon, *UCR*, July 18, 1910, p. 5).

Seventy students were assigned districts in July 1910, either travelling via the school launch to Dora Creek station and sleeping in their church at Hamilton before their assault on Newcastle, or travelling by train for Wyong the following day. Avondale School teacher Rhae Allbon provided a useful insight into this "training branch of education" in which on this occasion they distributed an estimated 14,000 leaflets and collected twenty-four pounds:

> Quite a number had not engaged in work of this kind, and begun (sic) in fear and trembling. Going forward in faith and knowing it to be the Lord's appointed work, they felt His presence and became quite fearless.
>
> The people between Wyong and Newcastle assuredly heard "temperance" that day, and are probably talking it still. No one escaped--railway officials at stations and on the trains, fellow passengers and travellers on the road--all received a charge in the form of the "No licence" leaflet.

Allbon was satisfied that the students had done a good work and had attracted the attention of "several prominent temperance workers" and others "who were quite in sympathy with our work". She recorded:

> As the workers met on the homeward train, enthusiasm overflowed in recounting the experiences by the way, and the voice of song awakened the echoes as we journeyed up the creek (Allbon, *UCR*, July 18, 1910, pp. 5-6).

Temperance themes continued strongly among the Avondale students during the year with chapel exercises including: "temperance recitations, dialogues and songs etc...." Temperance pledges were distributed and it was assumed that many of the non-Adventists in the audience would have signed up. Fifty students followed up this rally with a local distribution of the temperance publication, "Signs and Health Magazine" (Gates, *UCR*, September 19, 1910, p. 7). The basis for such vehemence against the use of alcohol appeared to have been derived from the notion that any person who consumed, regardless of the purpose or the quantity, was a drunkard. Such an uncompromising view is evident from Albon's attitude.

> We found on the whole that people were awake to the question of prohibition, and as far as could be judged, the majority favour it. Of course we met those who believed it would destroy personal liberty, others who took a glass medicinally, "but never got drunk" and still others who had much sympathy for the publican (Allbon, *UCR*, July 18, 1910, p. 6; see endnote 5).

During World War 1 Adventists appeared to be preoccupied in waging "War on Drink" in the local community rather than protecting their own shores, although a fair proportion of Adventists fought in World War I (Chamberlain, 1997, p. 159). In 1916 the Avondale Church accounted for the sale of 2000 tracts at sixpence a copy that represented 100% profit on the wholesale price of three pence. The Church was of the view that "there never was a better time" to present temperance to Australia ("War ...", *AR*, April 10, 1916, p. 8). The College had generally been loath to allow any outsiders to address the students except on matters such as anti-alcohol campaigns. But the exception was made once again for officials of the NSW Prohibition Alliance, ex-premier of South Australia, the Hon. Crawford Vaughan and Henry Macourt, who visited the College in 1928. They are recorded to have given "two most inspiring addresses on Sabbath afternoon to a very large and appreciative audience in the Avondale Church" ("Education Department", *AR,* May 21, 1928, p. 4). As a preparation for the vote on Prohibition Referendum on September 1, Vaughan told the students that liquor was "one of Satan's most insidious agents for preventing God's will being done on earth." Macourt "exhorted his hearers to use every influence and muster every energy to fight and banish this, the greatest 'body destroying, nation destroying, soul destroying, substance known'" (Turner, *AR,* May 21, 1928, p. 4). Following the programme, principal E.E. Cossentine offered a tour of inspection to the Prohibition speakers. It was recorded that they were "amazed at the scope of the work and the facilities open to students for gaining a practical preparation for Christian service" ("Education...", *AR,* May 21, 1928, p. 4; see endnote 6). The significance of World War II was not sufficient for the Church to be deflected from organising temperance rallies in Sydney by the College Board chairman E.B. Rudge and A.W. Anderson in an attempt to stop "immoral standards" from "threatening the future of the nation" ("Temperence...", *AR,* August 2, 1943, p. 5).

On the North American scene--alcohol for certain Presbyterian Colleges in the United States, including Lafayette--was never an obsession although officially banned. But there was a distinction drawn between drinking and intoxication. It was known that faculty and students alike became regularly involved in fraternizing over cocktail parties with the implied consumption of alcohol. While the official ban on drinking remained, it was eventually lifted in 1958 (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 156-160).

With the spin-offs of the Melbourne Olympics and the "revised" attitudes to Ellen White's intolerance to competitive sport and games, Australian Adventist

administrators heralded the virtues of teetotal Australian Olympic and sporting heroes to Adventist youth who might be considering a secret drink. The success of Betty Cuthbert, Ken Rosewall and Gary Player saw them used for Adventist promotional purposes in a new alcohol and drug prohibition magazine (White, "What Liquor...", *AR,* May 20, 1957, p. 5).

18.3 The subtle revisioning of a black and white case

The case against alcohol at Avondale and in the Church continued robustly on numerous occasions for the next thirty odd years. Andrew Cox reported in the *Record* in 1988, recognising that many Adventists had become social drinkers and that the single Adventist lifestyle "was becoming a myth" (A. Cox, *AR,* May 7, 1988, p. 4). This appears to have in some way pushed an alarm button for Scragg. Expressing his concern over youth trends in the use of harmful substances in Australia and New Zealand, he reiterated the Church's official position in 1989:

> We must never doubt what our standard is—total abstinence from all harmful substances, and the moderate use of the good. And we must never forsake our mission to those hooked by the wiles of evil (Scragg, *AR,* September 30, 1989, p. 2).

At apparent variance with Scragg was Coffin who now pressed for the paradigm of a values model rather than a blanket "thus saith the Lord', standards paradigm. His assessment, derived from a visiting American Adventist academic, was that "30% of Adventists were no longer convinced that the Bible teaches total abstinence". In an unprecedented manner, Coffin continued the debate, first raised in 1982 in the *Review and Herald.* He reiterated his perception that:

> "*the truth is that the Bible does not contain the type of concise and explicit directive enjoining total abstinence. Total abstinence is one of the number of areas where the Bible gives no explicit directive*" (Coffin, *AR,* November 11, 1989, p. 2; emphasis mine).

Scragg later affirmed the *Record* as a paper that at many times had indicated the direction that his Church was heading and that " the mission of the Church grows stronger and wider through its influence" ("Feedback", *AR,* February 10, 1990, pp. 4-5; see also Heise's comments in endnote 7).

The Australian Adventist cultural environment was assessed in some detail when a survey was conducted on its youth in a number of risk behaviours in 1992. By the age of 17, 67% of Adventist youth were recorded to have remained total abstainers from

alcohol (Hughes, 1993, p. 82). This is in remarkable contrast to the corresponding figure for the general community of only 5%. In the 1996 edition of *The Christian Faith in a Seventh-day Adventist Context,* College Departmental Head of nursing, Gwen Wilkinson, accepted that in small quantities, alcohol did have the ability to relax people from anxiety and was not a significant factor in causing premature death in Western societies. However the medicalisation of Adventist healthy lifestyle was firmly rooted in Adventist institutional psyche, with Wilkinson including in her advice the sensible use of appropriate medications (McIver, and Roennfeldt (eds.) 1996, pp. 166-168). Another admission, driving the Adventist position on alcohol into further ambiguity, came in 1997 when the executive health director of the SPDSDA, Dr Harley Stanton, conceded that despite the deleterious effects of heavy drinking, in moderation, it had some positive impacts on the prevention of heart disease.

> Alcohol lessens the cholesterol deposited on the inside lining of the arteries. It also reduces the stickiness of blood platelets, a key factor that leads to less blood clotting. In addition alcohol often relaxes the stress-prone individual in his unending challenge of daily living (Stanton, *AR,* May 17, 1997, p. 8).

Two graphs were produced in support of this news, further indicating that all cancers and coronary heart disease appeared to be reduced in risk when taking less than three standard alcoholic drinks per day.

Madigan, reflecting on a revisioned approach to various cultural practices at College admitted by implication that College students were no longer required *on entry* to give up alcohol.

> I've had parents who come to me and say, 'My Child has given up drinking *while* at College—isn't that great?' *We feel that we have achieved something when we hear that.* Perhaps if those students had been hounded initially on some of the things they considered were peripheral, we might not have achieved that success (Manners, *AR,* April 2, 1994, p. 7).

More recently, claims have been made by College students and graduates that the standard for alcohol had shifted from abstinence to having an appearance of abstinence and that up to 40% of students are now imbibing (Lawson, March 22, 2001; Kingston, March 21, 2001). Steve Thompson and others admit that Adventist attitudes toward alcohol are breaking down. This breakdown, Thompson observed, comes some 40-50 years later, following the rationalisation in Methodist and Baptist temperance stands, noticeable in the 1950s (Thompson Letter, 2001; see endnote 8).

In summary, the College and Church's position on alcohol, that any quantity was

evil, is now in an implied revision status. Assisted firstly by the medicalisation of the Church discussed by Bull and Lockhart (1989), the College would have difficulty scientifically in sustaining a creditable view, exacerbated by favourable reviews in the medical world, that alcohol in small quantities is necessarily harmful. Secondly, the propositions set forth by Coffin, Madigan and others drive the College and the individual student to make a private but more mature self-appointed judgement on this cultural standard in a biblical values context. And it is without the necessary implication that the Church or the College will remove them for taking a truly temperate approach.

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1. There were many examples of this standard in other Churches during the first few decades of the twentieth century (See *Bureau of the Census*, "Religious Bodies 1906, [US Department of Commerce and Labour, 1910].

2. Patrick observed: "Temperance and Sunday sacredness were central Methodist objectives." Indeed there remained a remarkable similarity in their major objectives with Adventist educational philosophy in Australia (Patrick, 1991 pp. 188-189). Yet, in one of the most stridently common bonds of belief and practice, the churches' interaction with each other, remained minimal and in strong competition.

Of note here was the work of another dedicated and less competitive organisation, that of the Christian Woman's Temperance Union. (WCTU) In confluence with Adventism's stand on alcoholic beverages and the preservation of a quality of home life, such common goals may have witnessed a complementary pathway. Ellen White spoke by invitation from the WCTU on numerous occasions overseas and at least once while in Australia. But if the activation of dedicated women to crusade against inebriation was an operation of commonality, its basis was predictably fraught with diverse theological and political view according to a 1894 report in the Adventist paper, *Echo*. Adventists objected to the notion that "they had no power to cope with iniquity" in an appellation to a civil government to create "pure hearts" and an improved "moral tone of society", and to a "petition that the law itself should be raised to the standard of 'Christian morals'" (*Echo,* May 7, 1894, pp. 138-139). Not being under Adventist control, and unlike the Avondale Health Retreat and the Sydney Sanitarium, the WCTU as a health institution could not be channelled and directed as an arm of the third Angel's message. Neither could it be trusted as a body observing Sunday sacredness and could not, therefore, lead people to a millenarian salvation of an Adventist mould espousing a new order of "the triumph of Christ, the vindication of the suffering saints, and the eventual reign of Christ on Earth (Sandeen, in Patrick, 1991, p. 243-4).

3. Alcohol, gambling, and other vices strongly pervaded the district requiring up to three policemen to keep law and order in the 1880s (Chamberlain, 1997, pp. 72-78). It was in some ways ironic that the Adventists should have picked on such a town. However, as already stated, the place was but a shadow of its former self with no hotels surviving due to lack of commercial viability or interest.

4. This was no more evident than in Cooranbong itself with the strange lack of a public hall. The observation that almost every other Australian village community has pulled together to cause such a facility, but the social exclusivity and insularity of the Adventist community matched with the awkwardness of cultural non-commonality has prevented this from ever occurring. In the early twentieth century, the non-Adventists' public venue fell to the lot of the Cooranbong Public School when town functions were organised. Beer-swilling

celebrations were becoming a fading memory, and the last remaining pub was either unsuitable or unavailable for town bazaars and dances. A request to use the school to assist the Belgian Relief Fund through use of the school classroom was upheld by the Education Department in May, 1915 (*NSW Education Department*: School File Records. Cooranbong Public School, May 5, 1915).

It was proposed that men who were temperate only, could serve justice. Those who imbibed alcohol indiscriminately were to be viewed as intemperate and immoral. Their judgment could endanger the security of people's property, reputation and even their lives. Alcohol, it was alleged, "dethrones reason, and hardens the heart against every pure and holy influence" ("Temperance...." *UCR*, September 2, 1907, p. 1).

5. Her reference to the medicinal glass has echoes of Paul's advice to Timothy to use occasionally, a little wine "for your stomach and your frequent ailments". (I Timothy 5:23, RSV) Adventists argue that this wine could not have been alcoholic, despite a record of the "good" or "old" vintage tasting wine created by Christ from six large stone water pots of water in his first miracle performed at the Marriage in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-10, RSV).

6. There appeared to be some conciliation to certain students caught smoking. On one occasion the Principal was invited by the faculty to interview a student "regarding smoking and advise him that unless he breaks this habit, he cannot be allowed to remain in the Institution" (*AMCFM*, October 17, 1939). Possum shooting and smoking attracted a student's probation for several months. Students caught drinking, smoking or gambling were expelled, as were indoor students who took outdoor girls out on more than one occasion. Theft attracted instant dismissal (*AMCFM*, October 17, 1939).

7. In a denominational revisioning context, the Avondale College Church pastor, Lyell Heise, wrote in 1993, that St Paul, with strong Christians was smiling in pity on the weak Christians bound up with rules and regulations. In contrast, the weak Christian is frowning on his brother for having no apparent concern for what is perceived as right and wrong behaviour (Gillespie, 1993, p. 220). Some pagan Gentiles were vegetarians, but the generally Christian Jews were not. Some of the Christian Jews were upset with the pagan Gentiles for not being concerned with how the animals were killed or how the meat was prepared. On another issue the Christians were anxious about eating meat that had been blessed and sacrificed in the temples of Pagan idols, despite it being nothing but the best in quality (Gillespie, 1993, p. 221). For some of the new Christians who had previously eaten this flesh as an act of worship it was now a hard act to swallow. A third issue for Paul to negotiate arose out of special days of fasting in the Jewish and Pagan calendars. Only certain types of food were eaten if at all.

From the maze of all these problems and the implications if some tough new church rules should emerge from an ad hoc church committee meeting, Heise points out that Paul covered these problems with the short but authoritative answer of Romans 14:5. "Each person should be fully convinced in his own mind". The ultimate key is one's individual conscience.

Conscience is an often-used word in the New Testament and it is described in several ways. One may have a strong conscience or a weak conscience. There is a warning for those who may wish to defile their conscience. Weak consciences are associated with Christian immaturity from lack of wisdom in the Gospel. It is interesting to note that Daniel wouldn't eat Paul's food. For Daniel certain food would defile him. Food offered to idols was untouchable in Daniel's eyes but for Paul it was now a matter of personal conscience. Heise observed that: "Both men are God's heroes, his saints. But they live in different ages and may fairly be described as demonstrating different kinds of consciences" (Gillespie, 1993, p. 223). If the growth and maturing of values and standards for godly behaviour in the Old Testament was a heart rendering experience, then there was the notion that it was even more problematic through contemporary experience for church youth in their quest for meaning and relevance in the life of the church. In their vigour to meet the challenge of new

experiences in life, an anchor point, security and trust underpin their ultimate desires (Gillespie, 1993, pp. 225). But this does not appear to be occurring for most Seventh-day Adventist youth.

8. The Sydney Adventist Forum (an ad hoc meeting of Adventist professionals and other Church members) accepted also that the alcohol issue is "becoming bigger and bigger". Medically speaking, there is evidence that "small quantities of red wine are cardio-protective". If being friends with "publicans and sinners" in the manner that Jesus was, then "aren't we going to need the odd sip?" ("Sabbatical and Sydney Adventist Forum-Together, again", [May 2001] advertisement information sheet) The context of this problem is lateralized by the position of the Church in its medical relationship with its hospital institutions and medical science. Steve Thompson argues that in this relationship with the outside world, the Church shows no time lag and seeks to have the latest technologies and to be at the forefront in the medical discovery of scientific evidence. He notions: "Perhaps our heavy involvement in educating health care professionals has provided a more direct channel into our midst for these developments."

Chapter 19

Avondale's standards for sexual behaviour and marriage

19.1 Isolating male and female affections in a co-ed school of adult age.

Adventism arrived in Cooranbong espousing a view that even within marriage, bodily gratification and sensual satisfaction were sinful. This Puritanical paradigm appeared to resemble some elements of Gnostic belief warned about in the New Testament, either believing or giving the impression, that the flesh or the body is evil and that to be tantalized by it is a specious form of carnality. Sex was a necessary evil and it was superior to live in the spirit. One of Adventism's texts anchoring its quest for "purity" originated from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. "For this ye know of surety, that no fornicator, or unclean person...hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5).

For some religions, holiness or purity was equated with celibacy, the most outstanding practised in the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church from an interpretation of I Corinthians 7:1 where Paul appeared to be advocating the advantages of not marrying (Dudley, 1986, p. 30). Dudley observed some literature in the Church espousing discretion when undressing in front of one's marriage partner in case bestial sexual lust might overwhelm them and the solemn spiritual bond be broken. (Dudley, 1986, p. 30) He contrasted this view of sexuality with the implied context of marital intimacy in Ephesians 5:25-33, when speaking of the "joyous symbol of the oneness in Christ and His Church." He observed that: "Sex is not simply for the purposes of reproduction but stands on its own merits as the epitome of holy pleasure" (Dudley, 1986, p. 55).

There is evidence of some attitudes of Victorian sexuality having its extreme effects on Adventism. Bull and Lockhart commented:

> Sex was deemed particularly injurious to the human constitution. Excess, resulting either from masturbation, fornication or marital lust, was likely to result in general

> debilitation and premature death. The sexual impulse, unless firmly repressed was liable to undermine the entire Adventist program for human betterment. It was redundant in the divine realm. The angels did not marry and bear children, nor would the saints in heaven. Sexual activity was, from the perspective of eternity, dysfunctional: it precipitated emotional outbursts of the kind that angels shunned: it reduced the possibility of remaining alive. It reduced the possibility of remaining alive until the Second Advent; and it caused psychological malfunction, which, as there is no dysfunction between body and soul, could also result in spiritual debilitation (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 169; see endnote 1).

In the first extant *Avondale School Minutes* of February 1, 1899, five men including the Australian Church president, A.G. Daniels, Avondale principal, C.B. Hughes, and three women met formally to discuss some sensitive affairs pertaining to College standards of behaviour and academic wisdom (*ASFM,* February 1, 1899). At this inaugural meeting, the school was delineated into the Bible Workers School for the senior students and the Preparatory School for the juniors. The meeting voted to "Endeavour to conform our work to the teaching of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy more fully," (*ASFM,* February 1, 1899) and the faculty must impress upon the students, both in the dormitories and the classrooms, the College's standard for student "deportment". They were not permitted to "loiter" outside the dormitory homes of the opposite sex and their visitors must obtain permission before entering (*ASFM,* February 19, 1899).

During April 1899, the College decreed that there should be separate seating for male and female students--the boys to sit on the right side of the room, the girls on the left (*ACFM,* April 11, 1899). A week later an outdoor strolling boundary was put under scrutiny, (*ACFM,* April 17, 1899) but it appears that the decision to actually designate the areas was not finalised until the beginning of the College year of 1900. (*ACFM,* January 23, 1900).

19.2 Ellen White's philosophy on courting

The first recorded College picnic also attracted considerable discussion amongst the faculty, decreeing that from June 5, 1899 onwards the "preceptor and preceptress accompany students to and from study periods" (*ASFM,* June 5, 1899). Two months later the faculty decided that a "respectable person" should accompany students hiring boats on Dora Creek (*ASFM,* August 8, 1899). The first students named for "repeatedly violating regulations" (*ASFM,* June 20, 1899) had a "charge" laid upon

them for "the passing of forbidden correspondence and (having) meetings at forbidden times and places." It was intended that their punishment would be to have their leave temporarily suspended (*ASFM,* June 21, 1899). There was some disquiet on the faculty, often balanced by an equal number of male and female members, with some of the female staff abstaining from voting to remove students. An alleged male offender was allowed to plead his case and the "way (was) opened for him to remain" (*ASFM,* June 21, 1899). Deep concern may now have been felt that many mixed-sex relationships were overstepping the bounds. The faculty saw fit to require young men and women to obtain permission to even speak to each other (*ASFM,* January 25, 1899).

Two years later, Ellen White found it necessary to cool the passions of the "colonial colts" planning on amorous connections with the opposite sex, with an unpopular edict. "Courting is not to be carried out in the school" (White MS 66, 1899). Gilson suggested that, on balance, Ellen White believed that fee-paying students should be single-minded while studying (Gilson, 1963, p. 143 citing White, 1913a, p. 100). When their minds are on courtship and marriage, "many students fail to reach that height of mental development which they might otherwise have gained" (Gilson, 1963, p. 143 citing White 1948, vol. 5, p. 203). These were Ellen White's parameters placed on those judged to not be of sufficient maturity, as usually indicated by their inexperience by virtue of their youthful age. However, age and character of the student in assessing their maturity for courtship and vocation, whether teaching ministry or other Church employment, could provide a positive decision for those seeking a relationship (Gilson, 1963, pp. 143-5, citing White 1913a, pp. 101, 174-175).

Surprisingly, in the Church's idealistic goals, there appears to be little or no debate over the planning for the problems involved in such a radical proposition as a mixed sex boarding college out in the bush. Economically, it made common sense (John Knight 1973, p. 153). Pragmatically, the men's and women's dormitories proximity to each other had to change with Ellen White deciding that the men's dormitory "must be in another location". (Ellen White letter, August 16, 1897) After further heart searching it was decided to have a segregated walking area: for the girls north and east bound of the College and for the young men, the opposite direction and never the twain should meet (*ACFM,* January 23, 1900; Hook, 1997, p. 56).

Early in 1906 another problem was arising between day school students and

College boarders. The faculty took the extraordinary step of having a meeting between parents or guardians of the village students (*ACFM,* February 11, 18, 1906). It transpired that male students were only allowed to shop in Newcastle on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays; Mondays and Wednesdays were allocated to females (*ACFM,* February 11, 18, 1906).

With almost five years elapsing since the departure of Ellen White, and the faculty appearing to be worried in the same year that moral relationships between male and female students were deteriorating, the faculty sought spiritual truth from the *Testimonies* of Ellen White. It would seem that they acquired precise advice about such matters and as a result came to the conclusion that "in our schools, courting should not be carried on" even outside College hours (*ACFM,* May 10, 1905).

Later, in 1916, Avondale College Board Chairman C.H. Watson applied Ellen White with stunning condemnation.

> Frivolity is the sickly bloom of immorality, and impurity is the scarlet sin of the world. As a scourge upon body, thought, affection, and life, it stands supreme among the sins of the race. It befouls and smirches the whole man, and the only antiseptic is a wholesome fear of God and the finest disinfectant is constant prayer; both of which will lead the soul to hate the garments spotted by the flesh, and to separate one's self unto that holiness without which no man shall see God (Watson, *AR*, 27 March, 1916, p. 6).

As one of the College's guiding lights and after which the College's latest and largest boys' dormitory was named, "Watson Hall", Watson as a Board Chairman, stamped his moral imprimatur on College behaviour in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. His dramatic admonition in the *Australasian Record* in 1916 painted a dismal and graphic account of an impoverished world of immorality and degradation at the zenith of "The Great War".

> The most horrible diseases, a growing traffic in womanhood and virtue, an increasing illegitimate birth-rate, the prevalence of pernicious literature, indecent photography, putrid pictures...incontrovertibly prove the general infection of society by the spirit of lust.
>
> ...facts which reveal a moral degeneracy which has 'put out the eyes of faith, chloroformed the conscience, shrivelled the affections, weakened the will, throttled heavenly aspirations, smothered emotion, and polluted the soul' (Watson, *AR*, 27 March, 1916, p. 6).

A tempering letter written in 1909 by Ellen White had encouraged those Church youth who might be contemplating marriage to firstly "know themselves". Despite her view that dating in her era was "a scheme of deception and hypocrisy", (White,

UCR, November 15, 1909, p. 2) she advocated that their chances of success would be enhanced through learning humility from the school of Christ, honouring their parents and respecting the wisdom of the Church elders. Advising females with matrimonial prospects, she suggested that they might predict their partners' respect for them, after marriage, by the way they honoured their mothers before marriage (White, *UCR,* November 15, 1909, p. 1).

Some strict and pragmatic guidelines were also laid down for the choosing of marriage partners and the "grave" responsibility of married life. In his address to world Church youth leaders at the General Conference in 1913, C.C. Lewis warned marriage was "no child's play". He suggested that: "If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is contemplated." It was better left until "a reasonably good education is acquired" in order to achieve a mature age-- 21 years for women 25 years for men. For marriage to be successful, the partner should be "in sympathy with one's work" otherwise it would only be "by chance" that the relationship could succeed. Furthermore a marriage should "be deferred until his business is fairly prosperous and a modest home--a cosy nest for the birdlings that are to be" had been established. Lewis was adamant on the husband's moral responsibility to provide a home for his wife and children: "No prospective father bird ever failed to provide a suitable home for his wife and little ones" (Lewis, *AR,* September 15, 1913, pp. 6-7).

The practice of faculty character recommendations for students' employment with the Church was sometimes used as a threat to students to align themselves to the spirit of the College. A Theology student and later pioneer mission worker in the South Pacific, Hubert Tolhurst, came in for scrutiny and counsel for his attention to his future wife, being singled out by the faculty, who: "Voted that Mr H. Tolhurst be informed that unless he refrain from paying such attention to Miss Pearl Philps the faculty will seriously consider not granting him a recommendation to the Union Conference at the end of this term" (*AMCFM,* 15 July, 1914; see endnote 2).

College student and Adventist teacher Wanda Boulting clearly remembered the scenic mile walk from where she stayed in her rented upstairs rooms of the Avondale Retreat to the old wooden Primary School building at the College when College Drive "was still surfaced with corrugated wooden planks." In her student years between 1915-1919 when she graduated from the Teacher Training Course,

> It was the practice for both young men and young women to line up by twos and

> threes to march out to the Village Church, to be present and on time for Sabbath School and the Church Service. The boys sat in the right hand wing of the church, the girls in the opposite wing and the adults in the middle. Few if any, had the opportunity to be acquainted with the village members as they were once again formed into their lines for the return to college dormitories and midday dinner. Rules were strict and if one was caught doing something not approved of, the culprit was called to the "Red Carpet" for discipline (Boulting, (n.d.) Supplementary Notes).

In his admonition, "A Word to Young Men" Pastor Robert Hare, a College Bible lecturer, advised his readers that in seeking a partner, to be aware of certain telltale signs exhibited by some young women. These included:

> the untidy dress, the spendthrift hat, those stilt-heeled shoes that compressed waist, and those cold hands. You may have thought of these things but they mean poverty, disease or suffering for your family (Hare, *AR*, July 27, 1914. p. 2).

Hare's pre-occupation with disease was linked to the upward mobile ethic of applying pragmatic realities in the selection of a partner who was both healthy and exhibited health conscious principles.

The Wood years saw a slight relaxation to the lack of courting opportunities. Students had been required to seek permission to associate off the campus during term-end break (Hook, 1997, p. 42). The faculty was constrained to review this painful and almost untenable courtship rule (*AMCBM,* August 6, November 23, 1925). Following the Wood era, former Avondale business lecturer Irene King recalled her year at Avondale in 1936. There were some particularly irksome rules preventing boys talking to girls as she recalled:

> Couples were restricted to 'parlour experiences', the official means through which students would attempt to get to know each other under the eye of authorities. This strict regime appeared to have originated from one of the early American principals. The rules had lingered and even now you were required to address every one as 'Miss' or 'Mr' (King, May 12, 1997).

At the other end of the spectrum the Church was extolling the virtue of a sacred and respected marriage in the context where the requirements for divorce were "so rigid that it was well-nigh impossible to bring about legal separation without flagrant infidelity" (French, *AR,* September 26, 1938, pp. 5-6). Even teachers faced difficulties with rigid social rules concerning the opposite sex, one teacher forced to resign in 1938 as a result of a possible miscarriage of justice (See endnote 3).

19.3 Student responsibility and trust slowly emerges

The consent for some female students to spend a weekend at Wangi Wangi was another small opening to the faculty's door of trust (*AMCFM,* September 21, 1938). However this would by no means herald the open door to attend Church mixed camps especially for students 'keeping company" with selected members of the opposite sex (*AMCFM,* September 21, 1938). In June 1938, the faculty made a rare exception to couples that they believed were mature and serious enough about prospective engagement and marriage and allowed them "social privileges" (*AMCFM,* June 16, 1938). If one were an indoor student courting an outdoor student, the original loophole of managing a shopping visit to Newcastle on the same day, was closed (*AMFCM,* March 23, 1923). The temptation to flout the "privileges" was too great even for the "trusted" in some cases. Two male students lost out financially, in 1939, when they exceeded their bounds and were forced to pay re-registration fees (*AMCFM,* April 12, 1939). A rule had been imposed in 1930 preventing any student under the age of 20 years from receiving privileges to court the opposite sex unless in the unlikely event the relationship could be proven to have been in existence for more than a year. Continuing to cite Ellen White as the authority, the faculty stated: "A youth not out of his teens is a poor judge of the fitness of a person as young as himself to be his partner for life" (White, 1930, p. 452, op. cit. *AMCFM,* March 20, 1940).

Azusa College, in 1940, saw its president promote similar rules but they were applied with less authoritarianism, placing the onus and responsibility upon the student in such a context as to embrace the idea rather than being forced at entry point to accept grudgingly threatening pronouncements.

> In consideration of others we will keep out of the halls after 10:00 pm
> We will not rearrange furniture in our room.
> Since we as Christian young people regard as sacred the social relations between young men and women, we will avoid accompanying the opposite sex except under social privilege conditions. We will not loiter together in the buildings or about the campus.
> We will uphold the standards of holiness in appearance and conduct so "that we will walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 753).

Standards were reiterated by administration for Avondale students leaving campus in 1942 but never with a similar appeal to social responsibility as practised at Azusa. Whether the war had impacted on the College to prevent shopping visits to

Newcastle until term end, the literature is not explicit, but the rules remained very strict by today's standards. Urgent trips were ordered to remain on different days for male and female students. Students were banned from attending the Village Church or taking part in the service except with the consent of the faculty. Visitation of parents' homes was permitted only once a term. Attending the homes of friends required faculty permission and a letter to the friend's home outlining the student's behavioural standards (*AMCFM,* August 10, 1942). The students' term end behaviour was seen as a "brief parenthesis in his school routine" and was therefore "a matter of interest and concern to the College", the faculty being of the view that "his name and honour were a badge of the College" (*AMCFM,* September 20, 1944). This remained an onerous experience if the letter of the law was observed for "note writing, sentimentalism or flirtation" remained taboo at the College (*AMC Handbook*, 1942, p. 44). In mid 1942 a College prefect took his liberties too far with a faculty member's daughter and predictably, his courtship privileges and prefect responsibilities were removed (*AMCFM,* July 29, 1942). They were eventually dismissed for failure to heed further warnings about their liaisons (*AMCFM,* September 1942). Later in the year the faculty endorsed the law that outdoor students had to live by the same code applied to the indoor students (*AMCFM,* September 6, 1942; see endnote 4).

The concept of a public apology by erring students continued in 1943. Four male students were reprimanded for trouble making and ordered to do three days labour without pay. They were also ordered "to make a statement in Boys Hall" (*AMCFM,* August 26, 1943). Another student, who later became an Australian Division administrator in the 1980s, was disciplined for spending time with a female student over night and the following Sunday morning, with the consequent punishment of 44 hours hard labour, one of the most severe punishments on record (*AMCFM,* July 7, 1943). The same student later transgressed in 1944, with three other students, for returning late and for "reprehensible conduct". They were "campus bound for the rest of the term" and were "required to do two days work without remuneration" (*AMCFM,* September 18, 1944).

Only in that year under T.C. Lawson's rule were brother and sister granted permission to sit together in Chapel (*AMCFM* March 22, 1944). In general, the faculty considered that:

1. The principle of specialisation was non-social.
2. Clandestine meetings were dishonest and suggest evil.
3. Absorption in love affairs militates against college purpose (*AMCFM,* July 26,

1944).

As indicated earlier in this thesis, the growing awareness in the 1950s of the humanness in the Church and its various problems was underlined by an admission of "prejudice, narrow-mindedness", (Rice, *AR,* September 15, 1952, p. 1) and inhumanness. (Piper, *AR,* October 6, 1952, p. 1). There was a curious summation by Australian Church radio speaker, Ross C. Piper in 1952 when he differentiated between the "hot sins" of passion which Jesus viewed with more sympathy, than the "cold sins" of "deliberate and calculated" nature--the sins of the Pharisees proceeding from hard-heartedness and inhumanity of man—and in the eyes of Christ, a "specially deadly" sin. Jesus viewed the erotic sins, according to the Pharisees and Jewish Church leaders, wrote Piper, with an "immorally gracious" attitude, incensing them to "perfect fury" (Piper, *AR,* October 6, 1952, p. 2). It is feasible, given the emergence of other similar views, that here were the precursors to more reflective and accommodating articles on the "how" of Christian lifestyle and relationships in contrast to the "what" of propositional truth and epistemic dogma. The Church appeared to now be slowly evolving its own brand of situation ethics within the sociocultural standards of performance.

19.4 The McDowell era: Heavy discipline for offenders

Yet while a gradual development of this trend was evident in the *Record,* the arrival of McDowell put any further sociocultural evolution in hetero-social relationships virtually on hold. Social interaction between sexes remained, according to Godfrey, "highly regulated" in the 1960s. A clandestine meeting was usually rewarded with expulsion (Godfrey, 1997, p. 6). The sexes were segregated at the common room meal table. Those who had formed recognised partnerships were able to dine together through the arrangement of the coveted "ticket tea" where they could meet three times per week. Otherwise according to Godfrey, student couples were "restricted during the week to the few hurried moments afforded by occasional unexpected meetings as they moved around campus" (Godfrey, 1997, p. 6; See *Avondale College Handbook,* 1965).

A rebuke was imminent for those who savoured a moment together too long. Senior couples were slightly more privileged but all were under the constant eye of

the staff and students alike. Saturday night was the only other time, when mixed company was permitted at games evenings. Godfrey observed that:

> Avondale College theology students had relatively few opportunities to mix with young people of different religions, culture or philosophical outlooks...Young Adventist ministers were educated in a closed social environment (Godfrey, 1997, p. 6).

The College faculty minutes reveal the strength of leadership from McDowell, who focused with some zeal in 1964 upon transgressing late arrival students or early leavers and who were without adequate reasoning. Monetary fines were imposed ranging from one to two guineas (*Administrative and Disciplinary Minutes*, May 28-June 24, 1964). A number of students had been involved in acts of "immorality" for which expulsion was the only punishment offered. Lesser infringements ranged from "clandestine meetings", "aiding and abetting" and "persistent untruthfulness". These would attract a "loss of privileges" including an embargo on talking with the opposite sex, shopping or visiting rights. At least one student was reprimanded for organising basketball competitions and admonished under threat of loss of privileges not to be involved in its "organisation and administration" (*Administrative and Disciplinary Minutes* May 28-June 24, 1964).

Fines of five pounds and free labour ranging between 10-24 hours were imposed on other students for unacceptable conduct. Further mention was made of "careless attitudes to cafeteria privileges", and walking "to Girls Hall together after the Commercial Fellowship Tea" after 7:40 pm. Two couples were warned prior to this occasion "to harmonise their social activities with the regulations". The infringement attracted a ban from being together for a fortnight and ten hours free labour (*Administration and Disciplinary Minutes* September-November 1964). However, the practice of inviting errant students to publicly apologise to the student and faculty body appeared no longer to be continued.

The courting of any female student remained at Avondale an inappropriate behaviour in 1965. The *Student Handbook* stated:

> Students should not allow their minds or lives to take part in sentimental love affairs. School is not a place of courtship...You are at Avondale to grow, not get married (*Avondale Student Handbook* (nd) 1965, p. 26).

Tension lay with ministerial students over the serious concern that the Church administration might withhold ordination to becoming a Church pastor if they neglected to find a wife before or after graduation.

Seen as a facility to sexual freedom, the motor vehicle was placed under severe restrictions until the 1980s. A student was for the first time granted permission in 1967 to own and drive a motor vehicle for "professional purposes", but this was rare. (*ACBM*, June 20, 1967) Cars continued to be banned from the campus or during the College year respectively (*Avondale College Calendar*, 1968, pp. 18-19). By 1981, indoor students were only being "*discouraged* from operating motor vehicles while at College" with the exception of "mature students" who could use one under special conditions (*Avondale College Calendar, 1981*, p. 22).

19.5 A liberalisation of standards and a revisionist attitude to the sacredness of sex

The 1970s liberalisation of sexual attitudes within Adventism and at Avondale could in part be traced to the work of C.F. Whittschiebe. Writing on Adventist approaches to love and sexuality he approached the almost taboo word of "sex", which for Adventism had the connotation of being "negative and coarse" (Whittschiebe, *AR*, December 14, 1970, p. 12). A "theology of sex" was needed, similar to the Church's theology on other distinctive truths, including the Sabbath, to roll back the baggage of Platonic dualism that had afflicted the whole Christian church, not the least Adventism. In a succinct statement through the *Record*, Whittschiebe argued that the Church had mistaken the scriptural ethos.

> Equating the carnal nature exclusively with "sex" and making impurity in this area the most horrendous of sins, has led to all types of austerity and asceticism. A number of the early Church Fathers viewed marriage as almost a degraded form of existence. Its only justification was the responsibility for producing children. The function was not intended to be a happy one, but a necessity, and only this objective could erase the possible venereal pleasure it provided (Whittschiebe, *AR*, December 14, 1970, p. 12).

Unwritten as it was, this notion cannily summed up a pervasive attitude from the Adventist Church hierarchy and at Avondale College. Wittschiebe also reminded the Church that the Garden of Eden represented, before sin, a wholesome physical relationship in a state of nakedness, and of being *un*ashamed--God's original plan before man's fatal error (Whittschiebe, *AR*, December 21, 1970, p. 10). Whittschiebe approached the myth of equating sex with sin applying the admonition from St Paul.

> Whatever one thinks of Paul, it must be conceded that in the opening verses of the chapter (I Corinthians 7) he deals in a frank and open manner with the sexual relationship. He advises the Christian couples in Corinth not to refrain from intercourse for too long a period of time, and then only by mutual consent and for a

> particularly important purpose. He does not recommend abstinence as a way of increasing sanctity, nor does he even remotely imply that the physical intimacy of marriage is in anyway detrimental to the spirituality of the partners (Whittschiebe, *AR,* December 21, 1970, p. 11).

Sex, he suggested, was not to be viewed as an item compartmentalised or detached from individuals. Love was basic to the naturalness of sexuality and without love sexuality becomes non-relational and selfish. A major Adventists hang-up had been derived from a connotation of "animal passion" cited by Ellen White in her *Testimonies to the Church.* Wittschiebe interpreted Ellen White in 1971 to have used this in context to lustful desire dominating the spiritual as observed in the animal kingdom. "Such a 'husband' gives his wife the feeling that he has married her only for her body" (Whittschiebe, *AR,* January 4, 1971, p. 10). Women, on the other hand, should see the sexual relationship with their husbands as a pleasurable oft-repeated event that occurs for the purpose of celebrating a healthy relationship. He argued:

> A woman, in turn, has no right to call her husband's normal sex hunger an "animal passion," nor can she in fairness depreciate the high importance of the sex relationship. Many fine and considerate husbands have been made to feel guilty of sensuality and insensitivity for simply desiring what should be normal. Immature and neurotic wives have used this as a weapon, or a fence, and have entangled their husbands in the quicksand of their unhealthy and severely constricted attitudes (Whittschiebe, *AR,* January 4, 1971, p. 11).

A remarkable back flip was evidenced under Magnusson in 1976 as a result of sensitivity to the austere policies in former student relationships instigated during Ellen White's stay.

> *Contrary to some unofficial reports, Avondale encourages association between sexes. What better place than Avondale for friendship to develop, both the attachment of lifelong "College friends" and the special affection that leads beyond friendship to courtship and marriage...*
>
> *Association between couples and mixed groups is encouraged in the following places and times... (Avondale Student Handbook,* 1976, p. 12).

But the invitation did not open the College to "improper" or "immoral" conduct on or off the campus, and the frequenting of dances, nightclubs or other "questionable" entertainment (*Avondale Student Handbook,* 1976, p. 29).

The pleasure of the sexual experience was made ever more kosher in 1982 when Charles Crinshaw, writing in the *Record,* under Garne's editorial consent, proclaimed from Genesis 1 that the flesh is in fact "very good". In this liberating report for many Adventists he stated:

> This is the guiding star from which any talk about sex in Christian terms must be good. The idea that sex is ignoble *contradicts* what the Bible has to say. God made the human body and he sent his only Son "to be flesh" literally. This means that God smiles on the body and that there is such a thing as the legitimate celebration of the flesh. God made us sexual. Sex is good and the joy of sex is good.

Crinshaw was careful to accord sex as having derived its authenticity within the act of marriage. Sex, wrote Crinshaw, was only "as good as the quality of love from which it springs." This was the love which Christ spoke of for his fellow man and was further described in Paul's dissertation on *agape* love in 1 Corinthian's 13 (Crinshaw, *AR,* September 4, 1982, p. 4). In the meantime, outside the College, the increasing failures of Adventist marriages, including those that first found their partners at Avondale, was concerning Church administrators, causing articles to appear with more regularity in the Church paper (Flowers, *AR,* September 4, 1982, pp. 5, 13).

The prominent Adventist author and lecturer on sexuality, Alberta Mazat continued this work, informing Adventists in 1984 that "God meant sex to be a transcendently wonderful experience for husbands and wives" (Mazat, *Spectrum*, vol.15, no.1, p. 2). Mazat reiterated that the prevailing platonic philosophy of dualism in which the body was viewed as evil and the soul or spirit good in confluence with the Victorian Age and Ellen White, promulgated the idea that any woman seen to be enjoying sex was loose and uncouth and that men should be restricted in their enjoyment. This attitude, he stated, festered a poverty of sexual freedom and creativity within the marriage relationship (Mazat, *Spectrum*, vol.15, no. 1, p. 3). It stemmed from the belief that God was so rigid that he had no creativity or variety in his personality--which is quite incongruous when viewing His creation (Mazat, *Spectrum*, vol.15, no. 1, p. 4).

Questions now appeared about the College's perceived decline in moral standards, in part precipitated by the presentation of a lecture on homosexuality by James Cox. Despite these lectures having been presented in conjunction with other ministers and authorized by the General Conference, Cox was asked to write a formal letter to the Church explaining his assent to the Church's standards on homosexuality. In his statement he emphasized the need to view all homosexuals in a redemptive and not condemnatory light (Parmenter and Cox, *AR,* March 26, 1983, p. 12). Cox seems to have been vindicated. The critic appeared to be silenced.

Magnusson's address to the College graduates at the end of 1987 emphasized operating within an inclusive paradigm shift, stating that there was no value in trying

to isolate themselves from societal change but much value in acting honourably with each other.

> We have all been drafted into the social yard and the changes have been branded onto our hides...The greatest single thing you can do for your church, for your country and yourself is to make your personal contribution to restoring morality which means restoring value to modesty and decency (Magnusson, *AR,* February 20, 1988).

To summarise this section, the relevant Church literature now indicates strongly a theologically based revision of the emphasized virtual relationship exclusion policy between male and female students. At the time of writing this thesis, the College and the Church continue to maintain, officially, the underpinning scriptural standard that premarital sex is wrong. The manner in which this institution enforces it has become increasingly tolerant but at the same time problematic. Avondale appears to have taken a more lenient and arguably more "mature" position in recent years, inviting its clients to make wise decisions consistent with their personal moral responsibility with the opposite sex. This is possibly due to its concern to attract more students to enrol, in turn boosting its funding.

Unlike its former stance, driven by Ellen White, that the College was not designed as a place for courtship, there is now no apparent instruction to discourage such behaviour. Indeed the administration now advocates Avondale as a great place to *find and court* a marriage partner. These factors considered, I would argue that there is clearly evidence of a prima facie shift in the former Adventist paradigm of hegemonial standards-based judgement, facilitated by revisionist thought and behaviour at Avondale. It has superseded the strict isolationist social austerity of cognitive truth, and now eschews a social basis for Christian belief, accepting that every student stands alone in the sight of God, ultimately, when making moral choices.

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1. During 1871, Ellen White, caught up in prevailing societal attitudes, made this amazing pronouncement to a meeting of Christian mothers. She stated:

> The artificial hair and pads covering the base of the brain heat and excite the spinal nerves centring in the brain. The head should ever be kept cool. The heat caused by these artificials induces the blood to the brain, causes unnatural activity, tends to recklessness in morals, and the mind and heart is in danger of being corrupted. As the animal organs are exited and strengthened, the morals are enfeebled. The moral and intellectual powers of the mind become servants to the animal...Many have lost their reason and become hopelessly insane, by following this deforming fashion (White, *Health Reformer.* October 1871, p. 121).

2. William Gilson, a student at Avondale in its second decade, who would later play a significant role in distinguishing the College and helping to steer it towards State recognition, was censured after transgressing College standards with the opposite sex. As an education student it was alleged that he sneaked out of College one Thursday evening and with another male friend, secretly engaged in a rendezvous with two female students on the banks of Sandy Creek. For their crime they were required by the Principal to read a public confession and apologise at both the girls and boys hall meetings. In return the offenders were given a reprieve and while the offences were recorded, they would be "overlooked this time on account of the circumstances and conditions" (*AMCFM,* 15 April, 1914). Gilson later wrote the first significant thesis on the educational philosophy of Avondale College numerously referred to in this thesis.

3. Problems in mixed social relationships had been looming for the music teacher R.W. Johnson in 1938. In August, his management of relationships in the music studio appeared to be unsatisfactory. Several students were suspended or placed on probation. Two male students were cautioned, being advised to

> be very careful in regard to associations with young ladies... if either of them be observed conversing for an undue length of time it shall be regarded (as) a breach of regulation regarding the association of sexes (*AMCFM,* August 16, 1938).

Johnson was asked by the faculty to "study the matter of music practice with a view to eliminating mixed practice during the evening" (*AMCFM,* August 16, 1938). The matter went from bad to worse. In what culminated, as a "dreadful miscarriage of justice", according to Hook, Johnson was sacked without due or fair process of justice. Hook's preferred scenario was that:

> Two young men, jealous of the time Johnson had to spend practicing with the chorus pianiste, fabricated a love letter allegedly written by Johnson to the pianist. They dropped their letter surreptitiously in the chapel knowing it would be discovered. Sure enough it quickly came to the attention of Piper, the principal, who fell for the vicious ruse. Immediately Piper traced Johnson to where he was milking his cow that evening and sacked him on the spot (Hook, 1997, p. 169).

Three Board members were assigned to interview Johnson. It is not known if this actually took place but Johnson was summarily dismissed with a month's pay for "conduct unbecoming of a SDA worker" (*AMCBM,* April 24, 1939). In an extraordinary turn of events, the board reported that Johnson had retaliated to remove all the band instruments from the music studio and that "the management of the college did not know their whereabouts." The Board decreed that he would receive no money whatsoever until he returned the keys of the music studio and the musical instruments (*AMCBM,* April 27, 1939). Of the dismissal Hook again records what he considers to be other irregularities in the fairness of College justice to Johnson:

> Furthermore, there was apparently no attempt to interview the pianiste herself. It seems no one rallied to defend Johnson. There was no court of appeal, no due process for grievances. Johnson himself later said it was the most devastating day of his life. He always denied any illicit association and she herself made no accusations. Arguably, Johnson was the best and most versatile music teacher the College ever employed. In retrospect it seems that there was a clear lack of justice in his case, he being discarded with such undue haste (Hook, 1997, p. 169).

4. Exceptions were made to the rule when one student was granted permission during mid-term to attend another's wedding (*AMCFM,* October 26, 1942). But a third student was not so fortunate when he was refused permission to hear his brother sing at an assembly hall nearby (*AMCFM,* September 10, 1942). The following year, under the leadership of Pastor E Rosendahl, despite his introduction of monitors to engage in night surveillance for clandestine meetings, (*AMCFM,* February 25, 1945) a significantly more conciliatory if not radical attitude was displayed. In reviewing leave of absence requests for weekends and term

ends, the faculty decreed that "There will be no distinction between boy's and girl's weekends nor shopping days" and that "No restrictions should be placed on lunch time invitations on Sabbath during vacations" (*AMCFM,* December 7, 1945).

Chapter 20

Tracing a brief history of College sectarian evangelism

20.1 The central doctrines of Adventism: Perfectionism through the doctrine of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the Second Coming

Avondale has always endeavoured to espouse a strong spiritual tone throughout the campus and to constantly facilitate the ethos of an all-important individualised spiritual fervour among students. To illustrate some of this ethos, William Robbins reported in 1911 that:

> The bands assembled in different rooms on Wednesday of each week at the regular chapel hour. We believe, as was expressed at the convention, that there is great value in arranging the student body in small groups where the discussions will be freer and where more attention is given to the individual.

This was intensified on Wednesday evening meetings where segregated male and female student groups would now meet for seasons of prayer and testimony, "in several divisions", to ensure that the student is "encouraged and strengthened in his school life" (Robbins, *AR*, February 13, 1911, p.7). Such ethos remained to a considerable extent at the College until the 1980s.

But to capture a cameo of an additional early distinctive Adventist sectarian zeal running through the Church during the 1920s and 1930s, the Sanctuary truth and its implications held significant sway on College conduct, whether by faith or practice in mission. As already discussed in chapter 3, both J.E. Fulton (Fulton, *AR,* February 23, 1925. pp. 1-2) and A.W. Anderson led the Australian charge through their presentations of the imminent arrival of the Eschaton. It was a charge heavily concentrated and driven by the distinctive beliefs of the sanctuary truth, so called, and the Investigative Judgement.

For Avondale College students this was translated in the third College decade to mean--"Tested, tried, in step, in tune...full of health, vigour, ambition and happiness" (Wells, *AR,* May 18, 1925, p. 22). From this educational experience in character development flowed the ingredients for a successful minister. According to one student, writing in the *Record* in 1927, the prescription for a candidate seeking ministry must be a person who had firstly accepted Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of

their sins. He must study the Bible, maintain a prayer life, and understand the basic sciences. In his communication the minister must employ simple language, exhibit pathos, be realistic, relevant and enthusiastic. He should be in good health, and be physically exercised. Above all his "impelling motive" must be to love Christ and man ("Education Department", *AR,* March 14, 1927, p. 4).

With typical ideological zeal, the student's passion knew no bounds at the College especially when "Big Day" (the selling of Church books door to door) arrived annually during the 1920s. Many students would awake at 3 am to assemble an hour later at the Avondale Wharf for the Sanitarium factory barge to ferry them down the starlit Dora Creek to the railway station. Students as prospective salesmen would practise their canvass on the train to Newcastle. The *Record* reported:

> With zeal and earnestness the contents of the books were placed before the people. Words of comfort, hope and cheer and the promise of a soon coming Saviour found a place in many honest hearts (Morgan, *AR,* January 4, 1926, p. 4).

20.2 Struggling with transparency and lost souls

Beach outings, while potentially therapeutic, appeared to be confined for the Avondale student to spreading the Gospel according to Seventh-day Adventism. In 1922 a section of College youth spent a day on the Newcastle beaches "ingathering", the Church's appeal for funds from the general public to supply Adventist missions with medical support and infrastructure in the South Pacific. Students travelled by train from Dora Creek on Easter Monday morning and with moneyboxes and papers in hand, sectioned off the beach into small companies (Fairfoul, *AR,* May 22, 1922, p. 4). Six years later the College had extended its student boundaries by train to Grafton and Armidale, 400 kilometres north, arising at 3 am on their annual quest for Mission funding (Hay, *AR,* April 16, 1928). The Appeal for Missions could be a rather onerous time for students not wishing to engage in the money collection. On occasions they were asked to "donate a portion of their time" to the College in lieu of not taking part (*AMCFM,* March 23, 1938).

But from its inception, the Church's "Appeal For Missions" was always well patronised by the College students. Between one third to one half were authorised to spend up to four days away from College studies to travel in organised bands by train, car, bus and motorcycle up to 600 km away and as far north as North Star in New

South Wales. Virtually the whole College would go into recess with the exception of the business office.

A good year occurred when all College appeal totals were eclipsed--for instance in 1956--when "17 country bands" left for several days. Students were spurred on to beat the previous year's collection total In this year they had achieved a grand total of 4,300 pounds. The best collectors were drawn from the small contingent of Chinese students who visited their Sydney Chinese friends, two of the students extracting a record 110 pounds in two days (Kent, *AR,* November 12, 1956, p. 2).

The Church administration regularly used the College Appeal campaigns in the *Record* to high profile the significance for other Australasian Church members to become inspired to do their collecting duty. In this year the College students were recorded to have volunteered on three separate occasions to "ingather" assigned North NSW territories for Church Mission funds (Johnson, *AR,* November 12, 1956, p. 2). The *Signs of the Times* was offered to Lake Macquarie residents in 1964 through a College door knock campaign in which 80 students distributed more than 500 magazines per month (Hills, *AR,* September 14, 1964, pp. 8-9).

Predictably, other denominations had become irked if not a little jealous from the inroads that Adventism was making on the public purse through its Mission Appeals. The Anglican Mission Board charged the Adventists with propaganda and misrepresentation of their charity. Some Adventists were alleged not to have disclosed their identity and as a result to have been mistaken for the better-known Anglican missions. After an investigation between the two churches, assurances were received that there would not be a repeat of any of the alleged infringements (Anderson, *AR,* August 21, 1922, p. 6).

Almost 100% of College students were reported to have accepted some form of work in October 1927 to assist the North New South Wales Conference Seventh-day Adventist Churches. *Signs of the Times* magazines were sold as far afield as Cardiff and Wyee. Students volunteered to visit the inmates at the Maitland goal (Ison, *AR,* October 31, 1927, p. 5). The struggles to evangelise their immediate and militantly opposed Methodist neighbour did not thwart an Adventist-run Sunday school in Martinsville, the midst of which formerly had largely been a Primative Methodist stronghold (Chamberlain, 1997, pp. 151-154). The Adventists obtained certain justification from "The shining faces of fifteen or twenty children, [which] told better than words could express, how much the children loved their Sunday school"

("Martinsville ...", *AR,* March 23, 1929, p. 4).

Other examples of the passion to serve the Church were demonstrated in 1933 when dedicated, loyal students, arising at 3:30 am, saved expense by sleeping in disused barns and haystacks on their 70-mile journey by bicycle to appeal for their missionary projects. Their efforts in Depression times were rewarded with a seventy-five percent increase in collection over the previous year (Fletcher, *AR,* April 3, 1933, p. 3). Beyond Depression times the culture and zeal of College evangelism was graphically stepped up, as portrayed in a 1936 report of its student activities in a township 15 miles north, at Barnsley, on the outskirts of Newcastle. Sabbath morning meetings were conducted by young men recorded to have had "enthusiasm" and "alertness" stamped upon their countenance. At 1:15 pm a large lorry filled with "ten or a dozen radiantly happy Seventh-day Adventists who have accepted the message at Barnsley", examples of the witnessing work by College students, would then experience Sabbath School and a Bible study (Ferris, *AR,* January 6, 1936, pp. 6-7).

A retired Conference President and former youth leader, Pastor Leslie Coombe, recounted how a prayer vigil for Avondale College souls in 1939 continued all night "at the gravel pit" behind the College Chapel following a particularly inspiring meeting held by E.L. Minchin. The College administration waived the rule on lights out at 9:30 and class time to give students opportunity to pray and make decisions to follow Christ. Coombe recalled that in the same year "the Spirit of God was so prevalent at Avondale at that time", and that the "atmosphere around Cooranbong was powerful under the Holy Spirit" (Coombe, 2001; see endnote 1).

College students were ever desirous to assist the community in calamitous situations and this was no more evident than in the 1955 disastrous Maitland floods. Some College students became involved in the collection of food and clothing and the visitation of Adventist homes in the flooded area to assist in cleaning up (Patrick *AR,* April 4, 1955, p. 2). This zeal to serve in the community would, 40 years later, be translated into a far broader field.

20.3 The "New Avondale" and a new theological emphasis

A more soteriologically–focused Church Board Chairman, L.C. Naden, declared that the "New Avondale" in 1964 was a College that had been established by "the direct

leading of the Lord" through a "blueprint that assured Avondale's future success". He was enthusiastic with the loyalty of Church youth and

> glad that so many of the outstanding youth of the Church—intellectually and spiritually—can pluck fruit from the denominational 'tree of knowledge' in which lurk no serpents which could strike and destroy our faith" (Naden, *Avondale News*, May 1964, p. 1).

Naden concluded with a Christo-centric statement from Ellen White:

> With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen and soon coming Saviour, might be carried to the whole world (White, 1903, p. 271).

Inasmuch as his comments were following the traditionalist line, as a straw pointing in the direction of the wind of change, the thrust of emphasis towards a more soteriological balance was evident.

The revered College history lecturer, Archibald L. Hefren, wrote in the same year that for the description of ichabod to apply to the College, it would have to lose its prescription as an education centre whose identity was bound up in *mission and eschatological focus.*

> I will not believe that the old Avondale has gone, its glory departed forever, while I will see praying groups by the side of Dora Creek, while I continue to meet youth, seeking thirstily an infilling of God's spirit, and while I know of students searching the Word of God far beyond the claims of classes... When some are so ready to deplore the supposed dangers of a Faculty trained to ever-raising standards of education and to question the necessity of senior degrees do they ever stop to think that those very degrees are certificates of glad consecration of talent to the work of God? The froth will turn from the main current and lose itself, stranded on the shallows. The river will flow on to its rendezvous with the ocean of eternity. Avondale alters but changes not. Its purpose remains as it ever was—the service of God and man. It is still sowing and it will share in the harvest (Hefren, *Avondale News*, August 1964, p. 6).

The arrival of Russell Kranz at Avondale brought a new dimension to evangelism in the mid-1960s boosting the opportunity for ministerial students to practise their textbook learning on real people away from College. Kranz ran a challenging and robust public mission in Newcastle and later in Canberra, where the ministerial students witnessed first hand the conversion of people to Adventism (McDowell, *AR,* December 12, 1966, pp. 11-12). The faculty, also, were granted increasing social freedom to visit secular universities. Ford was permitted to attend Melbourne University in 1965 and speak to the Adventist students (*ACBM,* March 17, 1965).

In 1971, Herbert Kersten, a prominent theology student, wrote in *Avondale News* suggesting that revival was continually on the minds of many College students, but that this was only possible firstly from the moving of God on the student. He observed: "I don't believe we can work one up. I believe God works them up, through those who, after having given themselves up, express the impress Christ has made on them, to others" (Kersten, *Avondale News*, 1971, page 6). It was a fundamental transition from the emphasis of the 1920s to 1940s that pushed the moral perfectionism barrow, driven from the seat of human workings, towards the notion that it was the work of God that was the more significant factor in providing grace and power for His work.

Five years later, the embryos of a new social mission thrust gathered momentum through the Avondale Student Aerial Outreach into the outback regions of New South Wales. During its initial foray, 40 students were enthusiastically involved in a variety of Adventist tailored programmes, including the Vocational Bible School for children, a 5 Day Plan to Quit Smoking, and a Nutrition School to promote vegetarianism (Fehlberg, *AR,* November 22, 1976, p. 12). Avondale's social evangelistic outreach programmes could now be seen as increasingly becoming a revisioning of the old sectarian paradigm of dragging people out of a sinful world into a ghetto to a more caring, mingling and socially facilitative community. This trend away from an emphasis on doctrinaire propositionalism could be evidenced, in part, with the College Theology Department focus on the Christian experience, in the context of a "spiritual gifts" ministry (Zaska, *AR,* June 18, 1983, p. 4).

President elect, Bryan Ball, having been trained at Church colleges before completing a secular university doctorate, graduated from a BA in theology, an MA in religion, finishing his PhD at London University. Without exception, the last six College principals from Murdoch on had completed their doctorates at secular tertiary institutions. Following this new pathway emphasis of individual spiritual experience, *Ball told the Church that his focus at Avondale, defined as the "mind and heart of the church", would be to educate students "to experience for themselves the love of God, to know what it is to love God in return and to love their fellow men so that they will be evidently known as representatives of the true gospel."* For Ball, who set a precedent by including his wife in the by–line, and had admitted the possibility of further generations before the Second Coming, this was the ethos in which to "attract coming generations of young people to train for the Lord's service until his work on

earth is done" (Ball, *AR,* November 26, 1983, p. 3).

20.4 Enter, a progressive Church Board Chairman--Walter Scragg

With a new Division president and College Board chairman in Walter Scragg at the helm in 1984, it would appear that together with Ball, here were two administrators who were mildly revisionist and keen to highlight the soteriological themes in their attitude to the College's sociocultural policies. Scragg, already surveying the prospects for 1985, (Scragg, *AR,* March 3, 1984, p. 2) remarked in his first editorial statement in 1984 that it was salvation that was the greatest gift (Scragg, *AR,* January 21, 1984, p. 2). He foreshadowed the need to carefully review how the College would approach ministerial training and the trends in institutional development. His attitude to the revisionist scholars was that although new ways should be found to communicate the Church's message, the fundamental doctrinal and eschatological identifiers of Adventism must remain ("The Editor..." *AR,* April 28, 1984, pp. 1-2). Division Field Secretary Jorgenson, having driven his systematic themes on the importance of Ellen White and the doctrines of the Church was also keen to speak now on a more experiential plane about the Holy Spirit and associated gifts. The College would further enhance its own spiritual ethos and identity with the knowledge that it was about to acquire its own purpose-built sanctuary despite some opposition from the Church community that it was a waste of money (Garne, *AR,* October 15, 1983, p. 2). Led by Bradford in 1988, Avondale continued to promote an evangelistic fervour by "studying the Bible in 45 homes in the Belmont area of Newcastle" with the goal to establish another new church in the community ("Avondale..." *AR,* January 16, 1988).

The year of 1986, for the Australasian Church, appears to have bought with it a watershed in Adventist thinking. That Australia had been assessed in this year as becoming "the Western world's most secular nation" with the tag of "a pagan country", moved Arthur Ferch, former head of Avondale's Theology Department, to ask: How could God, let alone Seventh-day Adventists, survive in Australia? (Ferch, *AR,* August 10, 1986). In the same year, Kenneth Mead asked the Australian Church, with an implied overture to Avondale, to stop further "erosion" and "tearing of the fabric" in its ranks and to join together for dialogue in some "realistic thinking" on its faith, practice and direction. He demanded a more transparent, responsible

administration, observing that openness was not synonymous with optimism. In a plea to allow the constituents to feel their ownership and renewed commitment of the Church, and for more lay involvement, he noted:

> *However, in a world where loyalty and support seem out of fashion, it's time for Adventists to make these concepts alive in our midst. Let's not talk so much of "the conference" and us: but rather of our conference, our church, our ministers and teachers. Then we will become the family of God in reality* (Mead, *AR,* August 23, 1986).

Scragg replied indirectly that the Church should be able to answer satisfactorily, questions about the performance of an Avondale trained pastor. This should include satisfactory answers to the questions: "Does he point you to Jesus Christ? Does he love the Bible? Does he love people? Does he care about hurting people in the church community?" (Scragg, *AR,* September 6, 1986). The new editor of the *Record*, James Coffin, highlighted the Church's need to recognise that truth is not only propositional but is embodied in the life one lives (Coffin, *AR,* October 25, 1986). Coffin hit a raw nerve when he observed that the Church should avoid hiding behind public relations styled reports. "Promotion lays no claim to objectivity...Promotion tells it as someone would like to have us see it" (Coffin, *AR.* October 19, 1986).

A survey of Australian and New Zealand Adventists, commissioned by Scragg and published in the *Record* in October 1986, suggested that persons with higher education tended to be more interested in issues of interpersonal relationships and SDA schooling and higher education. The survey also indicated that Adventists wanted honest and not public relations-styled propaganda (Coffin, *AR,* October 25, 1986). Coffin asked the previously taboo question, as to whether the Church was losing touch with society and increasingly talking only to itself (Coffin, *AR,* December 13, 1986). Coffin, it could be argued, was hired by the new Division and College Board chair to assist in the facilitation of the Church and Avondale towards a revisionist basis for Adventists to appreciate historical cultural contexts of the Church's faith and practice. These included an understanding of the Old Testament as a cultural way of dealing with the law of God, leading toward Christian values in the New Testament and epitomized in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ (Coffin, *AR,* January 17, 1987). It would seem also that Patrick, now as the Registrar of Avondale, saw an opportunity to have Adventist religion respected through another door, that of its academic authenticity of Adventist education ("Theologian...", *AR,* January 24, 1987). In my next few chapters I will discuss further his and others' influence in the

continuing revisionist direction.

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1. The dedication of students to God was equally impressive following the War. In 1948 a legless young female student having lost her limbs in a railway accident presented an emotional outpouring before a College convocation of prayer and "expressed her willingness, (if necessary) to lose her limbs again" for the cause of Christ (Pegler, *AR*, August 2, 1948, p. 5). Religious revival sessions at the College often occurred during its week of prayer and brought with it testimonies to the goodness of God. In 1950 a phenomenal 150 students rose to their feet to thank God for putting meaning into their lives (Peers, *AR*, October 23, 1950, p. 4).

PART IV

SHIFTS FROM A COLLEGE ESCHATOLOGICALLY STANDARDS-CENTRED PARADIGM TO A SOTERIOLOGICALLY VALUES-CENTRED PARADIGM: IS IT NOW A REVISIONIST POST-ELLEN G. WHITE ERA?

Chapter 21

The evolution of the Avondale mission statements and their objectives

21.1 Avondale's original sectarian objectives

Having now set a general course of argument towards a personal standards-centred paradigm at Avondale, I will attempt to add further cogency to my thesis by now tracing the evolution of the College's objectives and mission statements. As documented, Avondale's original focus in administering "proper education" was facilitated by a strict sociocultural hold on its students. This was reflected during the early years, when, although the Mission Statement varied in emphasis, the underpinning object was to train every part of the student's character, in the areas of physical, mental and moral being.

The 1899 *Avondale Handbook* stated that: "True education ...is a process by which God works in man to restore His image in his soul" (*Avondale Handbook* 1899, p. 9). God was the author of "all true science" through which "a symmetrical growth" could "make us complete in Him" (*Avondale Handbook 1899*, p. 11). On the Church's empowerment to mission, Ellen White said: "The first great lesson in all education is to know and understand the will of God...Our schools are the Lord's special instrumentality to fit up the children and youth for missionary work"

(*Avondale Handbook 1899*, p. 24). Every teacher was to be "under the full control of the Holy Spirit" and "eternal interests should be the great theme of teachers and students" (*Avondale Handbook 1899*, p. 25). The teacher's principles and habits were of paramount importance (*Avondale Handbook 1899*, p. 28). Finally Ellen White desired that Avondale "should bring the question of industry to the front" (*Avondale Handbook 1899*, p. 27). In 1902 the College objectives directed that: "The students in our school are to consider the knowledge of God as above everything else" (*The Avondale School 1902*, pp. 4-5). This education programme was designed to culminate in men and women of refinement and culture, possessing true Christian characters...to inspire a reverence for God's word, and to inculcate confidence in its teaching. On this basis, the College concluded: "Of all institutions in our world, the (Adventist Christian) school is the most important" (*Avondale Handbook 1899*, p. 9).

Some sixteen years later the College was placing the development of "character of the highest type" in tandem with "scholarship of the best quality" (*AMC Handbook 1916,* p. 11). The social order remained with the two "homes",. boys and girls dormitories, each with teachers acting as their parents. At meal times, "in the dining-room the teachers and students meet as one family" (*AMC Handbook 1916*, p. 13). Ownership and authority was highlighted by the administration in 1921.

> The institution is denominational, founded and controlled by the Seventh-day Adventists and is designed especially to prepare young people for usefulness in the cause of God... Solidarity of Character, a preparation for usefulness in life, and true Christianity will be held before the students as the highest ideals. They design to have a school where the fear of God will prevail, where His Holy Word will be reverenced , and where His worship and service will be respected (*Australasian Missionary College: 1921,* p. 5).

In 1925, a disincentive was couched in the preamble: "However, no one will be retained in the institution who persists in disseminating irreligious views among his students" (*Australasian Missionary College, 1921*, Prospectus, p. 11). The 1928 Avondale Mission Statement, in essence, having removed the disincentive, was based in a more proactive epistemic form, almost wholly on excerpts from Ellen White's writings:

> "Our Objective"
> The greatest want of the world is the want of men--men who will not be bought or sold; men who are in their inmost souls true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heaven falls. The Lord will have a people as true as steel and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation. It is to supply this want that the Australasian Missionary

College exists.

To accomplish such "a glorious work" demands the highest development of the spiritual, mental and physical powers; and to this end the College aims. It aims also to give a greater vision of a world's needs that this vision may inspire each student to attain the highest ideals of Christianity.

Workers of each branch are needed, preachers, teachers, nurses, businessmen, and home workers. To prepare such is the high calling to which the College is dedicated (*Australasian Missionary Announcement*, 1928).

This mission statement continued into the mid 1960s.

As the College's original purpose was for "training young men and women to become active workers for God in the homeland and the mission fields", the College, up until 1948, continued to prioritise the education of all its students towards acquiring a "noble Christian character". This acquisition was aligned with "unswerving allegiance to the principles of the Christian faith and a sense of personal responsibility to participate in the mission programme of the church" (*Australasian Missionary College Handbook, 1948*, p. 7). Such training was even more explicit with a 1951 statement that this "school of the prophets" was to be used "for service in Church and community in harmony with the distinctive ideals and world programme of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination" (*Australasian Missionary College Handbook, 1951*, pp. 7-8). A subtle change began to creep into the vocational direction for students in 1953 at the end of Murdoch's administration. The *Handbook* would now state that the College "also caters for students who do *not* plan to enter the organised work of the denomination" (*Australasian Missionary College Handbook, 1953*, p. 7).

The College continued to quote Ellen White officially as its authority in educational purpose and existence for the next twenty-five years. The call to educate "true and honest men who do not fear to call sin by its right name", to accomplish "a glorious work" and to "give them a training that will prepare them for the future immortal life" remained in vogue until 1980 (*Avondale College Calendar, 1968*, p. 3 cf "Motto", 1980 p. iv).

21.2 More evidence of a revisionist thrust

By 1978, during the latter part of the Magnusson administration, a revising of the traditionalists' terminology continued to emerge more obviously when the *Seventh-*

day Adventist "ideals and principles" were being described as *Christian* ideals and principles. At the commencement of his tenure the *Student Handbook* bypassed Ellen White, citing Scripture in 1 Timothy 6: 11 as part of an objective basis and outcome for College sociocultural behaviour; "But you man of God must shun all this, and pursue justice, piety, fidelity, love, fortitude and gentleness" (*Avondale College Student Handbook, 1972*, p. 1). The philosophy of Ellen White, that "the work of education and the work of redemption are one", remained explicit although unreferenced (*Student Handbook Avondale College, 1974*, p. 1). In 1975 a new symbol consisting of a stylised eye emerged as the College motif. From it a large cross was placed slightly off-centre but in the foreground. In 1988 it reverted to the original triangular motif with a globe set at the top without the cross. The abbreviated caption, "A Greater Vision", appeared.

By 1981, under the Cox administration, virtually all references to Ellen White appeared to be removed from the *College Calendar* although in 1983 both the teachings of the Bible *and* Ellen White were linked to the Adventists' source for lifestyle, "the Avondale experience" (*Avondale College Calendar, 1983*, pp. 11, 13). With this apparent exception, including a clause stating that the College sought to encourage the student to "engage in the mission programme of the church", the thrust now seemed to have an unmistakable tilt away from sectarian-styled interest (*Avondale College Calendar, 1981,* pp. 14-15). Ball wrote in 1985 that the College had now achieved "a respected position in Australian tertiary education." The objective of Avondale, said Ball, was "to lead students to a deeper awareness of *themselves* and of their Creator, and to a higher level of personal maturity and responsibility" (Ball, *Avondale Still Secures*, 1985, p. 1; emphasis mine). Likewise there was virtually no explicit quotation or reference to Ellen White in the College *Jacaranda* by any College principal after Magnusson.

In its *Annual Report* in 1991, Avondale produced a Mission Statement announcing that:

> The Mission of Avondale College is:
> * to prepare Christian professionals for service within both the Church and the community;
> * to enhance human relationships with God and each other;
> * to encourage the development of Christian character and a spirit of service;
> * to assist in the formation of responsible attitudes to the environment;
> * to endeavour to develop the potential within each person;
> * to encourage social justice and equality of opportunity for all regardless of race, gender or status;

> * to respect the dignity of labour and promote the ideal of service to others and strive to create a caring community on campus;
> * to preserve, disseminate and apply knowledge for the benefit of the individual, the Church and society;
> * to encourage research by its staff;
> * to function as a resource centre for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific region;
> * to contribute to the cultural and educational enrichment of the local and national societies (*Avondale College Annual Report* 1991, p. 2).

Principals (or presidents) are the linchpins if not role models of the school they administer. Madigan's entry, in 1991, witnessed his own interpretation of Avondale's philosophy of education. Indeed, throughout his term of administration, up until 2000, the *Avondale College Handbook* contained, in its introductory remarks, the foreword under his by-line commencing with the words *"I believe..."* (*Avondale College Handbook, 1992*, pt 2, pp. 14). The College's purpose had now evolved "to provide *well educated professionals* (or Christian professionals) for the Seventh-day Adventist Church..." (*Avondale College Handbook, 1992,* pt. 2, [section A] p. 2). It appeared that he was now being presented by the SPDSDA administration as the de facto authority in the wake of Ellen White's increasingly incipient use-by date. A clear example was provided in 1994 with Madigan's explanation of the "distinctiveness" of an Avondale College education. He presented it as "my recipe" in the Jacaranda, laying further claim to his personal stamp as the College's new guide.

> Take a group of fine young people, and mix with dedicated SDA staff. Add a cupful of concern for world needs, sweeten with Adventist values, and stir vigorously with a Christ-centred philosophy of education. Place the mixture on a rural property and allow it to mature for 97 years. The result is an education, unique and distinct: one that has stood the test of time, but meets the needs of today ("Principal's Address", *Jacaranda, 1994*).

By 1996 the Mission statement had become more definitive about the objective outcomes for the Church. It explicitly recorded that, the "excellence in higher education in the context of Seventh-day Adventist faith... was "to encourage students to develop a personal commitment to Christ" and to "support the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its accomplishment of the gospel commission" (*Avondale College Annual Report, 1996,* p. 1). Madigan's overview on this plane was less explicit. His concerns lay with "the offerings at Honours and Master's level" providing research degrees in its "niche market in Australian higher education, thereby contributing to the diversity and overall richness to the sector." The importance of this niche, as Madigan viewed it, was derived from a "traditional

Judeo-Christian heritage in the quest for knowledge and meaning." He claimed that the "College's engagement with ideas and commitment to values strengthens, rather than inhibits, its educational offerings" (*Avondale College Annual Report, 1996*, pp. 2-3). In 2000, Madigan again set out his own philosophy of education for the College, stating in the official Church newspaper an even more generalized vision for its existence, available arguably at any lesser faith-contextual educational institution:

> What is special to me about Avondale is that the adventure of education takes place in a faith context. Lecturers and support staff are there to help and offer encouragement. At Avondale, lifetime friendships are formed and maintained (Tawake, AR, December 16, 2000, pp. 4-5).

In the same year the Education Mission statement the College issued an ideal devoid of any reference to Ellen White and was simply stated: "The School of Teacher Education aims to prepare Christian teachers who are skilled professional with a vision for service in the contemporary work place" ("Mission Statement": Avondale College Education Department [2000]).

In summary, I have attempted in this chapter to provide some of the most compelling evidence yet to support my proposal that a bold and explicit movement is in process from within to revision Avondale College. The general thrust is to remove the final vestiges of sectarian taint and to communicate the notion that Avondale education is designed to be a Christian values-based journey for all students who fit the criteria of its expanding ethos based on searching for meaning to life.

Ellen White's educational philosophies, whether sociocultural or academic, are no longer promoted explicitly as the arbiter or source of wisdom for a College education although it will be argued that the *values and principles* of education she espoused remain firm.

From a presentist construction of the official literature there are strong indications implicating the current Madigan-led administration in making a determined effort to seek a new clientele base, albeit Christian focused, outside the Adventist Church. The student base will not be expected to have any knowledge or to give assent to sociocultural standards provided by Ellen White but will be expected to embark, through the College invitation, to find a satisfying self-actualising process derived from a Christian belief system espousing a revisioned Adventist identity.

Chapter 22

Perspectives of mission and the imminent pressure for a paradigm shift

22.1 The paradigm of the Truth, the Remnant and the Spirit of Prophecy

Before I attempt to discuss the College's revisioned evangelistic emphasis I will firstly explore in more detail the sectarian theological undergirding driven by the Church administration from which the College originally proceeded. Implicit in my thesis has been the Adventist Church administrators' desire for the Church to be portrayed as a bona fide Protestant denomination even prior to the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet they tried to offer to the world something new to the theme of the Protestant Reformation, whereby the two great truths of the Gospel of Christ, as enunciated through justification by faith through grace alone, and the authority of the Bible, (Vos, 1959, p. 406) had set denominationalism on fire. They attempted to offer reasons for being genuinely and biblically derived, but with their own distinctive add-ons in doctrinal eschatological interpretation, justifying its unique place in history. As made abundantly clear previously, the Church clung to an evolving separationist, sociocultural stance and to an insistence that it was the only authentic "Remnant Church" with "the message", "the truth" and a "prophetess" (See endnote 1). The Church would be imbued with a structure, process and passion for Christian purity such as the world had not witnessed since time began. The administration attempted, therefore, to cement down certain mores deemed a slice of the Church's unchanging and unchangeable identity, perceived to prepare it for translation. But in being critiqued by those not of Adventist faith there was no universal agreement or acceptance.

At the end of the 1950s the American Evangelical, Howard Vos, examined the Christian religions, and in excluding Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists and Unitarians from the Protestant Christian fold, described Adventism as:

> a borderline case difficult to classify as historic Protestantism or as sectarian... Although this group does not deny the Christian gospel, it demands the worship of God upon Saturday instead of Sunday as a necessary complement and evidence of salvation.

> It thus seems in danger of confusing the material principle of the gospel. Quite recently however, there has been an increasing tendency to place the Seventh-day Adventists within the Evangelical Protestant framework (Vos, 1959, p. 422).

Barnhouse and Martin, as discussed in chapter 6, were more positively disposed to Adventism's Christian authenticity.

22.2 A case for defining Adventism as a sect in 2000: Who are the "unequally yoked"?

A sect, by sociological definition, is essentially a separated minority group having deliberately chosen to stand apart from traditional church communities through their cultural behaviour, ethical precepts and special mission. According to Bryan Wilson, (*Spectrum*, vol. 7, no. 1) a sect will claim a complete monopoly on "the truth" either through the restoration of the pristine original or a special revelation contemporary with its own emergence as an organisation and applicable to subsequent ages. A sect will either represent, or appear to be, an exclusive elitist group with a distinctive way of life, conscious of a special mission and a special destiny. Its members will have internal pressures to perform with total commitment in an environment that facilitates that commitment and sanctity. A paid professional ministry or priesthood as a life work or full-time vocation will be rejected while lay ministry and leadership will be elevated. There will be stringent tests for entry into the sect and a tribunal or mechanism for expulsion for non-adherence to its standards. A sect will stand as an ethical protest group against a wider society seen largely to be damned. It has a special interpretation of the history of the world and its own role in world affairs. It will re-evaluate the world in the terms of the sectarian present. Wilson suggests that a sect is a "saved" group of persons or a group seeking to be saved from the world or prevailing situation of society which is deemed evil, either by resurrection, translation or transmigration (Wilson, *Spectrum*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 34-43; see endnote 2).

The Adventist interpretation of the scriptural injunction, "Be not unequally yoked", is in my opinion, a defining part of its continuing sectarian vestige. To expand this notion further I refer to the Church's stand in the choice of marriage partner. For genuine holy matrimony to occur with heaven's blessing, Church members must marry only those *within* the Adventist membership. Any person not baptised into

Seventh-day Adventism is deemed an "unbeliever". The definition of an "unbeliever" in the marriage context was simply a person who wasn't a Seventh-day Adventist. This accorded a similar position to Catholicism, in that no consideration would be given to a person who had made a commitment to Jesus Christ on the New Testament *ecclesia*. A genuine Christian could only be a Seventh-day Adventist.

We can note the evidence from administrators' rulings throughout the history of the Church, including L.H. Christian in 1916, explicit in their warnings to Adventists considering marriage:

> But we must also warn our youth against uniting in marriage with those who are not Adventists...Better a thousand times to remain single, or even to break an engagement, than to marry an unbeliever (Christian, *AR*, October 23, 1916, p. 5).

The matter was revisited in 1924. In quoting Ellen White's *Testimonies* J.E. Fulton left no room for compromise to the sectarian rule that an unbeliever was every one outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

> Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not) yet he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever and you are forbidden of Heaven to unite yourself with him (Fulton, *AR*, October 6, 1924, p. 1).

In 1951, Wilcox again justified the Bible's definition of an unbeliever through Ellen White's interpretation. He stated categorically in his *Review and Herald* article that in being "members of other Christian faiths", they are not members of the body of Jesus Christ. For his justification he quoted Ellen White who wrote a particularly strong letter to a young Adventist woman wishing to marry.

> My sister, dare you disregard these plain and positive directions? As a child of God, a subject of Christ's kingdom, the purchase of his blood, how can you connect yourself to one who does not acknowledge His claims, who is not controlled by His Spirit?
> ...he is an unbeliever, and you are forbidden of Heaven to unite yourself with him. You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction (White, 1948 vol. 5, p. 304 cited in Wilcox, *AR*, June 25, 1951, p. 3).

Wilcox made the broad but seemingly inappropriate assumption that Christians of other denominations had no genuine commitment to or belief in Jesus Christ or his Gospel teachings. By definition Ellen White was not describing a Christian here, but someone who was not "a child of God", nor a "subject of Christ's Kingdom". Wilcox did not address the issue of "born again" Christians of other faiths.

Likewise, citing the Roman Catholic Church to bolster Adventist authority, A.W. Peterson, in writing to his Australian Adventist youth, was unequivocal in his view

that Christian equal-yoked marriages were only possible among Adventist couples. He made no distinction between "worldly associations and...marriage to a genuine Christian of another Protestant denomination" ("Query Column", *AR,* June 9, 1952, p. 2; see endnote 3). They might sincerely confess Christ as their Saviour but if they had not accepted the seventh-day Sabbath and been baptised into the Church, they remained ranked as outsiders with 'the world'.

A problem for the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been its persistent claim by its administrators to it being The "People of God" and the "Remnant" Church, largely derived out of its own perception of its special place in history. The term, "remnant", has been increasingly viewed as a term of exclusivism and arrogance by others, both inside and outside the Church. The problem lies squarely with the belief that the Church is endowed with an epistemology that is virtually unobtainable outside its organisation.

In 1956, a General Conference administrator, Frederick Lee, in line with former senior Adventist administrators who claimed that non-members, regardless of faith or practice were "unequally yoked", "worldly" and unfit to marry Adventists, remained unequivocal in his definition of the Adventist Church as exclusively "*the* body of Christ" (Lee, *AR,* June 11, 1956, p. 13). As a consequence, Adventism had no intention of sharing its converts during evangelistic exercises, unlike the policy of the Billy Graham Crusades of the 1950s and 1960s, referred to later in this chapter.

Aligned to this dogma, and not immediately related to Avondale's value judgments on sexuality, but having the common denominator of what constitutes a genuine Christian and a member of the body of Christ, we examine the role of non-Adventist Gospel preachers. Seventh-day Adventism faced a dilemma in the mid 1950s-1960s in dealing with, and instructing, its faithful on the merits of arguably the most significant Protestant evangelist of the twentieth century, Baptist evangelist Dr. Billy Graham. The dilemma for Adventism was that, in being a member of the "out-sider's" Church, Graham was preaching a Gospel message that was claiming thousands of converts for Christ, and that these converts would be directed back to their own respective Churches, including some to the Adventist Church, who attended the evangelistic crusades out of curiosity. Nichol was careful in his critique, no doubt recognizing--although not explicitly--that to come down either for or against Graham would cause a storm in the Church. Nichol made a significant departure from a traditionalist administrative stance in his acceptance that God uses other people to

win converts to Christianity other than Adventists. Of Graham, Nichol wrote circumspectly but also raised the notion of a perceived inconsistency in the Church's own sectarian line--that marriage to anyone outside Seventh-day Adventism is an unequally yoked relationship and must be condemned. On this matter of epistemic sensitivity I cite Nichol as evidence:

> We are familiar with the inspired (Ellen White) warnings against false religious revivals. But shall we necessarily conclude that every man conducting a great evangelistic programme, who is not an Adventist, is conducting a false religious revival? Thus to reason would conclude that God can use only Adventists to preach the Gospel. And certainly Adventists hold no such belief. We declare that God used Wesley, Finney, Moody and William Miller—to mention only a few—even though they held what we believe were incorrect views of certain doctrines (Nichol, *AR*, October 21, 1957, pp. 2, 8; see endnote 4).

To recognise the Christian bona fides of the reformers with their "incorrect views" surely opens the gates to the qualified acceptance of contemporary believers of other faiths who may also have incorrect views, as "unequally yoked" persons dwelling in Babylonish churches. The condemnation by Church administration upon all who marry or make friends with them provided a remarkable contrast with Billy Graham's approach. He believed in the cornerstone of Protestant doctrine, that is, that "the blood of Jesus Christ is the only means of man's salvation" and that according to Scripture, throughout the ages, they must of necessity constituted *the* "invisible" body of Christ.

The Twenty-seven Fundamentals of Seventh-day Adventism stated that although the invisible body of Christ or the universal church was composed of "all who truly believe in Christ", in the last days of "widespread apostasy", "a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus". According to the Adventist Church every believer is called out to participate in this final witness. The church universal is a people called out of worldly practices (Issues, 1998? pp. 7-8). Nichol, as late as 1964, in not denying other churches' right to receive salvation, saw the Adventists as making their most important contribution as *that* body of Christ, through a "message we believe we should preach to men". These were the "great truths of the Second Coming, the Sabbath, the nature of man and the "devil's last delusion" (Nichol, *AR*, August 4, 1964, p. 6). R.F. Cottrell now opened the door a little further revisiting Ellen White's admonition to "Writers and Editors" (Cottrell, *AR*, May 23, 1966, p. 13). "Complete unanimity of opinion on every detail of biblical exegesis and prophetic interpretation is not necessarily evidence of a healthy spiritual

condition in a church." Adventism's emphasis on an epistemic system of correct esoteric knowledge as the basis for the true body of Christ rather than that of salvation through faith through a totally committed relationship with Christ to define the invisible church of God has proved, in my view, a dilemma for both sides of the Christian church.

22.3 By whose authority?

Surprisingly, when the issue of Christian commitment arose, Adventism, up until the writing of this thesis, has rarely if ever explicitly needed to equate church attendance as one of the standards necessary for upholding church loyalty. The notion of loyalty, faithfulness, commitment, and to some extent the mulch of Church identity and exclusivity, had been carefully woven into the member's psyche on the notion that regular attendance was a foregone conclusion as a church member. Strict observance of the Sabbath, as a day of cessation from all non-essential work, had provided the Adventist with practically nowhere to go and nothing to do except meet and worship with his fellow believers. It was effective in maintaining a culturally identifiable and virtually uniform system of religious practice.

Likewise Adventist laymen were largely neither seen nor heard until the 1950s in matters of Church controversy. But this was not due to self-satisfaction or the complacency evidenced in the major churches. On the surface, there was none, and if there was subliminally, it was not aired in any corporate or public arena. The regular faithful Adventist had much to contemplate with the constant alert being placed upon him of the need to "be ready" for Jesus' return (See endnote 5).

If one were to draw on other sociological constructs, including the popular sociological neo-Marxist approach, a temptation lay in aligning in some way the "conflict overview" whereby it is proposed that the school "represents the interests of a dominant group, rather than the true interests of all" (Lovat, (ed.) 1992, p. 50). From a study of Australasian Adventist literature we may reasonably conclude that the controlling thought group up until the 1950s, the Adventist administrators, were seen as the unquestioned authority but under increasing challenge from the Church's higher education arm.

Aligned to the Avondale College sociocultural controls through its epistemological process during its first seventy or eighty years, one may be led to

consider that Henry Giroux's construct of a "hidden curriculum" neatly applies. Of this paradigm facet, Terrence Lovat, (see endnote 6) cites Giroux

> *Certain forms of knowledge are passed off as being real forms of knowledge and the people who do well at them will obtain the good grades and be declared intelligent...The hidden curriculum also forces students to.... 'learn roles, feelings, norms attitudes and organisational structures of the classroom'. These leave students unfree and controlled by the system* (Lovat (ed.) 1992, pp. 51-52).

The measure of justification for the effective control by the system may be evidenced in *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, "The Authority of the Church" where the Church assumes authority given from heaven in its trial of Adventist members:

> "Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [*in church discipline*] (emphasis mine) ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Thus even the heavenly authority ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members when the Bible rule has been followed (*General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,* 1986, p. 156).

Ellen White appeared to have endorsed this view:

> The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments: it could not hold together as a body (White, 1948, vol. 3, p. 428).

The Church is explicit then, in the reasons for which members shall be disciplined (disfellowshipped and removed from the Church roll). At the top of its list is the epistemic notion: "1. Denial of faith in the *fundamentals of the Gospel* and in the cardinal doctrines of the church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same" (*General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, 1986, p. 162; emphasis mine). A problem for Adventism, as I have attempted to show, is that the Church appears to have been uncertain, especially in its emphasis, and has shifted ground on what is considered as the "fundamentals of the Gospel".

Michel Foucault's theory on regimes of truth, power-knowledge and disciplinary power, advocates that every society has its regime of truth. There are means by which it determines truth from error and sanctions the methodology of acquiring it. There are those entrusted through status, who are invested to judge what is true (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Within the pedagogy of such regimes of truth lie disciplinary relations of power-knowledge (Lovat, (ed.) 1992, p. 284). These need *not* be adverse and may operate as a productive power-knowledge system. As late as the 1960s Avondale students were obliged to uphold propositional epistemic and sociocultural truth. They

were required to "avoid popular places as...the motion picture theatre, the dance hall," so as not to "endanger their reputation as *truth-seeking* Christians" (*The Avondale Student Handbook* (nd) 1965). If and when a College student committed an offence against College rules, they were encouraged to confess it to the College authorities and be willing "to take your punishment with a wholesome attitude" (*The Avondale Student Handbook* (nd) 1965, p. 44). This remained a type of de facto public apology since every student was bound to find out who had been disciplined with the nature of the punishment being particularly public.

A curious article from the *Review and Herald* appeared in the *Record* in 1974, as a guest editorial, asking the Australasian Church if there was a teaching authority in the Adventist Church, similar to that of Roman Catholicism? Without referring to Ellen White, Don Neufeld stated that, *"there is clearly a teaching authority beyond the recognised teaching authority of the Bible."*

> Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church merely a loosely knit community of believers who take the Bible and the Bible only as their rule of faith? In this community is everyone free to interpret the Bible and set up his own moral standards? Is it only the case, then, that only major doctrines such as the seventh-day Sabbath and the state of the dead, are the bond that holds Adventists together?
>
> What type or level of teaching authority resides in the Adventist Church? When a member joins the Church does he pledge himself in any way to obey the church? The answer to this question is complex and we do not propose to discuss all its ramifications. We aim simply to make significant observations.

Those observations, which dealt with Church practice and "the specific policies" to exercise executive power, according to Neufeld, were a matter for none other than the *Church Manual* as illustrated in its law about divorce and remarriage (Neufeuld, *AR*, July 1, 1974, p. 4).

Since the Fordian fallout, negotiating the growing identity crisis has exposed the tensions of emphasizing doctrinal points over the focus on the *Creator* of the Word. During the 1990s a sectarian position continued to be promoted by the former Australian field secretary, Gerhard Pfandl, asserting that the Spirit of Prophecy of Ellen White *is synonymous* with the text citing "the spirit of prophecy" in Revelation 19:10, a point on which many Adventist scholars would now reserve their judgment (Pfandl, "Some Thoughts on the New Theology", p. 6). He again cited the Adventist position of 1980, which stated:

> One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth, which

> provide for the church comfort, guidance instruction and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested (Fundamental Beliefs 17).

The "Twenty-seven Fundamental Beliefs" were met with deep concern and bemusement at Avondale College but no one was prepared to discuss the matter publicly or be quoted. In this creedal-styled pronouncement the General Conference affirmed their belief that the Bible was their exclusive authority but that the Fundamental Beliefs were "the teachings of the Holy Scriptures". The preamble added that:

> Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p.16).

These truths, then, may not be regarded as absolute. In the words of former Avondale Board Chairman, Walter Scragg: "It is not to this (the statements of the Fundamental Beliefs) but to the Bible that an Adventist minister turns" (Dunton, et. al. (eds.) 1990, p. 117). However, the statement of *Fundamental Beliefs* which all Adventists must give assent to since 1980, (see endnote 7) had been developing during the twentieth century as a test of entry but not necessarily as a test of fellowship. While it may appear to be a creed, the Church administration has always denied it. Early Adventist thought was at variance with more recent practice, however. Early Church leaders, including James White and J.N. Loughborough, were adamant about their non-insertion into the Church's laws. Loughborough warned: "The first step to apostasy is to get up a creed telling us what we shall believe." James White was also blunt: "The Bible is our creed" (Bradford, *Ministry,* April, 1995, p. 24). The problem to be confronted was the confusion in the minds of administrators and editors inquiring into the definition of what an Adventist and Adventism were.

This dilemma is perhaps no better exemplified than by G.I. Butler and William Johnsson, almost 100 years apart, who appeared to have wished that the Church could define its members' practice within a set of clearly definable eschatologically-focused, epistemic sociocultural standards. For Johnsson the Church is under considerable threat in that there are "enormous differences among us as to the *essence* of Adventism" (emphasis mine). He appealed to the Church to work on a global "minimum" list of "what this church is all about." A sample of the fundamentalist conservatism that holds a strong influence on the Church is seen in his agenda for the

Church's doctrinal position. In the context of a "short", "basic" and "global" bottom line, he suggested:

> We are a people of hope--which is basic, so the Second Coming must always be central.
> We're a people of the Sabbath--so the law must ever be prominent but in a grace orientation.
> And we are a people of the Bible.
> And a people of the gift of prophecy.
> And the message of the sanctuary.
> And we have a mission to the world.
> And God calls us to live as his children, to represent him in these last days (Johnsson, 1995, p.121).

Johnsson did acknowledge, however, that the Church can not be frozen in time. There is the need for the Church to have "a theology of change, a biblical view of change." This change includes growing in God's image, individually and collectively, doctrinally as well as spiritually. Of Jesus, he interpreted: "He wants us to keep on the leading edge of his will, to remain a people of 'present truth' ". In this matter, Johnsson warned: "The Twenty-seven Fundamentals are an important start. If we lose our doctrinal unity, we'll likely lose everything" (Johnsson, 1995, pp. 120-121).

That the Church has changed, observed George Knight, citing early non-beliefs in the deity of the biblical Godhead and the person of the Holy Spirit, could be deduced from the knowledge that: "Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs." (Knight, *Ministry*, October 1993, p. 10)

In a reaffirmation during 1988, the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists reiterated:

> One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction and correction...(*Seventh-day Adventists Believe,* 1988, p. 216).

Adventism has tried to present the *sola fide, sola gratia, solo Christo* and *sola scriptura* of the Reformation as evidenced in the works of Martin Luther. (Pelikan and Lehman, (eds.) 1955ff.) It has experienced most difficulty in delivering the *sola scriptura* ethic without clouding it with the added "inspired" truth from the pen of "prophetess" Ellen White (Case, 1996, p. 45).

The Church, wrote Carl George, *was now approaching the dilemma of allowing traditionalist conservative quarters of Adventism, characterising Ellen White with the*

same stature as Moses, elevating her as a kind of "deity" who taught the infallible truth as a witness to Jesus Christ and the founder of a new order of salvation. Some administrators, observed George, have considered that the Church hangs or falls on the acceptance of Ellen G White as a prophetess, while it considers it must not deny that it hangs or falls on its faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ (George, 1988, pp. 65, 68). Johnsson admitted in 1991 that Ellen White's writings, while still regarded with *"deep respect"*, had now received a *"clearer view"* by the *Church* in the past twenty years (Widner, AR, July 20, 1991).

22.4 The revisionist reality of *Sola Scriptura*

While *sola scriptura* has always been the official position of Adventism, it is quite evident that it has not thought or exhibited this belief. This is in part due to it tending to be undermined or overwhelmed by the voluminous writings of Ellen White and the unwavering commitment to her veracity. Oliver stressed the need for the Church to develop a standard on how to interpret Ellen White in the light of scripture and the cultural perspectives that have been brought into the twentieth century from her genre. Luther, when challenged by the papal bull of 1520, wrote:

> This is my answer to those who accuse me of rejecting all the holy teachers of the church. I do not reject them. But everyone, indeed, knows that at times they have erred, as man will; therefore, I am ready to trust them only when they give me evidence for their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred (Pelikan and Lehman, 1955ff. vol. 32, pp.11-12).

The *Review and Herald* confirmed as late as 1967, the imprimatur of Ellen White's equal authority with Bible writers when it stated:

> *While Seventh-day Adventists do not consider the writings of Ellen G. White to be a modern edition to the canon of Scripture, we do recognise that in them the same quality and degree of inspiration as that of the Bible writers and consider their teaching and authority to be equal to that of the Bible--for Seventh-day Adventists* (The Editors, *Review and Herald*, March 30, 1967).

Again, after the Ford dismissal, the 1981/82 Avondale College self study report read in part:

> An academically responsible teacher is also aware that, while he or she is professionally obliged to examine all relevant data and test assumptions, he has not been granted licence from immunity (Anon, *Self-study*, 1981-82, p. 1).

In tandem with the General Conference working policy, there is little doubt that an interpretation of the sociocultural standards and philosophies of the Church

continues to hold a dualistic authority over its academia when it stated: "The norms by which the philosophic and religious viewpoints are evaluated will be sought within the Scriptures *and* writings of Ellen G. White" (Avondale *Self-study*, 1981-82, p. 2). In contrast to this question of dualism is the question that has now arisen from religionists that indeed we may now be in the era of post-Sola Scriptura. A view by J. G. F. Collison, as expressed by Max Stackhouse, is that the *sola scriptura* principle has passed its use by date (See endnote 8). This is partly seen as a result of the Third World viewing with some suspicion the interpretation of the authority of Scripture in the West as:

> in fact a rather parochial set of traditions about its meanings derived from "Judeo-Christian culture" as it developed in the West. Protestantism may have protested the Roman Catholic subordination of text to magisterial authority, but unwittingly subordinated the text to the presuppositions of Euro-American culture instead (Stackhouse, 1988, p.52).

Stackhouse's observation is astute:

> To speak of freedom and unity in Christ for all cultures and nations as advanced by the Gospel yet suffer alienation and rejection from the requirements of western-based cultural Denominationalism, opens the door to hypocrisy and divisiveness in the church (Stackhouse, 1988, p. 53).

On the other hand, if a 2000 year old collection of documents from a different world, although not easily understood, is entirely relevant on behavioural issues today, then we must realise the prerequisites set down by that collection in unlocking their keys to knowledge, wisdom, and life abundant. If this is now ignored, the question must be asked: What alternatives remain and at what cost? This claim appears to go further than the acceptance of how Ellen White described her own work. She stated that when speaking to the common matters of life, no inspired thought should be deduced from her pen or lips (White, 1958, Bk I, p. 39 cf White, *Spectrum,* vol. 4, no. 2, 1972, p. 25).

Furthermore, should the Church move one step closer to having an authorized version of Ellen White's inspired writings, at which time was she in her inspired state or in which version of a certain work was she most likely inerrant? A case in point might rest with Adventism's most sensational apocalyptic work, *The Great Controversy*, a book that has undergone three "major revisions" (after first written in 1858) in 1884, 1888, and 1911 (Patrick, *Ministry*, April 1991, p. 7).

It may be a matter for discussion that in the broad picture of Adventist evolution, the structure of its authority in its 150 years of existence, might have come almost full

circle. For William Miller, reason expounded Scripture and caused his understanding that the world was at an end: For early Adventism following the Great Disappointment, under Ellen White, visions now explained the Bible and reason was viewed with suspicion. "For Miller, reason came first; it expounded the Bible, and visions were disregarded. The Great Disappointment inverted this order; visions expounded the Bible and reason was disregarded" (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 31).

With the proliferation of Ellen White's publications, her testimonies allegedly "stabilized" the means to doctrinal understanding, combining the use of reason and revelation. The Modernist attack on Adventist fundamentalism strengthened the Church's resolve to make the Bible and Ellen White's writings, "mutually explanatory". This led to an inquiry into the authority of the nature and derivation of her epistemology in the light of reason and scriptural hermeneutics thus causing her control on "truth" to be moderated (Bull and Lockhart, 1989, p. 31). Consequently there appeared to be "many Ellen Whites saying many different things" according to what they wanted to hear. By 1970, there were at least 24,000 pages in more than 56 books written by her or edited on her behalf. To derive an effective hermeneutic should not have proved too large a hurdle. She wrote in simple English and the Church is in possession of the original manuscripts. (Bradley, *Spectrum*, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 54)

We have this warning also from her own comments on the misuse of her writings in her lifetime, especially that of her *Testimonies*. Of this, Ellen White warned her readers:

> Do not by your criticisms take out all the force, all the point and power, from the Testimonies. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability what is light from heaven, and what is the expression of mere human wisdom (White, 1948, vol. 5, p. 169).

She admitted that: "...time and place must be considered", (White 1958, bk. 1, p. 57) and that something "said in truth of individuals at one time, may not be correctly said of them at another time " (White, 1948, vol. 3, p. 471).

Hook summarised the contemporary dilemma of this issue: "The trauma of theological debate, together with Ford's dismissal and its repercussions, also brought consternation. It would take a long time to shake the shrouds of mourning" (Hook, 1997, p. 295). Parr, as a Conference president, some seventeen years after the event, recorded, in 1997, that: *"we should never forget our debt to Dr Ford for telling us*

what righteousness by faith really was about." Former SPDSDA youth director, Clem Christian agreed in principle, stating: "I would support that too" ("The Nineteen Eighties...", *AP.*, vol. 9, no. 1, p.15). Chamberlain wrote in 1999 that he considered Ford to be "the Martin Luther of Australian Adventism" (Chamberlain, 1999, p. 67).

It is my contention that those shrouds have all but been pulled aside for a new vision of a social gospel pervading the College campus and a celebration of basking in the light of a golden image of sociocultural freedoms, heading directly toward, but not quite arrived with the standards of secular humanism and postmodernity. The intention to hold Ellen White as the Church's continuing standard for its outward behaviour may be discussed and given credence but it now appears to be only a matter of time before this icon of educational philosophical thought may be but a revered relic of history. The focus of the Church in the twenty-first century will be the key to its relevance and survival as a purpose-driven cohesive community. That focus in a College higher education context, will, in my view, be stretched not only in sociocultural standards, but, in its identity of sociocultural standards through the push for a denominalisation of values and a loss of confidence in the mother Church's administration of it.

Inasmuch as the Adventist Church organisation might cringe from being labelled a sect, either by the media or its theological antagonists, it must also face the inherent problems with the acceptance of the denominational label. In the following segments of this chapter I will attempt to provide a critique concerning the growth of a more humanitarian and social philosophy in the dynamic profiles of the College's mission and vision.

22.5 Towards a social paradigm for mission

As previously evidenced from the 1960s and 1970s, there had been a slow but gradually changing emphasis by administration relating to the Eschaton and "final generation" theology. Oliver observed in the 1980s that the Church had now changed tack on its "final generation" emphasis in relation to mission and the Eschaton focus. I have documented evidence earlier of the General Conference's warnings that there were only "minutes" to go before the world's time clock would cease and the Eschaton would be ushered in. After more than 130 years following the 1844 Great

disappointment the Church backed away from its intense "any moment now" notions. Supported by Adventist theologian Fritz Guy et. al., Oliver discussed this change in 1989:

> Eschatology is no longer considered in terms of "this generation" in the same way as it was in the 1903 General Conference session. Adventist eschatology has become much more comprehensive in its treatment of the biblical data. For example, it has recently been asserted that the final act in the process of redemption is not to be regarded as the heart and centre of that process.

In other words the Church's theology has become more focused primarily around the soteriology of the Bible, "built necessarily and explicitly on the composite event of the incarnation, life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ". This is not an admission that the Church was wrong to highlight the Eschaton, cautions Oliver, but simply that the Church must be careful to hold a contextual systematic balance between the two great doctrines (Oliver, 1989, p. 348). The past relevance for Avondale College as a seat of learning for the Australasian Church may be conceded in Oliver's assessment of the eschatological driven missiology of the Church and its literature. His comments bear testament to supporting a view in my thesis that Church colleges, namely Avondale in this instance, place a differing emphasis on its missiology, and the need for the Gospel to be promulgated to all the world, in contrast to the intensely driven General Conference and Australasian Division directives and literature up until the last decade of the twentieth century. He stated that:

> their missiological writings and the presence of missiologists on their faculties and colleges have both remained minuscule in comparison to the emphasis which evangelisation receives in the literature and in the official pronouncements of the church (Oliver, 1989, p. 352).

For the Adventist Church, and to a lesser extent Avondale, problems of imminence of the Eschaton were now being faced in the context of sociological cultural theory, secularisation and changes of value judgments within the Church as evidenced by well built and architecturally pleasing buildings, sophisticated institutional management structures and advanced tertiary education programmes. As a Church with powerful future millennial aspirations, its preoccupation with structure, bricks and mortar, and respectable secular enterprises and institutions raises problems in its quest to maintain cultural identity, doctrinal purity and a sense of eschatological mission.

22.6 A brief history of the Church's Australian welfare interest and limitations

The social dimension to the Gospel for Adventism has always played a part in its evangelistic thrust to assist the physical conditions of men and women. As alluded to in chapter one, Methodism, through the mentoring of Wesley, showed considerable interest and social concern for the deprived socio-economic classes. And as early as 1914, a report in the Australasian Adventist paper indicated that its city slum work for children had commenced in Sydney. A number of faithful members and unnamed Church workers entered into the homes of the inner city poor and were shocked by their "socially deplorable conditions". A group of children were gathered from these visits for the purpose of youth services. The Anglican minister was recorded to have angrily challenged the Adventists for taking children in his Sunday school area. The authors of this report were somewhat apologetic in the number of children from other denominations, approximately 200, attending their meetings and the punishment delivered especially by the Catholics, for their 'illegal' attendance (Office Workers, *AR*, October 24, 1914, p. 5).

The anonymity of this report is curious and may have indicated that some Church administrators were not in favour of the method or place where this project was operating. Schwartz suggested that the Church "associate(s) righteousness with socially acceptable (middle class) life styles..." (Schwarz, 1970, p. 135). In contrast with J.H. Kellogg's philosophy to assist the poorer classes, (SDA Encyclopaedia 1966, pp. 268-269) this was, for College students, certainly not an instruction on the top of the list of Ellen White's ambitions, despite her view that the Church was "to come close to the poor and the depraved" (White, 1948, vol. 7, p. 58).

In essence, Ellen White appeared to divide the socio-economically deprived into two camps: those who were poor through circumstances beyond their control, (the worthy poor) and those who through their inclination to a life of drunkenness, dissipation and debauchery had ruined "themselves through their own independent course of action" (White 1948, vol. 6, p. 269). She had instructed the faithful "not to imitate and fall in with Salvation Army methods" (White, 1948, vol. 8, p. 185) as their work did not parallel the reasons for their call, but to act as a herald of the Eschaton through the Third Angel's message. Nor were the profits from Sanitarium work to be used exclusively for humanitarian work and "...to be drawn upon to

sustain numerous lines of work for the lower classes in our wicked cities..." (White, 1948, vol. 8, pp. 181-182).

Adventism failed to become involved on any real administrative level in an unconditional involvement with the intricate, time consuming and often unrewarded work in city slums. The Adventist Church appeared to continue in the next few decades after 1914 with the philosophy that people perceived to be wasters, drunkards, gamblers and profligates--all largely part of the lower sociocultural world and without hope--were already "dead" in their sins. This view may be sourced from an interpretation of Jesus' remarks to his disciples in Matthew 8: 22: "Follow me: and let the dead bury the dead." They would have also been cognisant of Ellen White's advice to the faithful: "The means and talents of His people are not to be buried in the slums of New York or Chicago" (White, 1948, vol. 8, p. 183). The point was that it was a waste of time to help the wasters. The Church saw a greater commission in heralding the Eschaton embodied in the third angel's warning for the world. In Patrick's words:"...the Adventists curtailed their good deeds lest they should fail to achieve the greater good..." (Patrick, 1991, p. 220) Such social ministry was seen more as a distraction to the pure evangelism of saving souls for a very imminent-perceived Eschaton.

On the other hand Ellen White wrote of *foreign missions* in a more generous vein.

> To show a liberal and self-denying spirit for the success of foreign mission is a sure way to advance the home missionary work; for the prosperity of the home missionary work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelistic work done in countries afar off. (White, 1948b, p. 465)

On the international scene, a certain embryonic form of revisionist thinking was developing in Adventism's mission to the Pacific Islands. In 1938 a definition of heathenism was offered by Church administration and although intolerant of other theological views it held to a certain sociocultural sensitivity and impartiality:

> Heathenism is not a low social condition; it is not poverty with its train of disease and misery; it is not even an inferior code of morals. Heathenism is the condition of men and women, whose worship is not directed toward God, the father of light but Satan, the prince of darkness (Beach, *AR,* October 31, 1938, p. 2).

The Church consolidated its mark and presence in the islands with its "clean missions" where it majored on the vital ministry of medical healing and health reform. Some 40 years later it was now seeing the benefits of its persistent, well-

organised programmes of educational and medical aid in the Pacific rim.

22.7 The ADRA factor: From an eschatological to humanitarian basis for mission

The inauguration of the Church's international development relief agency, ADRA, in the last two decades, has seen increasing interest by Avondale students often volunteering for calamitous situations abroad. In their desire to serve the Church and humanity they have been forced to encounter personal risk and trauma, and experience full-blown deprivations and tragedies of international proportions, including Bosnia, Kosovo, Cambodia and Ethiopia. It has proven an abrupt transition, in stark contrast to the early isolationist sectarian stance to evangelism and sectarian mission that had been driven by an eschatologically focused Church organisation and administration within a fortress paradigm.

Laying a further theological foundation for a more social gospel emphasis was Avondale BEd Graduate, Keith Allen, who wrote critically of the Church's emphasis on the Eschaton in the *Record* in 1991. He claimed that the Church had caused undue anxiety in its members by concentrating on "getting ready for the Second Coming," when Christ was already here now through the Holy Spirit. Second "Comingism", as a preoccupation with the future, to the exclusion of the present, was in his opinion "bad news". The emphasis significantly hampered a security and faith that believers were entitled to acquire in Christ, *now*. The fullness of life was available *now* and therefore the believer had no need to fear any future judgment (Allen, *AR*, May 25, 1991).

Perhaps not dissimilar to this emphasis was Ball's pronouncement in 1994 that the essence of Christianity was not contextualised in an academic, rationalistic or epistemic form, but in the ultimately authentic concept of *being* in Christ. As College Board chairman, he reflected:

> Real Christianity is not simply thinking or talking about religious ideas, however important or profound such ideas might be—God, sin, salvation, prophesy, the sanctuary, the future whatever. The ideas of Christianity must give birth to life. Essential Christianity is life (Ball, *AR*, January 29, 1994).

A senior College lecturer in Theology, Dr Ray Roennfeldt, provided the contemporary context for mission in 1996 when he suggested that as the Church faced

new situations it must adapt by way of understanding, evaluating and implementing the Gospel commission. In disavowing any explicit reference in the Book of Revelation to Ellen White's writings, he noted that any claim made by Adventism to a "remnant" must include strong components of social mission and justice within its doctrinal proclamation.

> *It is not enough to preach the gospel and leave the hard work to the "Salvoes".* (Salvation Army) *Real membership in Christ's church involves getting one's hands dirty in the troubles of the world... such aspects as mission to the world, faithfulness to scriptural teaching, openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit and concern for the marginalized of society* (McIver, and Roennfeldt (eds.) 1996, pp. 352-353).

Roennfeldt, however, reaffirmed a continuing promulgation of traditionalist sectarian aspects of the Church's theology, when he claimed that within this new emerging paradigm of mission, the retention of "corporate mission will be firmly based in the distinctives of the church" and that "the Adventist doctrine of judgment should be a strong reminder of the dangers of pride and apostasy" (McIver, and Roennfeldt (eds.) 1996, p. 353).

The College Director for Overseas Development, Harwood Lockton, explained the College's role in this instance as transitional and experimental.

> In the 1950-1970s Avondale's role was clear--to produce pastoral and educational graduates who could go as "missionaries" to the South Pacific. On the Eve of the 21st century, the situation is considerably less clear."

Lockton suggested in 2000 that part of the reason lies in the Church through its Avondale graduates over the last half century having been so effective in the South Pacific that the indigenous Adventist populations now supply their own workers through Pacific Adventist University (PAU) in PNG, and Fulton College in Fiji. (Lockton, 2000, pp.1-10). Agreeing with Lockton, Allen Sonter, former principal of Pacific Adventist College, [Now Pacific Adventist University] accepted that a "wholistic" message, having been delivered successfully within the South Pacific Rim, had enabled its past mission programmes to be instrumental in drawing people together from diverse regions and cultures. The Church, through the leadership and administration of Avondale-trained graduates, had facilitated a "mutual understanding" among the South Pacific indigenous.

This understanding has been further documented by the research of Crocombe and Meleisea in 1988, which reported that Pacific Adventist College was the most regionally orientated educational institution of the South Pacific Islands. (Sonter in

Currow, (ed.) 2000, p. 33 citing Crocombe and Meleisea, (eds.) 1988, pp. 382-383) Sonter admitted that the Church's programme *had also been naïve by discouraging many traditional activities allied to their pre-Christianity.* Erika Puni and Steven Currow supported Sonter, adding:

> There has been a tendency to Westernise rather than Christianise, the Pacific Islanders. A balance needs to be found between Christians' citizenship in heaven and their ability to understand and relate to the community in which they live (Puni and Currow, in Currow (ed.) 2000, p. 111).

Since the 1950s and 1960s high point of expatriate saturation, Avondale had embarked more recently on a volunteer student-missionary worldwide humanitarian aid and development program commencing in 1988 (Dixon, AR, July 30, 1988). It was part of a new response in a more socioculturally sensitive mission development programme, termed the "revisioning" of Avondale's "Greater Vision of a World in Need". This revisioning or "missioning" of development, says Lockton, is taken from the directives of Christ and other writers of the New Testament. Christ advocated that the 'weightier matters of the law' included justice and mercy.

> *Christ understood the pedagogic value of showing or demonstrating, as opposed to mere telling or proclaiming: it is well established that we learn more from seeing/experiencing than we do from hearing"* (Lockton in Currow, (ed.) 2000, p. 78).

Lockton reasons for the new Adventist paradigm shift from a sectarian mission to an humanitarian aid programme to show not just the goodness of Adventism with an eschatological warning and proselytising focus but a denominational paradigm "to reflect the character of God through humanitarian and development activities" (Lockton in Currow, (ed.) 2000, p. 79; see endnote 9). Usaia Baravilala, Fijian lecturer at Pacific Adventist University, and trained at Avondale College, wrote in 2000 that there must be an engagement with a new frontier of challenge to Adventism's theology of mission. Citing Oosterwal, (See endnote 10) he challenged the Church in a revisionist approach to:

> discover the 'present truth' for our day because 'the only boundary a person has to cross in order to be a missionary is that boundary between belief and unbelief. That boundary runs in front of the door.'

Redefined, Baravilala suggested that:

> real mission is not climbing up, but moving down; not going out, but going on. It is not making oneself dispensable, but making oneself nothing and becoming a servant; not narrow specialization, but becoming all things to all men (Baravilala in

Currow, (ed.) 2000, p. 95: see endnote 11).

Erika Puni, SPDSDA Church Ministry Director, and Steven Currow, lecturer in Theology at Avondale College, issued further challenges in 2000. They sought to revise the historical traditional management structures and methods undergirding South Pacific mission. In their section of the book *Revisioning Mission*, published by the College, they attack the Church's former "black and white approach to Christian values", claiming "it looms as a large threat for Christian mission."

> Fundamentalism reconstructs the complexities of life into the simplicity of 'my superior way'. Consequently, there is no understanding of issues apart from one's own frame of reference. Inevitably, this mindset will have a major impact on the ability of Christian mission to contextualise the never-changing Gospel into an ever-changing world (Puni and Currow, in Currow (ed.) 2000, p. 114).

Recognising that it was in the *standards* rather than the *values* that the Church has been guilty of a black-and-white application, it is of considerable significance that College theologians would now offer an explicit criticism of the past organisation's operational procedures, with its authoritarian pronouncements on sociocultural standards. This would imply criticism of Ellen White's authority.

Neither Puni nor Currow refer to her at any time in their paper. Their plea is for a more rational and relational approach to mission, written to stimulate more scope for facilitating agencies and specialist support. Such a redefinition of mission, for them, was seen as "a focus on Jesus' role of empowering his disciples instead of controlling them, of working beside them rather than above them" (Puni and Currow, in Currow (ed.) 2000, p. 118).

Yet, in 1997, the Church's internationally experienced public evangelists, Graeme Bradford and John Carter, expressed the Church's dilemma in the slowing growth, with a deep concern that the Church and College's focus had been deflected from the public presentation of biblical preaching and direct evangelism, which they claimed had made "evangelism the most important activity in the world" (Carter, *AP*. vol. 9, no. 1, p. 24). Carter challenged the constituents with the fundamental Protestant view that "people without Jesus Christ are lost" and that "people are not saved by doing good or being good." (Carter, *AP*. vol. 9, no. 1, p. 25) In confluence with George Knight's forecast that Adventist institutionalism was dangerously near to disintegration (George R. Knight, 1995), he warned that it was:

> *...the death* (of this style) *of evangelism that always leads to the death of the Church...Don't think that God will treat us any better or any worse than the*

Israelites who were God's Sabbath-keeping Remnant (Carter, *AP*. vol. 9, no. 1, 1997, pp. 26-27; emphasis mine).

Here was a clear challenge, by the older proven method of mission to return converts to the Church, against the newer College emphasis of the "unconditional love" and good social works. The call appeared to go largely unheeded, until recently when Bradford was invited to return to Avondale in 2001 as its senior lecturer in the Theology Faculty to re-energize Bible-focused evangelism.

If we are to summarise the evolution of social mission to this point we could say that Adventist Traditionalists, in the first fifty-odd years of the twentieth century, had approximated a model for mission that provided crisp clear-cut answers to the uncertainties of the cosmos, culminating in a sectarian version of eschatological climax. In a dangerous and chaotic world, they were unable to tolerate uncertainty. They were attracted to a single overriding authority and a translation that was unambiguous. Adventists, therefore, while in Fundamentalist mode, sought an authority that provided a rationale with clear convincing answers through a cosmology that revealed the future, giving hope to all who obeyed certain lifestyle commands and who separated from world culture, which was considered to be evil. World culture and standards were perceived as polar. People's behaviour was judged either to be black or white. (See Ostow in Cohen, (ed.) 1990) Following World War 2 the increasing interdependence and interrelated nature of society stopped Adventist Fundamentalism from maintaining a separatist and isolationist view. Evangelicalism emerged out of an across-the-board Fundamentalism at this time, and with its evolution in Adventism, came the buds of a more open relationally-focused community. But this was not seen to be fully flowering until the mid-1990s at Avondale, in particular, when with an increasing liberal philosophy they embraced a social agenda more soteriological in nature and mission.

Such was the emergence of what I might describe as the "neo-fundamentalists", as presented by Preston N. Williams--persons who rather than proselytise would seek to share their faith from a mutual focus in mission. Cross denominational in approach, they sought to eschew the practice of Fundamentalist absolutism and the non-Fundamentalist permissiveness. (See Williams in Cohen, (ed.) 1990) Shunning triumphalism, neo-Fundamentalism and Adventism appear now to be converging, particularly in Avondale's new orthodox Adventist proclamation of a revisioned mission message embracing unconditional love, justice and humility. (See endnote

12)

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1. See Lynden Rogers, "Can you speak the Lingo? *AR*, July 11, 1987, pp. 6-7).

2. As Adventism gradually discovered following World War 2, and documented earlier in this thesis, the Protestant cause generally found it had an increasing battle on its hands with the prevailing culture. According to Vos et. al., this stemmed most significantly with the inroads of modern science on the Christian's faith and practice of the fundamentals of Christianity rooted in supernatural events. (Vos, 1959, p. 432; Bernard Ramm, 1964, pp. 10-70) To a significant extent also, the lack of a church school system decreases the denomination's strength to maintain its peculiar traditional standards and values (Vos, 1959, p. 433).

3. I define basic traditional fundamentalistic belief as acceptance of the virgin birth, the sacrificial atonement, the physical resurrection and return of Jesus Christ to reign over the earth. (See Marty and Appleby, 1991, p. 2)

4. Adventist minister Llewellyn Jones, having met Graham, was impressed by his humility and graciousness. Jones wrote exhorting "Advent people to awake to the tremendous challenge to preach the Word as never before" (Jones, *AR*, April 6, 1959, p. 3).

5. Belief in the return of Jesus Christ and its literal imminence was not peculiar to Adventists. Almost all conservative Protestant churches were of the same view in the 1920s-1940s era (Hansen, 1978, p. 61).

6. Professor Lovat is Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales and is credited with being a significant author and facilitator in Australian public schools religious education curriculum.

7. In order to become members of the Church, one is required to accept a set of beliefs that the Church has continually developed.

8. He suggested that gone are the days of presumption reactivated by Martin Luther after "he stamped Protestantism with *sola scriptura* when the Bible could provide criteria by which to judge the adequacy of tradition, doctrine, morals, church practice and the cure of souls." Stackhouse reminds us that Luther's call to the "scripture alone" principle was conditional upon sola gracia and sola fidei. (by grace alone and by faith alone) In the contemporary world, however, there is an increasing "lack of clear cohesion" in the churches. Stackhouse warned:

> To state the point sharply, The Protestant tendency to rely on scripture as the decisive source and norm of faith is increasingly difficult to maintain unless one turns to extra canonical theories of inspiration or authority. In this regard we may well be at the end of the Protestant era (Stackhouse, 1988, p. 50).

9. As a consequence, Avondale provided a cross-cultural Ministry component in the BA Theology programme and an International Development Studies Course in 1999 at BA degree level, at the time of the completion of my dissertation the only course of its type offered in New South Wales (Lockton in Currow, [ed.] 2000, p. 82).

10. Gottfried Oosterwal is credited in the 1970s with being the first Adventist scholar to introduce to Adventist Mission an anthropological and sociological perspective concerning church growth. He held doctorates in theology and anthropology at the University of Utrecht before becoming Chair of the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University in 1968.

11 As early as 1888, Ellen White addressed the General Conference with a warning about its legalistic focus on outward standards of behaviour, placing Christ in a position of secondary importance. "The burden of our message should be the mission and life of Jesus Christ. Let there be a dwelling upon the humiliation, self denial, meekness and lowliness of Christ...Show to your hearers Jesus in his condescension to save fallen men" (Baravilala in Currow, (eds.) 2000, p. 95 citing Ellen G. White "Conference Address", September 11, 1888. cf White, 1958 vol. 1, pp. 383-384).

12. Oliver objects to the use of the word "neo-orthodox" Adventism although I am of the view that the use of the word new and neo may be virtually synonymous. (see Macquarie Dictionary on "new" and "neo") There is a possibility that such a word might be viewed as dangerous for certain constituents as it was for former conservatives in Protestant denominations (often those who held purse strings) and that fires of criticism might be fuelled too strongly to be quenched by past rhetoric. Certainly around Avondale, talking to staff who do not wish to be named, while completing this dissertation, I have detected significant confusion and nonchalance on the understanding of the word "inspired" when applied to Ellen White.

Chapter 23

The Church, Avondale and Burtchaell's perspectives on American religious college comparisons in soteriological and eschatological mission

23.1 Towards a values-based paradigm, revisited: Burtchaell's historical assessments

The Church's understanding of its prophetic or eschatological role and its new focus on New Testament values was, as we have already seen, a powerful factor in the transformation of its sociocultural awareness. Any major change to College standards and direction of mission was now being tied to a valid understanding of the Scriptures. The College, it would seem, could breathe easier with the Western Church administration, appearing to be less confrontational on distinctive issues despite its stance in enforcing, for instance, the Twenty-seven Fundamentals. Such tactics now would alienate many of the Church professionals, as evidenced by Australia's version of *Spectrum,* the *Adventist Professional,* from their potential support and throw wide open the fate of the College.

But the Church was also most anxious not to follow patterns similar, for instance, to Dartmouth College. Burtchaell's analysis described how it took 110 years before the first Liberal president led the college out of a sectarian culture toward a Liberal, Modernist and ultimately secular humanist pathway (cf Burtchaell, 1998, pp.11-44). This College was seen as largely a product of its time driven considerably by economics. The death knell to Dartmouth's Congregational control was evidenced by principal, William Jewett Tucker's 1892 pronouncement of the future of religion at the College:

> Religion must not be set to do the menial tasks of the college, it must not be made an instrument of discipline...The college fulfils an office which no man, I take it, will question, as it translates the original and constant religious impulse into terms of current thought and action, making itself a centre of spiritual light, of generous activities, and above all of noble intellectual and religious charity (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 32).

It was a watershed announcement taking the college into the new and uncharted waters of modernism and loss of original purpose. Former president, Samuel Colcord

Bartlett, had sought "to hold the institution firmly to its ancient moorings of sound learning and thorough training, consecrated by true piety and dedicated to the Master's cause..." (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 32). With his departure in 1892, all was ripe for change toward a libertine educational philosophy. The first symbolic move to liberal behaviour at Dartmouth was evidenced by the non-compulsory attendance to religious services in the name of freedom in religious faith. Tucker saw Christianity as being in transition from Protestantism, Puritanism and finally independence. Education for him was "right-mindedness...the moral disposition of the mind, the habit not simply of clear, strong, resolute thinking, but of right thinking" (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 35-36).

Tucker, according to Burtchaell, exhorted his students to move beyond the pale of the law, the prophets or the Gospel "to a higher morality still: 'personal standards of conduct and duty'" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 37). Eventually 80 percent of the college would in 1910 pledge themselves to "clean living and all round manhood, and to realise in my own life the Christian ideals of character and service." Three years later only 10 per cent were able to take this pledge (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 42). Dartmouth in 1998 had 2 percent of Congregationalists in attendance, Catholics held first spot with up to 36 percent. Students of no religious persuasion represented the second largest group. The current Jewish president has aspired to nothing "more important to his identity than being part of a tradition of scholarship and learning...my identity as an intellectual, and that identity was inextricably linked to my sense of myself as a Jew" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 52). Of Dartmouth's experience, Burtchaell summarised comprehensively its demise as a one time Christian college:

> Having moved, under Congregational auspices, away from a cramped orthodoxy and into a modernism that reduced faith to morals, and then having shifted its focus again from morals to manners, and its primary loyalties from church to class and country, it had become an enterprise unable to respond any longer to Christianity in any but a trivial and sentimental way (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 54).

Even by the 1960's the onetime US Congregationalist-based colleges no longer boasted of making "Christians out of men", but in the words of Paul H. Sherry, President of the United Church of Christ, they could only "help men to become fully men". (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 105) Burtchaell offered this revealing indictment on the church's loss of mission:

> The colleges related to Sherry's church are staffed by people without even minimal professional or personal concern for what his church thinks about justice or free access or who the "least of these" might be, or what elements of "the whole man"

they might be missing (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 105).

Mindful of this ominous trend, Adventism's "divinely controlled" entity appears to remain blessed with overt global supervision and control in the realms of mission, publishing, education and ministerial training. Yet few higher-educated Adventists in the new millennium seem to think that the nineteenth century standards set by Ellen White should remain. Rather, they would generally tend toward the application of a standard denominational profile as defined in the Wilson model with an organisation of members who are integrated with contemporary society in a manner that their sociocultural behaviour is indistinguishable (except by profession of their faith). There is no obvious exclusivity or triumphalistic notion of truth per se and members increasingly demonstrate virtual unconditional cooperation with other religious faiths. The denomination continues to be served by a paid professional ministry controlled by a bureaucratic administrative structure (Wilson, 1969, pp. 243-249).

The approach that Roger Dudley found most comfortable and identifiable in mainstream Adventism in 1986, on its pathway to denominationalism and society's acceptance as a "church", was the "culture-transforming" approach. Dudley suggested the scenario that: "while culture is fundamentally evil, it is redeemable. Christians may be God's agents in infusing the social system with the power and love of God and therefore causing the desert to blossom as a rose" (Dudley, 1986, p. 23). If Avondale now approximates this position, then there is some relevance and relationship to the 1976 situation of Azusa College where student beliefs (transformed from Lutheran to become Baptist) continued to advocate "scriptural separation from the world" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 770). But then, in 1981, with a developing postgraduate offering, the College claimed the title of a university (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 767).

Of heartening news was that Burtchaell found sufficient reasons for Azusa in the 1990s to describe it as a thriving established university, *still with lecturers who openly "regard their jobs as a ministry". Students came primarily for its religious focus, sixty-one percent of which have a religious affiliation and more than ninety percent reporting that they are "born again Christians"* (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 772). With the exception of Concordia University, Burtchaell saw Azusa as the most clearly forthright Christian university he had investigated in the US (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 773-4).

Not too dissimilar to Azusa in 1990, Concordia College became Concordia University through the provision of a "diversity of *programmes, faculties and*

students". It was in this light that Concordia "earned—university status much earlier in this decade" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 532). Two years earlier the College had set its Mission Statement on the basis that it would be challenged in the Lutheran context:

> to become an institution that intentionally serves as a locus for Christian Higher education, sharing the Gospel from a confessional Lutheran perspective.
>
> to provide undergraduate programmes in academic disciplines, church work and other professions, rooting them in liberal arts to prepare persons well educated for ministry in the church and the world (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 533).

In 1992, two years into university experience, Burtchaell observed that the "Lutheran character" was *not* evident from its "Strategic Planning Committee Goals and Objectives" draft (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 534). Six years later, with their former higher education institutions more academically respected and financially secure, the tradition and buildings of their institutions remained "attractive respected and of yesteryear" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 536).

There should be some obvious parallels here for consideration when reflecting on Adventist trends and "the Avondale experience". The Missouri Lutherans as Burtchaell observed, "once feisty about their faith and anything but neighbourly to other churches", and with some history of suspicion and dispute among themselves as much as with others, were "not particularly biblical in its (Concordia's) development nor scholarly in its outcome" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 536). Concordia, like Avondale had an original mandate to serve only their church professionally, and witnessed over-riding controls just as exerted on Avondale by the clergy dominated Union administration at the top. Today, the student body, only half of which are Lutheran, will provide but one third of its Lutheran work force (Burtchaell, 1998). Yet Lutheran focus on Christian education appears unabated, notwithstanding its release of other institutions, namely its hospitals, to state control. Quoting Richard Baepler from a 1977 Lutheran College faculty publication, Burtchaell encapsulated a remarkable scenario for Avondale in that it would probably have to undergo competition with Australasian Adventist medical and health food institutions, also struggling financially.

> It may be that the church will finally give up its involvement in hospital work and other institutional forms in which she pioneered and which the welfare state has taken over. But the education of the young is another matter. The church cannot abandon this wholly to the State. *There have to be strong church-related colleges where the young who bear the future can collaborate with older generation in freely and amply probing cultural memory, current realities and future prospects for man*

even when a majority of men may have forgotten their roots and lost their hope (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 537; emphasis supplied).

23.2 Adventist education's institutional monster

In challenging the secularism and amorality of university life generally today, and addressing only legitimate academic performance, Johnsson has asked of Adventist colleges and universities: "Did we create a masterpiece or a monster?" (Johnsson, 1995, pp. 52-8) He admits that in this area the ability to differentiate between the Church rules and God's rules has been a nightmare. George Knight has advanced the alarming proposition that Adventism including the Australian Church scene may now be too corporate and preoccupied with its own baggage. Of concern is that Australian Adventism is not growing as rapidly in Church membership as the Pentecostal churches, causing pressure on the viability of its institutions not the least its education system (See endnote 1).

John W. Knight has posed that Adventism's thrust toward denominationalism through its institutionalised programmes has significantly diminished "the initial spirit of dynamic protest inherited from the Millerite movement." It spelled "a gradual drift back to the conventional in education and in secular behaviour...a further implicit confession of the Advent receding," and exhibited evidences that were "eventually destructive of religious faith and fervour" (John W. Knight, 1973, p. 182). Aware of this criticism, already levelled in her day, Ellen White reacted strongly to this suggestion and saw it as a means of helping the Adventist faithful to "press together...in our separation from one another we are separated from Christ...In unity there is strength," (White, 1958, Bk. 2, p. 374) in maintaining their mission with undiluted resolve. The pragmatism of the new education philosophy was designed to fit the student for a self-supporting, self-sufficient worker in the "speedy preparation for the work", and an independent missionary before the final world crisis. The context, however, remained in Ellen White's view, that the Church "is not to be disorganised or broken up into independent atoms" (White, 1958, Bk. 2, pp. 68-69). The Church must advance as an institutional unit.

George Knight is in no doubt that a sense of prophetic mission is vital in the Church for the continuing focus of its eschatological goals, borne out of and generated by its prophetic understanding. One of its key pillars was the fundamental aspect of Sabbatarianism, its evangelisation, tied to an eschatological test,

maintaining the vision and the significance for the Church as a prophetic people (Knight, *Ministry*, October 1994, p. 10). The ultimate *cause de celebre,* was, in Knight's words: "the bedrock conviction that they were a prophetic people with a unique message concerning Christ's soon coming to a troubled world" (Knight, *Ministry*, October 1994, p. 11). He made the fundamental point *that to lose faith in the Second Advent, as an historical event, would be "to lose Adventism itself"* (Knight, *Ministry*, October 1994, p. 12). Knight concluded that the surrender of such a vision spells potentially the death of the denomination, as it is known. In recognising the growing problem that "it is hard to keep people excited about the Second Coming for 150 years," he provided no clear solution.

In reflecting, by way of summary, on earlier sections of this thesis, the distinctive sectarian, eschatologically mission-focused theology of the Church, so heavily thrust into the Australian Church press in the 1920s to the 1940s, had been in the 1950s, overtaken by preference for lead stories on personal piety, character development and the family. Issues relating to personal forgiveness, courage, righteousness by faith, grace, and gratitude interspersed by laymen's activities, public evangelism, discoveries in archaeology, and South Pacific mission development, now filled its pages. The Church appeared to enjoy the prosperity and peacetime growth with a new optimism in growing its kingdom on earth and with a reduced interest in eschatology and reduced space devoted to, but not sublimating, the Eschaton focus.

Towards the end of the 1950's temperance issues were again headlined. Now, more temporal social help programmes in the form of Five-day plans to quit smoking and preventative alcohol addiction programmes were wheeled out. The early 1960s graduated to an increased interest in personal pietism, the quest for reliance on Christ's perfection in Christians, the power of the cross and the body of Christ as an entity that *may* include believers outside Adventism. Articles emphasizing moral perfection through works and attainment and maintenance of Church standards ceased to dominate the pages and administration's mindset although its implication remained.

If W.G. Turner observed of Methodism in 1936, a situation that Adventism would face in 2001, the destiny of Avondale College's education may *almost* inescapably be plotted on the path that Methodism and Lutheranism trod before it. Wesleyan Methodism, having been in operation away from the Church of England for 150 years, had generally retained the values of frugality, diligence and perseverance

and entertained spiritual certainty and sociocultural upward mobility. That the Adventist pathway of upward mobility through institutionalism, will succeed in overcoming the world, Knight suggests, will be determined by the inherent honesty of those in whose hands its destiny is held (George Knight, 1995, p. 33).

Adventism's world-wide hierarchical model, not dissimilar to the Roman Catholics, while "tighter and more unified", (George Knight, 1995, p .47) has revealed that the Church's big problem now is the struggle against "the inertia of vested interests" (George Knight, 1995, p. 51). Part of this problem is levelled at pastors who have their eye on hierarchical advancement rather than building up the body of Christ. A second problem is seen in administrators watching the "baggage" of the Church when they should be acting as role models for the youth and younger members of the Church (George Knight, 1995, p. 52). Jurgen Moltman has presented Australian Adventism and institutional education, an ominous note of warning: "For Christian faith to bring about its own decay by withdrawal into the ghetto *without self-criticism*, is a parallel to its decay through uncritical assimilation" (George Knight, 1995, p.123).

The statistical growth of Adventist members in Australia and New Zealand give Adventist Church administrators little joy. The mood is that the Church is slipping backwards, with a generally reduced tithe per capita and a greater reluctance to remove non-attending or wayward members from the Church rolls. George Knight underscores the cause for the dilemma by suggesting: "Mission is what the Seventh-day Adventist Church is all about. Mission is the only reason for the denomination's existence" (George Knight, 1995, p. 7). He likens the institutionalised Church to a woman who, as a result of the non-return of Jesus Christ to date, has allowed secularisation, disorientation and social exclusivity in institutionalism to now find herself "both obese and sweating profusely--a woman standing before a door with arms full of precious packages...rich and increased with goods", a body that has "need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17; George Knight, 1995, p. 15). He adds: "The extension of time has mothered every problem currently faced by the Seventh-day Adventists" (George Knight, 1995, p. 7).

Another significant problem for Adventism, concludes George Knight, is that it erroneously derives its identity, "for the size, number, variety, and quality of her packages." (George Knight, 1995, p.15) Knight warns bluntly that the major flaw is administrative reactionism and egotism: "The history of the Adventist Church

indicates that it never makes needed structural changes of a major sort until it is on the brink of organisational and financial collapse" (George Knight, 1995, p.18).

23.3 Can a Seventh-day Adventist Avondale University identity be sustained?

Further education and enlightenment provide the bigger picture. Of the need for Adventist tertiary institutions and the quest for truth, in 1969, Godfrey Anderson asked the question: "Does the church need the university? Without reservation the answer is affirmative. 'Religion without learning, or learning without religion, must ultimately prove the undoing of the church'." Such is the means to lead people out of superstition, prejudice and ignorance. "The "Priesthood of the scholar" makes him responsible for searching out and disseminating truth--all truth. And all truth is God's truth" (Anderson *Spectrum*, vol.1, no. 1, p. 8). The grave danger is that a religious organisation can make an idol out of truth for the sake of believing that truth, of itself without love, is the essence of maintaining a grasp on salvation. Quoting Pascal, R.N. Bender related his explanation on the nature of truth: "We make an idol of truth; for truth without charity is not God, but His image and idol, which we must neither love nor worship. You lived for the worship of an idol. But in the last analysis, the name of every idol is Moloch" (Anderson *Spectrum*, vol.1, no. 1, p. 13).

On this matter, John Knight is critical of the discrimination (John W. Knight, 1973. pp. 109-110) that exists as a result of "sectarian" attitudes by Church administrators, who, in welcoming and advocating an open inquiry into the Church's belief system with free and unfettered examination, (*SDA Philosophy of Higher Education*, 1972, p. 10) direct their employees to "willingly support the religious concepts and philosophy of the Church..." (*SDA Philosophy of Higher Education*, 1972, p. 18). The fact has been that students were shackled by the admonition in as much that while enrolled at a Church institution they must not "display antagonism toward the ideals, objectives and program of the institution" (*SDA Philosophy of Higher Education*, 1972, p. 19). John Knight claimed that this attitude thwarted "scholarly balance". The reference for a limited frame of flawed academic investigation reference—that of the "suppression of fully and truly tertiary education" (John W. Knight, 1973, p. 110). If this was true of the past, any future criticism along similar lines will be examined with considerably more interest as the college aspires

to Australian university status. This theme will be revisited in the final two chapters.

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1. One of the positive aspects seen is that unlike other Protestant churches the Adventist Church is not a national church or a confederation of national churches. It is international (spanning more than 200 nations) with one fundamental theological and organisational structure. The only other church that could boast of its global nature, he claimed, albeit in much greater diversity, strength and numbers, was the Roman Catholic Church (Johnsson, 1995, p. 18). A second positive may be seen in average weekly church attendance in Australia in the early 1990s which saw Adventists with the seventh highest Protestant attendance, (36,551) below Anglican, (190,916); Uniting, (162,830); Baptist, (102,941); Assemblies of God, (80,181); Lutheran, (49,358); Churches of Christ, (43,611) (Kaldor, et. al., 1994, p. 60).

Even by 1980, the Adventist Church had claimed to be "the most widespread of all Protestant denominations...with the greatest number of (Protestant) missionaries in the field, (ca. 3200)" in the world. In the Church's 135 years of history, Seventh-day Adventists were operating in 190 countries using publications to disseminate their faith in 183 languages, with oral transmission in another 384 languages (Oosterwal, 1980, p. 1). Their influence through their 400 hospitals and clinics, 75 colleges and universities, 645 secondary schools, nearly 4000 elementary schools, 28 food factories, 50 publishing houses and presentations on 4000 radio and TV stations weekly have caused the church generally to be a highly effective body of believers with its destiny firmly between their teeth. (Oosterwal, 1980, p. 5.) By 1983 they had added an impressive 306 more primary schools, 246 secondary schools, and an increase of 21 colleges and universities (*123rd Annual Statistical Report,* 1983).

Such statistics demonstrate at a glance that Adventism has mobilized itself, like the much larger denominations, to provide an almost total health care, education and a general security system to meet the needs of its paying members and the surrounding community, encompassing from the cradle to the grave. Adventist Church growth specialist, Gottfried Oosterwal, laid claim for the Church that: "Over the years, the Adventist Church has shown the most continuous and the most consistent pattern of growth of all Christian churches" (Oosterwal, 1980, p. 5). This is despite the admission that recent areas of decline have been included parts of Europe and Africa, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand. Oosterwal suggested that:

> The effectiveness of the church's message and mission is not just determined either by its numerical growth and geographical advance, or by its institutional strength and organisational structures, its financial resources and its universal presence in the world. Rather, *the effectiveness of the church's ministry is measured by the way it has changed people and influenced society* (Oosterwal, 1980, p. 3; emphasis supplied).

However, this effectiveness is also related to Church membership, for Oosterwal stated: "numerical growth is fundamental to the life of the church" (Oosterwal, 1980 p. 7). Such numerical growth is most evident when the church is in a mode of "spontaneous witnessing at work, in the neighbourhood, in the family circle and among friends" (Oosterwal, 1980 p.10). Furthermore Church growth is contingent on the relevancy of the "message" to people's life and existence in the context of their particular situation" (Oosterwal, 1980, p.13). A major factor in church growth is the crisis factor from a change in fortune or relationships (Oosterwal, 1980, p. 9).

Chapter 24

The transition from an eschatological basis to an ecclesiastical-soteriological paradigm basis for Adventist mission: Some implications

24.1 The problem of retaining an Adventist identity, continued

Problems as a result of a prolonged focus on the imminence of the Eschaton, as discussed particularly in chapter 3 are now being faced in the context of critical theorists as they observe the inroads of secularisation and changes to sociocultural standards, once seen as landmarks and identification markers to remnancy within the Church and College. The incongruence evidenced is featured, in part, by recently well-built and architecturally pleasing buildings, sophisticated institutional management structures, and advanced tertiary education programmes. As a church with powerful future millennial aspirations, its preoccupation with structure, bricks and mortar, respectable secular enterprises and institutions raised problems in its quest to maintain cultural identity, doctrinal purity and a sense of eschatological mission. If we accept that Ellen White and the Church, through its administrative zeal, once lived in the certainty that the Eschaton was within a few short years from being fulfilled, Adventism and the College were clearly struggling to find their way mission-wise by the mid 1980s. Western Seventh-day Adventism now entered an era when it was no longer sure of the time, and could not signal in which generation Christ might come. Consequently, it appeared to have felt some need to create a new cause and justification for its claims to being different as the repository of religious truth and the remnant church.

Likewise, it would appear to have been shaken by some bad news about its public image during this time. Former College lecturer and Division Communications director, Russell Kranz, called upon the Church to clarify its cloudy image and acquire an updated single "corporate symbol" and to clearly state its name in everything it did publicly (Kranz, *AR*, February 15, 1982, p. 2). Furthermore, Avondale, as evidenced in its *College Handbooks, Calendars, Jacarandas* and Church newspaper promotions, had earlier, presented several different motifs using a

stylised eye. The obsession to publish apologetic articles on the remnant, apostasy, the importance of the prophetic gift and doctrine, and to a lesser extent Adventist lifestyle issues, continued to abound into 1982 with little emphasis on Christian experience relationships or any particular thematic focus on subjects of a soteriological nature so prevalent in the 1970s.

The Church's 1982 Week of Prayer readings presented six out of the seven majoring in bolstering Ellen White's authority and status as an inspired prophet ("Week of Prayer" *AR,* September 11-18, 1982). *Adventist Review* editor, William Johnsson again described the essence of Adventism as a Church that was a "prophetic gathering movement", one whose ecclesiology was linked to lifestyle, distinctive Church doctrines and eschatology (Johnsson, *AR,* October 9, 1982, pp. 6, 7). There was no mention of soteriological themes. But in Parmenter's reflections on 1983 he spoke of the "more abundant life" of Christ being available in the Church member's life now ("The More Abundant Life", *AR,* January 13, 1983).

Parmenter again tried to rally the College and the Church to "Sound an Alarm!" Set again in the context of a prophetic Church's message he gave further recognition that "the cross must be central to every message we preach" (Parmenter, *AR,* August 6, 1983, p. 2). Yet when retired Avondale lecturer, W.A. Townend described the College as an "annex of Heaven" in 1983, (Townend, *AR,* January 29, 1983, p. 5) he perceived that the Church's essential doctrines were built on the "solid" base of the "Sabbath, Second Coming, Spirit of Prophecy, sanctuary, standards, state of the dead, stewardship" and lastly the "Saviour" (Townend, *AR,* July 9, 1983, p. 6). It appeared to be an incongruous twist backwards from the increasingly soteriologically focused direction of the College.

24.2 The problem of administrative intransigence

Johnsson took the General Conference position that three years after the Ford sacking at Glacier View, *"The Adventist Church showed the maturity to face major criticisms of its leading doctrines and out of this searching inquiry it eventually emerged stronger than before"* (Johnsson, *AR,* November 5, 1983, p. 6; emphasis mine). The facts however might eventually show otherwise. Within a few short years this position had become even more threatened by a group of Australian professional laymen and Church administrators, who were now voicing their views for urgent changes to

administrative structures, decision making processes and paradigms relating to faith and practice. The unofficial organ for these revisionist-styled philosophies was the Australian equivalent of the American *Spectrum*, *Adventist Professional* that commenced in 1989.

A senior *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist, Malcolm Brown, in addressing the College Board chairman, Walter Scragg, and his Division administration in 1989, reminded them that Adventism, in context with the Chamberlain legal saga, had faced a significant problem in communicating its identity to the outside world. Brown marked matters of perceived weirdness to include "the 1844 basis for the cosmic resolution of things." He added that a further complication for Adventism was that in its

> 'last days' concept and its elevation of Ellen White almost to the level of a prophet, (the Church) seems to have wanted to add at least another chapter. In that way, it has put itself back into the Mormon category...(Brown, *AP*., 1989, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 8-9).

This news would have been most probably ignored at the beginning of the decade. But with the Church's increasingly out of step management of significant issues and the Caucasian growth of the Adventist Church, particularly in Australia and New Zealand, now falling during the mid to late 1980s to less than 1% per annum, alarm was spreading to many Adventist professionals concerned with the direction of the Church's mission and practice (Oosterwal, *AP*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 3). Oosterwal noted in 1989 that: "Churches organised hierarchically with communication flowing from the top had poor growth" and reiterated Ellen White's warning of 1901 that the leadership had operated with the notion that they had "kingly power" (Oosterwal, *AP*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 4). He suggested, "they had said far too little about the joy of serving the Lord who is our liberator" (Oosterwal, *AP*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 6).

Former College lecturer in Evangelism John Carter, warned the Church administration in the same year of the continuing lack of funding for mission when it appeared that "vast sums of money" were being used in "just running the machinery" (Carter, *AP*., vol. 1, no. 4, p. 7) of organisation. The Church, he suggested, was in need of a *perestroika* (Carter, *AP*., vol. 4, no. 1, p. 17). Oliver remarked that no organisational structure had the eternal seal of divine approval. There was a danger in sticking slavishly to old formulas of organisation when structures ceased to facilitate mission (Oliver, *AP*., vol 1, no. 3, 1989, p. 18). George Knight agreed, issuing a warning that radical structural change must occur if the Church was to move forward

(George Knight, *AP.*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 14).

Adventism, said Oosterwal, had structured its mission in the nineteenth century to focus on a largely Christian-respectful world and had not been prepared for modernity and secularism that would need to be confronted in the next century (Oosterwal, *AP*, vol 2, no. 1, p. 11). Paving the way for a more humanitarian approach to mission by Avondale, he noted that a new breed of Adventist missionary was needed to factor in what really shaped modern people's life and thought. (Oosterwal, *AP.* vol. 4, no. 1, p. 3)

SPDSDA youth leader, Barry Gane, wrote in the same year that the lone ranger mentality of the Church was to rush out from its fortress into the world and convert a handful of worldlings before retreating back in a cloud of dust and then hiding in the safety and separateness of its own institutional security. The introverted isolationism had to change towards a form of "incarnational mission" and "caring activism". This would become evident by the growth of the number of friends outside Adventism, vital as a basis for the healthy nurture and communication of Adventist beliefs (Gane, *AP.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp.14-15). Such an outlook, according to Zanita Johnson, writing in *Adventist Professional*, in 1990, must have the essential ingredient of inclusiveness allowing for plurality of opinion and the tolerance of a variety of viewpoints (Johnson, *AP.*, vol 2. no. 3, p. 9). In 1993, Gane explicitly emphasized a mission strategy for youth, advocating that unless leaders in the Church are Holy Spirit-filled, irrespective of any skills or talents brought to their work, they may eventually prove to be "useless" (Gane, *AP.*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 30-31).

24.3 The rise of Australian Adventist-inspired sociological critiques

In 1992, former Avondale College theology graduate and South Pacific mission president, Ritchie Way, pointed, for the first time, to the significance and urgency for the Church to embrace a paradigm shift in its cultural attitudes (Way, *AP.*, vol 6, no. 2, pp 2-5). In making the distinction between biblical morals and Adventist mores he proclaimed: "If your religious culture is alive it will change." This signal for a revisionist interpretation of as parochial culturally-induced set of standards from the traditionalists, placed the administration on notice that the Church should now clearly grapple with and discern the differences between absolutes and variables in its faith

and practice.

> We are not called to be separate from the world in dress, adornment, music culture or any other sphere except where they violate either the gospel or morality. To otherwise choose a different kind of dress, adornment or music culture from that of the people we seek to save, is to build a barrier between them and the gospel we proclaim in Christ's name.

Way did not define "morality" or "the gospel" in context of the Church's pre-1984 emphasis on eschatologically based mission. He did however point to the need for a revision of the administration's now reactionary interpretations on Ellen White's cultural mores for the Church, declaring a necessary change was vital. His basis for cultural latitude lay in the Pauline statement: "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel..." (I Corinthians 9:19-23; Way, *AP.*, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 7; see endnote 1).

The continual low growth rate in the West caused Folkenberg, in 1991, to ask a sensitive question concerning the continuing viability of the current structure of the Adventist Church organisation as a facilitator-servant model. His emphasis on mission provided evidence that there had been a clear switch now toward a soteriological basis for evangelistic mission.

> I understand the mission of our church as being to lead others to an acquaintance with and surrender to Christ (soul winning) and to guide our members to an ever growing Spirit-filled relationship with Christ (soul-retaining) (Folkenberg, *AP.*, vol. 4, no. 1, p.10; cf Newman, *AP.*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 2-5).

The Church, despite its hegemonial pressure on an eschatologically focused mission imperative, recognises that it is probably no nearer to ushering in the return of Christ. As the proclaimed remnant, unlike the New Testament apostles, it has not "turned the world upside down". This transformation, stated Folkenberg, must come from a change from inside the Church, a change at its "dead centre" (Folkenberg, *AP.*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 12-13).

24.4 Ford's contribution to the soteriological emphasis paradigm

Ford's issues became part of the College curriculum information in the 1990s, as evidenced in a chapter devoted to the Adventist Sanctuary dilemma in the 1996 edition of *The Christian Faith in a Seventh-day Adventist Context.* Senior College lecturer in New Testament, Dr Norman Young, described Ford's challenge as "one of the most powerful salvoes that have ever been fired across the bows of Adventism"

(McIver, and Roennfeldt, (eds.) 1996, p. 332). It had been derived from his notion that the Church was not just marginally, but essentially anti-cross and therefore anti-gospel. The College Theology Department has stated unequivocally that true growth in the Christian life is defined as development in an increasing dependence on Jesus Christ (McIver and Roennfeldt, 1996, p. 72). Within Christianity, the cross was the central focus rather than the identity with 1844. With the passage of time since 1844, the original concentration on the Three Angel's Messages and its emphasis on the sanctuary judgement hour has caused a "rethink" for the sake of the Church's continuing credibility. On this matter, Young stated:

> It is impossible to deny the validity of Ford's main concern that all Adventist teachings be grounded in Jesus Christ. As Ford says "our emphasis on the books of record have made it sound as though the Judgment were a balancing of good deeds over bad rather than the perception of the tenor of a man's life as revelatory of his attitude to the cross" (McIver and Roennfeldt, 1996, pp. 337-338).

The argument that I have been advancing, that Avondale now appears to have entered a revisionist or "post-Ellen White" era, with changing emphasis on mission, theological and sociocultural life-style perspectives, might also be termed otherwise as new-orthodox or neo-fundamentalistic Adventism. The faith has remained the same, overtly, but the practice of certain standards has changed. The evidence comes from a number of sources including comparisons of its Mission Statements in the last chapter, and its shift is in the eschatological mission paradigm emphasis to a more soteriological-ecclesiastical based paradigm as presented in an earlier chapter. This is not to deny that the "pillar doctrines" of Adventism, maintained by George Knight (Knight, *AR*, July 31, 1993) *and others do not remain as fundamental in the traditionalist Adventist mind* (See endnote 2).

In the Church's 1999 manuscript "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia" written as part of the Bible of understanding the main religions of Australia in the twenty-first century, Salom, as its creator, appears not to regard the traditional distinctive of the Investigative Judgment, as sufficiently relevant to be included as a significant doctrine of the contemporary Adventist Church. As the editor, he makes no reference to this fiercely defended and arguably singularly exclusive doctrine. In the section, "Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs and Practices", the doctrinal headings include, "Scripture: The Only Creed", "The Godhead", "Sin and Salvation", "The Church", "The Sabbath", "Church and State" and "Special Events" (Salom in Hughes (ed.) Christian Research Association, 1999, pp. 1-6 in press). Finally, there is no

explicit reference to the Adventist Church being linked as the remnant.

The election to provide no explicit evidence that Seventh-day Adventism maintained its former potent weapon in the Investigative Judgment is, in my view, a revisionist act to render it, while still a centrepiece to the Twenty-seven Fundamentals, as largely anachronistic. My proposition is therefore, that *more than any other twentieth-century influence in the Australian Church, including the external factors of modernism, when man reasoned that he was no longer the creation of God, in the context of industrial enlightened scientific reason, or postmodernism, where there was a reaction to reason and an assault on its methodological unity,* (Cooper and Burrell, 1988; Hassard, 1993) *the Ford factor has been instrumental to a significant degree in removing from Adventist's minds the need to further promote the Investigative Judgment aspect in the Adventist sanctuary interpretation. Australian Adventist literature for some years, has remained virtually mute on the subject, and it is hard to imagine in the prevailing climate of administrative direction, that to mention the process and impetus of higher education in its revisionist mission focus, could now enjoin in a reversionary thrust to highlight this dogma in a manner consistent with the early 1980s administration reaction.*

Subject to the validity of these deductions, any appearance that Avondale is now a revisionist educational institution might have caused some significant repercussions with a fiercely traditionalist, somewhat authoritarian and at times reactionary General Conference administration of the past. But Oliver views the Church administration as now being in revision mode over its former "slavish understanding" of Ellen White. In an era where for the first time the new president of the General Conference, Dr Jan Paulsen, is not only a theologian, but is being identified as a political and religious peacemaker, (see Dabrowski, *AR,* March 10, 2001, p.3) Avondale's direction may be seen more reflectively and approvingly in its attempts to work through a revision of her role as prophet and inspired authority. Oliver reflected: "We now must reinterpret her in the setting of the twenty-first century, respecting the cultural context of her life and message" (Oliver, October 22, 2000). What must not be applied is a continuation of her messages that were contextually conditioned to her era but which may not now be contemporaneous (See Butler as cited in Bradford, 1994, p. 65).

Carl George warned in 1988, that the Church's biggest hurdle was to put the correct and enduring value on Ellen White and her contribution in founding the Church. He further astutely observed that it was not Ellen White who held the key to

the identity of Adventism or its people. He is entirely correct in my opinion to propose to the Church that:

> *Adventism has nothing to fear from a close examination of its origin, its writings its founders because Adventism does not hang or fall with Ellen G. White. It hangs or falls on faithfulness to Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour* (George, 1988, p. 68; emphasis mine).

24.5 Revisiting sectarianism and standards control and a more "mature" values-based paradigm

The summary by Robert Banks (See endnote 3) is relevant to my argument here. He observed that theological education in the West is undergoing culture shock and painful transition into the twenty-first century. He maintained that mainline denominational and confessional institutions are falling away to rising charismatic and interdenominational higher education centres. Women also remain under-represented among faculty and administration. Therefore, the aims and purposes of Christian higher education as a viable enterprise are being intensely scrutinised (See Banks, 1999, pp. 8-10). From a review of the effects of the more authoritarian institutional behaviour regimes of Adventism, an even greater hiatus from cultural realities and personal relevance may have been created by holding on to a selective and separatist imprimatur version of Ellen White's sociocultural context.

In an analysis of the effects of prolonged sectarian education, and the attendant authoritarian administrative approach, Gary Schwartz, as far back as 1970, advanced the notion that *Adventist religious education ran into difficulty by virtually ignoring any investigation of sociocultural causes for the growth of Church faith by developing an increasingly conservative and traditional line toward its origins, foundations and peculiar identity* (Schwartz, 1970, p. 71). Schwartz observed that students of sectarian ideological frameworks have tended to ignore cogent analysis of the historical causes for their beliefs. Although Adventists have been taught to inquire using their intellectual process, guided by their ministers and leaders, the study of Scripture has, for theology students in the past, been conducted within a certain model or framework, known colloquially among its members as the "proof text method". This process selects and compares Scriptures, developing an argument from which a doctrine of the Church will be proved illuminated or illustrated. As early as 1891 the Wesleyan Methodist Church focused on the alleged evils of Seventh-day Adventists' Pacific Islands missionary activity accusing them of selective Bible interpretation by

"a pretty free use of scissors for clipping verses" (Patrick, 1992, p. 202).

Nevertheless, as a methodology for its day it was a potent persuasion to supplant another belief system with the logical and compelling Adventist epistemology. The Church's strength, having been epistemologically based, probably provided cause for a NCL survey on Adventism in 1994, to state: "Clearly it is a denomination which is satisfied with what it is doing and sees little need to consider new directions" (Kaldor et. al., 1994, p. 276). Case and Dudley contend that the mature Christian will manage life not by oversimplifying reality. "They do not see everything in black and white but discern the fine shades of grey in between." It may not be confined to the commands of authority figures but rather it will be reflective and address "all the main and crucial questions of life and provide functional answers." It must be a faith that does not remain static but leads to discovery. This faith will constantly reach out for answers (Gillespie, 1993, p. 53). Case and Dudley consider that maturity in faith is conditional on intelligent input and the ability to understand another point of view (Gillespie, 1993, p. 63). Religious maturity is more likely to be found in "value development" rather than "demonstrations of perfection" (Gillespie, 1993, p. 73). This is precisely the proposition that I attempt to demonstrate in this thesis. Sectarian Adventism under an Ellen White imprimatur has seen its cultural standards largely as black and white issues. The reality is that, like other religious communities that have run similar regimens, an individual standards judgement process is now much more relevant for students in order to negotiate the realism of the shades of grey associated with cultural standards in a postmodern society.

John W. Knight struck at the Achilles heel of the ultra-fideistic philosophy inherent in the Church's existence as the exclusive bearer of the Eschaton to herald the return of Christ. *If the Apostles, most without any apparent formal education, turned the world upside down, why has the Adventist Church, which has been given a clear mandate by its latter day prophet Ellen White to build educational institutions that will allegedly facilitate a better preparation base for Christ to return, not fulfilled its mission after 156 years?* The Church, he suggested, must accept that it has been in this sense a failure. With the hierarchy, having squeezed book after book and admonition after admonition from Ellen White's writings to stir the faithful into spiritual perfection, using changing eschatological interpretations about various world conditions, a muted, subtle if not passive backlash is now in process to reinterpret her in the context of her nineteenth century Puritan/Methodist North American culture.

Indeed he remarked that Adventism, because of its isolationist policies, posed no real threat to any society outside its own institutional stance (John W. Knight, 1978, pp. 13-14). The temptation is to remain in a state of "inward-looking" denial, stated Lawrence Moore, (See endnote 4) because as a Church, Adventism has proved remarkably self-sufficient and resilient able "to carry its believers from the cradle to the grave with little reliance or help from the non-Adventist World." (Moore, *Spectrum*, vol. 21, no.1, 1990, p. 46) Bain added that unless the Church is prepared to foster socially inclusive institutions it may as well not have them (Sydney Adventist Forum, May 26, 2001).

What John Knight appeared not to factor into his thesis was the increasing number of Adventist students and scholars in waiting, *not* bound by an institutionalised fideistic sectarian paradigm whose faith and practice is biblically-based and who have come to a set of standards driven by soteriologically-based values without any denial of the five great supernatural Protestant truths or the seventh-day Sabbath. At the time of his PhD thesis in 1978, there was only inchoate evidence of this occurring in Adventism and his observations were therefore more cogent in his own contemporary context. The difficulty remains, of course, as to the method of dealing with Ellen White as the inspired authority for Adventism. If Avondale has indeed shifted to a new paradigm by dealing with her in an historically contextual model then the values behind the standards she espoused need to be processed from the old authoritarian inerrant model.

Steve Thompson influenced somewhat by the work of anthropologist, Mary Douglas in her study of religious enclaves in the Book of Numbers, weighs in on the broader front of change in the Church's standards. In tending to interpolate my thesis proposition and question whether Seventh-day Adventists generally, need to be "'catching up' with their host societies", he asks if anything has really changed in the Church's approach to cultural assimilation with secular society in the past few years. Adventists, he says, who choose to remain "deeply pessimistic about the world" would probably like the Church to remain as it was. Those at ease with present society would possibly seek "a higher degree of integration with the host society." That the Church is now generally desirous to embrace the present may not be any more evident than in the past, when in his assessment there was somewhere between a 10-50 year lag in giving "acknowledgement" to, or assimilating its cultural standards (Thompson letter, 2001).

Despite Thompson's view that the Church (i.e. the Western division) shows no more evidence now to be desirous of cultural philosophical change, I would argue from the confluence of "new Adventism's" sociological perspectives, including that of Karla K. Walters, that Avondale at least and the educated members of the Church generally are becoming more strongly aware of the need for revision. Walter's message delivered at the American Adventist Forums in Seattle in 1989, applied strongly to the Australian context and Avondale in particular that the Church should now see the "present truth" of Ellen White as transcending her sociocultural and historical context, whether or not "one wears a saffron robe or black leather pants". This, she stated, was "far more than merely waiting for the Second Coming". It included "fighting the evils of a vicious secular environment" (Walters, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1990, p. 8).

Furthermore, if the Church is finding that against the backdrop of scientism's invasion into religion, its rationalisation and displacement of the power of spiritual manifestation and experience is causing the loss of the Spirit as a central pedagogical focus in the 1970s, it may be exacerbating the mainspring of passion and motivation for personal and public evangelical mission. Such denial of the work of the Spirit as an initiator and director of intimate personal knowledge in the dimensions of mind, heart and will is to severely constrict the ability and emancipatory power of the revelatory strength of the Christian gospel and hence a renewal in evangelistic passion (See Banks, 1999, pp. 63, 73-76).

24.6 A warning: Develop a biblical and Ellen White values-based hermeneutic for a future identifiable church and education system, now

Wolfgramm's assessment in 1997 of the Adventist Church and implied College's options to remain a dynamic mission-focused Church were succinct. He observed that "the very fulcrum of history, the Christ event", was heralded by Bible prophets calling for reformation and change and was usually met with refusal and rejection. Consequently in the context of contemporary religion, Adventism included, he suggests that the desire for change will experience a two-edged sword:

> to maintain an integrity with the hallowed past on the one hand, and to address the future adequately on the other...through these rocky postmodern times where choice

is everything and cultural synthesis is expected.

As a backdrop for this he advanced the notion of a range of "Adventism's" developing from the seeds of postmodernity and administrative dissonance. They would include:

* "Protestant Adventism", a reformation understanding of the Gospel;
* "Perfectionist Adventism", historical traditional Adventism as perceived by the "Adventist virtuosi"; and
* "Progressive Adventism", exhibiting revisionist tendencies and philosophies that give evidence of a paradigm shift.

Wolfgramm offered two other styles:

* "World Adventism" with its demands for a more independent-style, personal ministries autonomy; and finally
* "Pentecostal Adventism", moving towards a more emotionally rich congregationally-styled worship practice. While a conservative approach to doctrinal unity is essential, a similar approach to socioculturalism and structural management is not (Wolfgramm, *AP.*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1997, p. 10; see endnote 5).

Ethics, values and sociocultural standards have become a topical issue in the last decade. The prevalent evidence of unethical behaviour has created a yearning to pursue an elusive ethical and moral excellence and trust in relationships within and between institutions and individuals. The fundamental temptation is to avoid following through responsibility to others and to shift from an ethical altruism to an ethical egotism. George Hampton, writing in *Adventist Professional* in 1997, proposed that behaviour of real value placed self-interest second. He stated that: "One's duty is to do what is right *and avoid doing what is morally wrong irrespective of either the consequences of the act or the circumstances of the individual situations.*" In order to understand and appreciate the multi-cultural diversity and pluralistic concerns of the Church difficult choices may be made by persons not adequately equipped or specialized. They may bring their own narrow or insular ethical styles or leanings to the coalface and in a self-interest mode fail to embrace the servanthood facilitative model (Hampton, *AP* vol. 9, no. 3, p. 5).

Alvin L. Kwiram, while senior vice provost at Washington University in 1990, wrote a warning to Adventism in *Spectrum* of the *inevitable* effects of higher learning on its own Church administration. He advocated that the history of *all* religious

movements exhibited a similar process of decay. In summarizing his hypothesis, he argued:

* That during a movement's embryonic stages of creativity and artistry, a broad cross section of its believers will engage enthusiastically in its process.

* That emphasis on form and order will emerge and will gradually take precedence.

* The vision will grow dim and the system will decline.

* New ideas will become unwelcome and the experimentation associated with its former zeal will be marginalized.

* A loss of purpose will signal a turning inwards and a reactionary defensive posture.

* The prophetic movement will move towards closure and exclusivity of the group dominates (Kwiram, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 3, p. 3).

Kwiram admits that at any stage the process need not be inevitable but the temptation will always be strong. *The danger will be to lose impetus in the inspiring of students to a sense of destiny through mission.* While understanding, that growth and renewal are the paramount goal in Church leaders' and members' hearts and minds, the essence of a satisfying human experience may be assured. Kwiram therefore has called for a revision of Ellen White's writings by now being "smart enough to go beyond the particulars of her language and examples" (See Kwiram, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 3, p. 4).

Curiously, Kwiram called for an Adventist National Centre for the study and transmission of values--a call that the writer agrees has some merit but suggests that the term "justice" be included. Such a conference might meet say every two years or a quorum when in a state of emergency. It would include pastors, theologians, educators, psychologists, sociologists, social workers and scientists and other informed laymen committed to holding distinctive and Christian values in a creative and systematic manner to invigorate mission in a rapidly changing culture.

Similar pleas have been issued sporadically since this time, including one from Patrick in 1998 when he urged for an implied delegitimation of her authority through a consensus summit. He advocated that Ellen White as "mother to the church" had the right to now "expect her children to grow beyond her own understanding..." Patrick "urges the Church to get its scholars, theologians, editors, and others around the world to participate in open discussions of the need for change" (Patrick, *Adventist Today*,

March-April, 1998, p. 21). Whatever the Church's administrative modus operandi will be, it certainly cannot continue to blacklist or dismiss professional critique from mission focused members in the way it has in the past without the potential to escalate even more pain for, and loss of, its constituents.

To what extent the Church wishes to retain its cultural standards of identity, through any of its former behavioural standards, is highly problematic in the context of revisionist philosophy and a biblical values paradigm being espoused. Disengagement by colleges from churches, historically, has usually been slow and almost imperceptible. The alumni replacing the church as its financial patron usually evidences the first stage, observed Burtchaell. According to Madigan there is a wish for the College to now experience this transition to some extent. He forecast: "I see an increasing number of private donors, government agencies and philanthropic foundations supporting Avondale" (Tawake, *AR,* December 16, 2000, pp. 4-5). This gradual shift from acquiring money almost exclusively from the mother Church may then trend toward foundations, philanthropists or the government (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 837). On the basis of the colloquialism that there is no such thing as a free lunch, the Church will need to be extremely careful, should it continue to hold control, in how much money and from whom it will receive it. Indeed in my attempt to demonstrate that the College has now largely surrendered to the forces of the world in a number of codes and to a lesser extent health, morality, abstinence from alcohol, barriers to state aid and government controls, the general paradigm shift is continuing.

In Avondale College's own theology manual, prepared and edited in 1998 by members of its Theology and Arts faculties, as an ongoing revision of Adventist faith and practice, the authors set the tone by declaring that firstly, Adventist "truth" *has to evidence a pragmatic consequence* and secondly, that *no one group of Adventists had the monopoly on that truth.* Here again one may argue that a revisionist gauntlet is being thrown down to the administrative arm of the Church that traditionally, up until the early 1980s, had wielded a power-broking role in matters of doctrinal decision-making (McIver and Roennfeldt, 1996, p. 4). In quoting Ellen White, the authors asserted that the Bible is not word perfect but because it was "'given in the language of men' it is necessarily "imperfect" yet it is absolutely perfect for its role of revealing Christ and his salvation" (Timothy 3:15; McIver and Roennfeldt, 1996, p. 33). In her writings, "no teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were to be found...but to bring into clearer focus the truths already recorded in the Word of God" (McIver

and Roennfeldt, 1996, p. 96). It could be argued that this view was not always accepted in its emphasis context by at least one former General Conference educator, who was of the notion that if it was not for Ellen White's hold over doctrinal authority, the Church would not have held on so tenaciously to the Investigative Judgment (See Cottrell, cited in Wolfgramm, 1983, p. 168).

Avondale, in line with the revisionist disclosures from Numbers, Rea and Ford, declared in 1998 that the Church, in assessing Ellen White as no longer a perceived "all knowing, and ever authoritative" person, must "reformulate its religious tradition for itself if it is to adequately 'own' its own faith" (McIver and Roennfeldt (eds.) 1996, p. 99). The College put forward the notion that if in the 1970s and early 1980s, "the Church was in a new phase of its experience developing a more mature relationship with its mother", then it would be seen in the future as possibly "the final adolescence" period of the Church as it determines the context of Ellen White and her writings (McIver and Roennfeldt, 1996, p. 100).

The College must now determine to what extent it will surrender to the revisioning pathway of lecturers, including Baravilala, Lockton, Puni, Currow, Reynaud et. al. from Avondale, will influence the wider Church audience including administration without an *eventual* serious loss of traditional identity and ethos. The advice of Scragg, in 1997, that "Avondale College needs to maintain a Theology Faculty that does not depend largely on the ideas and skills of one key individual" seems now to be operating with a more direct focus as evidenced in revisioning mission by an ADRA "*don't tell me, show me*" public relations/marketing, corporate business enterprise paradigm shift (Truscott, *AP.*, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 8). His exhortation to effect, pragmatically, "diverse approaches and ways of interpreting and sustaining Adventist mission and belief..." (Scragg, *AP.*, vol. 9, no. 1, p. 17) is evidenced in the College's various recent publications under its own Avondale Academic Press title, as the College flexes its identity with the approval of the SPDSDA administration.

That new socially focused identity appeared already to be experiencing challenges of its own. Manner's *Record* editorial in April 2000, drew fire from facilitators of social revisionism at Avondale after he cautioned against the perception that ADRA's international mission should be the new barometer of a successful Gospel preaching Church. ADRA, he said, quoting the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* for the definition of true evangelism, "can only offer temporary salvation through food, literacy programmes, shelter, etc." For Manners, in restating the

Church's historic line, it was the preaching of "the gospel that should have our first priority" (Manners, *AR*, April 1, 2000, p. 2). College Humanities Faculty lecturers Lockton and environmentalist, Dr. Howard Fisher, reacted with a defence of the importance of ADRA's work, stating that the Gospel was integrated with a balance of spiritual and social concern (Lockton and Fisher, April 5, 2000). Manners failed to publish their reply.

In establishing a mix of governance and faculty for an accredited and state funded educational institution, an anomaly and inconsistency of application of standards will surely rear up when the state insists on compromise that may fatally destroy the ethos of education that a college might seek to give its clientele (See Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 832-835). Their lack of vital theological stimulus caused a vacuum in which energized Christian faith and mission were stifled. Inherent was the narrowing of academic interest by a faculty more focused on academic excellence to the detriment of the theological goals and mission of the college. Not only a perspective of faith but a personal consciousness was paramount to the student for the empowering of mission. Burtchaell took the view that "religious self-identity" will inevitably degrade towards morals, piety, manners, then class unless it understands "a sense of prophetic independence" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 836). A college's thrust towards piety, led by John Wesley and others including: "the primacy of spirit over letter, commitment over institution, affect over intellect, laity over clergy, invisible church over visible" with the use of "the earliest Christian communities as their models", assisted in bringing to their faith the original meaning and authentic dynamism of elements of the Christian life. He believed that: "They reach back both imaginatively and historically to the original sense and inspiration of church order, worship discipline, preaching, and theology." Their abilities in "prophetic critique" in matters of "family, civil powers, the classes of society, the relations of nations and peoples, and the stewardship of property"...caused them to be labelled by Burtchaell as "inveterate simplifiers" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 839). But Pietism, for Burtchaell, in being driven by a certain fervour, despite being

> in the hands of scholars...was naïve about history; it underestimated the need of Christianity to grow through time and circumstance, and its ability to modify or molt older forms without renouncing their purposes. The emphasis on spirit, enthusiasm, and unmediated grace repressed any strong sense of the visible church as an incarnate undertaking as the body of Christ (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 841).

It was a "thoroughgoing reading of the Gospel", according to Burtchaell, that was the more preferred foundation to denominationalism than a quarrel or a charismatic figure. If such foundations, once seeds for pietism, now lose their veritable historical antecedents and disintegrate, having argued from the standpoint of *unverifiable tradition or opinion*, the door to liberalism and rationalism, with its continual appeals for empirical evidence, could eventually find its home at Avondale and invalidate the basis of any future obsession for pietistic influence. In the study of the histories of the defection of Christian colleges from their mother churches, the slide has often been early, (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 844) something not witnessed in early Avondale education, but which may now be thoroughly tested.

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1. Some ten years or so years earlier, Ballis provided little hope that such reform might be immediately forthcoming. He found that of those Avondale trained pastors who had exited the Church following the Ford crisis they had not done so generally on theological grounds but on the culture of administrative processing of their grievances. Ballis formed the view that ex-ministers encountered "domineering and confrontational styles of leadership" and a culture of "manipulating of the system", under the guise of transparency, in operation during the ministers' search for meaning and the Adventist's *raison d'etre.* Combined with their sense of isolation and the unavailability of skilled independent professionals from whom they could seek counsel, ministers had felt betrayed by a "dishonest, devious and untrustworthy" hierarchy (Ballis, *AP.*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 28-30).

2. Indeed I find no dissent from any one of these at General Conference level.

3. Dr Robert Banks is Director of Macquarie Christian Studies Institute, Sydney, New South Wales.

4. R. Lawrence Moore is Professor of History at Cornell University.

5. Demanding behavioural uniformity should be nonessential for in local contexts this may be seen as an immature step and an extension of "egocentric adult expectation" (Gillespie, 1993, pp. 73-4). The paramount quest should be "to keep Christ central to our behaviours and values" (Gillespie, 1993, p.18). As a guide to describing how maturely people operate when considering the values and standards of an institution, Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning for behaviour in perceived maturity growth may provide a framework for social value judgments and natural justice in his Stage 6 model. *"Motivation out of a moral and ethical conscience by universality in approach, to provide consistently justice and fairness for everyone, respect, dignity and mutual trust for all human beings"* (Gillespie, 1993, pp.63-4).

Chapter 25
Conclusions and cautions

25.1 Introduction

In the final analysis of matters addressed in this thesis and of how Avondale's path ran generally against the tide of secular sociocultural standards for more than seventy years, I have focused particularly on its orthodox educational cultural standards, seen variously as its distinctive identifying markers. I seek now to illustrate the progression of events of some high points in the pointers to revisionist thought, commencing around 1977 when traditionalist elements in Adventism, namely the all-powerful administrative arms, were lining up with the General Conference to try to again hold the Church in check from further sociocultural or theological erosion.

Vice-president, Willis J. Hackett, in classical hegemonial tradition, foreshadowed Ford's demise by seeking a new authoritative statement on Adventist faith and practice. This precipitated into the imminent set of Twenty-seven Fundamentals. In being set out in black-and-white credal form, certain people in ministerial and academic posts were given notice that extirpation would be likely for those who persisted with any performance or agitation for revisionist style approaches to the Church's faith or practice. Hackett intimated that the result would be the preservation of

> the church... protected against the subtle influence of those who have become unclear as to God's self-revelation of His Word and in the counsels of the Holy Spirit (i.e. Ellen White; see Hackett cited in Wolfgramm, 1983, p.145).

Evidence was given to indicate that by 1980, it was apparent that the ascending younger academics were in growing tension with Church leaders and administrators, who were generally without any graduate or post-graduate exposure and hence ill-equipped to dialogue in specific critical analysis or general critique (See Veltman, et. al. cited in Wolfgramm, 1983, pp. 152-153). Led ultimately, if not inadvertently by Ford, who by his own admission in 1980, was not against Ellen G. White, but against the *misuse* of Ellen White, the battle lines were drawn for the context of the Twenty-seven Fundamentals to be sealed, albeit underpinned by the notion that "There are no errors in Ellen White's writings. Beware of historians." (Cottrell cited in Wolfgramm,

1983, p. 168) Such a statement has veracity in that Church historians, in confluence with Land, Butler, Numbers and others, have, by demonstrating the errant nature of sociocultural context and the plurality of sources, shown conclusively the need for a revision of the authoritarian use of Ellen White's writings.

James W. Walters, associate professor of religion at Loma Linda University, attempted to assure the members in 1991 that Ellen White's inspiration was not destroyed by the knowledge that she was a culturally-conditioned phenomenon, nor was the new understanding that not all her sources were from God (Walters, *Spectrum*, vol. 21, no. 5, p. 12). Ellen White may be used, he proposed, but in a clearly secondary position to biblical authority (Walters, *Spectrum*, vol. 21, no. 5, p. 13). Dudley initiated dialogue in 1986 suggesting that individuality and privacy should be implicit in the Church member's ability to *choose his own standards,* within the perceived New Testament ethic and ethos, and that the Adventist Church should not legislate *in any cultural detail* how the individual Christian should conduct his or her life. Rather than following the former traditional stereotypical "anti-cultural shibboleths" the Church should be preparing its people to be more aware of the significance of social, cultural and political forces (Chartier, *Spectrum*, vol. 17, no. 5, p. 58). Such notions now challenged the relevance of Ellen White's proclamations on sociocultural standards and consequently her authority as a prophet of inspired Bible commentator status. Richard T. Rice has suggested that the Adventist leaders must ask themselves: "How does the Church develop its standards? What accounts for the distinctive standards held by Seventh-day Adventists?" (Gillespie, 1993, p. 93)

In assessing what standards the Church should hold, it is essential to heed Oliver's words. In his remarks on contemporary lifestyles for Australian Adventist's he commented that he knew of at least one Conference president who thought that the Church, in discussing its standards, had not seriously or formally defined its principles (Oliver, 1997b). *A church's belief structure, therefore, must promote loud and clear its priorities in its value judgments. It would appear to not yet have come to an understanding of the importance for the discernment between morals or the principles of Scripture and the mores or sociocultural standards which may be termed as dynamic or "present truth"* (See endnote 1).

Though relief was evident from a relaxation of nineteenth century legalistic strictures there was an uneasy prognosis for the future direction for the Church and the College. The Old Lights, still deeply respected--despite their Puritan, sectarian,

culturally imbued view--by those with a penchant and understanding of Church history, had been basically relegated as icons of the past, with their standards from a bygone era. With gratitude for their zeal, discipline and vision, particularly Ellen White's, Adventism always had a clear understanding of its purpose and mission on earth. The Puritan obsession for education and hard work, underscored by a coherent set of propositional beliefs, was seen as the means of forging ahead to a common goal facilitating a bond and a fellowship known as "family".

The nineteenth century American Methodist notion that holy flesh could be achieved appeared to have largely driven Adventism in its quest for character perfection and cessation sin that seemed compatible with the notion that this would bring on the Eschaton in the early twentieth century. This, however, sat incongruously with George Knight and an increasing array of other scholars and, more recently, administrators. The beliefs of some early Adventist Church Fathers, with their non-acceptance in the deity of the biblical Godhead and the personhood of the Holy Spirit, would have--on a propositional test for "the truth"--disqualified them from "being ready". Knight proposed the frank admission that "most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe epistemologically to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs" (George Knight, *Ministry*, October 1993, p. 10).

The authenticity of Adventism has had as much to do with the direction of the journey it was taking as it did with the gradual unfolding light of truth (Froom, 1971, p. 33). *Indeed the challenge to Seventh-day Adventism, as it has been for all militant organisations, was understanding truth in its static and dynamic forms and being able to discern the difference. This thesis has been about describing the struggle of the dynamic, evident as culture, considered for a time as a landmark of the Church's ultimate identity.*

The new effects of globalisation on Adventism appear to have improved the cultural sensitivities of the Church. However it is inevitable that the growing concern about a sharp divergence in opinion by the younger Church members on lifestyle issues and core Adventist values evidenced in surveys conducted in America and Australia will determine to some extent how Avondale survives the future as a unique educational institution. Oliver suspects that the relevance of Adventist standards in a modern world and the ease of discussion about its lifestyle will present a difficult task ahead, and the price could be very high if some progress isn't made soon. For Oliver

and others: "At stake are a whole generation of Adventist Christians." The issues are not necessarily those of the past but are present inconsistencies that are rattling the gates of present Adventist credibility and relevance (See Oliver and Rice's comments in endnote 2).

Unfortunately there has remained, up until the 1990s, a fear lurking among certain Church administrators that in the presentation of differing points of view, neither passion for the Church nor the relevance of the proposition may be acceptable should there be the slightest suspicion of a challenge to long-standing traditions or cultural standards of the Church. To question any icon standard regardless of its unsubstantiated status in Scripture would have been a prescription for personal rejection and ostracism. The objection can arise that to criticize the Church is to not show love or loyalty for the Church (Case, 1996, p. 183). But there appears to be a growing view that the Church in God's eyes might be much larger than can be contained in any one organisation. While Adventist administration, driven by the General Conference, continued to depreciate its historians and mission-focused Church scholars, persisting in its traditional interpretation of Ellen White, it would face an ever-increasing dilemma in matters of faith and sociocultural behaviour.

As indicated earlier, some danger lurks for the College, as a distinctive Adventist place of higher learning, in the SPDSDA's continual struggle to maintain a reasonable and competitive material infrastructure as a result of it student intake. A lack of liquidity for a future College may mean that it will have serious difficulties resisting any lecturer, who, not being mission-focused, is deemed an efficient lecturer and delivers a professional product. His influence may clearly be discouraging students from a life calling or professional Christian service in the Church but the College is impotent to remove him. But Madigan is optimistic on this point, stating: "Avondale will continue to employ personnel who will uphold and model Seventh-day Adventist Christianity." This did not mean that all employees would be Seventh-day Adventists. To believe that Avondale "will continue to focus its spiritual and religious programs to the needs of tertiary students" may prove naïve when juxtaposed with other remarks also made by Madigan in seeking to enrol "more students from the growing Christian (non-Adventist) school sector" and "to address the changing career expectations...of the wider community" (Tawake, *AR,* December 16, 2000, pp. 4-5).

We have shown that Avondale's original purpose for existence was based almost exclusively of being a training ground for students to serve the needs of the Church. A

rationale on sociocultural learning experience consistent and contingent upon that goal was inevitable. One may ask, *Of what benefit is any distinctive sociocultural experience or distinctive religious belief to Avondale or the Church today if there is no intention to have an albeit modest supply of non-Adventist students convert to the Church?* The answer may be seen as in the public religious education paradigm advanced by Lovat et. al., that *there remains a freedom to choose a faith and belief system, that most appeals to the needs of the student and which might be perceived to best stand up, in the religious marketplace of ideas, as the most valid, satisfying and dynamic.*

The question of Adventist/non-Adventist believer ratios is another problem for the College to ponder. In the past the Church has shown certain insecurity by exclusion of non-Adventists from its institution. The rationale from past history in preserving its culture through separatism and elitism is easy to see. But if the product offered by the College was so good and it was believed that the gates of hell were inferior to the eternal power of the Spirit of God, why the reluctance to accept the challenge of a reasonable, albeit screened, "gentile" population at Avondale? Of course Avondale is not exclusive in its administration of such a policy in the past. A bigger question will be how to shut out students having no religious persuasion at all and who clearly show a destabilizing effect on the Colleges value system and religious beliefs as the College moves to a more robust inquisitorial style of student rapport in its teaching? It would appear from trends in other religious colleges before it, that this will not be decided alone by the resolve of administrators but by the increasing power of potential government, or constituent and alumni bodies that have the money and the will to accommodate and process the transitions (See for example Burtchaell, 1998, p. 25).

In Burtchaell's unambiguous summing up of the Lutherans' will to remain an educational force, it appears that Avondale is in the midst of its own fight for survival and relevance to external forces (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 538). While it remains the apple of the SPDSDA administration's eye, there is no particular clear or easy path from the present flow of data to provide comfort for a continuation of the College's past identity. Should the College retain a semblance of its former sectarian "Greater Vision of a World in Need", the only persons remaining committed to it will be those dedicated to it financially and in mission. Indeed, as previously alluded to, the major cause for change may now be the inspiration (or desperation) that is experienced

through independent funding (See Burtchaell, 1998, p. 823). Avondale's SPDSDA patronage in recent years has been falling behind, some of its resources being channelled to the new Pacific Adventist University in PNG (See endnote 3).

A message should, however, be kept in mind for those deliberating over Avondale's future in their attempts to prevent static truth, the values based on a Christological theology from becoming the dust of the future. Should the College faculty and Church administration, along with prospective future academics, continue to understand the long-term identity and purpose of the College as coinciding with its Christian historical values, then its prophetic insight interpreted through the Gospel will enhance the Church, Avondale and its evolving culture. On the other hand, as Burtchaell warned, should their nerve and resolve falter to combine "knowledge with vital piety" through intimidation by other academics, they will also:

> end up judging the church by the academy and the gospel by the culture. They will fail to judge the academy, or to notice intellectuals who are in thrall not free; argument that is not rational; judgments that have become dogmas roughly enforced (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 851).

Bradford's caution to Adventism on this point should be recognised:

> History shows that churches go wrong when they fail to keep open minds for more light and growth. Such was the case with the Papacy during the long Dark Ages. Creeds were set, and traditions, not the Bible, dominated the belief system (Bradford, *Ministry*, April 1995, p. 26).

Even Ellen White accepted the possibility of certain "truths" for the Church as holding a relative and changing value. She offered *"present truth"*, the Adventist landmarks notwithstanding, as a commodity of standards for our day yet something that may be less compelling or cogent in a future context. She stated:

> *We must not think, 'Well we have all the truth, we understand the main pillars of our faith, and we must rest on this knowledge.' The truth is an advancing truth, and we must walk in the increasing light.*
>
> *The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people is not a proof that our ideas are infallible....No true doctrine will loose anything by close investigation...*
>
> *It was the unwillingness of the Jews to give up their long established traditions that proved their ruin...*
>
> *But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word and discourage any further investigation of the scriptures. They become conservative and seek to avoid discussion...* (White, 1946, pp. 33-40).

And again during the 1888 battle over soteriological interpretation she warned of "perverted ideas" of what constituted the old landmarks (White, 1946, pp. 30-31).

25.2 Some problems in the denominational paradigm

On the basis of a sociological and even a theological concept of the defining essence of denominationalism I would proffer the view, that, if a church or college claims the right to be a member of a Protestant church in the "denominational" context, it should, as a prerequisite, rationalise its claim to be the exclusive arbiter of "the truth" by whatever means. It should firstly open for debate any notion that its religious organisation has the exclusive blessing of God to claim for *that organisation* the title of "the remnant". Secondly, true education, in its ultimate sense as thinkers and not mere reflectors, must incorporate the freedom to ask and the freedom, discussed again more recently by Lovat and others, to confront various problems.

This does not mean however that it should surrender its perceived unique purpose as a mission-focused, prophetically–inclined movement. Nor should it cease to see itself as a reforming Church on the cutting edge of discovering the true pietistic meaning of Christ's work, motivation, purpose and universal values-transforming approach based on unconditional love and the grace of God proposed by Lockton and others. Thirdly, a church that seeks to be understood and respected by its peer denominational churches must establish a clear regard for them by indicating that any special gift, the spirit of prophecy included, is a gift that is available from Seventh-day Adventists to those across the spectrum of other churches, in the same way that messages of the prophet Isaiah or any other Bible prophet were for the Jews alone (See endnote 4).

But an alternative may be seen by the potential for a neo-conservative element where, if at all possible, the Church should not surrender, says academic dean of Walla Walla College, Alden Thompson, to being what he terms "a mainstream sectarian body" (Brunt, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 10). That body must be aware and in tune with the world but *still retain a unique experience and belief that is supremely mission-focused.* But just how this construct, retaining all the old landmark theological and distinctive beliefs of Adventism, would now fare in a postmodernist setting is pregnant with unknowns and perhaps, significantly, bad publicity.

From the 1988 perspective of Bull, the traditionalist and public relations front

by the Church hierarchy has been to feature the Church's growth as one of "unparalleled achievement". He suggested that it "perceives geographical, numerical, and institutional expansion as indicative of success...moving inexorably towards its final goal". Another view led by George Knight and others suggests that the Church, if ever it was well, is now "moving from a state of health to a state of sickness." Regardless of the view, Bull argued that there has been a distinct paradigm shift—"The church was once full of vitality but now is blighted" (Bull, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 12). Bull is at variance with the common sociological organic paradigm to religious history. He argued that if Adventism is following in the well-trodden pathway from sect to denomination, and moving from a sectarian family or institutional paradigm of control, to an emphasis on individual religious experience, there is the danger that it will be seen to privatise its religion and facilitate the secularisation of its community. He opines that *while sects remain exclusive, isolated and at variance with the world, they will remain "potential agents for resacralisation"* (Bull, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 13). Denominationalisation is seen sociologically as the secularisation of sectarian behaviour and therefore the Church will experience greater difficulty in defining and identifying itself.

That the Church must sustain a process of higher education, there is no doubt. But this demands more robust inquiry and those using illogical, authoritarian or arrogant methods within a system relying on honesty, justice and empathetic understanding, will be judged harshly by history. John Brunt correctly observed: "You can't have a church that runs educational systems without having critical thinking concerning that Church's faith." And that is what Adventism did. Despite its concerns from Ellen White, it entered into a period after her death of "unthinking".

Aligned with the evidence offered in this thesis for a paradigm shift, if we are to provide a more focused and periodised thumb-nail summary of its power to control its culture, it could be said that the downhill slide grew in intensity following the 1919 General Conference Bible Conference which attempted to determine how it would approach Ellen White's writings. Precedent for some terrible pain was set in motion during the 1920s and 1930s period of reactionarism and fundamentalism. Loyalty to the organisation was an incessant theme. In uniformity was strength; in diversity was sin. The individual was neglected and marginalised for the hegemonial authority of the institution (See Brunt, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 9). The consequences of such rigidity and authoritarianism are always very serious and are well documented in

various histories. Yet not to resist the tide of secularism and postmodernity is not only dangerous to sectarian standards of practice but to biblical and static Christian values, also under threat.

Liberal Protestantism, Bull suggested, used a "self–justification" interpretation that denominationalism was the proof of exclusive communities ultimately buckling under to secular social pressure and a share in the religious market place. Islam is a prime example of its flawed model. After centuries of a "moribund religious tradition" this belief system has grown a new and militant religious right to emerge as a radical social and political force (Bull, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 14-15). But to examine Thompson's globalised sectarian focused body of believers has merit and more research needs to be achieved for Adventism to retain more than modest strength and purpose in its identity. By perhaps some good fortune to date, the western Adventist sociocultural position has probably not hit the ultimate lows of lethargy and loss of mission that mainstream Protestantism in Australia now appears to experience.

25.3 The New Testament order for a new social paradigm revisited

Former Avondale Theology lecturer Dr. Kerry Hortop, reminded constituents in 1994 of the two types of biblical models which had come to be known as the "castle" model and the "salt" model. The former was based on the metaphor of a holy city on a hill, where Christians were called out of an evil world permeated by corruption and inspired by Satan (John 15:19; 17:14, 16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17). It lent itself to an hierarchical model of military-like organisation and strategy where a crusade or public evangelistic environment existed. An adversarial climate prevailed between the deeds of the world and the mission of Christians. In a bruising and battering environment they can obtain security and nourishment in safety (Hortop, *AP.*, vol. 6 no. 3, p. 3).

The latter metaphor of salt, found in Matthew 5:13; 13:33; Luke 13:20,21; 2 Corinthians 5:20, appeared to be in tension with this model. Rather than promoting exclusion and separation from the culture of the world, salt directed us to the paradigm of inclusion, mingling, permeation and social interaction, as Christ's ambassadors sharing themselves in the good and bad times. This metaphor, empowered by the Spirit of Christ—the Holy Spirit--appeared to be the preferred

model in the New Testament. To be fraternizing with the enemy looked at once to be the more dangerous risk-taking behaviour for demoralization and destruction of the Christian's culture. But Hortop pointed out that the castle model, while appearing to be the more secure, in actuality was more prone to producing a false sense of security and a breeding ground for "the enemy within". The Church has relied too heavily on the castle model as an anti-social device in the past, and while there is a definite validation for its discreet use when recharging its spiritual resources this must be balanced in context with the Church's mission to the world.

Those in the Adventist historical traditional mould might have difficulty in not considering the salt/yeast paradigm to be an apostate position. But Hortop maintains that the western world must now see Adventism as a transparent inclusive mode of belief that finds its eternal security, not in structure or organisation, its castle, but in "personal faith armour", giving lie to its permeation and appreciation by the community at large.

> In our western culture, only a church whose members depend for their security upon their own personal faith armour, and who therefore can open themselves and the doors of their churches wide to the world, will have any sort of relevance and make any sort of impact (Hortop, *AP.*, vol 6. no. 3, p. 4).

The fortress paradigm exacerbated the strength and depth of mission when applied to the upward mobility of sociological layers among Adventists seeking higher education. A lack of sociocultural preparation and orientation inevitably would cause some form of culture shock after the Church had emphasized the need to be embedded in its own fideistic, cocoon-like subculture and separated from the outer-worldly culture. *At risk were potential Adventist professionals, who being unwillingly aligned with an authoritarian-styled fortress model out of loyalty, had little inner identity or ownership of cultural standards or personal faith to answer the empirical and inquisitorial challenges of secularism, scientism and modernism. They were experiencing an unparalleled cognitive dissonance and as a result were "slipping out of the church and taking spiritual residence elsewhere or nowhere"* (Bull and Lockhart 1989, cf J. W. Knight 1978; Jones and Landa, *AP.*, vol. 6, no. 3).

Paul Landa, Professor of History and John Jones, Dean of the School of Religion at La Sierra University advocated that if cognitive dissonance were to diminish in Adventist professionals' faith and practice the following changes should be implemented. These included:

* A political structure more responsive to the laity:

* An improved sense of openness and relevance in developing its doctrines:
* Be seen more as agents of change in the world especially in matters of social justice:
* Be more active in challenging emerging poisonous ideologies of the day:
* Deliver spiritual and relational renewal and healing in the Church (Jones and Landa, *AP.*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1994).

25.4 Other evidences for revisionist thought: Motif revisioning

Consistent with this thrust toward a revisionist status I will now focus further in this present chapter on the task of exploring the evolution of a major shift in another facet of the paradigm. From the promotion of final generation theology and the Three Angel's Messages of Revelation 14, evidenced by the Church's attachment to the motif representing it by the centrality and exclusivity of three stylised flying angels in the 1960-1970s, the organisation has moved from the imminent eschatological belief that it would be translated, to an understanding that more attention must be paid to the here and now. The physical symbolic evidence, which Wolfgramm disputes as little more than window dressing, is seen in the transition of two new Church motifs, the first in the 1980s of an angular nature with the cross, originally shunned as a symbol by some earlier conservatives, now tucked into the corner of the motif (See endnote 5).

Folkenberg, in 1993, asked for a solid soteriological basis for Adventist mission including a call for the Church to be repentant, have assurance, and maintain compassion (Folkenberg, *AR,* September 3, 1993). In apparent tension with Folkenberg's thrust in 1994 was SPDSDA's administrator Gerhard Pfandl, who, in searching for Adventism's changing identity, narrowed the *raison d'etre* to "four great truths". They included: "the Second Advent, the Sabbath, the Sanctuary and the Spirit of Prophecy" (Pfandl, *AR,* February 19, 1994, p. 2). And central to Adventism remained the sanctuary truth. A defensive Phandl, *recognising that this dogma was for many Adventists, "a theory of something going on in heaven that was of no practical value for their lives here on earth"*, observed that: "of all the doctrines we hold, this one is unique to our church. It has, therefore, received more criticism both from inside and outside the church than any of our other teachings" (Phandl, *AR,* October 1, 1994, pp. 6-7).

The new motif would now utilise historic Protestant symbols with the cross in the centre: "the central theme of our faith", the open Bible: "representing the biblical foundation of our faith", the flame: representing the Holy Spirit and the three lines: representing the Three Angel's Messages encircling the earth. The symbolism was designed to enable the Church to now appear to have a stronger soteriological-ecclesiological basis for mission. It had surrendered, on paper, the sectarian centralized eschatological final generation motif, appearing to have arrived as a fully-fledged Protestant denomination. The *Record* stated: "It was saying "Adventist" in any Language" (Dunstan, *AR*, June 28, 1997, p. 9).

In summary, we could argue that the motif changes may well have been catalysed by:

1. Ford's challenge to Ellen White's authority as the last word in doctrinal arbitration,
2. Rea's exposure of her borrowing of other writings and
3. Numbers inquiry into her psychological disposition.

All operated in tandem with the social process to further weaken the authoritarianism of a former triumphalist-inspired hierarchy.

In a local context, we have endeavoured to show how the fallout from the Ford and Rea controversies had a reverberating effect on the College's sociocultural authority--although to a lesser extent in the standards of sport and music--with strength not witnessed in any previous time. The social marginalisation and spiritual alienation process of these men, in particular Ford, caused a significant loss of face for the administrative authority and a significant loss of faith in Ellen White's authority in Australia and at Avondale College. Corresponding to this was a further separation from "final generation" eschatology, as evidenced from the 1980s onwards, in the continuing search for the Church's identity in a changing world.

25.5 Seeking an education utopia: The quest for transparency, honesty and justice

In focusing on the central contention of a revisioning pattern at Avondale it is important to recognise that the prevailing postmodern attitudes in Australia are seeing practical consequences for leaders and institutions in the late 1990s especially with issues of legitimacy and transparency. Mackay warned those who wished to *hide* their

wares to brace themselves when out in the market place for a new code of transparency. Who really are the people behind the product and what is it that is being marketed? Is it being told, "precisely, honestly and transparently?" (Mackay, 1999, p. 191) As already evidenced, the Adventist Church has made some very high claims about its mission and in its industry and services to the community has set some very high standards for the community to follow. But as in any belief structure with a negative view about other cultures, and a tendency to triumphalism of its own belief system, Adventism, with its very high philosophical standards of lifestyle (some would accuse them of asceticism) is bound eventually in a postmodernist age to attract considerable criticism from within and without. The unfortunate consequence, resulting from a social separationist stance has been that some of the criticism may have been totally misinformed while other criticisms were based on myth.

Having derived a theological ethos from a significantly emphasized Old Testament Edenic, prophetic and nationalist model and then superimposed upon it an eschatological basis for its mission, it has caused an uncomfortable if not partial social ineptitude for negotiating the here and now. In this matter I have endeavoured to reveal a facet in the paradigm revision of that philosophy, contextualised by an emerging open social doctrine in process, the latest of which has been testified by the College's first Social Justice Symposium in 2001 (Archer, *AR*, June 2, 2001, p. 5; see endnote 6).

Inevitably some criticism will be well founded and as in the case of all large organisations at times, may require serious and responsible attention. Avondale College has up until more recently, always provided an education, distinctive for its fundamentalist-styled philosophies and eschatological goals. Its present quest for university status should have caused, in my opinion, some agonizing heart searching in its struggle to hold to its traditional standards and uniqueness in continuing to supply a distinctive Christian education for its Seventh-day Adventist students. It may do well to keep in mind the increasing significance of the religious curriculums taught in public schools. Lovat, in signalling that the public school system might be providing a better environment for religious education, is critical of his own Roman Catholic Church, for its inability to respect freedom of choice in a religious learning context and to be free from education office and diocesan politics. He warned his Church that they, as religious educationists, *are in danger of being overhauled by a public system of religious teaching where the offering is demonstrated to have better*

"understanding, sympathy, and even enfaithment" than their private religious counterparts (Lovat, in Ryan, (ed.) 2001, p. 10).

This must surely have implications for the Adventist model of education, particularly in the style and method by which religion is taught. Drawing on an eclectic collection of views from educationists in the twentieth century, that of Dewey's primacy for freedom and autonomy; Piaget's ability to be allowed to derive original thought; Kohlberg's moral right to stand by one's own convictions and Fowler's freedom to develop one's faith, Lovat *finds an authenticity in the prescription for proper religious education to be underpinned by the supreme right for students to be "free to learn".* As this principle is applied across the Board of Education curriculum and general learning, so is "this freedom necessary for healthy and effective enfaithment" for genuine religious education and commitment, if desired, to occur (Lovat, in Ryan (ed.) 2001, pp. 4-10).

In my attempt to describe some recent distinct changes in the former attitude to the Adventist education paradigm that prioritised character development, President of Columbia Union College, William Loveless, and others have observed that in the western world, Adventist colleges and universities were waking to the reality that they must now become *consumer-driven businesses instead of ivory–towered enclaves.* Pressure from the secular arena in Australia may be seen from Gregor Ramsay's comprehensive 2000 New South Wales Government report on teacher education. He indicates that the needs of students are being driven increasingly by the demands from industry and business professions seeking the easy transition from education to their work "and which will enable lifelong learning" (See Submission 118 in Ramsey, 2000, p. 18). In other words, the market place is now the medium. The customer--the student--is "*numero-uno*". The college experience and its associated enculturation are giving way to a priority for career advancement.

This has presented itself as a serious dilemma for the Church. In now being increasingly obliged to accept a more diverse student intake, (Loveless, *Spectrum,* vol. 18, no. 4) how can Adventist education centres achieve this goal without losing a significant Adventist ethos, identity and control? Retired vice-president of the General Conference, Richard Hammill, conceded bravely that unity is available within diversity and pluralistic notions. He noted:

> The New Testament church, and that which followed it, was full of diversity...Diversity of opinion is tied closely to the uniqueness of each human being. How else can persons see, except through their own eyes (Hammill,

Spectrum, vol. 18, no. 4, p. 39).

Hammill concluded that the Church had to skill itself as a place for changing the world as much as holding to the traditionalism of being an embattled remnant holding the fort against worldly contaminating culture until Jesus arrives. He was more fearful of those who refused to discuss issues of pluralism without rancour than the expression of variant notions by those in search of a better way (Hammill, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 39-41).

Confluent with Hammill, Professor of Religion at Newbold College, Michael Pearson, stated in 1988 that a key to authentic learning and to avoiding "rule-bound spirituality" was its freedom to question within the context that doubt is not by itself an act of disloyalty to the Church. Learning must operate within certain tensions in order to have robust inquiry and the likelihood that to some questions there are no conclusive answers (Pearson, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 4, p. 37). Dean L. Hubbard, president of Northwest Missouri State University, remarked that because the church is represented as the bastion for refined answers and elaborate creeds or statements about religious faith, universities are in direct tension for their position that their learning proceeds from not knowing and the need to question in an atmosphere of tolerance and ambiguity (Hubbard, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 4, p. 38).

The findings of Mackay concerning Australian preferences, at the turn of the new millennium, indicates that anything less than transparency, especially where religion is involved, will increasingly receive negative feedback and through the media, possible retribution (Mackay, 1999). Finally, I wish to cite Patrick in issuing this warning to reactionary and traditionalist administrators and members: "...Seventh-day Adventism (will) become an anachronism were we to (continue to) adopt the writings of Ellen White as the definitive and authoritative encyclopaedia of our faith and practice" (Patrick, *Adventist Today*, March-April, 1998, p. 21). Patrick, a former director of the Ellen G. White Research centre at Avondale warned that any so-called "reversionist" or "reactionary" attitudes by administrators or Church members that defended her in the traditionalist mode is liable to do "further damage to the credibility of Ellen White" (Patrick, Unpublished manuscript, April 2, 1998).

As suggested earlier in chapter 21.2 the language of Avondale College has become more tailored for attracting non-Adventists in recent years with its public relations brochures designed to draw on a broader student clientele. In 2000, the focus

and language has become more secular, sophisticated and increasingly aligned with an institution posturing for university status. Whether this method fits consistently with the transparency code promoted by Mackay remains to be seen. For Business students seeking a "career" in Information Technology there is no apparent appeal to mission or service to God. (Avondale College: "Information Technology") For those seeking a "career" in Teaching, the brochure advocates Avondale as the ideal place "to study in a Christian environment". The student may learn to "discover, nurture and develop (their) God-given talents", facilitate others "to their full potential" and cause the student to be a "catalyst for change in the lives of others." The distinctiveness of Avondale lies in teaching one "to think critically and creatively" in "a caring and supportive environment" that provides "individual attention from lecturers." The course offers "academic excellence...well-rounded social and spiritual development", and "prepares you for postgraduate and research studies" (Avondale College [2000 brochure]: "B Ed Secondary Teaching"). The thrust had changed from teaching as a "calling" to evangelise children in the Adventist school system to an almost exclusive *academic career-oriented* pursuit in line with secular universities.

There are some inherent warnings here for the identity and spiritual longevity of a College that would promote Christian values. Burtchaell made the significant observation that *as a faculty becomes less committed in their ministry to the students' eternal direction, there will be seen to be a stronger commitment to specific disciplines and academic ability in the absence of Christian concern or values. So often the history of the rationalisation of sectarian belief has been witnessed by a slide from sectarian standards and when the denominational name becomes substituted for "Christian" then "religious" and the "goals of the college" become couched in philosophical terminology. There is evident in college announcements that a danger can exist in vision statements and preambles "addressing outcomes instead of causes"* (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 834). Undoubtedly the instruction and inspiration received from albeit the compulsory religious chapel meetings and the moral duty to attend Sabbath services has been a most significant factor in maintaining the fabric of spiritual culture and ethos in its youthful student membership.

Unlike the Congregational dilemma at Dartmouth College in the nineteenth century, of the "perennial drudge" of religious study, (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 14-15) exercises in biblical study had rarely raised a whimper among students during the earlier years at College life. However the College now appears to be heading into a

period where Adventist theological distinctives are being sublimated for a more general and generalized set of Protestant conservative beliefs as set down in the College's 1999 manual of religious instruction, *Adventist Foundations of Faith*. The Graduate Diploma of Theology public relations brochure suggests that the prerequisites for this now 'BA accredited degree with the Higher Education unit of the New South Wales ministry of Education, are "a university degree", the desire with others "to share the joy of the Lord...to have a caring nature...and seek "to minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church within the context of the South Pacific Division" (*Avondale College*: "Grad Diploma (Theology-2000").

Burtchaell referred to "patterns that repeat" in addressing Christian values evidenced in many formerly Christian Colleges and places of higher learning. He commented:

> For instance they easily spoke of the college preserving its offer of Christian values, but never of hiring those who could or would do the offering. While working on the menu they declined to hire the cook (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 834).

In the Avondale context, its acceptance by a secular community as a rational, significant, and growing corporate body of believers is replacing the old cultural philosophy of separatism, religious dissent and Puritanical morality. Social isolationism, however, could remain a predominant theme if encouraged by the Church's separatist approach to the observance of the Sabbath. But in as much as the College attempted to discover a fabric of socialisation for its philosophy and existence, while maintaining a hard line on fundamental beliefs, its process of education was being subjected to compromise, modification and inevitable adaptation (John Knight, 1973, p. 209). And then, in the terms of Mathematics professor of Andrews University, Harold T. Jones's poser: Does Avondale wish ultimately to become a non-denominational college (university)? Such a self-supporting institution would be in his words, void of the "crippling consequences of a university being owned and operated by the church...expected to be a model of Seventh-day Adventist perfection" (Jones, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 4, p. 42). An answer to this question may not be easily forthcoming.

The problem for Avondale's Board of Directors, (known today as the College Council) who remain with few exceptions, a selection of Seventh-day Adventists, may be that of eventually propping up a Church-based college whose ethos runs no deeper than its "wistful concern" for "the truth". Any college that has had an unstable

or ambiguous historical relationship to its mother church has not survived equivocating controlling influences (Burtchaell, 1998, p. ix). So far, to its credit, Avondale's history has been an exhibition of total control by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with a prescriptor for sociocultural and theological control over its selection of students, staff and curriculum. But there are now ominous test looming that it could be in danger of losing this vital grip.

As was the case when American Adventist youth were surveyed in the early 1990s, what they perceived in their churches was generally supported by the same experience in Australian Adventist youth seeking tertiary Adventist education. Daily, in apparent agreement with Oliver, also cites a lack of warmth and acceptance seen in dishonest thinking as significant negative characteristics for growth (Daily, 1993, pp. 7-8). This may be due in part to the Jewish Orthodoxy's preoccupation with "law, piety and externalism" (Daily, 1993, p. 55) but must also find its problems in the powerful culturalism carried over from pietistic Puritanism and Primitive Methodism from nineteenth century New England where a heavy focus on unquestioning loyalty and church standards existed--a church largely irrelevant to their needs and lacking grace and understanding in their problems (Daily, 1993, pp. 7-9). John C. Brunt has reminded us that the good news of Christianity must always undergird religious standards and values. One may now negotiate statements by Ellen White, as evidenced in the *Union Conference Record* in 1901, in a Christo-centric weighed New Testament values paradigm. She wrote:

> *No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are, is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of the truth, experience, and duty and we are to stand firmly in defence of our principles in full view of the world* (White, *UCR,* January 1, 1901, p. 1).

This notion should be considered on Brunt's proposition that:

> Throughout the New Testament both values and behaviour grow out of the Gospel...This means that the central focus of all religious education must be the good news of God's gracious kingdom (Gillespie, 1993, p. 167).

For Brunt, any change in behaviour through a value judgment will be to no avail ultimately, unless it was motivated by the central focus of the Gospel. This response to God is through total commitment. The values espoused in the Pauline epistles in expanding the breadth and implications of the Gospel commission are based on faith, obedience and the impartial acceptance of all humanity, along with the community of

believers. *Motive* and *consequence* are the relevant factors to moral and ethical values. Yet for those looking for absolute solutions on sociocultural issues, theirs will ultimately be authoritarian solutions (See endnote 7). As argued in the earlier chapter, systematic review and its ongoing evaluation are vital especially if relevance and meaning are to be understood and enjoyed by younger generations. With the knowledge that what most men learn from history is that they don't learn from history, such a course for the Church will not be negotiable by accident (George Knight, 1995, pp.124-5).

25.6 Final remarks

To align further threads in the facets of the paradigm shift as proposed in my thesis: It has become apparent that many scholars and professionals in the Australian Adventist education scene, during and since the 1980s, have refrained from highlighting Ellen White's inspired status or authority. As observed, she is no longer referred to explicitly in the official College mission statement. This shift was evidenced by Avondale presidents and College Board chairmen--including Cox, Scragg and Ball in the 1980s and 1990s--focusing and emphasizing the essence of Adventism as *being* in Christ rather than *doing* good works and upholding the Church standards, as pervasively implied during the 1920s to 1940s. The College handbooks make little reference to definitive standards of dress, social entertainment or sociocultural behaviour as defined by Ellen White through the bureaucratic mandate of earlier Church administrators. Replacing this has been an emphasis on Christo-centric values and relationships.

Avondale, I have argued, is being increasingly directed by revisionist attitudes from intellectuals, who, being traditionally in the vanguard of change, are towing the Church hierarchy, as the pragmatists, on a course of denominationalisation that hopefully leads to survival. Having set this general course of argument, and for the sake of completeness, I suggest that within the general paradigm shift, these revisions have been demonstrated through the various paradigm facets listed in this thesis. They include shifts in paradigm from sectarian standards to denominational values in the facets of literature, entertainment, sport, audio and visual media, sexual relationships, humanitarian-focused evangelism, and music. I have weighed evidence for a more general shift from an eschatological emphasis towards a soteriological focus on faith

and practice. Once conceding this shift, I suggest that the former impact of Ellen White as the eschatologically focused *source* of truth, is at best now seen as being a *resource* among the Scriptures, and at worst, a historically contextualised respected literature source, either secondary to, or entirely outside the authority of Scripture.

The Church administration in the West generally, according to Bull, recognises that they cannot return to the past and drag the majority of the Church with them (Bull, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 14). But in confluence with Niebuhr, who believed that the formation of various denominations is tantamount to the admission that the church has morally failed, Bull theorized that denominationalisation is a prescriptor for organisational disfunctionalism, the results of which can end in "schism, financial embarrassment and membership loss." He suggested that Adventist leaders, in seeking acceptance as a denomination, have been foolish. It should be satisfied with the status of a sect for it still retains major hallmarks in wooing a disproportionate group of socio-economically dispossessed and should concentrate on its identity as a world-wide religion (Bull, *Spectrum*, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 15).

The revisionist philosophies of literature and art inveigling through the authoritarian paradigm of "the truth" and the proper use of time espoused by Ellen White now threaten the very sectarian traditionalism of Adventism and its inspired authority. The Adventist student of Avondale, once taught that he was an alien of this world and a time traveller passing through, is now learning how to adapt to the world environment, indeed even to protect it. Once taught to go quietly, to move unobtrusively, not to dissent, and not to be the head or the tail of cultural change in society, (see Bull and Lockhart, *Spectrum*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 14-21) he is now firmly enmeshed in attempting to change the kingdom of this world. In other words there is an unsubtle process of dehomogenisation unmistakably evident in virtually all the Church and College's cultural standards, led essentially by the struggle between a Church hegemony in conflict with its academic faculties.

The struggle that Avondale is facing in its quest to revise a secure and unique identity within the ambiguities of denominationalism and the loss of authoritative status of Ellen White is really one for the whole South Pacific Church to ponder and to cast their vote. Madigan stated unequivocally in 1997, following the New South Wales Government's first rejection of the College's permission to obtain university status, that the College is determined to "maintain its Adventist identity." This identity was based on "three non-negotiables--the right to choose staff, to choose

students and to establish its curriculum" ("Avondale College...", *AR*, July 12, 1997, p. 10).

From the direction of Dr Bruce Youlden's remarks, prior to becoming the new deputy president of Avondale College in 2001, it could be deduced that a boost in the image and identity of Avondale by selling its unique potential more aggressively to its constituents and to other Christian education institutions was at the forefront of its goal for an increased student intake. Youlden has been employed by the College to assist in marketing the educational goal for Avondale as successfully as had been the case for Macquarie College, a major success story for Adventism in Lake Macquarie City. In doing so, he must lay a foundation that rewrites subtly the College's ethos as a place providing *less of distinctive Adventism and more of the universally accepted Protestant denominational standards and values that "share the joy of the Christian experience"* (Youlden, *AP.*, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 16). This faith ethos was one that Christian educators would lead out and operate on a "spiritually transparent" model that shared the friendship of Christ in such a manner so as to cause students' parents to "become the school's greatest ambassadors *and public relations* officers" (Youlden, *AP.*, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 18). Such an ambition wrought out of a significant body of non-Adventist sentiment, although feasible, would seem to defy any opportunity to run anything less than a broader and more windy path of cultural standards—one which would seem to further strengthen my claim that in the context of this thesis Avondale College is socioculturally post-Ellen G. White.

In advancing the quest for university status, New South Wales minister for education and training, John Aquilina, has signalled that he expected Avondale to now establish a "university culture" ("State MP..." *AR*, May 5, 2001, p. 5). Given this defining context it may disqualify the College from any further legitimation for a number of its former regulatory cultural standards. These include compulsory religious attendance—in my view, a sure watershed in the process of losing control (and there are those who will disagree with me) and the distinctive non-negotiable cultural practice of a healthful vegetarian diet, and the more theologically underpinned observance of the Sabbath and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ--the sure icons of a distinctive Adventist identity.

If the history of the direction of American religious colleges has any valid bearing, Avondale's mother Church identity and executive powers may have an increasingly limited use-by date. At best, should it continue on its higher educational

path, it may achieve, eventually, the identity of a non-denominational Adventist university and by no means a model of Seventh-day Adventist cultural idealism or control. On this basis a "post-Ellen G. White" revisionist model and not a rebel implant might remain in tact. Should it fail to gain continuing higher status, then as a theological and educational seminary-styled institution its traditional culture is more likely to be sustained.

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1 At the Perth (Western Australia) General Conference Session in 1991, a call was again made for all Church leaders and in particular ministers, "to lift high the fundamental truths of our message *from the pages of Scripture*" ("The Perth Declaration", *Spectrum*, vol. 21, no. 5, p. 59). The obvious exclusion was the words, "the Spirit of Prophecy". But still not discussed was the meaning of the term "fundamental message", that is the role of the external behaviour-modifying, Investigative Judgment. Neither was the method explained, through which the authoritarian use of Ellen White was applied, as promulgated and expanded by way of published compilations through her blood line descendants, the White Estate.

2. The five killer vibes that destroy young people's security in the Church were labelled as perfectionism, dishonesty, judgmentalism, uncritical thinking, and hypocrisy (Oliver, 1997b, pp. 2-4). Rice suggests that: "Basically Adventist standards represent the Church's application of the teachings of the Bible to the concrete situations Christians face in the world." The Church rules against tobacco and alcohol were set in the formative period when temperance and abstinence were the dynamic forces in the life of Eastern America (Gillespie, 1993, pp. 95-97). Such was the case that there was no direct evidence save for the appeal to healthful living. For instance, there was no mention of tobacco and there was no unequivocal rule laid down for the total abstinence from alcohol.

There are three different answers to the questions "What is a religious person?" "What is a Christian?" and "What is a Seventh-day Adventist?" As the questions are answered there appears to attend an increasingly high component of behavioural description about Adventists. Seventh-day Adventists are primarily seen as "a group of people who adhere to certain standards of behaviour." This impression tends to cause Adventist youth to confuse standards of conduct as religious requirements Rice considered that: "a tendency to identify the essence of Adventism" with behavioural norms produces a distorted view of the Church, and can lead to disastrous personal consequences.

Of supreme importance in guarding against this dilemma, is the teaching of the doctrine of salvation by faith and the acceptance of God's great gift through the blood of Jesus Christ (Gillespie, 1993, pp. 99, 100). This ultimate medicine is the crux of survival for man in the eyes of God. As embodied in Paul's doctrine of salvation, Rice reflected correctly: "Saying yes to God's gift therefore means saying no to all human achievement...we either accept salvation as a gift, or we lose it entirely. Relying on our own efforts nullifies what God has done for us. We are lost if we do it...behaviour never occupies the centre of Christian experience. The epicentre of Christian life is faith..." (Gillespie, 1993, pp.101-2). Faith is the essence of the Church. Behaviour is the reflection.

3. In correspondence to Chamberlain from Oliver, (December 29, 2000, p. 3) he stated that Avondale's appropriations have been increased by one million dollars since 1998.

4. A hurdle that the Church administration should perhaps squarely face is the position as discussed earlier, concerning how they still mark down any Adventist member who marries a non-Seventh-day Adventist genuine *Christian* who fulfils to his best ability the New Testament formula for the body of Christ yet unequally yoked. Adventism does not yet appear to have come to terms with the New Testament construction on the term, "body of

Christ" and "invisible body of Christ". In my view it is a problem to be negotiated and explained for all religious groups claiming exclusivity for their organization as the one through which God works most or best.

5. Wolfgramm tends not to view this evidence as significant to the revisioning process, suggesting that it is an imaging's process rather than a genuine desire by administration to embrace with other Protestant denominations a unity in the body of Christ (Wolfgramm, 2001).

6. The Symposium conducted on May 12, 2001 was only the second of its type in the world Church, the first being organized at General Conference level in 1998. It featured as its special guest, Sir Ronald Wilson, a former High Court judge of Australia and the principal investigator into the "stolen generation" of Aboriginal children. Calls were made at this conference by myself and others for a Church-based department or committee to research and facilitate a programme whereby an official stance and forum on ethics and values could be set up to alert the public of the Church's stand and action to be taken on various matters impinging on social justice issues.

The trend towards involvement in social and political issues is seen in a US Adventist News poll conducted in 2000 which indicated that 65% of Adventists now see no problem in running for office ("Running For Political Office", *AR*, December 9, 2000, p. 6).

7. In Brunt's view, "there is a certain relativity in Paul's view of Christian behaviour." Fundamentally, "for Paul any action is wrong that fails to build up believers" (Gillespie, 1993, p.153). If for James, favouritism, discrimination and divisiveness are anathema, for Paul, motives for behaviour must reside exclusively for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. Brunt sees the Gospel for Jesus Christ, as the Gospel of His Father's (and His) Kingdom. Discipleship, self-sacrifice in service to others (Mark 8:34-5) was a personal faith-actioned response with no regard for external conformity. This was nowhere more radically evidenced than in his handling of the Sabbath day, with his food preparation and healing on the Sabbath that was against the rules of the "church" of the day. The Kingdom of God is a matter not of the hand but firstly of the heart. Response to the God of the Bible through Jesus Christ is holistic--a total response as the total picture develops more clearly. It is the picture of God's unselfish and undying love. (Gillespie, 1993, p.159-160) Brunt remarks that the New Testament "consistently shows Christians are called to a set of values that often differ from the prevailing conventions of society" (Gillespie, 1993, p.169). The cultures of this world and age, if one does not seek real abundant and eternal life, will suffice for a time for those who know no better. They will have their reward under the rulers and Ruler of this Age. Reading the Scriptures and the works of Ellen White more realistically and responsibly should be the basis for the development of a mechanism to deal with values and standards for the Church.

On the prospective taint of sectarianism, in the American system, Burtchaell observed: "As long as 'church relatedness' is assessed by the 'common core of values rooted in the Judaeo-Christian heritage, and the tenets of a free democratic society,' no such discomfort is likely" (Burtchaell, 1998, p 835). There is no such guarantee in Australia it would appear, given a less sympathetic media to Protestant minority religion. (eg the Azaria Chamberlain case) Burtchaell further observed that within this value system the continuance of colleges with an undergraduate majority from their founding church is rare. Of the hundred examined by Burtchaell only five could be accounted (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 835).

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